

ST GEORGE'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Dear parents,

RESPONSE TO RSE PARENT CONSULTATION

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your responses to our RSE Consultation in the Spring Term. We hope you found the materials on the school's website informative. The responses we received were very positive and supportive of our proposed RSE policy and curriculum, which is in line with the new DfE guidelines.

We are happy to provide a response to the following comment, asking for further clarification on particular key areas of RSE and PSHE in response to the following question:

Are there any changes or additions you think should be made to RSE curriculum?



Yes

*Include more on diversity, including **same sex relationships, contraception and gender identity**. The focus is very narrow and this might appear to be in keeping with catholic teachings but it is a massive disservice to the children who will be entering a rich and diverse world, which should not be a shock or revelation to them upon leaving ST George's (or as a parent I need to find a way of delivering the diversity agenda without causing conflict with school or confusion for the child)*

Anonymous

Taking these three areas in turn, we would like to provide the following information regarding our approach at St. George's.

Same-sex relationships:

The DfE guidance states:

'Teaching about families requires sensitive and well-judged teaching based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances. Families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include for example, single parent

*families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents and carers amongst other structures.) Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and needs, to reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them; for example, looked after children or young carers.'*¹

At St George's, we wholly comply with DfE guidelines and take great care to teach about family in a positive and inclusive way. Families of all forms are acknowledged and respected, and we endeavour to be a 'community of loving respect where everyone is cherished as a person made in the 'Image of God'.²

All individuals and families are celebrated, as are the similarities and differences between them, across curriculum areas and specifically in RE, RSE and PSHE. The DfE requires schools to teach a relationships education programme 'tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.' As a school, we are confident our RSE curriculum does this. We are committed to delivering a high quality RSE programme and with the support of parents, we regularly review how we can meet the needs of our pupils.

Contraception:

We adhere to DfE guidelines on the teaching of RSE. *'The focus in primary school 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 with adults.'*³

As we stated in our **RSE Presentation for Parents** on our website, sex education in primary schools remains optional, though in Years 5 & 6 the Science curriculum is mandatory and involves the teaching of puberty and reproduction.

We take great care to ensure the RSE curriculum we deliver is age appropriate to the emotional maturity of the children. DfE guidelines do not mention or require the teaching of contraception at primary age. However, parents should feel reassured that the teaching of contraception is required at secondary school and therefore, in line with DfE guidance, pupils will receive education on this topic in secondary school. As a school, we liaise with parents before teaching RSE each year and are happy to discuss the needs of individuals and groups of children. Through open communication, we aim to identify any individual needs and support parents in delivering any additional information to children at home which may not be appropriate for the whole group.

Gender Identity:

Gender identity is taught through our PSHE scheme of work, SCARF. In Year 5 and 6, we teach lessons on gender diversity, gender identity and challenging gender expectations. The SCARF programme of teaching is fully compliant with the Equality

1 DfE Guidance on Relationships Education, Primary [July 2020]

2 'Made in God's image: Challenging homophobic and biphobic bullying in Catholic schools' [2018]

3 DfE Guidance on Relationships Education, Primary [July 2020]

Act 2010 which requires schools to eliminate discrimination and to advance equality. The programme also meets the required expectations for Personal Development, SMSC and British Values. We would like to reassure parents that our PSHE curriculum runs alongside our RSE curriculum and ensures that we are covering the issue of gender equality and diversity to a high standard and are fully compliant with all statutory requirements. More than this, we are confident that our school celebrates inclusion and diversity in a way that promotes confidence and acceptance of themselves and each other in our pupils.

Below is an overview of the lessons in which we cover gender at our school using our SCARF PSHE scheme:

Gender	Y6 We have more in common than not
Gender Expectations	Y1 Taking care of a baby Y4 That is such a stereotype! Y5 Boys will be boys? - challenging work-place gender stereotypes Y6 Boys will be boys? - challenging gender stereotypes
Gender Expression	Y5 Is it true?
Gender Identity	Y5 Is it true? Y5 Stop, start, stereotypes

We would also like to provide a response to the following comment:

6. Thinking about Relationship and Sex Education, is there an area that you think should not be taught for different age groups/key stages?

I think that starting RSE in KS1 is too early even if it doesn't cover certain areas on the beginning. Also It touches LGBT families, what are not supported by God. I think that God created us on the beginning to live our lives fully as His friends. As God's friends we will follow His rules and advise in everything we do. He said that sexual life is good and reserved for marriage, so I don't think it is good idea to educate children in KS1. God advised to wait with any sexual relationship until marriage.

Anonymous

In answer to this, we would like to explain our approach to RSE at St. George's:

The DfE have not introduced compulsory sex education at primary school. They have introduced **Relationships Education** at primary, to put in place the building blocks needed **for positive and safe relationships of all kinds**. This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

The RSE curriculum we propose to teach is tailored to the age, physical and

emotional maturity of our pupils and focuses on positive relationships. We would recommend that this parent carefully review our curriculum materials, posted on the website, to reassure themselves that the focus is not on sex, but on *forming positive relationships*. Specifically looking at KS1, we would like to provide the following information:

In EYFS, the focus is on friendship and being a good friend. In Year 1, the focus is on families, our love for our families and being part of God's family. In Year 2, the focus is on being part of a community, and recognizing feelings.

If, after looking at these resources, any parent should continue to have concerns, we would be happy to meet with them to discuss these in more detail. Although parents have a right to withdraw their child from sex education lessons, the teaching of Relationships Education is mandatory and children cannot be withdrawn from these lessons.

We are aware that some parents would find it useful to have some additional support in talking about these issues at home with their child. Below we have provided a book list of current reading materials which may support you in this. However, there is no 'one fits all' list of materials on the market and we must stress that it is up to each parent to **review the content of such books before sharing them with their child**, as each family will feel differently about what is appropriate.

Finally, we are very grateful to the parents who responded to our consultation and we hope that we have addressed the queries that were raised in this process. As always, if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best wishes,
Mark Braund

Book List:

Below is a list of books currently available to assist you in talking to your child about their bodies and puberty changes. All families are different and it would be impossible to provide a list that all parents will agree on. Therefore our strong recommendation is that **parents should review the content of these books in advance** of sharing them with their child to ensure they are appropriate to the needs of the individual child and the expectations of parents.

Reading Age: 3-5 years

My First Body Book: 1 (My First Books) by Matthew Oldham, Usbourne, 2019.

Reading Age: 6-11 years

How Do You Make a Baby? by Anna Fiske, Gecko Press, 2020.

Reading Age: 9-12 years

The Boys Guide to Growing Up by Phil Wilkinson, Wren and Rook Publications, 2017.

The Girls Guide to Growing Up by Anita Naik, Wren and Rook Publications, 2017.

Welcome to Your Period by Yumi Stynes & Dr Melissa Kang, Stripes Publishing, 2020.

Reading Age: 10-13years

How to Grow Up and Feel Amazing!: The No-Worries Guide for Boys by Dr Ranj Singh, Wren and Rook Publications, 2021.

Gender Identity

For more information on talking to your child about gender identity, please visit the NSPCC website. Please be aware, this information is for parents' use to aid a discussion, not to be shown directly to children.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/gender-identity/>