



St. Illtyd's Catholic High School

Relationships & Sex Education (RSE Policy)

July 2024

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	David B Thomas
SLT Role	Paul Moriarty
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St Illtyd's Catholic High School is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic, co-educational High School, located in the east of Cardiff in the Archdiocese of Cardiff. Pupils are drawn from our four partner Catholic and an increasing number of local primary schools.

Vision and Mission

Our Mission Statement at St Illtyd's Catholic High School is '**Together in Christ, we make a difference**'. Our mission is to be a fully inclusive Catholic School where every person is valued and respected for who they are. We aim to educate our pupils in the wholeness of mind, body and spirit through the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is through this mission that the school aims to prepare our young people for a rapidly changing world. In connection with this our Relationships and Sex Education needs to be both informative and values based with the aim of encouraging students to make good and informed decisions, positive attitudes as well as developing positive self-esteem, safe in the knowledge that they are gifted with the love of God.

At St Illtyd's Catholic High School we are inspired by Jesus to lead lives that are purposeful and enable us to fulfil our talents. The staff and governors of St Illtyd's Catholic High School care for one another and show mutual respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our lives. Through this we grow in our understanding of how loving our neighbour enables us to be fulfilled too. Such fulfillment 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. These help us grow and flourish, respecting that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. The St Illtyd's Pupil Profile develops the virtues needed to inform conscience and understand the teachings of the Church on sex, sexuality and sexual health. We emphasise that our sexuality is a special gift from God.

It 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, a life of integrity and wholeness of body, spirit and mind as they grow and change from children into young adults. We will prepare our pupils with the necessary skills to respond to the complexities of personal and sexual relationships in an increasingly secular world.

Procedures

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

- staff
- governing body
- parents
- Diocesan Education Service
- Feeder parishes
- School Council

- RE pupil voice

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy will be implemented in December 2022, reviewed every (two years), by the Head teacher, Deputy Headteacher responsible for Catholicity, Head of Religious Studies, the Governing Body and school staff. The next review date is November 2024.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. The school prospectus should contain a statement about RSE teaching and details of where to obtain a full copy of the policy upon request. The Diocesan Director Education/ Director of RE will be sent a copy of the school's RSE policy and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that this is up to date.

Rationale

As a Catholic Secondary school in the Province of Cardiff, Menevia, Wrexham and Herefordshire we use the term Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) as we believe that sex education is set within a wider context of relationship education, which itself is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life. Sex education is but one dimension of this greater whole.

The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human person 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 school must be rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church's teaching about relationships, marriage, sex and family life. The Church educates young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school's responsibility than teaching about any other curriculum subject. At St Illtyd'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 school 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 (10.5.2015)

This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our school is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Legal guidelines suggest that relationship and sex 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 Province supports all these aims in educating about relationships and sex education by incorporating them into the wider understanding of human relationships and human formation as reflected in our CBEW and CES Guidance.

Statutory framework

The statutory framework as applied to Schools in Wales can be found in Appendix 1. However, as we move forward with the gradual introduction of the New Curriculum the statutory framework that will be applied to Schools can be found in the RSE statutory guidance for Wales:

[https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#relationships-and-sexuality-education-\(rse\):-statutory-guidance](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#relationships-and-sexuality-education-(rse):-statutory-guidance).

This new Statutory guidance in relation to RSE is published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act); it is designed to assist those responsible under the Act to design RSE as part of the curriculum. See Appendix 1.

Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the RSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviour 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 love 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 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). Our school uses the St Illtyd's Pupil Profile' as our main tool for formation in virtue.

At St Illtyd's we live out the Gospel virtues and values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school by ensuring that the virtues and values are not only calendared each week of the academic year but shared with staff through prayer in staff briefings each week. This enables staff to fully understand and model the gospel virtue/value in order to share and reinforce with students in form prayer and lessons. Form prayer and acts of worship fully embrace the gospel virtue/value each week in order for students to progress in knowledge about moral behaviour throughout their time at school. Each act of worship enables students to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for reflection and growth. Further, each act of worship encourages students to be thoughtful and reflective about their attitudes and behaviour towards themselves and others, discover right from wrong and show love and care for themselves, others and the environment. RE lessons, in KS3 and KS4, aim for our young people to understand the richness of the Catholic faith which includes exploring gospel virtues and values and provokes a desire for personal meaning, thereby drawing them into a deeper communion with Christ in his Church.

Staff at St Illtyd's endeavour to promote virtues in their lessons and daily interaction with pupils and fellow staff. They are positive role models who actively encourage pupils to be thoughtful and reflective in the choices they make. Staff fully support the teachings of the Catholic Church. They also strive to develop the four Core Purposes (Curriculum for Wales) to encourage the holistic development of every pupil.

Pupils in St Illtyd's are encouraged to develop their moral and ethical attitude and behaviour throughout their years in the school. Pupils are encouraged and supported to pray and explore their beliefs in God and the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is achieved mainly in RE lessons but this is supported across the curriculum and opportunities for liturgy. Pupils can reflect on and express their beliefs in a safe environment.

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full." **John 10:10**

The Aim and Objectives of RSE

The aim of RSE is to educate the complete human person:

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.

RSE should therefore deepen the following areas of understanding:

- To develop self-knowledge, and 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 is 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 that is appropriate to the stage of maturity of the young people;
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of appropriate consent;
- To have an understanding of the law in England and Wales about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

At St Illtyd's it is our intention to develop attitudes, personal and social skills through RSE:

- 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 school which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the school 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 understanding of the nature of intimacy and 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 of all.
- We will seek to enable students to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.
- We will encourage students to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviour of others.
- We will encourage the whole school 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 school to recognise their part in the school family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the school falter.

- We will encourage everyone in the school to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others.
- We will develop students' 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 students' 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 students about the media and how to make good 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 students to develop a healthy, good moral framework about accessing information online.
- We will encourage students to recognise the influence of peer pressure and the moral integrity required to say "no".
- We will support students when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in school who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable.
- We will teach students about the damage that drugs, alcohol and promiscuity 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.

Inclusion

At St Illtyd'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 background. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect each other in their differences and develop an approach of dialogue.

The Wellbeing team and ALN department are available for guidance for staff and also for pupils to seek additional support should any issue present itself at any point within the programme. This maybe a counselling session, further clarity on topics discussed or referrals following a disclosure e.g. Child Protection.

Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St Illtyd'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.

Details of our continual commitment to equality can be found in the policies section of our School website. (Equality Plan July 2021)

Programme of study

The RSE programmes that are followed at St Illtyd's are TenTen resources and The Fertile Heart, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cardiff. It is envisaged that the programmes will be taught essentially in discreet lessons, in cross-curricular lessons, particularly PSE, RE and science. They are fundamentally embedded in the ethos of the school through assemblies, classroom discussions and the centring of all relationships in school on the person of Jesus Christ. The programme of study is based on the understanding of the Church of human nature and human sexuality and aims to help young people develop their sense of purpose and character. It will be taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and will thus allow children to express alternative viewpoints where they hold such views.

As in all lessons, a variety of teaching strategies (discussion/group work, self-analysis, information giving – audio/visual presentation, meditation, question and answer, guest speakers) will be implemented by staff in order for student engagement and best possible outcomes. Staff recognise the value of each individual and that young people are at different stages in their understanding and therefore are sympathetic and sensitive towards the individual needs and concerns of their pupils. At all times in the delivery the correct biological terms are used. The explicitness of material is always appropriate to the age of the pupils and all terms are explained to avoid misunderstanding and confusion. Questions often arise in a classroom context that refer to controversial issues. These questions are dealt with honestly and in as mature a way as appropriate to the age of the class; in such a situation, pupils would be encouraged to discuss these matters with their parents, and where necessary, parents will be informed by letter. All staff are careful to create an environment in which pupils can be open and honest without fear of embarrassment. Any tendency to immaturity, insensitivity and lack of tolerance will be discouraged. Ground rules will be formulated and discussed with pupils. These will include the fact that the work will be done without anyone having to answer personal questions or reveal private or family situations.

Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. Our schools exist to assist parents in this task, which includes RSE. The role of the school is thus that of assisting and completing (where needed) 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). Children's first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our school 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 governing body.

The right of parents to withdraw their children from RSE lessons no longer exists. (Under the provisions of the 'Curriculum for Wales') It is the duty of the school to design a developmentally appropriate curriculum which considers the needs of all learners. At St Illtyd's there are clear lines of communication with learners, parents and governors in relation to RSE. Staff are prepared to meet with parents to discuss any concerns they may have and to share the resources that are used in RSE lessons.

Teaching RSE

The Subject Leader of RE, is responsible for the leadership, co-ordination and monitoring of the programme. He will be supported by a designated foundation governor. The Deputy Headteacher, responsible for Catholicity, will have overall responsibility for RSE. RSE will be delivered through tutorial sessions, PSE lessons and science lessons. Sensitive elements will be reinforced through Religious Studies lessons. All staff delivering RSE will have completed the E-Learning Course on the new, statutory RSE Code and Guidance for Wales, produced by the Catholic Education Service in partnership with TenTen Resources.

Other agencies e.g. school nurse and TenTen theatre company will also be used to support RSE at St Illtyd's. Visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors at St Illtyd's and will agree in writing to follow the instructions. The appropriate 'protocol' available on the CES website will be used for this purpose.

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 school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school.

Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk.

The Governing Body desires that RSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for their wellbeing, and that of others and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Like all other subjects, RSE always needs to be taught in a differentiated manner appropriate to the maturity of the children. It needs 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. 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 negatively 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 RSE coordinator must be given access to support and training to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies.

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 does not 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.

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

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 school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures. The Wellbeing Team will support teachers and the school has three designated child protection teachers. They are the behaviour support teacher, deputy headteacher responsible for safeguarding and the assistant headteacher responsible for ALN.

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

Students 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 relevant policies.

Details of relevant policies can be found on the School website. (Child Sexual Exploitation July 2021, Child Protection / Safeguarding January 2022 and Self-harm July 2021)