

St. Mary's Primary School, Fivemiletown

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy



Policy adopted by Board of Governors: March 2019

Policy review date: March 2021

_____ (Principal)

_____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

INTRODUCTION

As stated in DE circular 20213/16:

The revised curriculum aims to prepare young people for all aspects of life and the Department of Education recognises the importance of delivering appropriate age-related relationship and sexuality education within a clear values framework as a means of developing the child as a whole. RSE is an integral part of the revised curriculum in both primary and post primary schools and must be delivered in a sensitive manner which is appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and the ethos of the school.

The school accepts the Department of Education definitions as set out in DE circular 2001/15a:

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 our parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place in school.

We in Saint Mary's Primary School view the development and implementation of a policy in Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) as an important step towards achieving our aim to develop all aspects of a child's personality and growth. The morals and values of our Catholic Faith are the core principles that underpin the teaching of RSE. Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships. As the learning process begins informally in the home we will endeavour to engage in full consultation with parents regarding the aims, objectives and teaching programme of this policy and their views will be considered when implementing and reviewing the policy.

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities that enable pupils to:

- Form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework

- Learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect
- Build the foundations for developing more positive personal relationships in later life
- Make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives.

AIMS:

In Saint Mary's Primary School we aim to:

- Develop a loving pride in one's family and an active association with one's parish
- Promote an appreciation of the importance of the family unit (regardless of structure/composition)
- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of each child
- Help the children to develop healthy and respectful friendships within the school and at home
- Develop an understanding of how human relationships grow and deepen through friendship, love and affection
- Promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- Develop a positive sense of self awareness, self esteem and self worth
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well being of others
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making

SKILLS:

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to develop:

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- Communication skills – putting one’s own views clearly and appropriately; listening to others’ points of view; handling and resolving conflict peacefully
- Decision making and problem solving skills – for sensible and responsible choices; making moral judgements about what to do in actual situations
- Inter – personal skills for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader
- Practical skills – for everyday living; for supporting others; for future parenting

MORALS AND VALUES:

The RSE curriculum promotes the moral values of our Catholic faith and enables the children to begin to develop:

- A respect for self
- A respect for others
- Honesty with self and others
- Self-discipline
- The difference between right and wrong
- The responsibility for ones’ own actions
- The recognition of the moral dimension to situations
- An understanding of the long term and short term consequences of their actions

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR AIMS?

Children will also learn on a day-to-day basis from the Christian example set by adults:

- At home:

As first educators, parents are expected to lay the foundations for all acceptable patterns of behaviour, leading by example, and sharing with school the joint task of bringing the child through to the age of eleven with a balanced understanding of life and a healthy appreciation of the human relationships they form in years to come.

- At school:

- The friendly school environment created by staff who work in the building
- The messages we give out to children through religious celebrations, assemblies, discussions, workshops etc

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- The encouragement we give and the standards we uphold in terms of sportsmanship, fair play, accepting decisions and taking both winning and losing in the same spirit
- The respect we have for and show to all members of our community

KEY AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM:

WAU

Includes statutory requirements to enable pupils to explore:

- Who am I and what am I?
- Am I the same as everyone else?
- 'Me' in the world;
- How do things change?

PD&MU

Includes requirements to enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

- their self-esteem and self-confidence and how they develop as individuals;
- their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others;
- strategies and skills for keeping themselves healthy and safe;
- their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others;
- how to sustain their health, growth and well-being and coping safely and efficiently with their environment;
- initiating, developing and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships.

R.E.

The Religious Education curriculum addresses many aspects of the RSE programme. It provides opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues, relate moral principles to their personal, social and family life, and identify and explore values and attitudes that influence behaviour.

PUBERTY

It is recognised that children are maturing earlier. It is therefore important that, with the agreement of parents, pupils are provided with appropriate factual information and have opportunities to discuss their feelings and concerns to help pupils to be better able to manage the emotional and physical changes at puberty. The 'Love for Life' team will be used to support the delivery of the RSE programme to Primary Seven. Attendance at the 'Love for Life' workshop is by parental consent and a contribution towards the cost of the programme is requested.

SAFEGUARDING PROGRAMME

The school is aware of the abuses that can occur in society and integrates personal safety programmes into the curriculum. Children are made aware of key safeguarding personnel through assemblies, posters and circle time activities. Guest speakers are invited into school e.g. PSNI, Childline, NSPCC.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITES:

Generally RSE will be taught in mixed groups, so that boys and girls are encouraged to work with each other and gain an understanding of each other's perspectives. However, there will be times that teachers or the school nurse will work with single gender groups, e.g. P7 Love for Life programme, to explore puberty related physical and emotional changes in both boys and girls. The programme of RSE delivered will be accessible to all pupils regardless of age, culture, disability, sexual orientation, gender or social class.

MONITORING REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THIS POLCY:

This policy will be under periodic review; at least every two years. Any changes in provision or policy will be relayed appropriately. The review process will be assisted by the information from teachers, which will have been gained through the teaching situation. Feedback from parents, governors, outside agencies and pupils will also impinge on the process. Necessary changes in policy will be implemented.

Review subject to Diocesan approval and parental consultation.