

St Mary's CE High School

"Aspire – Challenge - Succeed"

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION (SRE) POLICY

Date of Review: Summer 2013
Date of next Review: Summer 2016

Signed: Chair of Governors
Signed: Head Teacher

ST. MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Sex & Relationships Education (SRE) Policy

At St. Mary's, all students have the opportunity to access a well-planned programme of education relating to personal relationships and sexual matters. The teaching within this Church of England school is based on the Christian values of love, respect and faithfulness in our relationships with others. The teaching will be inclusive by nature; non judgemental; and include religious, non-religious, cultural and moral viewpoints. A copy of this policy is available to parents/carers upon request.

A definition of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)

SRE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of establishing and keeping happy and healthy relationships with others; the importance of family life and the acceptance of differing family structures and networks; and how to establish stable and loving partnerships based on mutual respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health.

SRE has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- Learning the value of commitment, family life, marriage, partnerships and stable loving relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the value of respect, love and care within a Christian framework
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas (from a variety of faith and non-faith viewpoints)
- Developing critical thinking as part of informed decision-making
- Challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour

Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect, respect for others and empathy for others
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- Managing conflict
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse
- Empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development and emotional expression at appropriate stages
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and

relationships

- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- Empowering students to make informed choices about their involvement in sexual activity. These are based on a full awareness of both knowledge and consequence of actions including the emotional aspects of sexual activity
- Learning about the law and legal responsibilities relating to sexual matters
- Understanding the moral responsibilities associated with relationships, including those that become / are intimate
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy

Aims of SRE

1. To inform and help students move towards a mature understanding of the responsibilities involved with regard to their relationships with others, including sexual behaviour
2. To enable students to take responsibility for their sexual behaviour with due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life by providing a basis for informed decision-making
3. Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
4. Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
5. Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
6. Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
7. Develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
8. Understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
9. Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
10. Be aware of sources of advice and support the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
11. Know how the law applies to sexual relationships

Effective sex and relationships education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It encourages self-esteem and self respect. It enables young people to mature, build up their confidence and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity and avoiding unplanned pregnancies and undue risks to sexual health. It builds up knowledge and skills, which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

Where SRE is taught

Much of the Sex and Relationship Education at St Mary's CE High School takes place within PSHCEE, Science and RS lessons. Tutors generally deliver the PSHCEE Curriculum with support from professionals and outside agencies including the Children's Centre and Family Support Workers where appropriate. Form Tutors work closely with their tutees over a number of years and we believe that they are usually the best people to work with the students on many of the SRE topics as they are aware of each student's individual circumstances. SRE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHCEE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included. The Science National Curriculum is delivered by staff in Science lessons. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten. Other subject areas may also deliver aspects of SRE from time to time.

The PSHCEE Programme and Science National Curriculum is taught in every year group.

Any SRE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, staff aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

More expert or specialist teachers support tutors who are uncomfortable with teaching certain aspects of the curriculum. Support is offered with the year team or from the PSHCEE co-ordinator who will help with planning or delivery lessons if required.

Assessment is carried out at the end of every module and involves teacher, student and peer assessment of knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.

RS contributes to this in a significant way by explicitly teaching about

- The value of marriage
- Sexuality including homosexuality and bi-sexuality
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Abortion and contraception.
- Issues such as arranged marriages
- Other religious attitudes to sex, marriage, relationships and contraception

Other subjects have a contribution as topics may arise naturally.

All teachers are expected to deal with questions relating to SRE objectively where questions arise in the context of any subject lesson, and to offer factual, balanced information acknowledging any ethical issues involved. Further guidance is available to staff involved in teaching SRE (see Appendix 1).

The content of SRE, resources and the stage at which topics are taught are reviewed regularly, and are subject to the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

All topics are approached in order to take account of the needs, ages, physical and emotional development of the students.

A variety of teaching and learning styles are used in order to promote the students' assimilation of the facts and issues relating to sex and relationships education. SRE lessons are mainly undertaken in mixed gender classes, although on occasions this may change depending on the topic and the needs of certain groups of students.

The SRE policy at St Mary's will be reviewed every three years.

The school:

- will provide students with accurate and up to date information
- will ensure that information is given in an unbiased and non-judgmental fashion, considering the school's Single Equality Policy
- will ensure that information given is appropriate to the age of the students involved, acknowledging that young people shouldn't feel pressure to engage in sexual activity
- will support students with appropriate pastoral care
- recognises the vital role and shared responsibility of parents/carers and guardians in this area of students' education
- will provide a forum in which students can discuss with each other, staff and outside agencies the different aspects of health related issues in an open and frank atmosphere
- will ensure that a programme exists that delivers effectively all aspects of health education in the (Science) National Curriculum at KS-3 and KS-4
- will arrange for suitable outside speakers to address students where practicable
- will use PSHCEE to address those areas of Health and Relationships education that are best suited to that environment
- will ensure a dialogue is open with parents/carers regarding the provision of health and sex education. Activities focusing on health and sex education will be publicised to parents/carers via letters, email and other forms of home school communication as appropriate
- will canvass the opinions of students regarding the effectiveness of the provision of health and sex education
- will use the VLE to signpost students towards selected reputable agencies
- will use external agencies to support high quality and specialist provision of SRE as required; and
- will monitor delivery to ensure that student entitlement is met uniformly, offering Inset to staff members to help them to achieve this

Inclusion

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

Governors intend our Policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught specific particular items in mixed groups. The School will respond to parent/carer requests and concerns.

Students with Special Needs

Governors will ensure that all young people receive sex and relationship education, and will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice and using specialist support where necessary.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

The School is committed to dealing sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.

The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are key partners with the school in preparing their students for sexual maturity. The School's teaching is complementary and supportive. Parents have the right to withdraw pupils from Sex Education (1993 Education Act - Section 24 (1)), except where it forms part of the National Curriculum Science Orders. We believe that communication with parents and consultation when appropriate should take place. If Parents/carers wish to invoke their right to withdraw their child from SRE this should be communicated to the Head Teacher, in writing, stating clearly the reasons for such a request. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers are welcome to review any SRE resources the School uses.

Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Members of school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to students when discussing matters related to sex and relationships education. However, members of school staff are not legally bound to inform parents/carers if a student is having a sexual relationship under the age of 16 unless they deem the student is not Fraser Competent*.

(*see Appendix 2 for definition)

In a case where a member of staff learns from an under 16 year old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- The young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice
- Child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the Designated Senior Person (DSP) responsible for Child Protection under the School's procedures
- The young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the member of staff will ensure that the young person understands that confidentiality cannot be promised and that they will refer immediately to the DSP.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation of Sex and Relationship Education

It is the responsibility of the PSHCEE Co-ordinator to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHCEE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The PSHCEE programme will be treated as a subject area in this exercise, under which all teaching and learning areas undertake self-evaluation and monitoring.

The Governors Curriculum, Standards and Student Welfare Committee is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on PSHCEE and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of students. This includes evaluating and commenting on the school's sex and relationship education policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.

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Pregnancy Unit

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This policy should also be referenced with the following School policies:

Curriculum Policy

Child Protection Policy

Health & Safety Policy

APPENDIX 1

SRE: Guidance for Members of Staff

General principles in SRE teaching

As professionals we believe that our teaching about SRE should be based on the following principles.

1. We dispel misinformation and myth
2. The emotional issues are identified and explored
3. A Christian position on such issues is identified and articulated
4. Wherever and whenever it occurs, that any form of prejudice is challenged
5. Physiological and other factual information is given regarding health implications
6. We identify for students the location and availability of further advice and information, including the school nurse and other outside agencies
7. Relevant cross curricular links are identified and utilised
8. All of the above is set in the wider context of the students' moral and ethical development

How sensitive issues are dealt with, in terms of the teacher style and teaching and learning methods used are crucial. Avoiding sensitive or controversial issues does not make them go away, and leaves children and young people confused and at risk. Such issues need to be presented in a broad and balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias, and sensitively pitched to the level of students' needs and experience. If staff are unable to respond to particular issues it is essential that referral be made to the Inclusion Co-ordinator for further advice.

Teachers will need to establish specific '**ground rules**'. These will help create a supportive climate for discussion and a group that is more willing to demonstrate trust and confidentiality, respect of privacy and the 'right to pass'. Sensitivity to religious beliefs will be an essential dimension and staff will need to maintain an awareness of the sensitivity that many issues will have for some students from different faiths.

As professionals and caring adults, we are naturally concerned about the moral values of our students. We believe that the best way to influence this is by example, not by exhortation, and by reasoned discussion and values clarification, not by instruction.

We cannot force or oblige people to 'be good'. Whilst we must acknowledge that young people will develop their own morality it is our responsibility to ensure that can do this with reference to Christian values. They will test their core values and beliefs against their experience. By this process they develop, own and implement their personal moral code. At St Mary's contentious issues are tackled with reference to Christian and other faith/non faith beliefs and practice.

A broad programme of SRE will respect individual differences - inspired by cultural, religious, and familial background - and it will see to promote those values which are common to all faiths and societies with a respect for human life and dignity

Confidentiality

Teachers may not give advice to individual students on contraception issues or personal problems. However, they may give information on where such advice or factual information can be obtained – for instance the school nurse. Teachers or other members of staff must not collude with a student by agreeing not to tell parents/carers or another colleague. All staff also need to be aware of the law regarding age of consent but also be aware of Fraser Competency (see Appendix 2) in regard to issues of confidentiality, reporting and referral.

The school has trained Child Protection Officers with whom appointments can be made to seek advice or help. The child should be told that there might be a need for appropriate action (e.g., in the case of a disclosure about sexual abuse), which will necessarily involve other relevant adults/agencies being informed. Trust can be maintained by reassuring the child, explaining at each stage what if anything must be done next and that nothing will be done without his/her knowledge. Generally personal information should be passed on in the interests of the well being of the child concerned, on a need to know basis (refer to the Child Protection Policy for further guidance).

Contraception

Teachers and members of school staff may give information about contraception without parental/carer consent but not personal advice to individual students under 16 years, the legal age of consent. Teachers and members of staff must advise students to seek advice from parents/carers and/or medical practitioners.

It is important that teachers are able to clarify students' understanding in a manner related to their age and experience. It is also recognised that students need to assimilate knowledge and understanding of contraception sometime before it is needed - hence the value of a 'spiral curriculum' when issues are approached each year in different ways and with increasing complexity. Young people need to learn to talk easily about contraception long before they may need to use it.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

The increasing risk of sexually transmitted infections has made it more important to raise these issues with students. This will include HIV and AIDS, chlamydia and other STIs. The importance of prevention is recognised within the Key Stage 3 Science Curriculum.

Attention is given to the forms of sexual and other behaviours which carry a higher risk of infection, how to recognise STIs and advice about ways in which risks may be avoided or lessened. How to practice safer sex is therefore an essential element in teaching students about their sexual health.

Same Sex Partnerships

Society is increasingly recognising the status and value of same sex partnerships. With these partnerships being recognised legally, it is important that this aspect of sex and relationships education is recognised at St Mary's.

As caring members of staff, we must always challenge prejudice and discrimination and support the development of self-esteem and a sense of responsibility in every student. This is a challenging task but one that can lead to more widespread sexual maturity and understanding. Respect for individuals and tolerance are key Christian principles that we have a duty to promote within our students.

Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, which prohibits the promotion of homosexuality, does not apply to schools. It does not prevent the objective discussion of homosexuality in the classroom.

Abortion

Students need to be presented with a balanced view that respects a range of religious and non-religious values and beliefs. It is, however, important that abortion is not taught as a method of contraception. Students need to be provided with the opportunity to distinguish between fact and opinion, to recognise the different views and opinions about abortion, and to establish their own views within the context of differing religious beliefs and practice.

Sexual Abuse

Increasing public concern about the widespread occurrence and long-term damaging effects of sexual abuse has been expressed in recent years. To ignore it would seem to neglect the needs of children and young people.

For all staff there are two dimensions:

1. Teaching for prevention, i.e., the promotion of self-esteem, the skills of assertiveness (e.g. ability to say 'No') lack of guilt or embarrassment about sexual matters and skills of self-expression including appropriate language and understanding.
2. Recognising signs of sexual bullying and abuse - physical, emotional and social. The class teacher or form tutor is able to play a significant part in the early detection of bullying and abuse. It is essential that correct procedures are followed as outlined in 'Working Together For Child Protection', a copy of which is with the Designated Child Protection Officers.
 - School-based staff should immediately inform the Head Teacher/designated teacher.
 - Head Teacher/designated staff must inform/consult with Social Services
 - No teachers should take on the role of Investigator. This is the responsibility of Social Services and the police.

School staff should observe the following:

- Give the child time to talk, but do not probe
- Record exactly what the child says
- Do not promise to keep secrets; state you may have to talk to someone else

School staff who, with ease and comfort, engage in sex education may demonstrate to students that they are adults who can be confided in. The inability of 'victims' to discuss their anguish is well documented.

APPENDIX 2

A Summary of the Law on Sexual Behaviour

The following is a summary of the main sexual offences in England

Unlawful Sexual Intercourse – Fraser Competency

It is an offence for a male to have sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of 16. Under The Fraser Competency, new guidelines / laws stipulate that:

- Sexual intercourse that occurs under the age of 13, or between people of any age with severe learning difficulties, is considered a Child Protection issue and must be reported immediately to the Child Protection Officers
- Sexual intercourse that occurs between the ages of 13 – 16 can be reported at the discretion of the adult. Guidance stipulates that if a child is 'not competent' (e.g drunk; under the influence of alcohol or drugs) then a referral must be made to the Child Protection Officers at once

In 2003 The House of Lords has ruled that young people who are under the age of 16 are competent to give valid consent to a particular intervention if they have sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable them to understand fully what is proposed and are capable of expressing their own wishes.

Additional advice can be sought from the Child Protection Officers; Head Teacher; school nurse; or community police.

Incest

It is an offence for a man to have sexual intercourse with a woman whom he knows to be his granddaughter, daughter, sister or mother. It is an offence for a woman of the age of 16 or over to permit a man whom she knows to be her grandfather, father, brother or son to have sexual intercourse with her by consent.

Rape

Rape is an offence. A person commits rape if

- i) They have unlawful sexual intercourse with another individual who at the time of the intercourse does not consent to it, and
- ii) At the time they know that the other person does not consent to the intercourse or they are reckless as to whether the person consents

If a student discloses that they have been raped a referral must be made to the Child Protection Officers at once. The Designated Child Protection Officer must then initiate a Child Protection Referral, along with a Police Referral.

Indecent Assault

A child under the age of 16 cannot in law give any consent which would prevent an act from being an indecent assault. Both boys and girls over 16 can give consent but, in the case of a girl, that consent can be vitiated in certain circumstances (i.e., when there is fraud as to the nature of the act). An assault need not be physical but may consist merely of conduct which

causes the victim to apprehend immediate personal violence. The assault must be capable of being considered by right-minded persons as indecent.

Acts of Indecency

It is an offence if a person commits an act of gross indecency with or towards a child under the age of 14. This encompasses conduct of an indecent nature which falls short of assault.

Homosexual Age Of Consent

Under the 2003 Sexual Offences Act is an offence to commit buggery with any person under the age of 16. This Act sought to remove any legal distinction in the criminal law between heterosexual and homosexual activity. All sexual activity with under 16s, whether homosexual or heterosexual, is now covered by the same laws.

See Appendix 3 for additional information on the 2003 Sexual Offences Act.

APPENDIX 3

Sexual Offences Act 2003: Key Messages from Teenage Pregnancy Unit

In England and Wales, the law on Sexual Offences has been updated. Under this Law, the legal age for young people to consent to have sex is still 16, whether one is heterosexual /gay/lesbian or bisexual.

The aim of the law is to protect the safety and rights of young people and make it easier to prosecute people who pressure or force others into having sex they don't want. Forcing someone to have sex is a crime.

Although the age of consent remains at 16, it is not intended that the law should be used to prosecute mutually agreed teenage sexual activity between two young people of a similar age, unless it involved abuse or exploitation.

Under the Sexual Offences Act a young person still has the right to confidential advice on contraception, condoms, pregnancy and abortion, even if they are under 16.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 received Royal Assent on Thursday 20 November and became law in May 2004.

Does the Sexual Offences Act 2003 allow health professionals and others working with young people to provide confidential sexual health advice and treatment?

Yes. Government has committed to ensure the Act will not prevent the provision of confidential advice and treatment to young people under 16, **including those under 13**. In light of concerns that were raised about the implications of the Act for those who provide sexual health care and advice to young people, an exception has been introduced, **in statute**, to make it clear that a person does not commit an offence if he acts for the purpose of:

- (a) Protecting the child from sexually transmitted infection, or
- (b) Protecting the physical safety of the child; or
- (c) Preventing the child from being pregnant, or
- (d) Promoting the child's emotional well-being by the giving of advice

as long as he does not act for the purpose of causing or encouraging the activity constituting an offence or the child's participation in it. Nor does it apply if the person is acting for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification.

The exception covers not only health professionals, but also anyone who acts to protect a child, for example teachers, Connexions Personal Advisers, teenage magazine advice columnists, parents, other relatives and friends.

Those providing contraceptive treatment to under 16's without parental consent will continue to assess competence on a case by case basis and work within the Fraser Competency. Further guidance is available within the Child Protection Policy.

Can young people under 16 continue to seek contraceptive or sexual health advice in confidence?

Yes. The Act does not change the fact that young people under 16, **including those under 13**, have the same right to confidentiality as adults.

Confidentiality can only be breached in exceptional circumstances where the health, safety or welfare of the young person or others would otherwise be at grave risk. The decision whether to breach confidentiality depends on the degree of current or likely harm, not solely on the age of the patient.

Does the Sexual Offences Act 2003 make it illegal for teenagers to engage in normal sexual activity?

The purpose behind the offences in the Act is to enable the prosecution of abusive and exploitative sexual activity. To achieve this the Act includes a number of offences that criminalise sexual activity between under 18's and under 16's. However, this will not lead to prosecution of mutually agreed sexual activity within normal adolescent behaviour, where there is no evidence of exploitation.

Guidance issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions to custody officers under the provisions in the Criminal Justice Bill will provide that the decision whether children under 18 should be charged with sex offences will be reserved for Crown Prosecutions, rather than the police. A charge will only be brought if it is in the public interest to do so. Revised Crown Prosecution Service guidance will make this clear.

APPENDIX 4 - Background information on Christian attitudes towards sexual matters

Different churches will have different opinions and attitudes on sex and sexuality.

There are some general principles that they share:

- The proper place for sex is within a loving and stable married heterosexual relationship
- The sexual act is an expression of love- a complete giving of one person to another in order for people to grow up experiencing happy and fulfilled sexual relationships they must learn the value of respecting other human beings not as objects of their own gratification but as other people with the same feelings, emotions and hopes as them

This can only be a brief discussion about these issues. For further information it is suggested reviewing the following websites:

www.reonline.org.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/religion
www.cofe.anglican.org.uk
www.quaker.org.uk

As well as this you can use church websites themselves, or the school website where there are other links that you can use to research these issues

Roman Catholic view on Contraception

Catholics have adopted a view of sex that aligns itself to a Natural Law ethic. What this teaches is that there are natural processes in the world which are God-ordained and should not be hindered or prevented by human intervention. For example, the Catholic Church teaches that the natural outcome of every sexual act is the possibility of procreation (babies). Unhindered (that is without using contraception) there should be the possibility of pregnancy with every sexual act. Thus the 'function' of sex is procreation. This is the natural outcome of sex. Anything that hinders this is unnatural. Artificial contraception, masturbation, anal and oral sex are understood as sexual practises whereby procreation is not possible and are thus considered unnatural (and obviously this means homosexual acts are considered unnatural also as a logical consequence of this reasoning). So although sex is to be enjoyed its primary function is for the procreation of the species (within the context of marriage).

Protestant view on contraception

Protestants do not hold the same view of sex and allow for the use of contraceptives in sexual activity. The Church of England approves the use of contraception.

It wasn't always so - as late as 1908 the Lambeth Conference stated:

"the Conference records with alarm the growing practice of the artificial restriction of the family and earnestly calls upon all Christian people to discountenance the use of all artificial means of restriction as demoralising to character and hostile to national welfare."

By 1930 the Lambeth Conference had changed its mind and declared that if there was an ethically acceptable reason not to have children and to continue to have sex then:

"the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of Christian principles."

By 1958 the Anglicans had concluded that God wanted the responsibility for deciding upon the number and frequency of children to be something for the consciences of the potential parents, and that they could manage their family and fertility 'in such ways as are acceptable to husband and wife'.

In modern times different Christian churches hold different views about the rightness and wrongness of using birth control. Liberal Protestant churches often teach that it is acceptable to use birth control, as long as it is not used to encourage or permit promiscuous behaviour. Less liberal churches only approve the use of contraception for people who are married to each other.

Since these churches regard sex outside marriage as morally wrong (or if not wrong, as less than good), they believe that abstaining from sex would be morally better than having sex and using birth control. More conservative churches suggest that contraception should be limited to married couples who are using it to regulate the size and spacing of their family. They often teach that using contraception to prevent children altogether is not desirable.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality is the emotional, psychological and physical love shared by two people of the same gender. If the church begins to accept that sex is the expression of love as well as for procreation then it needs to look at the traditional attitudes to homosexuality.

A homosexual relationship can be as loving and caring as any heterosexual one. Most Christian churches now accept the concept of homosexuality love while finding the sexual act more difficult.

What is the Catholic Churches view on Homosexuality?

Cardinal Hume in 'A note on the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning Homosexual people (March 1995)' wrote:

"It is necessary to distinguish between sexual orientations or inclination and engaging in sexual (genital) activity either heterosexual or homosexual. Neither a homosexual nor a heterosexual orientation leads inevitably to sexual activity. Furthermore an individual's sexual orientation can be unclear even complex. Also it may vary over the years. Being a homosexual person is, then, neither morally good nor bad: it is homosexual genital acts that are wrong ... The church does not consider the whole personality and character of the individual to be thereby disordered. Homosexual people, as well as Heterosexual people, can and often do give a fine example of friendship and the art of chaste (no sex) loving."

This means that the church does not condemn a person for being homosexual by INCLINATION but they say that a person should not express that feeling by sexual (genital) contact with another person. This distinction between the orientation of a person's sexuality and the outworking of it is the common viewpoint of the Christian church. Most Christians would argue that the persecution of a person because of their sexual orientation is wrong but that (genital) sexual contact between two people of the same gender is also wrong. This is bound up with the idea that chastity (no sex outside marriage) is the ideal for a Christian.

In line with our Christian ethos, the views of other faiths and no faith will be taught. For details/more information, please see the subject lead.