

Bunscoil an Iúir

Ní neart go cur le chéile.



**Polasaí Chosáint agus Cúram Tréadach
Pháiste**

**Relationships and Sexuality Education
(RSE) Policy**

Reviewed: November/December 2016

Ratified: 22/02/17

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

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.'

School Ethos

We in Bunscoil an Iúir have a responsibility for the general welfare and the safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. Bunscoil an Iúir is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status

Rationale

All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life and RSE plays an integral part in this. A key learning area in the Northern Ireland Primary School Curriculum is Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and an integral part of the PDMU curriculum is the provision of RSE.

In primary schools, RSE builds in a developmentally appropriate way on children's existing knowledge and experience of their bodies, relationships and the world around them. To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the programme will be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils and will meet the needs of both genders.

An RSE programme for primary schools should provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- themselves as unique human beings
- their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth
- their friendships and relationships with others and
- the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur at puberty.

All teachers will deliver the RSE programme. Topics and themes can be introduced as part of the Health Education curriculum, PDMU, RE, The World Around us, PE and Drama.

It is essential that teachers create a classroom environment which is supportive, where self-esteem is fostered and where the pupils feel valued and affirmed. The climate of the classroom needs to promote mutual respect and the dignity of each individual. It is important to create an atmosphere in the classroom which allows all pupils to feel comfortable, to express opinions and feelings in a secure and safe manner and to explore issues which may be sensitive and personal. Every effort should be made to ensure that the whole group is at ease, with pupils showing respect for each other and realising their responsibilities to each other. Ground rules should be agreed to help to minimise embarrassment and encourage respect for each other's opinions.

Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos and stories can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

Important considerations are the:

- degree of trust, respect and positive regard for pupils
- relationships between the teacher and pupils, and between the pupils themselves
- need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives
- use of teaching and learning methods which involve pupils actively in their own learning

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives.
- learn to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect.
- build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life.
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives

Aims:

The aims of RSE are to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions
- help develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships
- foster a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework
- value family life and marriage
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- appreciate the value of human life and the wonder of birth.

Learning Objectives:

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
- understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families and in wider contexts
- develop an awareness of differing family patterns

- develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in personal, social and health contexts
- 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.

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 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; 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.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HOME, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY.

The effectiveness of this policy and its implementation is dependent on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents/carers, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has a distinctive contribution to make.

Keeping parents/ carers informed about the school's provision for RSE is a vital element of this policy. Informal sessions may be arranged so that parents/carers could consider issues such as the readiness of children for aspects of the RSE programme, the appropriateness of resources, the content and methodologies proposed and the handling of sensitive topics.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy
- The Principal and Senior Leadership Team co-ordinate the school's approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, and health professionals.
- The staff provide a link and have a complementary role with parents/carers and deliver the school's RSE programme within the context of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Teaching and Learning
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Children
- Pastoral Care
- Health Education
- Drugs Policy
- Circle Time
- Golden Time

Department of Education Circulars providing advice on developing or reviewing their RSE policy are provided in:

- Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- Circulars 2001/15a and 2001/15b)
- Circular 2013/16
- Circular 2015/22 Relationships and Sexuality Education

These circulars are available on the Department's website: www.deni.gov.uk. Guidance and resources on RSE are also provided on the NI Curriculum website at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

