

*St. Finlough's Primary School*

*Sistrakeel*



# RSE POLICY

## **Introduction**

The aim of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) at St Finlough's PS is to develop attitudes and values based firmly on the Catholic Faith. 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. RSE plays an important role in increasing informed choice by providing opportunities for pupils to examine their own values and beliefs in the light of those held by others.

## **Rationale**

- 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.
- 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, form 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 child.
- 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.
- 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 and in St Finlough's PS we 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.

## **Context**

### 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. The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Elements of RSE are embedded in many areas of the curriculum, such as Personal Development for Mutual Understanding, the World Around Us and Religious Education.

## **Cross Curricular Links**

This document reflects the core principles of other related policies, and aspects of RSE are likely to be addressed already within school's Code of Conduct for Employees, Code of Conduct for Students and Intimate Care Policy, all of which are circulated to all teaching and non-teaching staff.

## **Aims**

The aims of RSE are to:

- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- 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
- Appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- Promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth
- To form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect
- 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.

## Skills

The RSE curriculum and other related disciplines will contribute toward enabling 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 judgments about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgments 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.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Relationships Between Home, School and Community

The effectiveness of this RSE policy and programme is dependent on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has distinctive contributions to make. Teachers, governors and parents can raise any concerns they might have about RSE issues and the Senior Management will address these or refer to the BOG if necessary.

### The Role of Senior Management

A planned, structured and coherent approach to RSE will be sought throughout the school, in conjunction with CCMS. Implementing this and other related policies will be managed by the Designated & Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection. Consultation will need to be initiated with governors, staff, parents, health professionals and other relevant community representatives as necessary.

### The role of Governors

The Board of Governors will foster and support the development of our RSE Policy by collaborating with teachers and parents and reviewing and ratifying the policy. They will seek to accommodate and be sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs of staff and parents while fulfilling their responsibility to ensure the availability of adequate RSE for all children.

### The Role of Teachers

The classroom teacher has a significant and diverse role to play in the planning and implementation of RSE in the school. At all times, the role must be considered to be complementary to that of parents, taking cognisance of the individual needs, age, maturity, stage of development and family background of the child. The class teacher will strive to promote the aims of this policy and other related policies and deliver the requirements of RSE at the level appropriate to their particular class.

### Involving Parents

Our aim is to develop a structure which enables both parents and teachers to work together. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a child's life, and especially so in the domain of relationships and sexuality. Parents are often concerned about the information their children are receiving from their peers and from television, videos, newspapers and magazines. We will attempt to provide opportunities for pupils to consider this information and ensure they receive accurate information. Where puberty-related changes are being covered with P7 classes, parents will be informed about when these talks will take place, the content to be covered and the activities that pupils will undertake.

### **The Rights and Responsibilities of Parents**

#### We will strive to facilitate the following rights of the parents:

Parents of pupils in grant-aided schools have a right to have their children educated in accordance with their (the parents') wishes, in so far as this is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.

Parents also have a duty to cause their child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

We will endeavour to take account of the wishes of any parent who wishes their child to be excused from particular, or all, sex education classes.

Any issues raised regarding the content of an element of RSE, or other related programmes, will be addressed and resolved in a positive manner as part of the consultation process.

Although full consultation may have been undertaken, a parent may still request that their child is excused from participating in some or all of the RSE lessons. In this circumstance, the school should discuss the nature of the parent's concerns, attempt to deal with any misunderstandings, identify the specific issues and lessons which are problematic and explain the implications for the pupil in terms of the parts of the statutory programmes of study which will be missed.

The social and emotional effects of exclusion should be considered, as well as the likelihood that pupils will discuss the content of RSE lessons outside the classroom.



Prior to delivery of the programme, parents/carers will be invited to a talk hosted by Love for Life to inform them of the contents of the programme. They will answer and questions and concerns that parents/carers may have.

### **Delivering the RSE Programme- skills and content**

In St Finlough Primary School, we have decided, through consultation and agreement with our parents, Board of Governors, principal and teachers that RSE will be delivered through our RE Programmes, Grow in Love with the addition of Love for life programme for P6 & b7. Grow in Love will be the main scheme used by all year groups.

As deemed appropriate, sensitive issues may be addressed by experts from outside agencies. Planning and materials to be used will be discussed in advance with the class teacher/RE coordinator and will be in keeping with the Catholic ethos of our school. Parental consent will be sought beforehand.

In addition, the general primary curriculum offers opportunities to develop an RSE programme in a holistic and cross-curricular way. Issues can be integrated within specific topics, discussed in subject-related contexts, addressed through health education, pastoral work and at assembly time as well as during visits from the school nurse or other agencies.

It is important, therefore, for schools to consider the links that exist between RSE and the other curricular areas at each key stage.

A review of existing provision will reveal where aspects of their proposed content are being covered already and where there are gaps in provision.

In many instances, RSE shares content with WAU, Science, Religious Education, Physical Education and English, as well as PDMU. Circle Time may be used as an appropriate tool to engage children in RSE.

## **Key Stage 1**

### **Myself**

- Myself, how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example, hygiene, sleep, exercise
- Naming parts of the body (basic), developing an agreed language for our bodies
- Being myself - I am unique, my self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, respect and caring for myself
- Similarities and differences between myself and others, for example, uniqueness, fingerprints, gender issues, different rates of growth
- An introduction to the stages of human development, changes as we grow, for example, baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents.

- Recognising moods, feelings and concerns and developing a language and an appropriate manner of expressing them, for example, What do I do if I feel sad or angry?
- Personal likes and dislikes.

### **My Relationships**

- My family, special people in my life - what they do for me and what I do for them
- Friendships - getting on with each other, for example, communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating and sharing
- Ageing - how do we know that things are alive, dead, young and old
- Loss and mourning - death of a person or a pet. (Note: the situations of the pupils should be taken into account prior to introducing this topic.)
- Respect and caring for family members and friends, for example, caring for a new baby
- Bullies and what to do about them
- Personal safety - simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety
- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends and the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances
- Strategies which pupils might use to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations

### **My Community/Environment**

- Awareness of different types of families and the roles of individuals within families
- Keeping safe, for example, dangerous places, dangerous situations, the adults who will help, how to get help from others
- Rules at home, at school and in the community
- Respect and caring for people in the community, e.g. elderly people

### **Key Stage 2**

#### **Myself**

- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy
- The physical, social and emotional changes which occur during puberty (girls and boys)
- Myself and my peers - Different rates of growth and physical development, maturity
- Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses
- Feelings, for example, things that make me happy, sad, excited, embarrassed, angry, scared
- Expressing our feelings, showing love and affection

- Gender roles
- Making choices – the influences on me and the consequences of actions for oneself and others
- Distinguishing between right and wrong
- Secrets - knowing the difference between good and bad secrets, what to do about bad secrets

### **My Relationships**

- Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values
- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's views, emotions and feelings
- Families and how they behave. What family members expect of each other
- The meaning of friendship and loyalty; making and maintaining friendships and social relationships, for example, identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people's point of view
- Handling difficult situations, for example, teasing, bullying, or death of a family member
- The meaning of relationships within families, between friends and in the community
- Behaviour - what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate physical contact
- Identifying dangers and risks within relationships
- Being assertive in defending individual rights and beliefs
- People who can help pupils when they have anxieties, concerns or questions

### **My Community/Environment**

- Appreciation of the family in relation to the school and the wider community
- Cultural differences in families and family relationships
- Helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different circumstances
- Messages and images about health, gender roles and sexuality from the media, family and peers

### Primary 6 and 7

- The RSE programme 'What's Inside' will be delivered to the P6 & 7pupils by Love for Life in a 3-hour long workshop. They are committed to working in partnership with teachers to ensure that excellent Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is delivered.



- Love for Life will deliver the programme through holistic Relationship & Sexuality Education (RSE) in schools and the community:
- Love for life will encourage and equip young people to understand and value strong, healthy relationships
- Love for life resource families to use the positive influence they have to support their young people as they develop relationships with others
- Love for life will create space for honest conversations about authentic relationships.  
**(Contact details for Love for Life Team- Appendix 1)**

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- The school will update this Policy in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary. The opinions of pupils, parents, staff and governors will be valued and where appropriate, action will be taken.
- The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of each member of staff and its effectiveness and implementation will be regularly monitored and reviewed.
- This policy will be updated in light of any further guidance and legislation. The Board of Governors will also monitor the implementation of the policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports.

**Date Policy Reviewed:**            **April 2022**

Signed: Geraldine Herron (Designated Teacher)

Yvona Patton (Principal) **(Acting)**  
D. Roddy (Chair of Board of Governors)

Contact Details:

Appendix 1

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