

# Coloma Convent Girls' School

## Policy for Relationships and Sex Education



“I have come so that they may  
have life and have it to the full”

John 10, 10

Date policy agreed: April 2015

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### 1. Background of School

Coloma was set up by the Daughters of Mary and Joseph for the education of Catholic girls. There are 1077 girls at the school. Those between the ages of 11 and 16 are all baptised Catholics. In the 6<sup>th</sup> form girls join Coloma from other schools and have varied faith backgrounds, though 70% have continued into the 6<sup>th</sup> form from Coloma's own Year 11.

### 2. Rationale of this policy

This policy is designed to reflect the Mission Statement of the school, to uphold Catholic church teaching and to fulfil the statutory requirements for sex education guidance. It is designed to sit alongside other policies of the school that touch on relevant areas such as the Teaching and Learning policy.

### 3. Statutory requirements

This policy has been written to conform with the teachings of the Catholic Church and to fulfil the statutory requirement of the Education Act 1996 (c.56, s.404), for a "separate written statement of [the governing body's] policy with regard to the provision of sex education" and the Learning and Skills Act (2000). The Education Act 1996 also requires that governing bodies have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance, and that:

- "The Secretary of State must issue guidance designed to secure that when sex education is given to registered pupils at maintained schools—
- (a) they learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children, and
  - (b) they are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned."

The policy also recognises and respects the following guidelines set down by Circular 0116/2000 from the Department for Education which states:

"Parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex and relationships; maintaining the culture and ethos of the family; helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up; and

preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.”

In essence then, Coloma’s teaching should be complementary and supportive to the role of parents.

This policy also has regard to relevant guidance and requirements within the following:

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994
- The Declaration on Christian Education (Second Vatican Council, 1965)
- Encyclicals: *Humanae Vitae* (1968), *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), *Mulieribus Dignitatem* (1988), *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) *Deus Caritas Est* (2005)
- Charter of the Rights of the Family (Holy See, 1983)
- Educational Guidance in Human Love (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1983)
- Education in Sexuality (CES, 1994)
- Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995)
- The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997)
- Diocesan Policy for Education in Human Love (Archdiocese of Southwark, 2007)

#### **4 Guiding principles – Catholic ethos: a celebration of Life**

The Coloma Relationships and Sex Education Policy is designed to reflect the school’s ethos and thereby reflect the richness of the Church’s teaching about the human person and the family. The governing body is responsible in law for upholding the school’s religious character, and seeks to do so in this policy.

##### **4.1**

##### **Dignity of the person**

We are created in God’s image. Human nature is further exalted by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, son of God, born of the Virgin Mary. We therefore have an intrinsic dignity which demands that we seek goodness. To be human is to relate; we exist in relationship with each other and God. We must live in ‘right relationships’ with the whole of creation.

##### **4.2**

##### **Sanctity of life**

As we know from scientific research, a new human life begins its journey at the time of conception (fertilisation). From this point onwards, the individual demands our care and protection. “The New Testament revelation confirms the indisputable recognition of the value of life from its very beginning.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, 45

### 4.3

#### **Sexuality – a mystery of the person**

Human sexuality is a sacred mystery which includes the identity of each person as man or as woman, his or her physical and spiritual difference and complementarity, and the Divine plan for human love and marriage. Our sexual nature is good. Our sexuality finds the context for its fullest expression in marriage.

### 4.4 Marriage

Marriage is designed for the building up of society – for its increase and its social development, and the growth of its members in virtue. This includes developing a well-formed conscience, chastity, purity of heart and mind. Self-giving expressed through sexual intimacy is designed to allow married couples to share by procreation in the creative work of God. (Christ restated unchanging teaching on sexual morality, and restored the discipline of marriage as a life-long exclusive union of man and woman).

## 5. What our Catholic ethos means for relationships and sex education

We put God first in all things and we adhere to the Church’s authoritative teaching of Christian doctrine in all things. The Church’s concern and love for us manifests itself in instruction; its instruction is a guide to holiness and the joy that it brings. For SRE this means:

### 5.1

#### **Doctrine and the curriculum**

We seek consistent application of our principles across the whole curriculum that the truth of the Gospel must prevail over culture.

### 5.2

#### **Marriage and chastity<sup>2</sup>**

The school’s Catholic ethos of joy will celebrate marriage between a man and a woman as the God given space for human sexual expression.

### 5.3

#### **Assisting the work of parents**

We recognise that the Church acknowledges the collaborative and subsidiary role that is played by schools in “furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of sexuality as value and task of the whole person.”<sup>3</sup>

The school will always seek to deliver lessons that are appropriate according to age and stage. The resources used in the classroom will be similarly appropriate according to age and stage.

*Please refer to Appendix I for a fuller response.*

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<sup>2</sup> [Familiaris Consortio](#). (1981) 11-16

<sup>3</sup> Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality (1995) 66

## **6. Specific objectives of SRE in the school**

The following objectives are a guide, not an exhaustive list.

### **6.1**

#### **Understanding sex and relationships in God's plan of creation <sup>4</sup>**

- To teach the right place and purpose of sex in God's creation and to help pupils to see the beauty and purpose of their sexuality.
- To help pupils to understand and adjust to the physical and emotional changes they undergo in adolescence in the light of God's plan for mankind and according to His will for each individual.

### **6.2**

#### **Learning to apply Christian values in this area of life**

- To raise awareness of the positive impact of good choices: similarly to recognise the damaging effects of bad choices.
- To raise awareness of how our decisions about relationships and sex can be affected by factors like alcohol, peer pressure, lack of self-esteem and pornography.

### **6.3**

#### **Marriage and family**

- To teach that marriage is the mutual giving of the whole self, including one's sexual faculties, in a lifelong exclusive covenant.
- To promote the importance of loving and caring relationships and the idea of mutual responsibilities within these relationships.

*Please refer to Appendix II for a fuller response.*

## **7 Key Responsibilities**

### **7.1**

The board of Governors is responsible for approval of the Relationships and Sex Policy.

### **7.2**

Mrs Martin – as Headteacher has overall responsibility for the programme.

### **7.3**

Mr Gray, as SLT member responsible for policies, currently has responsibility for ensuring that the policy is made available to parents and staff and is properly monitored and evaluated, and that it is reviewed in due course.

### **7.4**

Mrs Byrne – has Team Leader of Religious Studies and specific responsibility for its delivery within the context of Religious Studies and PSHE lessons.

### **7.5**

Mrs O'Donnell – has responsibility for PSHE and, as part of the Sixth Form Leadership Team, has responsibility for General RS in the Sixth Form.

### **7.6**

Miss Waldron – as Team Leader of Biology currently has responsibility for the delivery of National Curriculum requirements related to sex education as prescribed within the Science curriculum.

### **7.7**

All teachers will be involved directly or indirectly in the Relationships and Sex programme. In addition to subject specific training other training will be provided as appropriate and identified by staff through performance management. Specialist staff and agencies will be utilised where outside expertise is required, particularly on sensitive issues.

## **8. Implementation**

We respect the trust that parents place in the school to teach SRE in conformity with the teaching of the Church. All resources, including speakers and visitors from external agencies, will uphold the school's ethos, its fidelity to the Church and its understanding of holiness, chastity and appropriateness.

“Right to withdraw” is applicable to part or all areas of sex education under the 1993 Education Act but not to aspects defined within the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3. It is the view of the school however, and the governing body that children that are withdrawn lose a valuable opportunity to learn in a controlled and caring context.

Our SRE delivery seeks to provide information about health and sexual matters in an appropriate way, being sensitive to the needs of individuals and groups.

Relationships and Sex Education is taught in both a Curricula and Cross Curricula framework. The Religious Studies, PSHE and Science Departments have a specific contribution for teaching subject matter related to their disciplines and the teaching and learning strategies used will reflect the specific objectives outlined in the Relationship and Sex policy. The way SRE is taught must allow the requirements of this policy to be met.

The programme of teaching will reflect the age and conceptual development of the pupils and take into account the requirement for progression in line with National Curriculum requirements.

## **9. SRE Content and resources**

In Year 7 aspects of human reproduction are taught in Biology, at the same time in PSHE topics taught include the God-given nature of life and thereby the importance and uniqueness of every individual. Relationship issues in particular are highlighted, especially in PSHE and in Religious Studies. Key Stage 3 R.S. (as addressed in 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' series), focuses on relationships as demonstrated by friends, families and local and national communities. Issues regarding prejudice and discrimination are also examined. Scripture and theological truths help students to see the interconnecting threads that weave a tapestry of human development. The idea that sexual relationships are enshrined in scripture forms the foundation on which is built scientific and ethical awareness.

At Key Stage 4 the Ethics unit of the R.S. GCSE course explores, within the context of the dignity of the individual, marriage, divorce, contraception, abortion and euthanasia. The Science Department covers the hormonal control of the menstrual cycle and the use of hormones to control fertility. Wider issues such as human dignity are covered in many GCSE subjects including History, Geography and Health and Social Care. Sensitive issues are also explored through languages, drama and literature. Outside agencies are involved in the PSHE programme in Year 7.

The central focus of all retreats organised for pupils in Key Stages 3 & 4 is relationships.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> Form the programme is delivered through special relationship days, the general Religious Studies programme (for all 6<sup>th</sup> form) and PSHE. The special relationship days include topics such as Relationships, Justice for Women, HIV/AIDs, Child Protection (Emotional, Physical, Sexual and Neglect), responsibilities for the vulnerable person, and the implications of substance abuse. Many of the subjects taught include related topics such as role of women, sexuality and media influence.

As Coloma's Sixth Form is multifaith, aspects of personal relationships are studied from a variety of faith perspectives.

A wide range of materials are available on all aspects of relationships and sexuality. Core schemes are based, at Key Stage 3, on booklets included in the Folens Citizenship and PSHE programme supported by Life Skills: Make a Connection material. At Key Stage 4 the programme is derived from Activate Citizenship with sensitive issues being based on materials from the Chalkface Project. At Key Stages 4 & 5 'Save Sex' sessions are delivered by The Challenge Team UK which promotes chastity. Sexual relationships as understood within a coherent Catholic perspective are also explored by the Ten Ten Group.

*Please refer to Appendix IV.*

## **10 Review**

The policy will be monitored regularly. Changes in legal requirements may also require it to be updated.

# Appendix I

For the purposes of clarity, listed below are positions and approaches which are contrary to the school's ethos:

## **1 Approaches to sex which undermine the coherent message of the Church**

- Condoning extramarital sexual acts or a recreational approach to sex
- Treating alternative relationships as equivalent to marriage
- The presentation of sex as a mere bodily function or biological process
- The negative approach that regards chastity as a old fashioned, unrealistic or unattainable
- The assumption that one cannot condemn sin without condemning the sinner

## **2 Interventions against human life**

- Abortion and artificial birth control (including post-coital birth control) are contrary to our ethos. They will not be promoted, provided, facilitated or condoned.<sup>5</sup>
- Information or services for obtaining or using these measures will not be provided, promoted, permitted or condoned.
- Manipulating human fertility in ways contrary to the church's teaching is rejected.

## **3 Secularism, relativism**

- A secularised approach which puts God at the margin of life
- All that is unworthy in relationships (disrespect, exploitation, dishonesty, abuse, etc)
- Moral systems which deny the reality of good and evil, or which substitute personal choice, individual conscience, relativism, or the pursuit of pleasure.
- Whatever is objectively contrary to the virtues of modesty and chastity is to be rejected.

## **4 Resources**

- External agencies which fail to uphold the school's ethos will not be used.
- The use of resources (including websites, DVDs, books, etc) other than the following have to be approved by the Headteacher.

<sup>5</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997) 2284, 2286

# Appendix II

Further objectives of SRE include:

## **Understanding sex and relationships in God's plan of creation**

- To recognise and support the role of parents as primary educators in the areas of sex and relationships.
- To appreciate that Jesus' command to love one another as he loved us is the pattern for Christian life.
- To present positively all the virtues connected with sex and relationships, such as modesty, chastity, honesty, forgiveness and faithfulness.
- To recognise that God calls us to live the virtue of chastity according to our state of life (single, married, widowed, etc.)
- To appreciate the constancy of God in calling us to repent and offering forgiveness, and the importance of showing forgiveness to others.

## **Learning to apply Christian values in this area of life**

- To encourage pupils to challenge negative influences in the sphere of sex and relationships.
- To inform pupils about how the integrity of the person is protected by laws upholding sexual mores, such as the age of consent.
- To help pupils understand the 'gift of self' in our relationship with God – giving Him time and attention in prayer, and in relationships with others by giving our time, our good actions or our material goods

## **Marriage and family**

- To help pupils to understand the nature of marriage as a life-long and exclusive covenant of man and woman and why the Church does not allow divorce and remarriage.
- To teach that the vocation to marriage entails the procreation and raising of children.
- To inform pupils about the rights and duties conveyed by marriage, and how these are reflected in ecclesiastical and civil law.
- To help pupils understand how the laws of the country support or conflict with the moral law and the church's law in the areas of marriage, sexual behaviour and relationships.

# Appendix III

From National Curriculum 2007

Science Programme of study for key stage 3 and attainment targets

## **Organisms, behaviour and health**

- a life processes are supported by the organisation of cells into tissues, organs and body systems
- b the human reproductive cycle includes adolescence, fertilisation and foetal development
- c conception, growth, development, behaviour and health can be affected by diet, drugs and disease
- d all living things show variation, can be classified and are interdependent, interacting with each other and their environment
- e behaviour is influenced by internal and external factors and can be investigated and measured.

# Appendix IV

## RESOURCES

- 1 'The Bible'
- 2 'Catechism of the Catholic Church'
- 3 'AQA Religious Studies: Roman Catholicism' Wallace & Bartlett
- 4 'AQA Roman Catholicism : Ethics' Bowie & Bartlett
- 4 'Religion & Citizenship' Fleming, Jordan, Smith, Worden.
- 5 'Faith, Beliefs and Issues (Thinking Through RE)' Eileen Osborne
- 6 'GCSE RE for You - Christianity and Moral Issues' Anne Jordan
- 7 'Contemporary Moral Issues' Joe Jenkins
- 8 'The Catholic Church: Belief, Practice, Life and Behaviour' Michael Keene
- 9 'Dimensions of Christianity' Anne Burke
- 10 'Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education' Books 1 & 2  
Steele, Benzinski, Moorcroft, King & Haydon

## DVD

Materials from SPUC, LIFE, CAFOD including:

- 'Whose Choice is it Anyway?'
- 'The Rights and Wrongs of Abortion'

**KS3** The themes and issues drawn from the above resources include:

### PSHEE Year 7

New school year  
You & your friends  
Who am I?  
The spiritual dimension of life  
  
Image of self  
Bullying  
Families: we are different  
Keeping clean: puberty- myths & facts  
Adulthood

### PSHEE Year 8

New school year  
New friends  
Rights & responsibilities  
Girl friends/boy friends: the differences  
Pressure groups  
World AIDS Day  
Respect for self  
Family life.  
Identity within faith communities

**KS4** The themes and issues drawn from the above resources include:

Human sexuality & sexual relationships.  
Heterosexuality & homosexuality  
Contraception  
The right to life  
Sanctity of life  
Pro Life, Pro Choice arguments regarding abortion..  
Nature & purpose of marriage.  
Religious and civil marriage ceremonies.  
Alternatives to marriage: civil partnership.  
Attitudes to divorce and re-marriage.  
Importance of the family.

As a means of illustrating the comprehensive nature of the treatment of Ethics taught at KS4, and thereby offering some appreciation of the sensitivity with which the subject is handled, particularly with regard to issues surrounding relationships and sex, the following areas are covered:

**Christian values:**

- Making moral decisions
- Virtues, gifts and fruits of the Spirit
- What are the Ten Commandments?
- The Ten Commandments: loving God
- The Ten Commandments: loving neighbour
- The Beatitudes: part 1
- The Beatitudes: part 2

**Christian marriage:**

- Introduction to marriage in society
- The Sacrament of Marriage
- The rite and symbolism of marriage
- Parenthood
- Adoption and fostering
- Sex outside marriage
- Marital breakdown
- Divorce, remarriage and annulment

**Christian vocation**

- An introduction to Christian vocation and the Parable of the Talents
- The role and vocation of lay people (laity) in the Roman Catholic Church
- Lay ministry and the Priesthood of the believer
- Holy Orders (ordination) and the role of a deacon

- The role of a priest
- The Rite of Ordination
- Issues 1: celibacy
- Issue 2: the ordination of women
- What is a vocation to the religious life?
- Examples of religious life

### **The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

- Sin in the Roman Catholic tradition
- Forgiveness in the Roman Catholic tradition
- The rite and symbolism of reconciliation
- The importance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Causes of crime
- The aims of punishment
- Types of punishment
- The death penalty
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Race and colour
- Gender and disability
- Religious discrimination
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan

### **Christian healing**

- Christian attitudes to sickness and healing
- Anointing of the Sick (extreme unction)
- Attitudes to death and life after death
- Death rites
- The sanctity of human life
- Abortion
- Contraception
- In vitro fertilisation
- Euthanasia

### **Christian responses to global issues**

- Christian duty towards the poor and those in need
- The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats
- Differences between rich and poor countries
- What are the causes of world poverty
- How do Christians respond to the needs of the poor overseas?
- CAFOD and Trocaire
- Fairtrade and exploitation
- War and peace introduction
- Just War theory
- Nuclear warfare and proliferation

- Terrorism
- Pacifism

**KS5 (Sixth Form: PSHE/General RS)**

The themes and issues drawn from the above resources include:

Sexual relationships  
Sex before marriage  
Religious attitudes to marriage  
Religious attitudes to contraception  
Purpose & character of marriage  
Good parenting  
Morality in relationships  
Female circumcision  
Religion and politics

