



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

St. John's Primary School, Coleraine

Safeguarding Team

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Policy ratified by Board of Governors: May 2019

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Rationale:

RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI curriculum and taught in a holistic manner through Religious Education, PDMU, Health Education, World around Us, Drama and as situations arise. The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 set out the legislative basis, requiring all grant aided schools to offer a curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues. The learning process begins informally with parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place at school.

St John's is a Catholic Primary School and RSE is taught through the curriculum in an atmosphere of mutual respect within our Catholic ethos. As they mature, pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the importance of self-discipline, dignity, respect for themselves and others. We look at how pupils interact with each other, focussing on the need to make pupils feel safe and confident. Through the NI curriculum, children may learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older.

"...young people have the right to be stimulated to make sound moral judgement based on a well-informed conscience and to put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment..."(Gravissium Educationis, Para.3, Second Vatican Council)

Teaching at all times will be appropriate to the maturity and level of understanding of the pupils concerned. Teachers will be aware of, and take into account, the variety of existing pupil knowledge, the different attitudes and beliefs and the pupil's capacity to understand the issues. An improving awareness will be developed amongst staff of the vulnerability factors and current indicators of child exploitation. Effective RSE provision will help pupils recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations and how to take preventative action.

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to give and receive love; procreation and, in a more general way, the aptitude for forming relationships with others. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships. We, as a school will be seeking to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships - RSE is underpinned by a theology of relationship. Pupils will come to understand more about themselves, others and the beauty of creation.

The general principles which underpin our work are those set out in Departmental guidance and the following references and Circulars:

Irish Episcopal Conference, Share the Good News (2010)
Bishop's Conference of Ireland, Guidelines on Relationships and Sexuality Education (2013).
Love is for Life – No 7
Irish Episcopal Conference, Love is for Life (1985)
<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2004/05/03/supporting-marriage-and-the-family/>
Circular 2001/15: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
Circular 2001/15-2: Guidance for Primary Schools - Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
Circular 2010/01: Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
Circular 2013/16: Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools
Circular 2015/22: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Guidance
Sept 2015: CCEA - Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance: An Update for Primary Schools
Circular 2016/20: Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools
Circular 2017/04: Safeguarding and Child Protection: A Guide for Schools

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils:

- To form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;
- To examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives;
- To learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- to appreciate the sanctity of human life.
- To build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life;
- to make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives.
- To appreciate the values of respect, trust, honesty and compassion
- To understand the importance of personal safety and the dangers of abuse.
- To understand that love is the central basis of all relationships
- To develop a respect for difference, gender and race.

AIMS

The aims of RSE are to:

- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child;
- help the child develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships;
- Foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework;
- Promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions;
- Help the child come to value family life and marriage;

- Appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- Promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder birth.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self;
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth;
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others;
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts;
- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns;
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts;
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity;
- Develop personal skills which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships;
- Develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse;
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction;
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development;
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

SKILLS

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to develop the skills necessary to form and maintain relationships and to make informed choices and decisions regarding health and well-being.

Pupils should also be helped to develop skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values. They need opportunities to develop:

- **Practical skills** for everyday living; for supporting others; for future parenting;
- **Communication skills** learning to listen, listening to others' points of view; putting one's own view forward clearly and appropriately; giving and receiving feedback; handling and resolving conflict peacefully; being assertive;
- **Decision-making and problem-solving skills** for sensible choices made in the light of relevant information; making moral judgements about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgements into practice; acting

responsibly and with initiative as an individual or as a member of a variety of groups;

- **Inter-personal skills** for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader.

Confidentiality and Child Protection/safeguarding Children (in keeping with school policy and legal obligation) is paramount. Links to other policies-Religious Education, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Health Education, Teaching and Learning will be utilised. Links to relevant Department of Education legislation/guidelines/circulars etc. will be made.

MORALS AND VALUES

RSE should enable pupils to clarify what they believe and why they believe it and develop a respect for and interest in the beliefs of others. Pupils need opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how they affect them, and others. Children should be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- a respect for self;
- a respect for others;
- non-exploitation in relationships;
- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships;
- mutuality in relationships;
- honesty with self and others;
- a development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others;
- an exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships;
- compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life;
- self-discipline.

DELIVERING THE RSE PROGRAMME

Foundation Stage

Self-Awareness

- Exploring who they are
- what they can do
- identifying favourite things
- What makes them special

Feelings and Emotions

- beginning to recognise how they feel
- knowing what to do if sad or lonely, afraid or angry
- telling others about feelings
- realising what makes people sad or unhappy, recognising how people feel

Health and Safety

- Being aware of caring for his/her own body

- recognising good hygiene practices
- understanding growth and change
- exploring appropriate personal safety strategies, road safety,
- medicines and drugs -safety rules

Religious Education

- Life is a gift from God (Catechism of the Catholic Church CC 2260).
- Stories which help children distinguish right from wrong and help children to make moral judgements about situations.
- Moral values such as sharing, caring, love, forgiveness and friendship.
- The importance of family and care of the earth.

Key Stage 1

Self-Awareness

- Feeling positive about oneself
- awareness of own strengths, abilities, qualities, personal preferences
- recognising own feelings and emotions
- recognising and managing the effects of strong feelings – anger, sadness, loss
- acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes
- recognising how they can develop and improve learning

Health, Growth and Change

- Recognising and valuing the options for a healthy lifestyle
- having respect for their bodies and those of others
- being aware of the stages of human growth and development
- recognising how responsibilities and relationships change as you grow older
- understanding medicines and drugs
- understanding that, if not used properly, all products can be dangerous
- being aware that some diseases are infectious and some can be controlled

Religious Education

- My family is a gift from God.
- Christians respect their bodies and the bodies of others because they were created by God (CCC 364; CSRE 3a).
- The importance of looking after ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Key Stage 2

Self-Awareness

- developing self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- confidently express own views and opinions
- identify current strengths and weaknesses
- face problems and try to resolve them
- examine and explore own and others' feelings and emotions
- recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way
- develop insight into potential and capabilities
- reflect on progress and set goals
- identify and practise effective learning strategies
- be aware of different learning styles

Health, Growth and Change

- understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle
- recognise what shapes positive mental health
- know about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and other illicit and illegal substances
- understand that bacteria and viruses affect health and know that basic routines can be followed to minimise risks
- know how the body grows and develops
- be aware of physical and emotional changes (at a basic level) that take place during puberty (Y7 only)
- be aware of the skills and importance of good parenting
- recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent

Keeping Safe

- develop strategies to resist peer pressure
- recognise the nature of bullying and the harm which can result
- become aware of the potential danger from strangers and how their attention can make you uncomfortable
- recognise appropriate road use
- develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety – at home, near water, on the internet, TV etc
- know where, when and how to seek help
- being aware of basic emergency procedures and first aid (Y7)

Religious Education

- The importance of looking after ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- Life is precious and God-given.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE Policy:

Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Governors and available for parents on request. St. John's Primary School staff are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically important to the RSE Programme are:

- Religious sensitivity within our Catholic School Ethos in St. John's Primary School
- pupil feedback
- staff review and feedback
- parental feedback
- further Departmental guidance and legislative changes

Specific Issues for Consideration:

The Status of the Family:

The model of family life and marriage remain at the centre of the RSE policy, particularly as it is taught through Religious Education while linking up with other curricular disciplines. There is also an inherent sensitivity to the social change and family make-up today.

Sacredness of Life:

Life from the very moment of conception is sacred and this tenant of belief is reflected in RSE and based upon moral and spiritual principles, in no way can that life ever be compromised.

Confidentiality/Child Protection Safeguarding Policy:

The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. A key rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that "no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions".

Teachers must not promise confidentiality. A child must be aware that incidents in the classroom or in the wider context of the school may need to be reported. **The principal or designated teacher must be informed of any disclosures, which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected** (see Child Protection policy).

Homosexuality:

Within the primary school context and given media influence, children are much more aware of the language in this area: 'gay'/'lesbian'. Rather than going into what is really a post-primary issue, it may be important to look at issues related in the context of bullying and the use of names.

Sensitive Questions Asked By Pupils:

There will be no direct teaching on issues such as homosexuality, Aids, Contraception etc. but if a child raises these issues the school will decide whether these should be

addressed in a sensitive manner in keeping with the Catholic/Christian ethos of the school or referred to the parent/guardian.

Sensitive Questions:

- Requires the professionalism of the teacher.
- Reference to parents – pupils may be asked to seek clarification from their parents.
- Question box advocated allowing time for teacher and parent consultation.

Emotional and Physical Changes:

Emotional and pubertal changes are caused by hormonal activity; this is revealed in the influence of peers and going through such change, relations with parents can diverge with an increase in communication difficulties. Children can begin to view themselves in an adult world and yet are very much children. Bodily changes are intricately linked with emotional changes. The school must therefore address these issues in a comfortable, non-threatening manner with effective resources. The school provide teaching on this aspect as part of the preventative curriculum.

Terminology:

Use of proper biological terms and language is vital and when these terms are placed in the context of self-respect and respect for others then their essence is understood.

The use of the expertise of Agencies and Individuals:

There may be times when external agencies are involved to support pupils in their learning in RSE. The activities which the agency or individual is to undertake will complement the on-going RSE curriculum and will be within the context of the Catholic Ethos of the school. Pupils should be prepared for the visit, a suitable room should be allocated, the session should be uninterrupted and follow-up activities may be undertaken by the class teacher.

Withdrawal from class and supervision:

The DENI Circular 2001 clearly stipulates the right to withdraw from RE and children can be withdrawn from class by parents over the area of RSE, particularly if taught through RE. This may mean the child going to another class or supervised area for the duration of the lesson.

Staff Training:

Staff training will be held by the SENCO and Child Protection Teacher. There will be a need to crystallize a strategy for formation using teamwork and tapping into positive practice; consulting with teachers from our own and other schools who have had positive experience of the programme.

Outside support

Nursing service

NSPCC

Child Protection Support Service (EA)
EA Transition to Post Primary School

Policy Review:

St. John's Primary School will update this Policy in the light of any further guidance and legislation and review it annually.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

History of Implementation: May 2018

Review & Ratification: May 2019

Review Due: Term 3 2020