

Termoncanice P.S.

RSE POLICY



Date ratified by Board of Governors: _____

Signed: _____

Next Policy Review Date: _____

Learning Together – Caring Together

Contents

Underpinning Principles	Page 3
Statutory Obligation	Page 4
Rationale	Page 5
Definitions	Page 6
Aims	Page 6
Cross Curricular Links	Page 7
Special Educational Needs	Page 7
Specific Issues	Page 7
Sensitive Questions	Page 8
Implementation	Page 9
Roles and Responsibilities	Page 10
Other Relevant Policies	Page 11

Termoncanice is a welcoming community, where each child will feel valued and where all will celebrate and share our Catholic faith in worship, spiritual development and hospitality.

Following the example of Jesus as our Shepherd and our greatest teacher, we develop in our pupils the active and creative minds which enable them to act with courage, inspire those around them and develop as young Christians, learning together and caring together. We promote an ethos which is sensitive to, and caring for, the needs of all our pupils through co-operative group work in the classroom and active participation in the wider community. We listen to their voice thereby empowering them to take their place in a rapidly changing world.

School leadership is collaborative, respectful and honest and all staff are encouraged to reflect on their professional practice so as to sustain school improvement.

Termoncanice Primary School offers a broad and balance curriculum enabling every child to achieve his or her fullest academic and social potential as an individual through the enjoyment of learning in partnership with staff, parents and the parish community, working with all for the good of all.

Principles Underpinning Relationships and Sexuality Education:

- The school should be seeking to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships
- The school must recognise its role in this area as subsidiary to that of the parents
- The Catholic school should reflect Catholic moral teaching on sexual matters
- The dignity, privacy and modesty of each individual child must always be respected
- The sanctity of human life
- Sexuality is a gift from God
- Relationships should be based on love and self-giving
- The virtues of modesty and chastity
- The forming of conscience
- The values of respect, trust, honesty and compassion
- The importance of personal responsibility
- The importance of commitment/marriage and the family
- The value of abstinence outside marriage
- The importance of personal safety and the dangers of abuse

Statutory Obligation

Relationships and Sexuality Education in the N.I. context

RSE is not a new area of the curriculum. The framework for sex education was initially established by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) in a *Guidance Circular 1987/45*. The main recommendation of this Circular was that each school should have a written policy on sex education which is endorsed by staff and governors and communicated to parents. It also stated “*sex education should be taught in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school and in conformity with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities*”.

The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 further 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.

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

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

Within Termoncanice Primary School, RSE will be taught with Christian and Catholic values at the core and so will be taught through Religious Education. We further recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers in this area of personal development and acknowledge the contribution that can be made by outside agencies with skill and expertise in particular areas of the curriculum (eg. Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre/ NSPCC).

Rationale

Ethos statement

At Termoncanice Primary School Christ is at the foundation of our whole educational enterprise. We develop attitudes and values based firmly on the Gospel. We seek to develop each child spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically in order that they may realize their full potential and have an appreciation of their self – worth.

Given the current media climate and culture, where children have the opportunity to be misinformed about sexuality, RSE has been introduced. Through RSE and other relevant areas of the curriculum, we endeavour to equip, inform and prepare children for life in a moral and spiritual context, enabling them to make positive responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives.

Methodology/Approach

RSE taught through Religious Education and linked with other subject areas such as PDMU, WAU and PE addresses the current trends in relations and sexuality, albeit in a progressive and sensitive manner according to the age of the children.

The DENI Circular 2001 states that RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI Curriculum, particularly through Health Education and Science and other spheres of influence. RSE must be taught in harmony with the ethos and values of the school. RSE is not value free and has family and marriage at its heart. Our RSE policy and programme links up with our school's Child Protection policy, our suite of Pastoral Care policies as well as other relevant documentation from DE, CCEA and the Derry Catechetical Centre.

The programme 'Formation in Christian Chastity' will be used as a resource for teaching RSE. Teaching will take place at whole class level and group level. The teaching staff of the school have agreed that the biological facts of life are more suited to secondary school and that the natural innocence of young children should be protected. Chastity is the virtue whereby we regulate our sexual activity in accord with our state in life. 'Formation in Christian Chastity' focuses on giving our children a proper, healthy and holy understanding of themselves and their gift of human sexuality.

Definitions

Relationships and Sexuality Education

As the title suggests there is an intricate entwining between relationships and sexuality, which is a life long process. The process involves the whole person in terms of belief, corresponding values and relationships in the personal and social domain. Skills, attitudes and parental influence are crucial. Sexuality impacts upon the physical, spiritual, social, psychological and cultural aspects of the human person. This gift of sexuality shapes and crafts relationships through the qualities of love, respect and future new life.

Sexuality in its essence is a gift from God. Our gift of sexuality calls us into a relationship with Christ, encompassing the whole person. We have a sense of belonging and identity particularly in our connectedness to others, the world, God and ourselves. Faith colours and influences our sexuality so we can interpret our relationships in and through Christ.

Morals: is essentially linked with behaviour and what we actually do. It is also directly connected with experience and faith.

Ethic(s): refers to a systematic structure such as the ‘Christian Tradition’, which provides a particular lifestyle with corresponding and inherent values.

Value: The characteristics of good moral behaviour e.g .respect for self, honesty with self and others.

Personal: Morality by its nature is personal but also public or social. It is about what we do every day and through example. The ethos of the school is concerned and caught up in the morality Christ presents.

Aims

- To help young people recognise their worth and dignity as children of God and to celebrate their own uniqueness.
- To help young people celebrate the God-given gift and sanctity of life.
- To help young people to appreciate their uniqueness and full potential as human beings.
- To enable young people to understand that love is the central basis of all relationships.
- To help young people become more confident in listening and talking about relationships.
- To help young people to grow in their understanding of how to develop, nurture and sustain relationships thereby building up God’s Kingdom here on earth.
- To encourage and promote a deep respect for women and men within the context of the school among staff, pupils and parents.
- To enable young people to appreciate sexuality as a gift from God.
- To know by name the various parts of the human body.
- To help young people recognise, understand and prepare for the body changes that they (and their friends) will undergo in the years ahead (puberty).
- To help pupils develop healthy lifestyles and learn how to keep themselves safe and to ask for help or advice when needed.

- To foster the growth of values which impact on moral behaviour.
- To develop a respect for difference, gender and race.

Cross Curricular Links

Currently RSE will be linked and taught through Religious Education while linking up with other areas such as PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding), WAU (World Around Us) and PE. RSE will be implemented through Religious Education, taking into consideration the materials from CCEA.

Special Educational Needs:

Special Needs are paramount at Termoncanice Primary School – the given material may need to be adapted and re-interpreted or some pupils may need small group or one to one support from a teacher or classroom assistant.

Specific Issues

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 tenet 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 conception, 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. We recognise that parents are the first educators of their children in these matters but the school will address these issues in a comfortable, non-threatening manner as they arise. Primary 7 girls will be given a talk by a female member of staff about changes in their body and what to do if they require assistance in school.

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 R.E Coordinator. 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.

Implementation:

How will this programme work?

'Formation in Christian Chastity' is based on the premise that parents know their children, where they are in their own personal development, and can best judge when their child is ready for specific lessons or information. The natural innocence of young children may be protected in this way. During P.1-4 parents will be the teachers. For each year we will provide a series of ideas and recommendations for you to review with your children. These will outline some of the basic concepts that are building blocks to understanding a chaste life and one that looks forward to a holy family life in the future. In P.5-7 we will assist parents with some classroom activity to support some of what they will be teaching in school.

Monitoring and Evaluating:

The RE Co-ordinator will be involved in monitoring and evaluating throughout the process; on lessons, the actual programme, staff feedback, pupil feedback and parental views.

The aims as listed in the policy will be at the forefront of any monitoring and evaluation to ascertain if they are being achieved.

This will be carried out through the creation of questionnaires.

Evaluating lessons is essential. Written evaluation should be kept whenever possible. Evaluation should be kept simple. Sentence completion is one technique. Another simple technique is the use of a continuum, with participants marking how they feel along the line. If teachers are to complete evaluations, time will be allocated during Directed Time in the Termly Planner

Evidence of pupils' learning might include:

- Feedback from staff and pupil evaluations.
- Reviewing a selection of pupils' work.
- Comments or advice from Diocesan Advisers.
- Questionnaires will be created in order to gain feedback from pupils and parents particularly during the initially years of implementing the programme and in Key Stage 2.

Roles and responsibilities:

Board of Governors

- Collaboration with Principal, teachers and parents.
- Examine and approve policy.
- Review policy.
- Religious sensitivity.

Principal

- Oversee the introduction, implementation and evaluation of the RSE programme
- Communication with R.E. co-ordinator
- Consultation with Governors, Staff, parents, Health Professionals and other community representatives when required.

RE Co-ordinator

- Draft policy document.
- Seek Ratification of policy from Board of Governors.
- Monitoring and Reviewing the Implementation and effectiveness of the RSE programme; consulting with staff, pupils and parents.
- Disseminate resources from the RSE programme to staff.
- Consultation with Governors, Staff, parents, Health Professionals and other community representatives when required.

Staff

- Planning and implementation of RSE.
- Evaluation of Teaching and Learning in RSE.

It is better that the programme is taught by someone who is positive and enthusiastic. Teachers who are reluctant to teach the programme or who lack confidence in doing so should inform the Principal or R.E. co-ordinator so that additional support can be arranged. This may involve the use of Diocesan Advisers, outside agencies or joint teaching with the R.E. co-ordinator or another member of staff.

Again, we uphold the primary rights of parents as the first educators of their children in RSE.

A copy of the policy and the RSE programme is readily available for parents to consult at any time.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

This policy complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- ❖ Positive Behaviour policy
- ❖ Anti-Bullying policy
- ❖ Special Education Needs policy
- ❖ Health and Safety policy
- ❖ Relationships and Sexual Education policy
- ❖ Digital Images policy
- ❖ Acceptable Use of The Internet and Digital Technologies policy
- ❖ ICT policy
- ❖ Mobile Phone policy
- ❖ Pastoral Care policy
- ❖ E-Safety policy