

RSHE Introduction - Catholic Ethos

Grays Convent is a Catholic school founded by the La Sainte Union Sisters. This makes our school distinctive because our school is founded on the values and teaching of Jesus Christ. These values and our Catholic Ethos is reflected throughout our curriculum, indeed in everything we do. One of the characteristics of Catholic schools is we aim to develop the whole child/young person in our care which includes a Relationship, Sexual, and Health Education Programme to fully prepare pupils to take up their place in society, to seek loving relationships, and to live their lives to the full.

For this reason, all aspects of our PSHE and RSE programme are situated within the beliefs and values of the Catholic Church, which teaches that all human beings are made in the image of God, with the dignity of each person being paramount. Catholics believe that God is love, and that we are called to love and respect in responsible loving relationships. Catholics believe sex is a gift from God, a beautiful expression of love and the sacred. The Church teaches that sex should be unitive, bringing the couple together, and procreative, open to the possibility of conceiving a new life, and that the right place for a sexual relationship is within the permanence of marriage.

The Catholic Church teaches that all forms of artificial contraception are wrong because to remove the possibility of conception is to separate the unitive and procreative purpose of a sexual relationship. The Church promotes natural family planning methods which pupils will learn about along with artificial methods in Science and RE classes.

The Catechism (Teachings of the Catholic Church) states 'Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception' CCC 2270. The Church does not accept abortion as human life is sacred and must not be destroyed.

We are grateful to external speakers and health professionals for their knowledge, and experience helping us deliver aspects of RSHE. Such visits complement our whole school RSHE programme and the content will be discussed ahead of time to ensure that it is set within the context of Church teaching.

In addition, all teachers have a responsibility of care; they contribute to the guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSHE in accordance with the Church's teaching and our wider school ethos. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSHE.

Any visitor must adhere to our protocol for visitors to Grays Convent, which was developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools. We have longstanding relationships with health professionals visiting Grays Convent; they are briefed on our school's policies. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

Finally, all lessons, especially those in the RSHE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.