



OLHC Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy 2019

Last review: New Policy	Ratified: By OLHC Staff, School Advisory Council
This review: October 2019	Future Review: October 2022

Rationale

This policy seeks to support families in the important area of Relationships and Sexuality Education in pluralist 21st century Australia. Families seek to nurture their children’s values of personal dignity, identity, sexuality, family life and interpersonal relationships. This policy will inform the work OLHC School Wendouree completes in partnerships with families.

The intentionality of this policy is to ensure that Relationships and Sexuality Education at OLHC School contextualizes Catholic beliefs concerning Relationships and Sexuality Education, so they can be experienced meaningfully by all members of the school community.

This policy promotes dialogue and deep reflection between all members of the school community and beyond, recognizing the richness of the Catholic story as a source of wisdom regarding Relationships and Sexuality Education whilst reading the signs of the times.

OLHC School, is committed to ‘child safe’ environments. This policy compliments existing school policies that seek to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students is protected at all times.

Policy Statement

At OLHC School Relationships and Sexuality Education respects the God given dignity of each student and focuses on the development of a school community that is safe, supportive and inclusive of all.

We are committed to providing Relationships and Sexuality Education in partnership with families that nurtures the flourishing of each student. Relationships and Sexuality Education is focused on fostering student well-being and personal dignity through essential learning in the areas of sexuality, personal development, anatomy, physiology, morality and spiritual development. Learning is both developmentally appropriate and responsive to multiple elements that embrace growth in self-knowledge and self-control. Learning is interdisciplinary, informed by the Awakenings Religious Education Curriculum and the Victorian Curriculum.

Definitions

Families

Parents and caregivers who are the primary educators of their children.

Sexuality

Sexuality is a fundamental dimension of the human person. It is the basis of our capacity to relate to others, to foster friendship, to feel affection for another, to love, to experience intimacy and to procreate. This dimension of being human relates to physical, social and spiritual growth and development for every person. (CCC 2332).

Personal Development

Use of personal, interpersonal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills and strategies to promote a sense of personal identity, wellbeing and to build and maintain positive relationships.

Anatomy and Physiology

Understanding of different parts and systems of the body. The way in which the body grows and changes over a lifespan.

Spiritual Development

The capacity to have right relationships with self, others, creation and God. "A Catholic Spirituality should also bring the fruits of gratitude, joy, and celebration to people's lives. Growth into such a holiness is a lifelong journey; it is sustained by community and conversation" (Groome 2002 p. 275)

Moral Development

The process of understanding the good that ought to be done and the ongoing development of the capacity to exercise personal freedom to choose to act in accord with the good. This involves an understanding of values and the recognition of moral experience as a being drawn to the good as it is understood. Our lives and our particular actions become genuinely moral (or ethical) when we live with the awareness of being in relationship with all other people. (CCC 1935).

Foundation principles that underpin this policy and are explicitly incorporated into the curriculum

Principle 1

God is Loving Communion

God is love and God's life is expressed through loving relationships. Created in God's own image, humanity is inscribed with the capacity and responsibility for love and communion. Personal Relationships and Sexuality Education promotes bonds of communion with others that reflect God's love and recognizes the image of God in both the giver and receiver.

The Scriptures present the creation of man and woman as creation in the image of the God of love and communion. "God said, 'Let us make humanity in our image and likeness.' So God created humanity; male and female God created them." (Genesis 1:26-27)

Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person, especially the capacity to love and procreate and more generally to form bonds of communion with others¹. In male and female we recognize difference and complementarity that inform and enhance a communion of love².

Principle 2

The Dignity of the Human Person

Created in the image of God, all human life is sacred. Humanity has a radical equality before God and all human beings have an innate dignity and inestimable worth. Personal relationships that mirror God's love and communion are characterized by respect for God's image in oneself and in the other person.

Education in sexuality and relationships promotes the dignity of every human life and recognizes that in each person God "wonderfully created human nature and still more wonderfully redeemed it"³.

1 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd. ed., 2331-2332, accessed 17 May, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm

2 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd. ed., 2333.

3 CATHOLIC CHURCH, The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night – Prayers after the Readings, assessed 18 May 2018 <https://owensborodiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Easter-Vigil-Script.pdf>

Principle 3

Gradual Maturing of the Human Person

From his earliest years "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature" (Luke 2:52). The human person from the moment of conception is on a gradual journey of growth and maturation. The capacity and responsibility for love and communion expressed through life-giving relationships also grows and develops through one's life. Relationships bring opportunities for joy and bonding, but they can also involve experiences of brokenness and failure. The God of love and compassion is with us in times of joy and in times of struggle.

Education in sexuality and relationships should provide information reflective of children and young people's growing maturity. The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age⁴.

Principle 4

Freedom and Responsibility

Every person has a fundamental right to fullness of life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to ourselves, one another, our families, the larger society. The human condition means we have the fundamental capacity for making choices. Positive choices can enrich relationships committed to communion and love. However human weakness can result in negative choices that are harmful to one's self and others.

Relationships and Sexuality Education can inform and empower young people in discerning the impact that choices have on themselves and others and equip them with the necessary skills to accept and grow in their responsibilities "discovering that freedom is not the ability to do whatever you want, but the faculty of living in order to do what is good⁵".

Guidelines

1. Planned programs pro-actively addressing areas such as child and adolescent development, effective communication and sexuality, are an important component of Relationships and Sexuality Education. It is imperative that Relationships and Sexuality Education is not seen solely as planned programs. All people who work in Catholic Education share the responsibility to support young people in their journey through childhood and adolescence. Scripture, tradition and witness are a source of wisdom allowing participants (including adults) to inform form and transform themselves and the world.
2. OLHC School shares in the educational partnership with families. To assist in this, opportunities for formation of families in the area of Relationships and Sexuality Education and for families to be informed of the learning and teaching that is taking place in this area is a priority. The four principles of this policy are integral to the Catholic Story and Vision. Therefore, every student should have the opportunity to participate in "positive and prudent sexual education," in which the Vatican II Declaration on Education invites schools to provide for all students.
3. The connection between the formal curriculum and the fostering of high quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, parents and support staff sets the tone and priority of Relationships and Sexuality Education. Teachers are in a powerful position to counter balance exposure to messages from sources that often exploit the developing young person.
4. The following areas are important sources for the, planning and implementation of policy and procedures regarding Relationships and Sexuality Education:
 - Religious Education
 - The Spiritual dimension
 - Health and PE –focus area relationships and sexuality
 - Ethical Capabilities
 - Personal and Social Capabilities
 - Critical and Creative Thinking

It is crucial that foundational principles of Catholic Anthropology (see Policy Principles) will illuminate dialogue, learning and teaching and ongoing reflection, regarding Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school.

Appendix 1: Guiding Questions for Discernment

- How does the school's Vision and Mission statement, Learning and Teaching and other relevant school based policies align with this Relationships and Sexuality Policy?
- Where and how is Relationships and Sexuality Education explicitly targeted across the curriculum in a rigorous, consistent, methodical, intentional manner?
- In what ways are the four principles in this policy evident in learning and teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education?
- What plans are in place for the school to effectively provide relevant staff with the opportunities to participate in ongoing, professional learning and formation that assists in knowledge, critical reflection and discernment in the area of Relationships and Sexuality Education in a contemporary Catholic School?
- In what ways are families informed of learning and teaching concerning Relationships and Sexuality Education? Does it include a variety of means of communication including face-to-face sessions and meetings, noting aspects of the program that is to be taught?

Appendix 2: Suggested Resources

Victorian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education

Catholic Education Office Ballarat (2005) AWAKENINGS CORE DOCUMENT Curriculum
<https://awakenings.ceob.edu.au/>

Catholic Education Office Ballarat Vision and Mission <http://ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au/who-we-are/mission-vision/>

DOBCEL Child Protection Policy 2019

DOBCEL Pastoral Care Policy 2019

DOBCEL Protocol for Engaging People Outside the Diocese 2017

OLHC Child Safe Policy 2019

References

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls, 2000

Groome, T (2002) *What makes us Catholic? Eight gifts for life* Harper Collins San Francisco

CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety (2016) found at

www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/b5d43278.../Commitment-Statement-A4.aspx

Amoris Laetitia found at

m.vatican.va/.../papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf