

St. Joseph's RC High School
Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Joseff Sant

Sex and Relationships Policy

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This policy was updated March 2025 by the Acting Head of RE Charlotte Massaro

This policy was presented and accepted by the Governing Body: March 2025

This staff were made aware of this policy and or updates: March 2025

This policy will be reviewed: March 2027

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***“Sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person - body, emotion and soul - and manifests its innermost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love”
John Paul II***

St Joseph's RC School is a Voluntary Aided, co-educational Catholic Comprehensive school for children from 11 to 18 years, located in Newport in the Archdiocese of Cardiff. We have seven main Catholic feeder primary schools. The Head teacher, class teachers, school staff and governors all work together to create a secure loving and caring community. Children are encouraged to discuss problems with staff and we encourage parents to keep fully informed of any relevant and up to date information about their child. In keeping with our Mission Statement, ***‘Serving God Through Learning Together’*** the school shares the responsibility for providing a well-balanced education fulfilling the needs of each unique individual. We need to therefore support the personal, moral and social development of all pupils, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others sexuality, in positive ways and to enjoy relationships which are based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility and free from any abuse.

1. Vision and Mission

Our mission is to provide an outstanding Catholic education for all the children in our school. We will follow the example and teachings of Christ and everything we do will be inspired by gospel values. We will strive for excellence in all areas of our work and cherish every child in our care. We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

St Joseph's RC High School, in partnership with parents and carers, sets out to be a school for the whole human person, who, in their material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching. For this reason, we are committed to the development of the whole person in the awareness that all human values find their fulfilment in Christ. “Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being.... It is an integral part of the development of the personality and of the educative process”. We emphasise that our sexuality is a special gift of God.

Using a framework that is permeated with enduring Christian values, based on the Gospels, and taught with sensitivity within the Catholic ethos of our school, we will equip our pupils with the necessary skills to build a solid foundation of moral principles so that they can acknowledge, recognise and respond to the complexities of personal and sexual relationships in conjunction with the Church's teaching about what it is to be truly human.

***“Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you”
(Romans 12:2)***

“It is not easy to approach the issue of sex Education in an age when sexuality tends to be trivialised and impoverished. It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love for mutual self-giving. In such a way, the language of sexuality would not be sadly impoverished but illuminated and enriched.” (Amoris Laetitia 280)

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2. Vision for Relationships and Sex Education

At St Joseph's RC High 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 lives. 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 fulfilled 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.

We are bestowed with the love of God and the ability to love others. We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals. Our sexuality is part of our total self-gift of the heart and we seek to bring the young people in our care to know the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Church's teaching about how to lead a fulfilled, a life of integrity and wholeness of body, mind and spirit and they grow and change from children into young adults.

3. Procedures

The following groups were consulted upon in the Autumn term 2022 in producing this policy;

- Senior Leadership team and Head of Religious Education
- Governing Body
- Archdiocesan Education Service

The consultation process involved a draft policy being devised by the Head teacher, Head of Religious Education and Chair of Governors. The draft was shared and discussed with the Youth Chaplaincy team and presented to Governors for comments before ratification.

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy will be implemented 2020 and reviewed annually by the Head teacher, Chair of Governors, Head of Religious Education and the Governing Body.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. The school prospectus will include a statement about the delivery of RSE teaching and details of where to obtain a copy of the policy upon request. The Archdiocesan Director of RE will be sent a copy of the school's RSE policy and it is the responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure that this policy is up to date.

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4. Rationale

‘I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.’ (Jn.10.10)

As a Catholic Secondary school in the Province of Cardiff, Menevia, Wrexham and Herefordshire we use the term Relationship and sex education (RSE) as we believe that sex education is set within a wider context of relationship education, which itself is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life. Sex education is but one dimension of this greater whole. The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human person 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 educates young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school's responsibility than teaching about any other curriculum subject. At St Joseph's RC High School, we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that young people's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage the young people in our school/college to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As they 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 neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). We also encourage young people to know that God's love for humanity is so great, he is waiting to forgive us.

“We are all sinners, but God heals us with an abundance of grace and mercy.” (Pope Francis)

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'.

Legal guidelines suggest that relationship and sex education should build on the children's own experiences, be sensitive to the specific domestic contexts the children come from, form attitudes and values towards relationships, develop personal and social skills and increase the knowledge and understanding of each young person as they grow about their relationships and well-being, including sexual health. The Province supports all these aims in educating about relationships and sex education by incorporating them into the wider understanding of human relationships and human formation as reflected in our CBEW and CES Guidance.

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5. Statutory Framework

The statutory framework around education about human relationships varies between England and Wales. The relevant documents can be found here:

a) RSE statutory guidance for Wales:

[https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#relationships-and-sexuality-education-\(rse\):-statutory-guidance](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#relationships-and-sexuality-education-(rse):-statutory-guidance)

b) Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) statutory guidance for England:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

6. Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the RSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviour 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 of 'charity') 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 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 Joseph's RC High School, we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school both in our policies and practices. They underpin all that we do in terms of the relationships that we form in our school. We expect all members of our school to uphold our core principles in the way they respond to each other and to the children in their charge. We are expected to model tolerance, respect, forgiveness and to do all we can to support our pupils to be safe. We set high expectation of all members of our community, rewarding positive behaviours and correcting negative ones in a fair and consistent manner. Pupils are challenged to reflect on the behaviours and attitudes of themselves and others through the curriculum and collective worship. They are given numerous opportunities to put their faith into action, both within and beyond our school. Every day begins in prayer and this is a time for respect and reflection from all members of our community, where God is at the heart of their lives. Each act of worship enables pupils to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for silence, reflection and growth.

At St Joseph's RC High School our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion. We live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school by ensuring that the virtues and values are not only calendared each week

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of the academic year but shared with staff through prayer in staff briefings each week. This enables staff to fully understand and model the gospel virtues to share and reinforce with pupils in form reflection and in lessons. Form reflection and acts of worship fully embrace the Catholic Pupil profile and pupils can grow in knowledge about moral behavior throughout their time in school. Pupils are encouraged to practice these virtues habitually so that they can be Christ's Body on earth.

"A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions."

"The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God"
(CCC Article 7: 1803)

7. The Aim and Objectives of RSE

The aim of RSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person.

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.

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RSE should therefore deepen the following areas of understanding:

- To develop self-knowledge, and respect and love of self;
- To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God;
- To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose;
- To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this is an expression of God's love;
- 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 that is appropriate to the stage of maturity of the young people;
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of appropriate consent;
- To have an understanding of the law in England and Wales about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

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- We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God's creation.
- 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 understanding of the nature of intimacy and the importance of marriage and family life to live in loving relationships with others and with God.
- We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity of all.
- We will seek to enable students to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.
- We will encourage students to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviour 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 students' knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for managing their own risk.
- We will develop students' experience of what it is to be truly happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification, satisfying the spirit rather than the senses.
- We will teach them the virtue of patience.
- We will teach students about the media and how to make good choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply, especially when using social media, and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.
- We will encourage students to develop a healthy, good moral framework about accessing information online.
- We will encourage students to recognise the influence of peer pressure and the moral integrity required to say "no".
- We will support students 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 teach students about the damage that drugs, alcohol and promiscuity do to relationships with the self, as well as others.
- We will teach young people that God is merciful and always waiting for us to be reconciled with him.

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8. Inclusion

At St Joseph's RC High 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 background. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect each other in their differences and develop an approach of dialogue.

The Inclusion department is available for guidance for staff and also for pupils to seek additional support should any issue present itself at any point within the programme. This maybe a Counselling session, further clarity on topics discussed or referrals following a disclosure, e.g. Child Protection.

9. Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St Joseph's RC High School endeavors to do its best for all 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.

Additional details of our commitment to equality at our school can be found in our Strategic Equalities Policy on our website, which contains a Strategic Equality Plan with clear timelines and responsibilities.

10. Programme of Study

The RSE programme that is followed at St Joseph's RC High School is through The Fertile Heart and TEN TEN programmes as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cardiff. It is envisaged that these programmes will be used essentially via PSHE and RSE sessions and fundamentally embedded in the ethos of the school through assemblies, classroom discussions and the centring of all relationships in the school on the person of Jesus Christ. The programmes of study are based on the understanding of the Church of human nature and human sexuality, and aims to help young people develop their sense of purpose and character. It should be taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and will thus allow children to express alternative viewpoints where they hold such views.

Staff delivering RSE at St Joseph's RC High School will have in depth training on how to deliver The Fertile Heart and TEN TEN resources. The Head of Religious Education will lead this every academic year.

For the best possible outcomes and staff/pupil engagement, a variety of teaching strategies will be implemented. These may include power point, discussion/group work, audio/visual presentations and Christian meditation. Guest speakers that have been recommended by the Archdiocese will be invited in to enhance certain topics. No outside speaker will be used unless authorized by the Director of RE Schools. Staff recognize the value of each individual and that our young people are at different stages in their understanding of the 'self' and their relationship with God, and therefore is sympathetic and sensitive towards the individual needs and concerns of our pupils. At all times in the delivery, the correct biological terms are used. The explicitness of material is always appropriate to the age of the pupils and all terms are explained to avoid misunderstanding and confusion. Questions often arise in a classroom context that refer to controversial issues. These questions are dealt with honestly and in as mature a way as appropriate to the age of the class; in such a situation, pupils would be encouraged to discuss these matters with their parents and parents will be informed by letter. All staff are careful to create an environment in which pupils can be open and honest without fear of embarrassment. Any tendency to immaturity, insensitivity and lack of tolerance will be discouraged. Ground rules should be formulated

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and discussed with pupils. These will include the fact that the work will be done without anyone having to answer personal questions or reveal private or family situations.

11. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. Our school will assist parents in this task which includes Relationships and Sex Education. The role of the school is thus that of assisting and completing (where needed) 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 school, 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.

Communication to Parents

Parents will be informed by letter prior to pupils receiving lessons. Parents are informed of their right to withdraw their children from RSE lessons, or request their withdrawal, where such a right exists. Where such a right does no longer exist (as under the provisions of the 'Curriculum for Wales'), particular care has been taken to ensure that dialogue and involvement of parents is a priority concern of the school. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any topic other than those in the National Curriculum. Parents have the right to see the content and teaching materials before they are used with their children. These can be obtained on request from the school.

12. Teaching RSE

Mrs. K Burke, Head of Religious Education, is responsible for the leadership, co-ordination and monitoring of the programme. She will be supported by the Link Governor for RE, Fr Brian Cuddihy. The Head teacher will have overall responsibility for RSE. RE, Science and PSHE will deliver the main elements of the RSE, and any sensitive elements will be reinforced through Religious Education lessons. The Fertile Heart and TEN TEN programmes will be used to deliver RSE.

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. Guest speakers/visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors at St Joseph's RC High school and will agree in writing to follow the instructions. The appropriate 'protocol' available on the CES website will be used for this purpose.

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13. Supporting Children and Young People deemed to be at risk

The Governing Body desires that RSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for their wellbeing and that of others and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Like all other subjects, RSE always needs to be taught in a differentiated manner appropriate to the maturity of the children. It is 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 to share confidential information. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked openly, knowing that their questions will be answered and knowing that these questions will not be judged negatively by staff or other students. It is vital that we create a framework of mutual trust and care, whilst respecting personal information. The RSE coordinator must be given access to support and training to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies.

The following guidance for dealing with questions in RSE will be adhered to:

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 are prepared for the unexpected. For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher will remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher will 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, they will acknowledge this and suggest that the pupil or teacher, or both together, research the question later.
- If a question is too explicit, or too old for a pupil, or is inappropriate for the whole class or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher will acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect, the teacher will remember to talk with the pupil later.
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's Child Protection procedures.

(DfE Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 "Dealing with questions" 0116/2000)

Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example because of their explicit or graphic content, they will be addressed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy and confidentiality procedures. All staff are given training on this. The school will ensure that this policy is available for all staff, governors, parents and pupils and the confidential nature of how to obtain advice and guidance as a result of any issues or questions that may arise. The policy is available on the school's website.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/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 Safeguarding policy. This policy will be supported by the Equality and Diversity Policy and the Good Conduct Code Policy.

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Monitoring and Review of Policy

All relevant parties will be involved in this review and will be reviewed periodically by the Governing Body. The RE department is well placed to offer good advice and expertise and will assist in monitoring and evaluating the implementation and delivery of this RSE policy.

APPENDIX 1

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SEX EDUCATION

Definition of Sex Education

- A.1** Section 579 (1) of the Education Act 1996 gives a definition of 'sex education' as including education about:
- (a) Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and Human Immuno-deficiency Virus; and
 - (b) Any other sexually transmitted disease

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- A.2** Governing bodies of **all** maintained schools are required by section 404 of the Education Act 1996 to:
- (a) Make, and keep up to date, a separate written statement of their policy with regard to the provision of sex education and;
 - (b) Make copies of the statement available for inspection (at all reasonable times) by parents of registered pupils at the school and provide a copy of the statement free of charge to any parent who asks for one.
- A.3** The policy statement must also include a statement about parents' rights under section 405 of the Education Act 1996 to exempt/withdraw their child from sex education.

Secondary Schools

- A.4** All maintained secondary schools are required under section 101 (1)© of the Education Act 2002 to include, as part of the 'basic curriculum' of the school, sex education for all registered pupils.

Guidance

- A.5** Where sex education is given, section 403(1B) of the Education Act 1996 (as amended) requires headteachers and governing bodies to have regard to the National Assembly for Wales' guidance.
- A.6** Section 403(1C) requires the Assembly's guidance to 'include guidance about any material which may be produced by NHS bodies for use for the purposes of sex education in schools'.

Marriage, family life and inappropriate materials

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A.7 Section 403 of the Education Act 1996 requires that the governing body and the headteacher shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where sex education is given to any registered pupils at a maintained school, it is given in such a manner as to encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life.

A.8 In addition, section (1A) of section 403 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to issue guidance designed to secure that when sex education is given to registered pupils at maintained schools:

They learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children, and

- (a) They are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned.

Parent/parental responsibility

A.9 Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as follows:

- (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, 'parent' in relation to a child or young person includes any person:
- (a) Who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
- (b) Who has care of the child. Section 3 (1) of the Children Act 1989 defines 'parental responsibility' as follows: (1) In this Act 'parental responsibility' means all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property. References to parents/carers in this guidance should therefore be taken to include those with parental responsibility or care of a child.

Exemption /withdrawal from sex education

A.10 Section 405 of the Education Act 1996 enables parents to prevent their children, either wholly or partly, from receiving sex education in school other than sex education contained within the national curriculum.

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