



# RELATIONSHIPS AND HEALTH EDUCATION

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

*'I have come that you might have life and have it to the full'*  
(John10:10)

The Government is introducing compulsory **Relationships and Health Education** at primary level from September 2020. This is not new for us in Catholic schools, we have always placed a strong emphasis on the development of the 'whole person' through our distinctive education which seeks to *form* as well as *inform* young people in preparation for life.

This is what the Government guidelines say about **Relationships Education**: *it will put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships, including with family, friends and online. By the end of primary school, pupils will have been taught content on:*

- *Families and people who care for me*
- *Caring friendships*
- *Respectful relationships*
- *Online relationships*
- *Being safe*

**Health Education** is described as giving children *the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, to recognise issues in themselves and others and to seek support as early as possible when issues arise. By the end of primary school, pupils will be taught content on:*

- *Mental wellbeing*
- *Internet safety and harms*
- *Physical health and fitness*
- *Healthy eating*
- *Facts and risks associated with drugs, alcohol and tobacco*
- *Health and prevention*
- *Basic first aid*
- *Changing adolescent body*

Further information about this can be found by searching 'relationships and health education' on GOV.UK.

In our Catholic schools, this content will be delivered as part of the 'whole curriculum' where we seek to develop each child's knowledge and understanding of themselves as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience. We teach this precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach

to Relationships and Health Education is therefore rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following '*virtues*' will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

It will be taught through the following themes:

***Created and loved by God*** - the Christian imperative to love self, made in the image and likeness of God, shows an understanding of the importance of valuing and understanding oneself as the basis for personal relationships.

***Created to love others*** - God is love. We are created out of love for love. The command to love is the basis of all Christian morality.

***Created to live in community (local, national and global)*** - human beings are relational by nature and live in the wider community. Through our exchange with others, our mutual service and through dialogues, we attempt to proclaim and extend the Kingdom of God for the good of individual and society.

The Church has always acknowledged that **parents** are the 'first teachers' of their children. Therefore, the role of Catholic schools is to work in partnership with parents at all times and to '*complement*' but not replace the primary role of parents. In order to do this, schools will involve parents in the review of their policy on this area and parents will always have the right to express an opinion. Where schools choose to deliver sex education as part of their curriculum, parents do have the right to ask that their child is 'withdrawn' from this aspect. However, children may not be withdrawn from content which is taught as part of the science curriculum. Please feel free to speak to your child's school. It is really important that you understand how the school will deliver this.

In order for Catholic Relationships Education and Health Education to be fully effective, we believe that it needs to:

- be faithful to the Church's vision of human wholeness whilst recognising the contemporary context in which we live today;
- involve parents as they are primary educators of their child;
- provide a positive view of human sexuality and dignity of the human person;
- equip young people with the ability to make practical judgements about the right thing to do in particular circumstances;
- explore and promote virtues which are essential to promoting respect and dignity;
- be delivered in an age appropriate way which reflects the development of the child;
- be part of the cross-curricular work in both primary and secondary schools;
- be sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and recognise the mix of pupils with different sexual orientations, genders and family backgrounds in each class.