

GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

We, the Governors and Staff of St Bede's College, seek to provide the highest quality of education for life, according to the ideals/ philosophy of Catholic education which insists that the person – body, mind and spirit – must be addressed. We believe it to be of fundamental importance that young people should be enabled to develop understanding and appreciation of the whole area of personal relationships. Within the provision for Education in Personal Relationships the school will provide for a positive, prudent, developmental programme of sexuality education which is rooted in a Christian understanding of morality, recognises parents as the primary educators of children, is drawn from all areas of the school curriculum and is set in the context of the Gospel values of love, justice and reconciliation.

PARENTS' RIGHTS

It is important for parents to understand that they have the right to withdraw their children from lessons when any part of the Education in Personal Relationships (EPR) programme is being taught. They do not have the right to withdraw children from the Personal, Social and Moral Education (PSME) programme.

OUR REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

- 1 The 1993 Education Act says that Governors are required to provide sex education for pupils in maintained secondary schools.
- 2 The Diocese believes that sex education should be provided.
- 3 We at St Bede's believe sex education should be provided because sexuality is an integral part of human nature and we seek to nurture the whole human being in his/her growth towards God.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE POLICY

- 1 As an Independent School we are not bound by the requirements of the Education Act. However, we acknowledge that the Governors are required:
 - a) to ensure that sex education is provided for all pupils;
 - b) to include instruction about HIV/AIDS and other STDs;
 - c) to grant parents the right to withdraw their children from lessons where sex education is being taught outside the prescribed material of the National Curriculum;
 - d) to provide teachers with appropriate in-service training in the development of suitable teaching and learning programmes.
- 2 As a Roman Catholic school we acknowledge the Salford Diocese's 5 principles:
 - a) sexuality is a gift from God;
 - b) we are made to love and be loved;
 - c) what we say with our bodies should reflect what we mean in our hearts and minds;
 - d) mature Christian sexuality involves openness and commitment to others;
 - e) genuine love is creative.

- 3 At St Bede's we believe that there are 4 absolutes:
- a) the Governors should own the College's sex education policy;
 - b) parents should be informed and should have the right to withdraw their children from the sex education programme;
 - c) no member of staff should feel obliged or compelled to take part in the teaching of the programme;
 - d) the programme should be wholly consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

We also believe that the programme should be consistent, compassionate, gentle, should respect innocence and should be delivered in an environment of mutual trust between staff and pupils which allows teachers to accept any questions, even when those questions challenge the teachings of the Catholic Church. Finally, we believe that the programme should be progressive, integrated, continuous and co-ordinated.