



CARDINAL NEWMAN
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

November 2017

Date of Next Review:
November 2018

**Education for
Personal
Relationships
Policy**

EDUCATION FOR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Introduction - Essential Theology and Key Principles

At Cardinal Newman Catholic School we believe that every child is unique and made in the image of God. We are committed to the education of the whole person and to enable each child to realise their full potential as members of the community. In order to do that our students are educated to develop a range of rich relationships and, in that context, to gain knowledge and understanding of their sexuality as a gift from God. In this work we recognise that parents are the first teachers of their children and we seek to work in active partnership with them.

Our approach to education for personal relationships is in line with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and we take inspiration from the following statements:

“Education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator, for “both we and our words are in His hand, as are all understanding and skill in crafts” (Wis 7:16). Pope Benedict XVI speech to teachers and religious, chapel of St Mary’s University College, Sept 17th 2010

The Universal Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

“The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation.”

“. . . they (children and young people) should receive positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex . . . and young people have the right to be stimulated to make sound moral judgements based on well-informed conscience and to put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment.” Gravissimum Educationis (para. 3) Second Vatican Council

Theological and Ethical Framework

Key principles:

- Sexuality is a gift from God.
- We are made to love and be loved.
- What we say with our bodies should reflect what we mean in our hearts and mind.
- Mature Christian sexuality involves openness and long term commitment. This is most clearly reflected through the permanence of the sacrament of marriage.
- Genuine love is creative.
- Each person has a duty to inform as well as to follow their own conscience.

Role of Parents

Parents are also key figures in educating their children for relationships and sexuality. Therefore, parents are seen by the school as the primary partner in supporting the personal growth of an individual child. By working together it is hoped that school and parents can realise the school's mission of 'Caritas' in caring for each student's personal development. This school/parent partnership will always be invaluable in nurturing Christian values in our young people, but it is particularly important for both the school and parents to have a shared understanding in relation to relationships and sexuality in the context of our present social climate.

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from non-National Curriculum sex education (but not from education for personal relationships generally).

Aims and Objectives

As a result of the 1993 Education Act, all Catholic secondary schools are required to make provision for sex education for all students registered at the school. Such education must include education about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. However, as a Catholic school our mission is to "promote the wellbeing and freedom of the whole human person, understood as created in the image and likeness of God". This means that our approach to Education for Personal Relationships will, of necessity, go well beyond this legal minimum. In the light of our mission statement the aims and objectives of our Education for Personal Relationships programme are as follows: -

Overall Aims

- To support the development, growth and journey of the whole person towards becoming 'fully human, fully alive' as a unique creation made in God's image.
- To provide information and guidance in an age appropriate way for each year group.
- To develop positive self-esteem.
- To complement and support the education that is already being undertaken by home and family.
- To enable young people to make informed and responsible lifestyle choices providing a counter culture to the portrayal of sex in the media and society and presenting positively the Church's vision of the gift of sex and its place within marriage.
- To offer our young people a Catholic Christian framework to help them make informed decisions.

Specific Objectives

To gain an understanding of where students are in relation to their own knowledge, values and attitudes so that Education for Personal Relationships is both supportive and challenging

- To provide a forum where students can share their concerns and offer a climate of support where they know they will be listened to sensitively.
- To correct misinformation.
- To ensure students recognise the importance of the choices they make (in conscience) and the ways in which these choices mature through knowledge, understanding and Christian belief.

Attitudes and Values

- To encourage students to become aware of their own attitudes and values and understand that these will affect the way they view themselves and others.
- To encourage growth in self-respect and self-worth recognising that each of us is created in the image and likeness of God.
- To enable students to understand that love (agape) is central and the basis of meaningful relationships epitomised through marriage and family life.

Personal and Social Skills

- To enable students to reflect on their relationships and to recognise the qualities that help relationships grow and develop positively.
- To enable students to recognise the importance of the choices they make and that they are responsible for the decisions they take.
- To help students resist negative peer, social and media pressure.

Knowledge and Understanding

- To increase student understanding of themselves, their own bodies, their emotional development as they grow and change and their relationships with others.
- To explain the process of human procreation.
- To consider carefully responsible parenthood and family planning.
- To give careful consideration to the issue of homosexuality and sexual orientation.
- To inform students about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STI's).
- To enable young people to know and understand the legal framework relating to sexual activity.
- To learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity and for restricting sexual activity to marriage.

Education for Personal Relationships – Ground Rules

In any classes considering issues of relationships and sexuality whether they are delivered through R.E., PSHEE or Science guidelines are always given to the students about the way in which the class will be conducted. They are: -

- Listen to people when they are speaking.
- Everyone has the right to pass on a question.
- Only one person to speak at a time.
- Laugh with people not at them.
- Encourage people who are less confident.
- Respect other people's opinions.
- Use positive and appropriate language.
- No "put downs".
- No one should be put on the spot or feel threatened.

Support Agencies and Guidelines for Operating

Where a student seeks advice on personal matters of sexuality or welfare the teacher's role (including the Pastoral Leader) is confined to the educational context, following the theological and

ethical framework set out in this policy. This means that the teacher should not offer individual advice to a student which is the proper remit of the medical profession or counsellor. The teacher would encourage the student to seek parental advice and to talk to the appropriate support person within the school. In this way, the school makes a distinction between the information and values-based work done in the classroom and advice to individual students.

In addition to the pastoral system of the school, support for students is also available from the Chaplaincy, School Matron and Counsellor. In relation to their work each of these follow the guidelines set out below:-

- All professionals working at Cardinal Newman Catholic School (whether teaching or medical) should be sensitive to the school's distinctive ethos and seek to present their medical advice in this moral context.
- All professionals working at Cardinal Newman Catholic School should seek to bring the school and the home into a closer partnership for supporting young people. As the school is acting in loco-parentis the school has a duty to inform the parent unless there is a good reason for not doing so.
- Except within the Sacrament of Reconciliation the school cannot offer a student complete confidentiality. The degree of confidentiality would always be governed by the need to protect the child.
- If a teacher or medical professional judged that a student's disclosure might raise the possibility of the child being at risk, that is, that there was "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm", then the designated teacher for Child Protection would be informed. (See School Child Protection Procedures)

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored using the school's self-evaluation framework. It will be discussed and reviewed every two years at a meeting with parents.

Responsibilities and Key Personnel

Dr J. Kilmartin, Headteacher

Mr R. Galvin, Subject Leader for Religious Education

Mr M. Conneely, PSHEE Co-ordinator

Miss K. Le Marquand, Subject Leader for Science

Ms A. Kelly, Deputy Headteacher & Designated Teacher for Child Protection