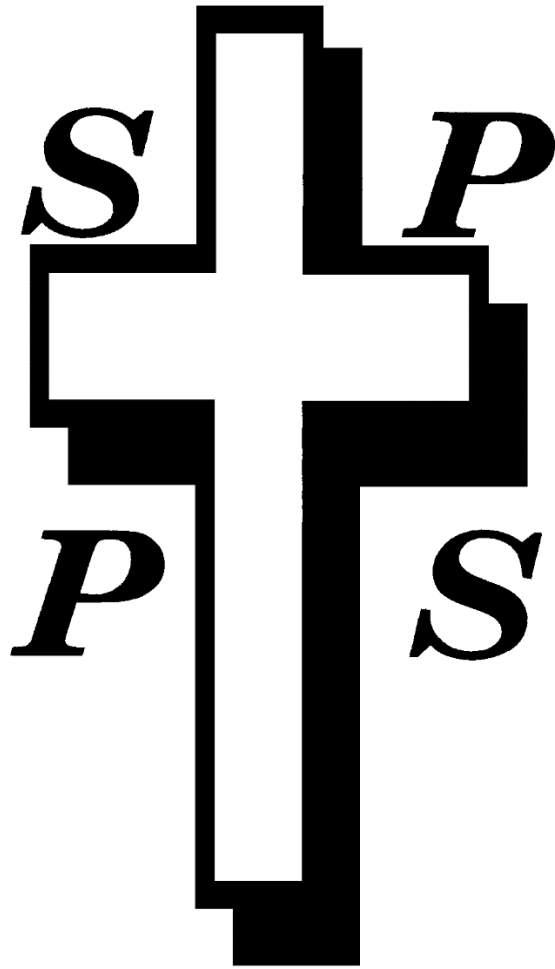


# St Patrick's PS



## RSE Policy

Review Due: March 2025

We believe that each pupil is entitled to experience a school climate in which the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, is marked by honesty, personal identification, warmth, trust and security. We recognise that Education in Personal Relationships and Sex Education is a shared responsibility between home and school and is based on a scheme that all are comfortable to use:

- the parent in the home environment
- the teacher in the classroom
- and the child in both.

*“The vision, the values, the human and Christian virtues, the revealed truths and the lived tradition which go to make up the Christian understanding of life cannot be taught without reference to sexuality and procreation and the responsible, respectful and loving use of these gifts of God.”*

***(Episcopal Commission for Catechetics)***

### **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**

In 2001 CCEA gave primary schools specific guidance on the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education. This material was accompanied by the Department of Education Circular 2001/15. The introduction of the (revised) Northern Ireland Curriculum in all grant-aided schools as required under the Education(N.I.) Order 2006 means that Relationships and Sexuality Education resides in a new area of the curriculum: PDMU. However, RSE within St St Patrick’s Primary School will be taught with Christian and Catholic values at the core and so will be taught through Religious Education. The Department of Education published guidance on provision and best practice in RSE. See Circular 2015/22

### **Rationale**

#### **Ethos statement**

At St Patrick’s 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.

RSE taught through Religious Education and linking with other subject areas such as Health Education, PE and Science, addresses the current trends in sexual activity, 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. Any RSE policy and programme should link up with Pastoral Care and Child Protection and any other relevant document.

After consultation with staff in each school we decided to commit to delivering the programme, 'In the Beginning'. As a result, teaching will take place as a whole class and when it is deemed appropriate boys and girls will be separated to ensure equal opportunities of access and relevance for all.

### **Definitions**

#### **Relationships and Sexuality Education**

As the title suggests there is an intricate entwining between relationships and sexuality, which is a lifelong 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 recognize their worth and dignity as children of God.
- To help young people to appreciate their uniqueness and full potential as human beings.
- To enable young people to appreciate sexuality as a gift from God.
- To foster the growth of values which impact on moral behaviour personally and socially.
- To develop a respect for difference, gender and race.
- To encourage and promote a deep respect for women and men within the context of the school among staff, pupils and parents.

### The Programme:

***The content headings and a summary of the concepts taught in each year group can be found in Appendix 1. The same concepts may be repeated in year groups in relation to the age, understanding and maturity of pupils.***

'In the Beginning', will be taught through Religious Education. The interpretation of CCEA materials will be under the ethos of the school.

Currently RSE will be linked and taught through Religious Education while linking up with other disciplines such as Science and Health Education and PDMU. RSE will be implemented through Religious Education, taking into consideration the materials from CCEA.

In Primary 7, the Love for Life organisation visit the school to deliver their programme – 'What's Inside?'

What's Inside is designed for pupils who are in the final stage of their primary education. This interactive programme aims to equip pupils in P7 to deal with the changes that so often cause concern and anxiety at their age. It reminds pupils that they are all unique by looking at the process of conception, the amazing construction of our bodies and the continuing process of growing up. The gender-specific puberty talk is often the most reassuring part of the day for pupils who are worried about changes in their bodies. Target setting, friendship, and assertive behaviour skills are also addressed in the presentation.

Topics covered in the presentation:

- Self-esteem & uniqueness
- Conception and pregnancy
- The rollercoaster of growing up
- Coping with change
- Puberty: physical and emotional changes
- Assertiveness under pressure
- Target setting
- Healthy relationships
- How to get help

The resources and teaching styles and strategies will consider the previous knowledge, understanding and maturity of the pupils.

### **Special Educational Needs:**

Special Needs are paramount at St Patrick's Primary School – the given material may need to be well broken down 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 will also be an inherent sensitivity to the social change and family make-up of 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:**

The child's right to privacy must be always respected 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 also, 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.

#### **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.

#### **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. These

resources from the '*In the Beginning*' Programme can be viewed by any parent / carer at the school office.

Awkward 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

Terminology:

Use of proper biological terms and language is vital and when these terms are placed in the context of respect and self-respect 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 should complement the ongoing RSE curriculum. 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.

## **Implementation:**

### **Monitoring and Evaluating:**

The principal 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.

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 to gain feedback from pupils and parents particularly during the initially years of implementing the programme and in Key Stage 2.

### **Staff Training:**

Staff training will be held by the Diocesan Advisers. 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.

## **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
- 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 so that additional support can be arranged. This may involve the use of Diocesan Advisers or outside agencies.

### **Parents**

At St Patrick's Primary School, we recognise that parents are the primary educators of their child. The primary responsibility for RSE lies with parents. The school will do their utmost to support parents in their role.

### **OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES**

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

- Positive Discipline/Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Special Education Needs
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexual Education
- E safety and the use of Digital devices
- ICT
- Pastoral Care Policy



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Appendix 1 – Summary RSE to be taught in St Patrick’s PS**

#### **Primary 2 - God’s Master Plan.... Creation**

- Recognise all living things which are divided into male and female
- It presents the word sex as a division of gender.
- It shows families with adults & young, and eventually places humans into this plan
- It reminds us of the way God wants us to live together....in friendship, in love and in Him.

#### **Primary 3 - God Made Me**

- Puts the child in the context of their own family, surrounded by love and care
- It explores the individuality of the child and recognises their value
- It acknowledges our imperfections and encourages pride in being who we are
- It promotes health education and focuses on experts who support our bodily needs, eg. doctor
- It explores actions, consequences and responsibility
- It develops good citizenship

#### **Primary 4 - God the Master Designer (uses flowers as the main focus)**

Develops:

- Male and female parts and functions
- Pollination and fertilization, reproduction and life cycle
- Our relationship with God through Mass, Prayer and the Gospels
- The importance of communication
- Good citizenship and an ‘active’ response to our Faith and supporting the needy

#### **Primary 5 - God the Caring Protector (uses fish as the main focus)**

Develops:

- Male and female identification (naming parts)
- Homebuilding and courtship
- Laying of eggs(female) and fertilizing with sperm(male). The use of the terms ‘fertilizing’ and ‘sperm’ may or may not be used.
- Aftercare, protection of young and life cycle
- Parental responsibility
- Stewardship and care of the world given to us by God

#### **Primary 6 - God the Great Provider (uses birds as the main focus)**

- Male and female identification (naming parts)
- Courtship, homebuilding and life cycle
- Mating, passing of sperm, fertilization of eggs inside the female. (Again, terms/words of the teachers’ choosing)
- Shared responsibility of parenthood - incubation, feeding, hatching and aftercare
- Partnerships for life
- Good friendships and bad peer pressure
- Society and contribution
- Christ in our lives; living our Faith

### **Primary 6 - God the Friend and Neighbour (uses rabbits as the main focus)**

Develops:

- Male and female identification (naming parts)
- Courtship, mating, homebuilding, life cycle
- Birth, feeding (suckling), aftercare of young and parental responsibility
- Knowing yourself and how others might see you
- Understanding true friendship and love
- Respect for others and care for those in need
- Living the Gospels

### **Primary 7 - God the Image Maker (uses humans as the main focus)**

Develops:

- The 'Love for Life' organization are invited to school to talk to P7 about friendships/relationships and puberty
- Friendships and relationships via (late-teen) boy meets girl relationship which steadily develops - attraction, friendship, falling in love, engagement, planning a future, marriage, setting up home and having a family.

### **Primary 7 - God the Image Maker Part 2 (continues from the point of birth)**

Teaching staff at our school have agreed that parts of this section are more suited to Secondary School and so will not use all of the resources available in this section of the programme.

Develops:

- Helplessness of the new born baby/need for support
- Physical growth, support and decision making, including problem solving
- Spiritual growth and the importance of the Sacraments
- The uniqueness of the individual through genes, family characteristics, outward appearance, inner feelings and attitudes towards others, with Christ as our role model
- Personal hygiene, resisting peer pressure - drugs, smoking and alcohol
- Age-appropriate relationships and activities
- A review of life / a time for making good decisions
- A call for God / Christ to enter our lives and help us to become as He intended us to be.