



Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Mission Statement

To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ's Gospel.

*'I have come that you might have life and have it to the full'
(Jn.10.10)*

Our Sex and Relationship Education Policy is based upon relevant sex and relationships guidance received from both the Diocese and the Department of Education.

"Sex and relationship education is a 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."

"Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives."

We are involved in relationships and sex education 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 RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. As a consequence of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share in the divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DFE, RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated for all students so they can make responsible and informed decisions about their lives.

Aims of Sex and Relationship Education:

1. To engender growth in self-respect and self-worth, recognising that each of us is created in the image of God. This is the foundation for responsible and caring relationships.
2. To explore attitudes and values stressing the importance of marriage and family life, promoting the general ethos of the school. Teachers will be aware that students come from a range of backgrounds and be sympathetic to their particular circumstances.
3. To develop a responsible attitude to human sexual behaviour, including some realisation of the Law of God as revealed in the Bible, namely that, sexual intercourse should be reserved for a relationship of total commitment.

4. To enable students to develop informed, reasoned, and responsible decisions and to be aware of the extent to which their choices and decision affect others.
5. To develop the knowledge to help girls protect themselves against illegal or unwanted experiences.
6. To encourage students to recognise the sanctity of human life, the responsibilities and the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young.
7. To encourage due regard for correct behaviour in both public and private situations and to enable students to understand and enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, equality and understanding, realising that love is central and the basis of all meaningful relationships, which is to uphold Gospel values.
8. To counteract misleading myths and false assumptions and to encourage unembarrassed acceptance of sexuality by providing appropriate vocabulary for all parts of the body and encouraging a positive attitude to all bodily functions.
9. To prepare children for puberty.
10. To have an awareness of where students are in their own knowledge and understanding so that concerns can be identified.
11. To help students develop their critical faculties and be aware of and, where necessary, resist peer pressure together with social and media pressure.
12. To give equal access to all students by integrating sex and relationship education into the broader curriculum and to provide appropriate help and support in understanding the relevant information. In all these things, our primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of all our students and as staff, we endeavour to walk with them through these formative years, in a supportive role.

Inclusion and Differentiated learning:

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity, and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

Parents and Carers:

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their policy. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and

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evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme. Our aim is that, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents have **the right to withdraw** their children from RSE except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

Responsibility for teaching the programme:

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with PSHE teachers, members of the science department and the RE Department.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

Supporting children and young people who are at risk:

Children at Thornton will feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. All members of our community are aware of the needs of our pupils and as a result, would not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse, they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

Monitoring and evaluation:

The RSE Co-ordinator (Mrs Murphy) will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated annually by means of questionnaires / response sheets/needs assessment given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Introduction to Relationships Education in the Primary School and the Role of Parents and Carers

At Thornton, we recognise that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children, especially in matters relating to relationships, personal development, and values. We aim to work in close partnership with families to ensure that our approach to Relationships Education is respectful, supportive, and consistent with the messages children receive at home.

To promote this partnership, we will:

- Inform parents and carers about what is taught in Relationships Education and how it is delivered.
- Welcome and respond to questions or concerns from parents regarding the content or approach of our Relationships Education programme.
- Provide reassurance and clarity about how teaching will be sensitive, age-appropriate, and rooted in kindness, respect, and responsibility.
- Share relevant guidance and resources, where helpful, so that parents feel confident in continuing these important conversations at home.

We believe that by working together in mutual trust and openness, we can give children a clear and consistent foundation for understanding themselves, others, and the importance of respectful relationships—now and as they grow.

The Whole School Dimension

There are no areas of school life that potentially cannot contribute to sex and relationship education and be of benefit to the whole school and its wider communities. How our school community lives, the relationships which develop, the way in which issues are tackled in the classroom and students participate and feel a sense of belonging, underpins the ethos of our school.

Content of Programme

In Years 1-6 relationships education is integrated into the normal school curriculum as well as PSHEE lessons and emphasises the family unit, family relationships, growing up, respect for others, and physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Basic information on parts of the body is included, and any specific questions are answered openly and honestly as they arise.

We believe that it is important to introduce the correct language for parts of the body from an early age and for the reproductive organs when appropriate. All staff are aware of this and attempt to introduce this in a consistent manner. The PSHEE provision in the Prep School at Thornton College is a 'spiral curriculum' meaning that the specific learning builds for pupils as they move through the school, gradually expanding and deepening their knowledge, skills, and attributes. The learning

opportunities have been divided into three core themes: **Health & Wellbeing; Relationships; Living in the Wider World.**

In Year 5 talks are given on puberty, focusing mainly on body changes, feelings and ‘growing up.’ In Science, lessons are delivered on the human life cycle, which includes puberty. In Year 6, further talks are given on puberty and menstruation.

As part of the statutory Health Education curriculum, pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught about the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty, including the key facts about menstruation and how to manage it. By the end of Year 6, most pupils will be able to name the main parts of the human body using correct terminology, describe the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty, and understand that individuals experience these changes at different rates. Teaching is delivered in a sensitive, age-appropriate manner and aims to support pupils in developing confidence, reassurance, and the knowledge of where to seek further help if needed. This content helps prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and supports their overall wellbeing.

Senior programme

Sex and Relationship Education is integrated throughout the RE, PSHEE and Science syllabus in the Senior School. While RE studies and teaches the ‘Values of Christ’s Gospel’, PHSEE seeks to examine the practice of these values in day-to-day life

One of the compulsory sections in PHSEE is Social/Moral Education, which includes Citizenship and EPR (Education for Personal Relationships). Another is Health, which includes aspects of personal safety and Sex Education. In the context of these sections, the following topics are covered:-

	RE	PHSEE	Science
Year 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Marriage and family relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puberty and menstruation (Revision) Consent 	Key Stage 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male and female reproductive organs Functions of organs Fertilisation Development of a baby in the womb and the function of the placenta Birth Feeding baby
Year 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of the Family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friendship issues Family issues Peer Pressure Appropriate Behaviour 	..

Year 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage and family Relationships in Islam and Judaism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contraception • Risk Situations • Grooming • Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour • FGM • Drugs/Alcohol • Body Image 	..
Years 10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to Life • Sex and Relationships • Marriage and Family Life • Parenting • Contraception • Family Responsibilities • Personal Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting • Contraception (Revision) • STDs AIDS • Well-woman issues • Staying Safe • Child Exploitation/ Human Rights/ Grooming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination and control • Menstrual Cycle • Contraception

Years 12/13

The Year 12 Core RE is based on a variety of social and ethical themes and aspects of relationships are covered as part of this. The context, while encouraging and recognising a broad and inclusive approach, is rooted in Scripture and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Well-Being Programme

During tutor time, on a Wednesday and Friday, tutors take part in a well-being activity, which acts to build on key topics and issues which have been addressed in PSHEE and RSE; which includes topics examining equality diversity and inclusion, anti-bullying, target setting and physical and emotional well-being. A tutor programme is in place, which can be accessed, by all form tutors and Heads of Year, on the one drive. There are also resources which complement each topic available on Firefly. Heads of Year will ensure that resources are sent through each week to cover any given topic, and thought is given to ensuring these resources are age appropriate.

Disclosures

Teachers conduct Sex and Relationship Education lessons in a sensitive manner, and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously, and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. They will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Head of Thornton College and her Deputy Head to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about the Sex and Relationship Education Policy.

The Head of Thornton College and her Deputy Head monitor the programme, and report to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

The Curriculum Committee of the governing body monitors the impact of our Sex and Relationships Education Policy. The Curriculum Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the Sex Education programme and makes a record of all such comments. Governors require that a written record, giving details of the content and delivery of our Sex Education programme is available.

Professional Development:

Staff continually participate in professional development to ensure that RSE is taught in a way that is compliant: Courses attended in academic year 2021-2022: RSE Training Course, AGBIS Everyone's Invited Webinar series, Webinar two and RSE Sex and Health Education Curriculum.