



# St Mary's RC Primary School

Duckpool Lane  
Whickham  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
NE16 4HB  
T: 0191 4205828

E: [stmarysrcprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:stmarysrcprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk)  
W: [www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk](http://www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk)

Head Teacher: Mr J Wheatley  
Chair of Governors: Mrs C Wood

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## RSHE Curriculum at St Mary's

Dear Parents/Carers,

In the academic year 2021/22, there will be an expectation on all primary schools in England to fulfil the statutory requirements with regards Relationships Education and Health Education. As a Catholic school, our mission is to support the spiritual, moral, social, physical and emotional development of all of our pupils, rooted in the wisdom and teaching of the Church. The education of children in human sexuality is an important, precious and privileged responsibility. The Church teaches us that this is very much a partnership with parents, in which parents are the 'first educators' of their children on these matters; ultimately, you confer on us the right to co-educate your children with you.

It is in this spirit of partnership that I write to you to share our school's Relationship, Sex, Health and Education (RSHE) policy which outlines the updated curriculum provision to be delivered across school this year. You will see that our policy makes links between our existing RE curriculum, *Come and See*, the wider curriculum and a new RSHE specific curriculum, *Life to the Full*. As a school, we have decided to adopt this curriculum which is produced by Ten Ten Resources: an award-winning Catholic educational organisation that is well-respected and very experienced in this field of work. Life to the Full has been approved by our diocese. Furthermore, Ten Ten have entered into a partnership with the Catholic Education Service and the Department for Education to provide training for teachers in Catholic schools on the subject of the new statutory curriculum. As such, we are confident that this programme is a very good fit for our school.

Through their programme, Ten Ten understand the foundational role that parents have in educating and nurturing their children on these matters. Within the programme, they have built in resources which will not only keep you informed about what is being taught in school, but will also give you the opportunity to engage your children in discussion, activity and prayer. As a parent, you have access to our school's parent portal, found here:

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/parent-portal/> (username: st-mary-ne16 password: lady-16), which will provide you with Information about the programme children will be following will afford you access to resources and suggestions for further activity at home.

Each term, we will have weeks of study devoted to covering the units from the *Life to the Full* scheme (see attached the information booklet for parents and yearly overview for RE/RSHE). I would encourage you to spend time on the parent portal reviewing the content to be covered in each unit.

As you will see on the parent portal, there are some key decisions that schools have to make about the content covered across school. Below, I have summarised some of the key decisions we have made as a school:

- Key decision #1 – Genitalia:

Genitalia is not named in Early Years Foundation Stage, private parts are merely referred to as ‘privates’. However, in Key Stage One, a decision must be made about whether to introduce names of genitalia to Years 1 and 2. We have decided that we will introduce names of genitalia in Years 1 and 2. The case for introducing teaching about genitalia at this age is two-fold. The first is that this is the stage at which we talk to children about the differences between boys and girls. Here, it is important not to uphold negative gender stereotypes and, in fact, the non-physical differences between boys and girls at this age are small and difficult to define. By linking gender to biological sex, it helps children to understand the difference, equality and complementarity of boys and girls. The second is a safeguarding issue. The argument goes that if young children are better able to confidently articulate about private body parts, they are better equipped to identify experiences of feeling uncomfortable if any form of abuse takes place.

- Key decision #2 – Puberty:

We have taken the decision to deliver the session on puberty in Year 5. This is in-line with NHS guidance which states, “The average age for girls to begin puberty is 11, while for boys the average age is 12. But it's different for everyone. It's completely normal for puberty to begin at any point from the ages of 8 to 14. The process can take up to 4 years.”

We have taken a decision to swap content covered in Years 4 and 5 in Spring 1 to accommodate this change, meaning that Year 4 will cover content on peer pressure (Personal Relationships) and Year 5 will cover the content on puberty and changing bodies. This is also in line with the support school receives from the school nursing service.

- Key decision #3 – Talking about sex:

Teaching about sexual intercourse to primary school children is not part of the statutory curriculum. We feel that it is a parent’s right to approach this subject with their child in the safety and security of the home in the way they deem most appropriate. *Life to the Full* provides an optional session which parents may use at home, should they wish, to prompt important conversations with their child at home.

It is important to emphasise that *Life to the Full* is inclusive of all children, families and teaching staff. From the very start, the programme acknowledges that families are made up differently, and it celebrates the family unit in whatever form it takes. The programme emphasises very strongly the dignity of every person as being created and loved by God, and we are confident that it has the required flexibility for us to recognise and celebrate all our pupils and members of our wider school community. Consultation is an important part of embedding our new policy effectively, so I would also encourage you to contact me at school if you require any further information or would like to discuss any aspects of the programme in more detail.

We look forward to sharing in your child’s ongoing learning journey with you and your family over the coming year.

Yours Sincerely,



Mr J Wheatley  
Headteacher