



## Introduction

*Our Mission is to be a Catholic school which promotes positive relationships founded on the gospel values of respect, care, compassion and love. We firmly believe that each individual can discover, develop and achieve their full potential to take their place in our ever-changing world.*

*Our core purpose is: "To achieve the best for all". This philosophy is at the heart of everything we aspire to do for each member of our community.*

It is through this mission that the school aims to prepare our young people for a rapidly changing world. In connection with this our Education for Personal Relationships needs to be both informative and values based. It aims to encourage students to form opinions, positive attitudes as well as developing positive self-esteem.

All experiences at Mary Immaculate focus on the growth and development of the whole person. Our aim is to integrate each student's intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, psychological, social and physical development. Throughout their time at Mary Immaculate each student will receive a variety of learning experiences, some gained through the formal curriculum, others through the "hidden". We believe that together they form part of the educational process and enable students to form, nourish and sustain relationships.

## Aims and Objectives

As a result of the 1996 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 approach to Education for Personal Relationships (EPR) will go beyond this legal minimum. Our mission is to promote the well being of the whole human person as created in God's image and likeness.

As a Catholic community our aim is:

- To reflect gospel values in all areas of the curriculum. Our policy for EPR stands within the context of the spiritual life of the school and as such attitudes and values in relation to sexuality are developed through RE, PSE and the Science Curriculum;
- 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 develop positive self-esteem and encourage students to foster habits of self-discipline and responsibility;
- To provide a meaningful and relevant Education for Personal Relationships in the context of the Church's teaching whilst complementing and supporting the education that is already undertaken by home and family; and
- To enable students, within a Catholic Christian framework, to make positive responses to change and assist them in making free, but informed lifestyle choices.

## Organisation of Education for Personal Relationships

### Name of person responsible for planning and delivery

Mrs T Churchill – Head of Faculty for Progress and Well-being, in collaboration with Mrs A Wilson, Deputy Head

### Who will teach it?

RE department, PSE tutors and Science department

At Mary Immaculate the programme we follow is loosely based upon the "All that I am" programme developed and supported by the department for Religious Education within the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

The programme is founded on

- The belief that every human life has an intrinsic and absolute value through being created by God and in the image of God;
- This value derives from the simple fact of existing and is not dependent on an individual's age, abilities, social acceptability or any other characteristic;
- Self-respect and respect for each other must underlie all human relationships;

The planned methodology and teaching approach will enable students to gain an understanding of where they are in relation to their own knowledge, values and attitudes so that EPR 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;
- To be participative and interactive so that the teacher is facilitating the learning but also correcting misinformation.

The programme is intended to form the basis of a sound moral education for the students and have a clear emphasis on love and responsibility for the life that God has given to them and to others.

### Teaching Methods

The learning process of the programme is a mixture of teaching methods and technique including:

- Biblical and theological reflections;
- Teacher reference points to the Church's teaching;
- Posed question;
- Video extracts;
- Group and paired activities;
- Role play;
- Accurate scientific knowledge;
- Use of literature to explore emotions and issues;
- Key vocabulary;
- Use of different spoken and written genres.

### Specific classroom arrangements

In both key stages much of the specific content is covered within the existing schemes of work for RE, PSE and Science. Content is partly dictated by statutory requirements. Aspects that are not covered this way are taught using resource material from the "All that I am" series and other appropriate material within RE and PSE lessons.

In both key stages classes are set (x band and y band) and mixed (boy/girl).

In Key Stage 4 much of the content is incorporated into the GCSE Religious Studies syllabus (WJEC). Any content not covered is delivered through PSE days which are planned in conjunction with the RE department to ensure compliance with Church teaching.

### Dealing with sensitive issues

During the course of the year specific and sensitive issues may arise during an EPR lesson or a one to one discussion. It is important that staff teaching this course and/or specific topics follow the statements made below.

### Confidentiality, advice on sexual matters including contraception and sexual behaviour

At all times it is emphasised that a teachers' pastoral function should never trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. All professionals working within Mary Immaculate should seek to bring the home and the school into closer partnership in supporting the young people in our care. As the school is acting in *loco parentis* the school has a duty to inform the parents unless there is a good reason for not doing so.

On the specific question of the provision of contraception advice to students it is understood that this is not one of the professional responsibilities of a teacher. All those working at Mary Immaculate should be sensitive to the school's distinctive ethos.

Teachers should be careful not to guarantee confidentiality but to use their professional judgement, consulting with senior colleagues, if appropriate.

If a teacher or medical professional judges that a student's disclosure might raise the possibility of the child being at risk, that is, that there is "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer



significant harm”, then the designated child protection officer must be informed (see Child Protection Procedures for further details).

Where circumstances are such as to lead the teacher to believe that the student has in mind a course of conduct which is likely to place him or her at moral or physical risk or in breach of the law, the teacher has a duty to ensure that the student is aware of the implications and is urged to seek advice from his/her parents or relevant health professionals. In such circumstances the teacher shall inform the Headteacher who should arrange for counselling, if appropriate.

### **Sexual Orientation**

The school adopts a whole person approach which accepts that students and young people are sexual beings who have received their sexuality as a gift from God and which is something essential to personal identity. Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love. Therefore it is an integral part of the development of the personality and of its educative process. Catholic schools have a responsibility to ensure that the information given to students and young people is received in the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church and, therefore, based on sound theological principles. This positive approach excludes anything which risks reducing the understanding of sexuality to the level of a mere bodily function, biological process or recreational activity.

Staff will deal with this issue honestly, sensitively and in a non-discriminatory way. They will answer appropriate questions and provide factual information. Students will be encouraged to respect and recognise diversity and differences in human life.

Guidance in National Assembly Circular 3/99 “Pupil Support and Social Inclusion” deals with the unacceptability of and emotional distress and harm caused by bullying in whatever form, including sexual orientation. Any instance in the school will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s bullying policy.

### **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including HIV**

The strategies for teaching about STIs including HIV will include:

- Helping students clarify their knowledge of STIs including HIV
- Teaching them assertive skills for negotiating relationships
- Enabling them to become effective users of services that help prevent/treat STIs and HIV

### **Parental Right of Withdrawal**

Section 405 of the Education Act of 1996 states that

“If the parent of any student in attendance at a maintained school requests that he may be wholly or partly excused from receiving sex education at the school, the student shall, except so far as such education is comprised in the National Curriculum, be so excused accordingly until the request is withdrawn.”

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The policy for Education for Personal Relationships will be reviewed annually by the Governors.

**Policy Approved:** December 2017

**Policy Review Date:** December 2018