



St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School **Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

1. Introduction

This document provides a framework within which parents, staff and governors can work together to meet the needs of our pupils.

The Mission for St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is,
"...to ensure a loving and faithful community in which our children can become the person God created them to be. A community where we celebrate the dignity, worth and uniqueness of every individual. Where we grow and learn together with joy, in the love of Jesus. In this love, we strive to be courageous stewards of creation.

Therefore, the development and implementation of our Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy supports us in achieving our mission and in providing the appropriate provision in this area for all the children in our care.

2. Vision

Vision for Human Relationships and Sex Education

At St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School we are inspired by Jesus to be the very best we can be. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. This is about understanding how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Therefore, having a good relationship with ourselves and the other people in our lives makes us grow and flourish and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. We are all children of God, called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the action of the Holy Spirit.

3. Procedures

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

- staff
- governing body
- parents
- Diocesan Education Service

Parents and staff will be sent a copy of the draft HRSE policy with a time limit to submit their thoughts and suggestions for consideration by the governing body.

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy will be implemented in September 2020, reviewed very three years, by the Headteacher, HRSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and school staff.

The next review date is Spring 2024.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. The school prospectus contains a statement about HRSE teaching and details of where to obtain a full copy of the policy upon request. The prospectus should also cover the statutory elements of relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education that are not covered in HRSE, though the whole intent of the school curriculum is drawn from its Catholic character. The Education Service will be sent a copy of the school's HRSE policy and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that this is up to date.

4. Rationale

As a primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as it believes that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole.

The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human form 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 offers education to young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic schools responsibility than teaching about mathematics or English.

At St Bernadette's we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that children's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage children from the earliest age to recognize that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As children 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 neighbor as yourself"(Mark12:31).This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our schools is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in line with 'Fit for Mission Schools'.

The Department for Education in 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019) states that,

"to embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support."P.8

The Diocese recognises the value of these curriculum aims. However, Catholic schools also have regard for the spiritual welfare of the students and recognize that to know and love God brings lasting happiness.

5a. Statutory framework

The statutory framework replaces Statutory Guidance: 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000). The DfE states that it intends to update the guidance every three years

The statutory guidance is available from the DfE

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>). It should be read in conjunction with this Diocesan guidance and the following documents.

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)(statutory guidance)
- [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#)(a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#)(advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)
- [SEND code of practice:0to25years](#)(statutory guidance)
- [Alternative Provision](#)(statutory guidance)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#)(advice for schools)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#)(advice for schools ,including advice on [cyberbullying](#))
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#)(advice for schools)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#)(provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#)(guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural(SMSC))
- [SMSC requirements for independent schools](#)(guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- [National Citizen Service](#) guidance for schools

Purpose of the Statutory Guidance

The guidance intends to help children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes they gain will support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society. The Diocese of Lancaster agrees with these aims and seeks to support them through the appropriate development of the HRSE provision.

The table summarises statutory obligations.

Relationships Education	Relationships and Sex Education	Health Education
-------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------

<p>All schools providing primary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (includes schools as set out in the Summary section).</p>	<p>All schools providing secondary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (see Summary section of statutory guidance).</p>	<p>All maintained schools including schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, non-maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.</p> <p>The statutory requirement to provide Health Education does not apply to independent schools – PSHE is already compulsory as independent schools must meet the Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.</p> <p>Independent schools, however, may find the principles in the guidance on Health Education helpful in planning an age-appropriate curriculum</p>
<p>The statutory requirements do not apply to sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies or Further Education (FE) colleges, although we would encourage them to support students by offering these subjects. These settings may find the principles helpful, especially in supporting pupils in the transition to FE.</p>		

We, at St Bernadette's, provide a broad and balanced curriculum as stipulated in the National Curriculum. Provision is made for PSHE and HRSE within the curriculum mainly through the teaching of Religious Education, Science and other subject areas e.g. Internet Safety. In addition to this we provide other opportunities to teach HRSE through assemblies, social skills groups and outside agencies such as the school nurse.

5b. Requirements of the Diocese of Lancaster

The Bishop of Lancaster requires that all schools within the Diocese have a policy in line with Section 48 inspection requirements. (The term sex and relationships should be replaced in policies with human relationships and sex education.)

The key points within this guidance are as follows:

1. All schools must have an up-to-date HRSE policy that may incorporate Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education policy drawn up by the governing body, and available to parents and for inspection.
2. This should be developed in consultation with parents and the wider community.
3. Primary schools should have clear parameters on what children will be taught in the transition year before moving to secondary school, and that parents be consulted.
4. All schools' policies must include how they will teach Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

6. Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the HRSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours 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 charity (sometimes love is used instead) 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 happy, 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).

At St Bernadette's we believe that the rites, practices and teaching of the Catholic Church drive what we aim to achieve with all members of our community. We promote moral education driven by Gospel values to instill principles that guide our choices. We aim to develop the spiritual dimension in all of us in order to question our meaning and purpose. We promote social and cultural education to help each of us positively relate to each other and an appreciation and tolerance of the differences that exist within our society.

We believe that each person is a unique creation of a loving God and has been endowed with particular gifts (or talents) to be developed and used for the service of others.

The headteacher and school staff strive continuously to model Gospel values to the children and each other. This is seen in formal settings such as whole school assemblies, the teaching of Religious Education, collective worship and awards such as our Courtesy Award and informally through our daily interactions with each other.

7. The Aim and Objectives of HRSE.

The aim of HRSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in *Fit for mission? Schools* (2009).

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.

HRSE should deepen the following areas of understanding.

- i) To develop self respect and love of self.
- ii) To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God.
- iii) To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose.
- iv) To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this can be an expression of God's love.
- v) 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.
- vi) A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent.
- vii) To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

Our HRSE policy will develop attitudes, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding.

- We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the work of art that is oneself and respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God's creation.
- We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.
- We will seek to enable children to understand the choices they make and how these choices can help or harm themselves and others.
- We will encourage children to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviours 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 children's knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for their own safety.

- We will develop children's experience of what it is to be happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification and value patience.
- We will teach children about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.
- We will support children 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 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 teaching about the importance of marriage and family life as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God.

8. Inclusion

At St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School 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 sexual orientation. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people are encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue.

All staff members are trained as Rainbow Counsellors and we offer support programmes to children who are particularly vulnerable and experiencing difficulty in their lives.

In addition to this the school has attained the Carnegie Mental Health Award (Silver) to support staff and children to navigate and deal with the difficulties they will inevitably face throughout life.

9. Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St Bernadette'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 (see our Single Equality Policy).

Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.

Teaching should reflect the law as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the broader legal implications of decisions they may make.

Further guidance is available for schools from the Catholic Education Service at <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/equality>. The guidance covers the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and working with students of other faiths in Catholic schools.

The 2010 Act identifies the following protected characteristics applicable to pupils, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil

partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Age is also a protected characteristic. It does not apply to students, but governors should be aware of this aspect as employers.

Catholic schools should be mindful that our primary mission is to the poor and seek to alleviate any disadvantage. Attention should also focus on the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects to ensure the inclusion of all students in a way that is appropriate for them. **Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education, must be accessible for all pupils and must be borne in mind when planning for pupils with special educational needs** and disabilities who represent a significant minority of pupils.

We believe that all pupils should have full access to the curriculum regardless of sex, race, religion, culture or special educational needs and disability (Single Equality Policy).

We believe that all pupils are entitled to a broad balanced and creative curriculum, experiencing a wide range of activities in order to appreciate and better understand themselves and the world in which they live.

Learners acquire knowledge through a range of different subjects and experiences which prepares them as future citizens. Pupils are intellectually developed and in addition to curriculum knowledge, long term memory is built through interconnections of ideas, concepts and skills across all subjects, in every year group.

We believe that all our pupils should enjoy the maximum benefit from continuity of learning and planned progression both within the school and on transfer to another school.

We believe the curriculum should be adapted to meet the needs, aspirations and interests of pupils and prepare them for the demands of a changing society and contribute to its development for the common good. The curriculum should also relate to their level of maturity and provide for enjoyment and fulfillment.

We believe the curriculum must identify and meet the varying needs and ability levels of all pupils. There must be sufficient differentiation in the teaching strategies for challenging but realistic goals to be set and for the motivation of each pupil to be established and maintained.

The critical characteristic of Catholic education is that all people are children of God. With this belief, underpinning school life perceived limits on students because of their characteristics must always be subject to challenge as the school is part of the Universal Catholic Church. It is through this lens schools should challenge stereotypes and address behaviours such as homophobia, misogyny and sexism. Schools must be alive to the fact that the approach of the Church may not be the same as the approach taken in other areas of life, such as social media. A clear and consistent message about human dignity must be conveyed through the whole of school life by staff, students and those who support the work of the school such as governors.

Governors at St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School understand the implications of the DfE's 2017 guidance Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges for their school. The guidance covers what sexual violence and harassment is, schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities, a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection and how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Sadly, students can believe that sexual violence and harassment are just part of growing up.

At St Bernadette's we believe that each person is a unique creation of a loving God and has been

endowed with particular gifts to be developed and used for the service of others. Therefore we believe that all pupils are valued equally regardless of sex, race, religion, culture or special educational needs and disability (Single Equality Policy) and should be treated with equal dignity. To support this all staff receive regular training in Child Protection and Safeguarding to recognize and support children who may suffer sexual harassment.

All teaching in HRSE, including that which covers areas around the protected characteristics, must be sensitive to the age, cultural background and family experiences of students. The Catholic view of human dignity should challenge the cultural assumptions that can underpin prejudices, such as racism, sexism and religious discrimination. **Catholic schools should robustly challenge homophobia or any inequitable behaviours based on a person's sexual orientation or gender as an infringement of human dignity.** Though schools will teach the Church's view on what it means to be human, and the challenges this offers to a wide range of lifestyles, the needs of the individual students will remain paramount. In a Catholic school, we aim to see the child, a Child of God, as a person in need of love and care. The DfE's guidance makes specific mention of teaching about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender characteristics, which it shortens to LGBT. The guidance states,

"At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at an appropriate point as part of this area of the curriculum."

At St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School we address questions about sexuality and gender as and when they arise. Our school's behaviour policy identifies all protected characteristics as possible triggers for aggressive or bullying behaviours. We train all staff to support children who are asking questions about themselves or others in these are as in partnership with their families and they know the legal requirements incumbent on the school with specific reference to sex or gender requirements. The dignity of each child is central to our care and we support any questioning child and their families through a culture of listening and seeing them as a person. We do not rush to label but offer children and their families time to discuss and explore what is best for them as individuals within our school community."

10. Programme of study

The Department for Education has prepared a statutory programme for 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' which will be a compulsory requirement from September 2020. The Diocese of Lancaster began working on Human Relationships and Sex Education(HRSE)in2016. At St Bernadette's we have adapted the Life to the Full program of study; from TenTen Resources to enable us to ensure that our pupils grow in faith and understanding of their relationships with God, each other and themselves.

The intent of the programme of study is to encourage young people to recognise their interior beauty, their dignity as a human and through this to understand and value the worth of others. We hope that this builds on the experience of the home where, as children, we all

experience our first expressions of love and form our early relationships. The challenge in school life is to develop this not just in an academic sense, but as a lived expression of belief ultimately, an invitation to hear the Good News.

"We must wonder! We must create an environment of wonder! We must create a climate of wonder! This task is closest to the family... Wonder is needed so that beauty might enter into human life, into society and the nation... We need to marvel at everything that is found in man." Pope St. John Paul

Creating a climate of wonder can seem a far cry from the modern world our schools are called to serve, though this is our calling as educators in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Lancaster. Engaging with the Church's teaching about human loving enables us to share with our young people the wonder of human life and the happiness that is waiting for us in Jesus. As always, this is an invitation, a way to deepen understanding of what it means to be fully human.

The Programme of Study fulfils the statutory guidance from the government and is underpinned with a Christian faith understanding that our deepest identity is as a child of God, created, chosen and loved by God. Governing bodies and head teachers should be mindful that from 2020 OfSTED will inspect the new 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' and Section 48 will continue to examine provisions in HRSE.

The HRSE program of study will be taught in all classes through discreet lessons in HRSE, as well as through RE, Science, ICT and other subjects and approaches such as whole school, key stage and class assemblies.

Other agencies may be involved to deliver this such as Childline, Police Internet Safety, First Aid training and the school nurse. The delivery of HRSE will be monitored and assessed using our whole school assessment procedures and in other ways such as reviewing our Behaviour Management policy and procedures.

11. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school should support parents in this task. The role of the school should be that of assisting and completing 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 schools 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 school will involve and support parents in learning about HRSE by informing them of what is to be taught in RE and Science at the beginning of each term. Information about HRSE is contained in the school prospectus and the majority of the programme of study is developed through the ethos of the school. Life to the Full will provide access to an online parent portal which provides content, links and suggestions for home activities to support the childrens' learning and development.

Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

Parents have the right to request that their child not participate in some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request, it would be good practice for the headteacher to discuss the application with parents and ensure that they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum in a Catholic context. A discussion should follow, as appropriate, involving the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to record and document this process.

A good practice is also likely to include the headteacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. For example, the possible social or emotional impact of withdrawal, the likelihood of them hearing a peer's version of the content, rather than the teacher's. However, parents may prefer to discuss sex education to their child at home instead.

Following discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is applicable for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. A process for the parental right to withdraw will form part of the policy.

Parents are informed by letter of their right to withdraw their children from specific HRSE lessons (e.g. Year 6 Physical Changes). However, they are not able to withdraw their children from statutory RE and Science lessons.

12. Teaching and Assessing HRSE

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.

Mrs A Bramhall and Mrs N White are the teachers responsible for the leadership, monitoring and coordination of the HRSE programme. Paul Wyre is the nominated Governor responsible for HRSE. All teachers have responsibility for delivering the HRSE programme to their class. They will be supported at times through key stage and whole school assemblies and other agencies such as the school nurse, Childline and the Police Internet Safety team.

Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school. However, the programme of study will be taught through discrete lessons and each child will have an exercise book that accompanies them through each Key Stage of the school which will provide evidence of their learning.

Sometimes, the children's learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors at St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School and agree to follow the its instruction.

There are elements of the statutory framework that are not covered in the Diocese of Lancaster's HRSE programme. These elements are listed at the end of the 2020 programme of study. These elements include.

Internet Safety and harm (PSHE)	Computing and Personal, Social and Health Education
Online Relationships	Computing and PSHE
Healthy Eating	Science
Changing Adolescent Body	Science and PSHE
Physical Health and Fitness	Physical Education (PE)
Basic First Aid	PE
Mental Well-being	RE, PSHE and PE
Health and Prevention	PSHE, Science and PE
Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco	PSHE.

Assessment forms part of the statutory framework. The HRSE programme includes a self audit for schools.

At St Bernadette's we will use the Diocesan self-audit to monitor all aspects of HRSE. Governors use the CES RSE audit tools to monitor their knowledge and understanding of this area. The HRSE framework and the elements of the statutory framework not covered by HRSE are monitored and assessed through whole school planning, written pieces of work, teacher's notes on discussions and targeted lesson evaluations. On occasion, the school uses questionnaires to evaluate students sense of well-being and may use written or practical assessments where appropriate, for example, to evaluate understanding of basic first aid.

13. Dealing with difficult questions

The Governing Body desires that HRSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for wellbeing, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of the wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked openly, knowing that their questions will be answered and understanding that staff or other students will not judge these questions. It is vital; therefore, that teachers invest time in creating this framework of mutual trust and care while respecting personal information. The HRSE co-ordinator must be given access to train and support to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies. The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidelines for dealing with questions.

- 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 prepare 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 doesn't know the answer to a question, it is essential to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the subject later;
- If a problem 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 received respectful treatment, 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.¹

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need 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. The safeguarding framework of the school should frame this, and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up to date safeguarding professional development.

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 following the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures.

¹Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000

All staff are regularly updated on our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures. The children are made aware of the opportunities they have to disclose sensitive information to a staff member.

The school's Child Protection policy and procedures are available in the school office and on our website www.st-bernadettes.org.uk

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.

14. Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk.

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need 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. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the school and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up to date safeguarding professional development.

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.

All staff are regularly updated on our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures. The children are made aware of the opportunities they have to disclose sensitive information to a staff member.

The school's Child Protection policy and procedures are available in the school office and on our website www.st-bernadettes.org.uk

Signed: *A Bramhall* (HRSE Coordinator)

D Shoulder (Headteacher)