



St. Mary's Catholic Academy

Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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Next Revision Date:	Spring Term 2019

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary's is a caring faith community based on the teachings of Christ.

Our mission is to provide an outstanding whole person education through which all are challenged to grow in wisdom, understanding self esteem and closeness to God.

"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full"

John 10¹⁰

1. Introduction

St Mary's has adopted the Diocese of Lancaster's model policy as the central structure for this policy. The policy sets out St Mary's Catholic Academy's approach to Human Relationships and Sex Education and its place within the mission vision and values of our Academy.

2. Vision and Mission

St. Mary's Catholic Academy is a caring faith community.

Our mission is to provide an outstanding whole-person education through which all are challenged to grow in wisdom, understanding, self-esteem and closeness to God.

The hallmarks of St. Mary's are:

Catholic Caring Community Challenging

St. Mary's is a *Catholic* academy where prayer and reflection are woven into the fabric of the academy's life. The universal message of the Church and its call to new life encourages us to value every individual as precious in God's sight. The distinctive education offered at the academy includes the continuing development of morals and Christian values.

Respecting the uniqueness of each person is central to the *caring* nature of the academy and a reflection of the Gospel message of love. A strong and supportive pastoral system continues to care for all and helps build people's self-esteem.

The academy strives to be a *community* where high quality and enriching relationships are built. Tolerance and the valuing of others are key points of daily life. We seek to manage every aspect of academy life, with justice, for the common good of all.

We *challenge* all people to use their God-given gifts to achieve excellence and make significant progress in their learning. Opportunities exist for aesthetic, performing and creative talents to be nurtured.

Our Vision

St. Mary's Catholic Academy is a secure, caring community with a clear focus on learning.

The academy's distinctive curriculum seeks to provide the experiences that help create a community of enthusiastic and increasingly independent learners. The attainment of all students is a matter of pride, and good results across all ages and abilities reflect this enthusiasm. The academy aims to develop innovative and high quality teaching and learning across the curriculum. St. Mary's Catholic Academy provides an extended and enriching curriculum. Using creative and innovative teaching styles, incorporating developing technologies, the academy seeks to challenge and support all pupils to achieve their individual potential.

The academy recognises the importance of working closely with parents and pupils, parishes and primary academies towards excellence. We strive to work in close partnership with our family of academies and schools, with our local community and businesses sharing our specialist facilities and resources. By developing and disseminating good practice from which all learners will benefit.

There is a calm, tolerant and supportive atmosphere in which talents are developed and weaknesses understood. The Christian spirituality of the academy is reflected in curriculum, liturgy, prayer and practice. These important aspects of our community nurture pupils on their unique journey of faith.

The Directors and academy leaders promote a shared vision and common purpose. Academy development planning, self-review and evaluation translate this vision into a process of continuous improvement.

Structured programmes for all pupils, a caring pastoral system and excellent facilities ensure that St. Mary's remains a popular choice. The academy environment is pleasant and well maintained. Classrooms and specialist areas enhance learning. Effective displays throughout the buildings celebrate the range and vigour of all aspects of academy life. This range and vigour is further seen in the full programme of extra-curricular activities that enrich our pupils' lives and further enhance the reputation of the academy.

Vision for Human Relationships and Sex Education

At St Mary's we are inspired by Jesus to lead lives that are purposeful and enable us to fulfil our talents. We care for one another and show mutual respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with Him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. Through this we grow in our understanding of how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Happiness can only be truly achieved when we have a good relationship with ourselves, recognising our God-given dignity, which enables us to enter into relationships with other people in our lives, which help us grow and flourish, and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. We are all children of God, created equal and called to grow in love for Him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the work of the Holy Spirit. We are gifted with the love of God and the ability to love others. Our sexuality is part of our total self-gift of the heart and we seek to bring the young people in our care to know the beauty, goodness and truth of the Church's teaching about how to lead a fulfilled life as they grow and change from children into young adults.

3. Procedures

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy.

- staff
- directors
- parents
- Diocesan Education Service
- wider community (This may be the Parish/es or additional services, such as school nurse)
- academy council
- pupils

This consultation took place through a full consultation process with parents, local parishes and staff by inviting responses to the consultation policy via letter and email and with pupils through a series of consultation forums with representatives from each section of the academy's student body.

In consultation with the Directors, the policy will be implemented in 2017, reviewed every three years by the Head teacher, HRSE Co-ordinator, the Directors and academy staff. The next review date is summer 2019.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Directors and all members of staff. The academy prospectus contains a statement about HRSE teaching and details of where to obtain a full copy of the policy upon request. The Education Service will be sent a copy of the academy's HRSE policy and it is the duty of the Directors to ensure that this is up to date.

4. Rationale

As a Catholic secondary 11 -18 Academy in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as we believe that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole.

The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human form with an extraordinary dignity that goes beyond that of all other forms of life and shows that humanity alone can embrace this relationship with God. Therefore, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but infused with the Holy Spirit. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in the academy must be rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church's teaching about relationships, marriage, sex and family life. The Church offers education to young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic academy's responsibility than teaching about any other curriculum subject. At St Mary's we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that young people's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage the young people in our academy/college to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As they mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). We also encourage young people to know that God's love for humanity is so great, He is waiting to forgive us.

"We are all sinners, but God heals us with an abundance of grace and mercy." Pope Francis.

This is the basis for all relationships in our academy. Teaching about relationships in our academy is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in line with 'Fit for Mission? Academies'.

The Department for Education (2000) suggests that sex and relationship education should build on the children's own experiences, be sensitive to the specific domestic contexts the children come from, form attitudes and values towards relationships, develop personal and social skills and increase the knowledge and understanding of each young person as they grow about their relationships and well-being, including sexual health. The Diocese of Lancaster supports all these aims in educating about relationships and sex education though recognises that the Church's objectives in this are about complete human formation.

5. Statutory framework

The statutory framework that surrounds education about human relationships largely falls within three key areas.

- The National Curriculum (2014)
- Statutory Guidance: 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000)
- The Children's Act (2004)

Additionally, non-statutory guidance directs policy and guides the work of OFSTED as it seeks to promote what is perceived as best practice, which may go beyond the limits of statute.

	State Funded Maintained Schools	Academies and Free Schools
Whole Curriculum	Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based* and which: -promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; -prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.	
Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education	Department for Education: All schools should make provision for PSHE, drawing on best practice. Schools are free to develop their own PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils.	
Sex and Relationships Education	Statutory for secondary aged children to have sex education that includes HIV, Aids and other sexually transmitted infections	
Sex and Relationships Education Guidance	Any school that provides SRE has a statutory duty to have due regard to Sex and Relationships Education Guidance DfEE 2000	
National Curriculum	Statutory sex education forms part of the science programmes of study across Key Stages 1-3.	
Sex and Relationships Education Policy	DfEE Guidance (2000) states that all schools should have an up to date SRE policy available for inspections and on request for parents or carers.	SRE policy is advisable but not compulsory

St Mary's, as a Catholic Academy chooses to meet all of the requirements of a state funded maintained school as set out in the table above.

6. Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the HRSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (sometimes love is used instead of charity) are about developing the habits of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and happy, good life. The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and self-mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach "the abundant life" (John 10:10).

At St Mary's we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of the academy. This is evident in the way in which staff model Gospel values and virtues and encourage pupils to do the same. Pupils are encouraged to progress their knowledge of moral behavior throughout their life at our academy through the work of all staff who teach or work with them. This is especially evident in form time and in PSHE as well as in assembly and collective worship in addition to RE lessons.

Pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective about their attitudes and behaviour towards themselves and others in all of their lessons with a particular focus in RE and PSHE lessons through the curriculum. Pupils are also encouraged to develop self-confidence and a level of self-control on these occasions as well as the ability to distinguish right from wrong. This is reinforced in the day to day dealings of staff with pupils through insisting upon high expectations of behaviour and the academy's Behavior for Learning policy.

Through daily collective worship pupils are able to express what they believe about God in an atmosphere that is free from criticism. Through the work of all staff in form time, assembly and lessons pupils are encouraged to show love and care for themselves and others. These opportunities in collective worship and through RE lessons help pupils to learn how prayer enables them to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for reflection and growth. This work through the curriculum and through worship and RE allows pupils to explain the choices they make with reference to conscience and a moral framework.

7. The Aim and Objectives of HRSE

The aim of HRSE is part of our wider aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in *Fit for mission? Schools* (2009).

The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, and eschatological (Our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person.

This is why Christ and His Gospel must be the foundation of the educational project of each school and college, because He is 'the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection' (Congregation for Catholic Education, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School). Therefore, the Catholic school or college is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff.

HRSE should deepen the following areas of understanding.

- To develop self-respect and love of self.
- To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God.
- To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose.
- To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this can be an expression of God's love.
- To foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church about how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood.
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent.
- To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

HRSE will develop attitudes, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding.

At St Mary's:

- We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God's creation.
- We will foster an atmosphere in our academy which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the academy and its relationship with the Church.
- We will teach children about the beauty of the Church's teaching about love and God's love for them which is shared in the Sacraments.
- We will sensitively share the Church's teaching about the importance of marriage and family life as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God.
- We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.
- We will seek to enable pupils to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.

- We will encourage pupils to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviours of others.
- We will encourage the whole academy to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous Father as Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer.
- We will encourage everyone in the academy to recognise their part in the academy family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the academy falter.
- We will encourage everyone in the academy to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others.
- We will develop pupils' knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for managing their own risk.
- We will develop pupils' experience of what it is to be truly happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification, satisfying the spirit rather than the senses.
- We will teach them the virtue of patience.
- We will teach pupils about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply, especially when using social media, and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.
- We will encourage pupils to develop their own moral framework about accessing information online.
- We will encourage pupils to recognise the influence of peer pressure and the moral integrity required to say, "no".
- We will support pupils when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in the academy who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable.
- We will teach pupils about the damage that drugs and alcohol can do to relationships with the self, as well as others.
- We will teach young people that God is merciful and always waiting for us to be reconciled with Him.

8. Inclusion

At St Mary's we identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and sexual orientation. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue.

Pupils requiring or requesting additional support, for example because they are transgender, will be treated with dignity and respect and offered support through our pastoral system, work with our Chaplains and through seeking appropriate help from other agencies.

9. Equality

The Directors have wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St Mary's endeavours to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked after children.

These obligations are laid out in the Blessed Edward Bamber Multi Academy Trust's equality policy which can be found at:

http://www.bebcmat.co.uk/images/PDF/Equality_Plan_v1.2_-_July_2015.pdf

10. Programme of study

The Diocese of Lancaster has a programme of study for its family of schools. The programme ranges from ages 2-19 years and provides suggested areas of study and outcomes for the young people it serves. It is envisaged that this programme will be taught in discrete lessons, in cross curricular lessons, particularly RE and Science and fundamentally embedded in the ethos of the academy through assemblies, classroom discussions and the centring of all relationships in our academy on the person of Jesus Christ. The programme of study is based on the teachings of the Church and aims to help young people develop their sense of purpose and character. It should be taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and allow children to express alternative beliefs and viewpoints where they hold

such views. The programme of study will be supported by published resources, recommended by the Diocese, as well as those created by the academy. A list of recommended resources is available on the Education Service website.

At St Mary's HRSE is taught in PSHE, RE and Science lessons. A wide range of teaching strategies is used and all staff have received extra training in the delivery of HRSE through PSHE where resources provided by Blackpool public health are used to support lessons. Lessons involve the establishment of clear ground rules for discussion. Parents are informed by letter at the start of Year 7 about how HRSE is delivered at St Mary's and lessons always take account of the safeguarding policy which can be found at:

[http://www.bebcmat.co.uk/images/PDF/Policies/Safeguarding_Child_Protection_Policy_v2.5 - May 2016_WS.pdf](http://www.bebcmat.co.uk/images/PDF/Policies/Safeguarding_Child_Protection_Policy_v2.5_-_May_2016_WS.pdf)

Progress and understanding is monitored through regular assessment in Science and RE in addition to monitoring of work in PSHE lessons by the Academy's PSHE coordinator. Pupils' well-being, is monitored through a positive behaviour policy and by tracking pupils' outcomes based on expectations.

11. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The academy should support parents in this task. The role of the academy should be that of assisting and completing the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of "*sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God*". (Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education n69) Pupils' first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our academy we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance. Parents have been consulted about this policy before it was ratified by the Directors.

Parents are informed of their right to withdraw their children from HRSE lessons at the start of Year 7; however, they are not able to withdraw their children from statutory Science lessons.

The academy will involve and support parents in learning about HRSE by a sharing of an overview of the curriculum on the academy website, the use of letters when visitors are coming to the academy or when a sensitive subject is to be taught. The academy also recommends some resources around safeguarding and safer behaviour to use at home. In addition to this there is information in the academy prospectus and on the academy website, listening to questions etc.)

Information about HRSE is contained in the academy prospectus and the majority of the programme of study is developed through the ethos of the academy and in PSHE, RE and Science. However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity may benefit from additional parental support.

12. Teaching HRSE

Assistant Head teacher, Mr Matthew Holden is responsible for the monitoring and line management of HRSE. The PSHE element is co-ordinated by Mr Simon Mitchell (PSHE coordinator), the Science element by Miss Rebecca Jones (Head of Learning House for Science and PE) and the RE element by Mr Phil Allan (Head of Humanities Learning House). The Head teacher will monitor the implementation of this policy and his work will be monitored by the Executive Director of the Trust, Mr Stephen Tierney.

HRSE will be taught in RE, PSHE and Science lessons in addition to some use of one off timetable days. In addition the academy nurse, 10:10 Theatre Company, Public Health and PCSO may help input to areas of the curriculum from HRSE which they have relevant experience in discussing with students.

All staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour based on a Christian understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the academy's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the academy. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in our academy in accordance with the vision and mission of the academy.

13. Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk

The Directors desire that HRSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where pupils experience a growing appreciation for their well-being, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked openly, knowing that their questions will be answered and knowing that these questions will not be judged by staff or other students. It is vital, therefore, that time is invested in creating this framework of mutual trust and care, whilst respecting personal information. The HRSE co-ordinator must be given access to support and training to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies. The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidance for dealing with questions.

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening but teachers will need support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected. For example:

- *If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as a school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;*
- *If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the question later;*
- *If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and*
- *If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.*

Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the academy and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up to date safeguarding professional development.

Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example because of their explicit or graphic content, should be addressed in accordance with the academy's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures which can be found at:

http://www.bebcmat.co.uk/images/PDF/Policies/Safeguarding_Child_Protection_Policy_v2.5_-_May_2016_WS.pdf

The academy will ensure that this policy is available for all staff, directors, parents and pupils and the confidential nature of how to obtain advice and guidance as a result of any issues or questions that may arise.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers about issues and questions that arise as part of the programme. It will be made clear to all that unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where illegal or abusive concerns come to light and these will be dealt with under the terms of the academy's safeguarding policy listed above.