



### **Introduction - rationale**

As a Catholic school our teaching on relationship and sex education (RSE) is informed by Scripture, the words and actions of Christ and the teaching of the Church. There are three important concepts which underpin our thinking on this subject:

- ❖ The dignity and worth of each person made in the image of God. *“Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.”*(From the inaugural address of Pope Benedict XVI)
- ❖ We are called to love and be loved: *“God is love and whoever lives in love lives in God.”* (1 John 4:16)
- ❖ We are called to form relationships and to live in community: *“wherever two or more of you are gathered in my name there I am.”* (Mt 18:20)

Pupils at The Oratory School come from many different backgrounds. Pupils have different life experiences, different maturation rates and different levels of sexual awareness. The pressures and influences on them from society and the media, often subliminal, cannot be underestimated. The School must be ready to accompany them on their journey to adulthood, modelling for them and enabling them to become capable of whole and wholesome relationships, and discerning their calling. Above all the School needs to help them understand that they are loved by God and capable of loving.

Our response to Government initiatives on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) must be guided by our vision of what it means to be human and our claims to educate the whole person and the need to address issues raised by the actual experience of pupils today.

*“...children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral, and intellectual qualities....they should be given a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex.”* (Declaration on Christian Education, par. 1 Ed. Abbott, 1966)



## **Defining Relationship and Sex Education**

The latest DfE Guidance defines RSE as:

*“lifelong learning about physical, moral, and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love, and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching. Its three main elements are attitudes and values; personal and social skills; knowledge and understanding.”* (Sex and Relationship Guidance DfE 0116/2000)

The DfE document identifies three main elements: attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding. This guidance recognises the need for relationship and sex education to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. At The Oratory School teaching about relationships and sex education is not, however, simply a response to government initiative; we do not teach this because it is a legal requirement. We teach about relationships because relationships are the core of who we are and how we respond to God’s love.

## **A Rationale for Relationship and Sex Education**

At the core of our rationale is a Christian understanding of what it means to be human. We are involved in Relationships and Sex Education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person: the interior life of God is a community of persons. We are made in God’s image and therefore destined to live in relationships with others, to form community; called to love and be loved. There is often a mistaken belief about Christianity, a belief that somehow we are opposed to the body and that sex and sexual expression is therefore wrong. Nothing could be further from the truth. Pope Benedict XVI wrote:

“Human beings are made up of body and soul. We are truly ourselves when body and soul are intimately united.” (Deus Caritas Est. Benedict XVI par. 5)

In the society in which we live there is often a distorted view of sexuality. It is often relegated to merely a human appetite; sex is separated from relationships, reducing it to its lowest form. The dignity of the human person, the value of life, the need to form community, these tenets of Christianity are often lost in a culture which



places a high value on the individual. God's love is the model for our human love and this requires right and loving relationships. In developing our relationship education therefore the following approach is adopted:

- ❖ Parents are the first teachers of their children. We aim to work collaboratively with parents and welcome parental input.
- ❖ It is a developmental programme. As boys progress through the school the RSE programme is appropriate to the boys' age and development, and will help them to grow in understanding, to reflect critically on information given to them and enable them to make right judgments within the circumstances of their lives.
- ❖ It is a whole person approach. The approach is not simply based on biological facts but grounded in our views on the whole person, placed in the context of our beliefs.
- ❖ It is a whole school approach. Attitudes are formed and values truly appreciated by the total experience of life at The Oratory School, through both the formal and 'hidden' curriculum. This is a family school and the boarding environment impacts on both boarding and day boys; attitudes and values develop as a result of relationships between boys and staff. Consequently, while the Deputy Head Pastoral, Head of Personal Development, and Head of Theology develop the necessary programmes, it should also be seen as a responsibility shared by the whole staff, with the whole range of curriculum contributing to the formation of right attitudes in each boy.



## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Pupils**

All pupils have the right to be respected as a unique and unrepeatable human being created in the image of God. They have the right to receive accurate information, appropriate to their age and ability, to be able to develop spiritually and morally and to have an informed conscience and to be able to make informed choices. It is hoped that all pupils will be willing to listen to the teachings of the Church and become aware of the variety of other views regarding moral issues related to relationships. Pupils need to be helped to develop a positive attitude and sense of responsibility regarding their own and others' sexuality; to have a sense of self-esteem that enables them to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, dignity, and responsibility.

### **Parents**

Parents are the first teachers of their children and the School needs to have a mutually supportive relationship with parents in order to implement our teaching regarding RSE matters. Parents are given information regarding our RSE programme and can examine this programme. Parents are encouraged to talk to their boys about lessons and talks they have received at school and listen to their questions and thoughts. In many cases what the boys learn at school can have a deep impact on parents as well helping them to understand relationships in their own lives and give a good example to their children.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RSE, except those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Parents wishing to exercise this right do not have to give reasons but are requested to contact the Deputy Head Pastoral to discuss their concerns and resolve any misunderstandings that may exist. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request is complied with until revoked by the parent.

### **Teachers**



All adult members of The Oratory School community are role models or educators in this dimension of boys' education. The teacher's role, in particular, is to value and affirm all pupils; actively to promote open and wholesome relationships; to develop gospel values and effective pastoral systems; and to provide positive and accurate learning about relationships and sex.

For teachers not directly involved in the overt teaching of relationship education there will be opportunities for learning, occurring in all areas of the curriculum which will indirectly refer to this area and all teachers therefore need to be aware of this policy and curriculum for relationship education. All teachers have therefore signed to say they have both read and understood this policy document.

Teachers, through the Head Master, advise governors of the content and organisation of RSE. Teachers also help develop suitable procedures for dealing with requests from parents to withdraw their children from RSE lessons; contribute to reviewing existing provision and use their professional skills in developing the curriculum.

### **Specific Delivery of RSE at The Oratory School**

RSE is delivered in a number of formal and less formal ways. The School's Citizenship programme is delivered by tutors in their weekly meetings with tutor groups on Thursday afternoons. The Citizenship programme is co-ordinated by the Head of Personal Development, who provides year group heads with information, who then provide tutors with a programme and resources for each year group. Each year group head has a stock of resources their tutors can use and can also provide guidance. The Citizenship programme is important for encouraging our boys to see themselves as having responsibilities in the world but does not directly deliver any RSE which is instead delivered by a number of specialist stake-holders:

- ❖ The Theology Department through the teaching of Religious Studies and Religious Instruction.
- ❖ The Chaplain, Fr Macnab, in his role of the principal religious educator in the school who is available to give boys advice on any matter including RSE.
- ❖ The PSHE co-ordinator is Mr J Pennisi who organises a number of specialist speakers to address the boys on issues including RSE.



- ❖ The Biology Department who have a specific responsibility to deliver the mechanical side of RSE and the reproductive cycle.
- ❖ The Health Centre which has regular contact with many boys and which is able to offer advice on RSE issues.

## **The Theology Department**

The Theology department is the one department in the School that has contact with every boy on a weekly basis from First Form through to Upper Sixth. Boys up to Third Form have three lessons a week – one more lesson than comparable subjects in order that time can be used to deliver PSHE issues as well as Religious Education as such.

In the First Form we lay the foundations of our RSE teaching by emphasising the importance of our bodies and the crucial point that our flesh is important to God and must be treated with dignity and respect. Mention of John Paul II's teaching of dignity and respect for the human body is a crucial seed that is sown in this year group.

The Second Form boys continue and develop this theme in their classes especially on the Fall of Man in the story of Adam and Eve. Boys are taught the importance of understanding that our bodies and their desires can lead us into sinful/bad ways and to be aware that we can often lead others into bad ways as well through the use of our bodies. In the work on the resurrection however we are given the ideal of the glorified body and that bodies are not considered in Christian theology to be bad but an integral part of the human being.

The Third Form gets more input than any other year group on the PSHE front and most of this is directed at how boys relate to others and there will be much time devoted by teachers to relationship and sex education. Focus early on in the year will be on the boys' future roles as husbands and fathers and the need to think about how they view these roles. Time will spent considering what makes a good husband or father and how selfishness is always the root-cause of breakdown in relationships. Boys will be encouraged to think about how they wish to be viewed and what will make them a reliable husband in the future. Later in the year boys consider the importance of marriage and time is spent understanding marriage as a



sacrament. Questions invariably bring the discussion around to issues such as Civil Partnerships and Gay ‘marriage’. Boys are taught that marriage as a sacrament is different from a civil marriage and focus is brought to the understanding of what is sacred about a marriage between a man and a woman and the biblical basis for this union as distinct from any other form of relationship. Finally boys are taught about what it means to be moral in today’s world. This will pick up on previous themes of trustworthiness in a relationship and will introduce new themes such as appropriate use of the internet addressing themes such as piracy and pornography and the affect that these may have on people especially the vulnerable and also the consequences of all types of addictive behaviour and how this may affect the forming of appropriate and lasting relationships.

Since 2016 boys have followed the AQA Specification B route studying Judaism and a study in Mark’s Gospel alongside the Catholic Christianity. Some of the themes covered in previous years are revisited in the course. Marriage, relationships, the marriage vows, the Catholic understanding of the body are all covered at a deeper level. Our RS teachers are all specialists in the subject at Third form and above and therefore encouraged to pursue questioning of a sexual nature to ensure the boys are comfortable with the Catholic teaching on any particular topic. In particular time is given to explain Catholic teaching on contraception and how if this is understood in the context of wider Catholic teaching on sexual conduct it forms part of a coherent system. Abortion is another topic covered and as part of our role as Catholic Educators the boys should be able clearly to articulate Catholic teaching on this issue among others.

In the Sixth Form boys may take RS as an academic option for A-Level in which case they will study Ethics and will further their studies of themes such as relative and absolute morality. All boys however meet the Chaplain for an RI class on a weekly basis on which see below.

## **Chaplaincy**

In conformity with the School’s Catholic ethos, Biblical, and catechetical teaching on the safest and most responsible use of the sexual faculty form a part of the normal issues discussed in the Chaplain’s lessons with the Sixth Form. It is an essential part of the Chaplain’s pastoral role to explain and teach the purpose, as well as the principle of the standards and values of morality enshrined in Catholic



teaching. This is partly done through homilies in school and house masses. Also within the context of RE lessons, through questions raised or related topics that lead into a discussion of sexual attitudes in general. Apart from this, a good deal of input is exercised within the internal forum, where clarity with compassion, as well as patience and encouragement in guidance is never out of place.

### **PSHE: Outside Speakers**

#### **LIFE**

Covers behaviour - chastity, resisting peer pressure, personal integrity, STIs - definitions, medical advice, Abortion debate, Positive alternative to abortion & IVF. LIFE as an organisation is neutral on contraception; however it has a clear view of what a Catholic school will teach and the speakers are scrupulous in following that.

#### **10:10 Theatre**

Play for St Philip House boys: changing nature of boy-girl friendships at senior school age;

Bullying play for 4th form: chastity; peer-pressure; under-age sex; cheap nature of one-night-stand approach.

Play for 5th form: teenage sex; abortion; marriage

### **The Biology Department**

Reproduction is taught in the second form following the key stage 3 National Curriculum. This covers sperm and egg cells, anatomy of the male and female reproductive systems, fertilisation, development of the zygote and pregnancy. Puberty is then covered looking at the menstrual cycle and how sex hormones physically change males and females.

At GCSE we follow the Edexcel iGCSE biology course in triple and double award science. There is a chapter called Human Reproduction which both routes follow which gives the boys a chance to revisit the reproduction topics. It covers all of the areas looked at in the second form with the addition of birth. The level of terminology is increased and detail of hormones is deeper to bring it to GCSE level. The syllabus does have limited coverage of anatomy so this is added to the teaching scheme of work beyond the syllabus recommendations. The Human Reproduction



topic is taught in the beginning of fifth form which ensures that boys that have not been previously taught about the biological side of Sex Education receive it here at the Oratory School.

Human reproduction is not part of the A level course and is therefore not taught in the Sixth Form.

### **The Health Centre**

The nurses provide informal sexual health education concerning areas such as sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, abortion or relationships when advice is requested by boys. Queries are varied and usually specific to a boy himself. They generally have a medical implication and can be of great concern to the boy who may lack basic knowledge to understand the risks and consequences of his or others' behaviour. Referral to the School Medical Officer can be the most appropriate route. Discussion and advice about management or treatment and any associated education is then undertaken by him or one of his partners. Condoms are not available from the School Nurses at The Oratory School.

However the nurses do provide information about sexual health including the Department of Health's National Chlamydia Screening Programme aimed at all sexually active young people under 25 years and they advise about access to this service when appropriate. They are fully aware of mandatory requirements for child protection concerns should they be made aware of sexual activity in a young person under 16 years.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Any complaint about the RSE programme should be made in accordance with the School's published Complaints Procedure.

### **Confidentiality and Advice**

Pupils will be made clearly aware that some information cannot be held confidential and be made to understand that if certain disclosures are made, actions will ensue. Any disclosures will fall under the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies so that any boy at risk of abuse can be properly protected.

No pupil should be directly asked personal questions of a sexual nature by a member of staff and staff should avoid being in a position where they can be asked specific questions concerning their own relationships.



Advice is available for all pupils and parents if they request it, regarding information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sex and relationships advice/counselling and treatment.

## **Implementation of the Policy**

### **Communication**

Staff, particularly those involved in the delivery of RSE, will receive INSET training.

### **A copy of the RSE policy will be made available to Trustees, Staff and Parents**

As a School we shall use any opportunity to educate and discuss aspects of RSE, to use clear direct and honest messages, to use assertiveness techniques etc. via the Life Skills - PSHE programme, RS lessons, Health Centre.

We shall deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents, where necessary.

We shall use outside specialist agencies to make presentations to pupils about RSE.

We shall encourage good role modelling.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy should be reviewed annually in June by the Head of Personal Development in consultation with the Deputy Head Pastoral. The policy should be sent to the Head Master's Office for approval by the Head Master.

### **Resources**

In addition to the resources already mentioned and groups used by the school the following resources are also helpful:

- ❖ Educational Guidance in human love CTS 1983
- ❖ Education for Sexuality CES 1994
- ❖ Sex and Relationships Education Guidance DFE 2000
- ❖ Science national curriculum
- ❖ PSHE Guidance

### **Links with Other Policies**

This policy has clear links with other school policies aimed at promoting boys' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. These policies include:

- ❖ Disability and equal opportunities



- ❖ Health and Safety
- ❖ Inclusion
- ❖ Special Needs
- ❖ Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship (Personal Development)
- ❖ Behaviour
- ❖ Anti-Bullying
- ❖ Safeguarding
- ❖ ICT and e-safety
- ❖ Science
- ❖ Religious Education

## Future Position

The DoE is currently reviewing their requirements of RSE delivery in schools. The area particularly of interest is the age in which the pupil can opt out of RSE on their own accord, as the DoE states:

*“We will need to include in the regulations the age at which a young person will have the right to make their own decisions” (DoE, 2017, p.6).*

The DoE remain consistent in allowing parents to make this decision:

*“We have committed to retaining a parent’s right to withdraw their child from sex education within RSE, other than sex education in the National Curriculum as part of statutory guidance, but not from relationships education at primary” (DoE, 2017, p.6).*

Last reviewed January 2018

Reviewed annually in June.

*J A Pennisi 2018*

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DoE, 2017, Changes to RSE: A call for evidence

Url: [https://consult.education.gov.uk/life-skills/pshe-rse-call-for-evidence/supporting\\_documents/Sex%20and%20Relationships%20Education%20A%20call%20for%20evidence.pdf?mc\\_cid=766a3c4451&mc\\_eid=42f0306a63](https://consult.education.gov.uk/life-skills/pshe-rse-call-for-evidence/supporting_documents/Sex%20and%20Relationships%20Education%20A%20call%20for%20evidence.pdf?mc_cid=766a3c4451&mc_eid=42f0306a63)

