

## **Relationship, [Sex] and Health Education Policy:**

### **St. Mark's Church of England Junior School**

#### **Our School Vision**

**“Believing in better”**

#### **Rationale**

The Education Reform Act 1988 states that schools should provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which:

*“promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.”*

In St. Mark's Church of England Junior School, we aim to treat everyone with dignity as all people are made in the image of God and are loved equally by God. (See Valuing All God's Children document from the Church of England) We believe that all pupils have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and which is set in a learning community where differences of lifestyle and opinion (within that which is permissible under UK law) are treated with dignity and respect; where bullying of all kinds is eliminated; and where they are free to be themselves and fulfil their potential without fear.

As part of our emphasis on the well-being and care of all pupils, our school seeks to ensure that the RSHE curriculum protects, informs and nurtures them. We aim to prepare pupils to cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up and in doing so, our RSHE curriculum clearly differentiates between factual teaching (biology, medicine, the law, marriage, different types of families and the composition of society) and moral teaching about relationships and values, recognising that the distinction can be easily blurred and that there needs to be discernment about the manner in which this is taught. We teach RSHE within a moral (but not moralistic) framework.

RSHE in St. Mark's Church of England Junior School is about what constitutes wellbeing and loving care for ourselves (Physical and Mental Health Education), how we show loving care for others (Relationships Education) and, when at an appropriate age and stage in life, how we show loving care to those we choose to be intimate with, including within marriage (Sex Education).

It is also about the spiritual and moral aspects of healthy, loving and nurturing relationships within a context of a Christian vision for the purpose of life.

Pupils will consider how to ensure that they treat themselves and others, at all times and in all contexts, with dignity and respect.

#### **Defining Relationships Education**

Relationships Education is learning about how to:

- be appreciative of existing relationships
- form new healthy friendships
- enjoy strong positive, caring, relationships with good boundaries, online and in person

This will particularly refer to family relationships (including marriage), friendships and relationships with peers and adults.

### **Defining Sex Education**

Sex Education is about reproduction: learning how babies can be made and the emotions that people experience when they are ready for close intimacy.

The National Curriculum for science includes content about human body parts, growth, puberty and gestation. Parents do not have the right to withdraw from this aspect of the curriculum.

### **Defining Health Education**

Health Education is learning about physical health and mental wellbeing so that pupils can make wise choices to ensure their own flourishing and the flourishing of others.

### **Teaching and Learning/How RSHE will be taught in our school**

**DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance 2019:** *"The focus in primary schools should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with other children and adults"*

RSHE will be delivered professionally and as an identifiable part of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE). It is mainly taught by the class teacher and is led, resourced and reported to parents in the same way as any other subject. There is a planned programme delivered in a carefully sequenced way.

RSHE will be taught in a way that affords dignity and shows respect to all who make up our diverse community. It will be sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. It will not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act and will be sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community.

RSHE will seek to explain fairly the principles, beliefs and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships and teach these viewpoints with respect. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships. It will encourage pupils to develop the skills needed to disagree without being disagreeable, to appreciate the lived experience of other people and to live well together.

RSHE will seek to build resilience in our pupils to help them form healthy relationships. We seek to ensure that they have the knowledge to recognise and understand boundaries in relationships, including online and that they know how to report abuse.

RSHE will promote healthy resilient relationships set in the context of character and virtue development that sits within the school's Christian Vision and Values. These include values such as hope, wisdom, community, dignity and love.

**Confidentiality** – It is important that pupils have confidence in the teacher and that a 'safe space' is created where pupils feel confident and can ask age-appropriate questions. Wherever possible, teachers will help to establish clear boundaries for confidentiality between pupils and adults. They will:

- Reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained;
- Encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers and give them support to do so;
- Make sure that pupils are informed of sources of confidential help;

- Ensure that pupils understand that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and that if there is any possibility of abuse, that school adults will follow the school's child protection policy/procedure.

**Answering difficult questions** – it is our aim to generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on personal health, relationship and sexual matters can take place without embarrassment and that questions are answered with honesty. Teachers will set ground rules for answering questions. Occasionally, it may be that a pupil asks an explicit or difficult question in the classroom and, while it is our aim that pupils speak to a known adult rather than use the internet for information, the teacher may not feel it is appropriate to answer the question there and then. We believe that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in these situations, and may answer some questions directly, while others may receive a response such as, 'that is a good question but I will talk to you after the lesson'. Teachers can refer to the head of School or Head of Teaching & Learning Development if they are concerned. Parents may be advised of what has been asked.

### **The right to withdrawal from Sex Education**

Please see Appendix A

**Pupils with SEND** will have had the content made accessible to them by differentiated learning and support of a teaching assistant where necessary

### **What will be taught in the RSHE Curriculum?**

At St Mark's, we follow the JIGSAW programme of study (as of January 2020). It combines SEAL objectives, PSHE Education, emotional literacy, mindfulness, social skills and spiritual development. All year groups cover six units: Being Me in My World, Celebrating Difference, Dreams and Goals, Healthy Me, Relationships and Changing Me. Each year group is taught the same unit at the same time to allow for a whole school approach.

Full details can be found using the following link:

<https://www.stmarks.wilts.sch.uk/page/pshe/79647>

These are in line with the requirements for RSHE from the Department for Education [click [here](#)]

### **How RSHE will be assessed, monitored and evaluated?**

The assessment of pupils' personal, social and emotional development is as important as any other school subject and pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and personal experiences in order to explore how their knowledge and understanding has developed.

The monitoring and evaluation of RSHE in our school follows the same monitoring and evaluation processes used throughout the school for all subjects. This includes staff meeting discussions and peer review between colleagues. Pupil conferencing, work reviews and learning walks are also used to gain a holistic view of the impact of teaching of RSHE and to inform further developments.

### **Policy Review**

This policy has been produced through engagement with the school governors, a parent forum group, pupil voice, teachers and the senior leadership team.

Whilst a number of school stakeholders have been involved in the development of this policy, it must be recognised that the law specifies what is taught. How it is taught is ultimately a decision for the school.

This policy will be reviewed every year.

It is due to be reviewed again on: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023

It was approved by FGB on: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022

### **Related Documentation**

This policy should be read in conjunction with The Equalities Act 2010 [here](#) and the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

And the following Church of England documents:

- Valuing All God's children
- Church of England Charter

## **Appendix A**

### **The right to withdrawal from Sex Education**

Parents and guardians do have the right to request that their child is excused from the Sex Education aspect of RSHE and can do so by making concerns known and applying in writing to

the Headteacher. The school will invite any enquiring parents or legal guardians to talk through concerns. An explanation of the rationale for RSHE will be given; an opportunity will be offered to review the intended materials and to consider the impact of not receiving Sex Education with peers.

Withdrawing a child from Sex Education remains a statutory right as a parent or legal guardian. If a pupil is excused from Sex Education it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

The school will document this process to ensure a record is kept.