



## **FAMILY LIFE POLICY**

### **CONTEXT**

The Family Life Education policy at St Augustine's Catholic High School is firmly rooted in the belief that:-

- Every person is created in the image of God and is therefore deserving of respect. Sexuality is essential to our personal identity and is God's gift to us.

The policy refers to a programme which aims to foster the holistic development of all students based on Christian principles and in all respects conforms to Catholic teaching

The Academy Representatives of St Augustine's acknowledges its statutory duties to provide Sex Education for all students in accordance with the Education Act 1993. It welcomes the support provided in the DfCSF Circular, Sex and Relationship Education Guidance July 2000 and its recognition that schools of a particular religious ethos may choose to reflect their faith beliefs in their sex and relationship education policy and delivery. It therefore uses the support offered by the Diocese in its Family Life Programme 'All that I am'.

The Academy Representatives also recognises that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and family life and aims to support the work of parents in this area in the Family Life Education Programme.

Family Life Education is delivered through a programme which:

- Combines a treatment of the biological, social, moral, spiritual and religious aspects of sexuality, procreation and parenthood;
- Places such treatment in the context of the Gospel understanding of Christian love, marriage and the family;
- Upholds the dignity of the human person in all interpersonal relationships;
- Encourages the development of a personal relationship with God through prayer to nourish and foster healthy human relationships.

### **AIMS**

The programme aims to:

- Educate students concerning the facts about human development, puberty and sexuality;
- Foster a healthy understanding of family relationships and the nature of love;
- Uphold the importance of marriage and the family;
- Help and support students through their physical, emotional and moral development;
- Build up self-awareness, self-esteem, a sense of moral responsibility and a tolerance of difference;
- Prompt the skills to avoid and resist unwanted sexual experience;
- Foster an understanding of the moral, religious and social responsibilities which the individual has in relation to self, members of the family and the wider community;
- Provide knowledge and enable understanding of the teaching of the Catholic Church in matters related to personal relationships, while being sensitive to other people's opinions and tenets of understanding;
- Promote a living faith based on Catholic ethics and morals.
- Promote marriage as the ideal committed relationship in which children are born.

### **DEFINITION OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION AT ST AUGUSTINE'S**

Family Life Education at St Augustine's is about:

- Physical, emotional, spiritual and moral development;
- The dignity of the human person because they are made in the image of God;
- Understanding the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care;
- The teachings of sex, sexuality and sexual health and the teachings of the Church in relation to these;
- Parenting.

The Family Life Programme has three main elements:

### **ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

- Learning the importance of values and the individual conscience and moral considerations in the context of Catholic teaching;
- Learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children;
- Learning the value of respect, love and care;
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

### **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS**

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- Encourage choices and decisions to be informed by the Gospel message;
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- Managing conflict;
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

### **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- Learning about fertility awareness;
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity;
- Learning the importance of a committed married relationship for family life;.

### **THE PROGRAMME**

- Teaches about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex;
- Focuses on both boys and girls;
- Teaches the taking on of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood;
- Provides students with information about fertility awareness;
- Gives young people a clear understanding of the reasons and arguments for delaying sexual activity until marriage and resisting pressure;
- Links sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol;
- Ensures young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships;
- Makes clear the teaching of the Church in all matters related to the dignity of the human person and personal relationships;
- Provides information on services which offer help eg Life;
- Uses organisations such as Life and Theatre Groups such as Ten Ten to support delivery.

### **PROVISION**

The Programme is:

- Coordinated by the teacher in charge of Religious Education. It is delivered mainly through RE with support at times from Science;
- Extends over all year groups in the school, is progressive in structure and endeavours to match the capacities and meet the various needs of all students;

- Taught by RE teachers who are fully supportive of the aims which inform it, and who teach it with a sense of integrity and sensitivity;
- Concerned with exploring knowledge and understanding, attitudes, values and skills around a range of topics using teaching methods which encourage reflection and discussion, and group work.

Appropriate on-going training is sought for all teachers delivering the programme. The biological content of the programme may be taught by members of the Science Department when part of the Statutory Curriculum.

### **COUNSELLING AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The school accepts that giving advice to students about personal problems is an integral part of the school's pastoral support system. However teachers should encourage students to discuss concerns regarding sexual activity with their parents. When students express a desire or even give a subtle indication that they wish to confide in a member of staff regarding matters of a sexual nature, teachers cannot promise confidentiality. They should inform the student beforehand that they may have to disclose the content of such conversation to other significant senior staff whose responsibility it is to take action eg informing parents or other appropriate agencies. When in doubt, staff must seek advice from the Principal, the Assistant Principal responsible for Child Protection and Student Welfare.

### **LIAISON WITH PARENTS**

Parents are consulted on the content of the Family Life Programme (a summary of which is included in the School Prospectus each year). Copies of the full statement are available on request. Parents are also able to withdraw their children from the programme when it is delivered outside the National Curriculum. They must seek an interview with the Principal to do so.

### **EXTERNAL SPEAKERS**

When external speakers are used to assist with any aspect of the programme they must:

- Be provided with a copy of the School's Policy beforehand;
- Be thoroughly briefed and understand the values/guiding principles of the School Policy;
- Make a contribution, which is consistent with the School Policy and educational practice.

### **CONSULTATION PROCESS**

In drafting this Policy the Academy Representatives have considered the views of staff, parents and students, Religious Educators and Health Advisors in order that an effective and helpful programme can be made available to all students.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Family Life Education Policy is reviewed on a regular basis by the Senior Leadership Team and the Curriculum and Standards Committee of the Academy Representatives. Its content and delivery is guided by the Religious Education Department. The successful implementation of the Policy requires the support of the parents/guardians and is considered to be complementary to the Family Life Education given by them.

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Any complaint about the content or delivery of the Family Life Education Programme should be addressed to the Teacher in Charge of RE at the School.

## THE PRESENT PROGRAMME

In Year 9 consideration is given to the following:

1. Religious Education
  - Becoming fully human – valuing self and others because we are all made in the image of God;
  - Valuing life as a gift from God and forming a loving relationship with Him and with others;
  - Being called to holiness – knowing oneself and one’s Christian Vocation’
  - Developing conscience and assuming responsibility for words and actions in relationships with others.
  - Knowing we are creators with God – creators of human life – responsibilities we have in that role as parents;
  - The language of love;
  - Commitment to Family Life in the context of marriage.
2. National Curriculum Science
  - Menstruation;
  - Human fertilisation;
  - Human reproduction;
  - The development of the foetus in the uterus;
  - Physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence;
  - The human life cycle;
  - How the growth of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect health.
3. Personal and Social Education
  - Knowing ourselves – gifts, talents, families celebrating differences;
  - Puberty – boys and girls – the menstrual cycle, feelings and emotions;
  - Reproduction – pregnancy and childbirth;
  - The importance of self-esteem, self-respect, trust and communication;
  - Assertive and challenging skills;
  - Fertility awareness;
  - Natural family planning;
  - Abortion;
  - Obligations and responsibilities to others.

In Years 10 and 11 consideration is given to the following:

1. Religious Education
  - The values of respect, responsibility, reverence, restraint;
  - Abortion;
  - Contraception;
  - Marriage;
  - Divorce;
  - Euthanasia.
2. National Curriculum Science
  - Hormones;
  - Medical use of hormones in controlling and promoting fertility;
  - The defence mechanisms in the body;
  - How sex is determined in humans.
3. Personal and Social Education
  - Making choices and decisions in relationships;
  - Resisting peer and unwanted pressure;
  - The commitment and work needed in relationships;
  - The responsibilities of parenthood;
  - Risk-taking behaviour and consequences;
  - The law related to sexual matters.

In Years 12 and 13 considerations is given to:

- Sexually transmitted diseases and AIDs;
- To bioethics, genetic engineering and human rights in core theology.

Other subjects and SMSVC's reflections delivered during tutor time also deliver aspects of Family Life. Health and Social Care at GCSE level and A level also covers aspects of Family life. However this subject is only taught to those students who choose it as part of their option choices.

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