



**Victoria Primary School**  
**Relationships and Sexuality Education**  
**Policy**  
**2023**

This policy should be read with the:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Internet Safety Policy
  - PDMU Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

## **Vision Statement**

*An inclusive, imaginative and inspiring Learning Community where everyone can be safe, healthy, happy and successful together.*

# V.P.S. Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

## **Rationale**

All children have the right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life and Relationships and Sexuality Education plays an integral part.

RSE helps children and young people acquire age-appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and develop attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy. Effective RSE, which is taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner, encourages children and young people to value themselves as individuals, to develop and maintain healthy relationships with others and to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives.

This policy has been created using the revised DENI circular 2015/22 and the CCEA Relationships and Sexuality Education in Northern Ireland Guidance for Parents and Board of Governors. Members of staff and governors were consulted and invited to respond to the draft policy. All responses were discussed, and any appropriate amendments were made to the policy document.

This policy takes account of The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, which stated that all children should be treated with respect and dignity and are not treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

The United Kingdom Government, including Northern Ireland, is a signatory to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It has agreed to uphold the rights of children and young people as set out in the convention. This means that all children and young people in Northern Ireland have a right to good quality education in accordance with the Convention.

The policy forms part of the school Pastoral Care Policy and closely links with the school Child Protection Policy, the Health, and Safety Policy and the PDMU policy.



## Aims of R.S.E.

Relationships and Sexuality Education in Victoria Primary School provides children with opportunities to:

- Value themselves as unique individuals;
- Respect themselves and others;
- Develop their own moral thinking and value systems;
- Learn about friendships and healthy relationships;
- Recognise their feelings and those of others, and learn how to communicate those feelings;
- Learn about the changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence, particularly the emotional and physical changes of puberty;
- Learn about keeping themselves safe and know what to do or who to go to if they feel unsafe.



At Victoria Primary School we have based our Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy on our school ethos and principles which underpin everything we do:

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can feel safe, healthy and happy.
- We believe every child should be celebrated in their diversity
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive, and restorative ethos across the whole school.
- We value the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.

At Victoria Primary School we feel the teaching of RSE is important to:

- Provide a better understanding of diversity and inclusion
- Teach children the importance of knowing their rights (UNCRC)
- Helps children to keep themselves safer in the digital world
- Provides reliable, accurate and timely age- appropriate information
- Promotes the use of appropriate language
- Helps children to recognise inappropriate behaviour and touch

R.S.E. is a statutory element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding. It supports the curriculum aim which is 'to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.

Teachers will endeavour to ensure that pupils are enabled to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing:

- Self-awareness
- Feelings and emotions
- Learning to learn
- Health, growth, and change
- Safety
- Relationships
- Rules, rights, and responsibilities
- Managing conflict
- Similarities and differences
- Learning to live as members of the community

Teachers will access the PDMU Resource pack Living and Learning Together as well as using the RSE Hub on the CCEA website.

Planning for RSE will be aided through the RSE Progression Framework which clearly sets out the key themes to be covered at each stage in detail.

All staff will have access to training via the Training and Professional Development section of the CCEA RSE Hub and annually during the Child Protective staff development day.

RSE is a priority for all pupils, and this includes learners with SEN (Special Educational Needs) who have social, emotional, and mental health needs and/ or learning disabilities. It is important that learners with SEN have access to RSE which is appropriate to their age and ability.

Through our links with St Mary's Primary School, we continue to enhance educational and personal development opportunities for our children to be open to diversity, within and across communities.

### **Sharing Responsibility for Relationships and Sexuality Education**

At Victoria Primary School, we believe that the responsibility for relationships and sexuality education should be appropriately shared between teachers, parents and the school community. Its effectiveness depends on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has distinctive contributions to make and the school will endeavour to define and fulfil its responsibility, providing an opportunity for teachers, governors, and parents to raise any issues and concerns they might have about the R.S.E. policy and programme.

## **Equal Opportunities**

All pupils, have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, regardless of their age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, disability status, religion, or social class.

The R.S.E. programme will meet the needs of all children; it is developmental and appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. As maturity is not always determined by chronological age, teachers are sympathetic to the personal and emotional circumstances of each individual pupil. They are aware of, and take into account, the variety of existing pupil knowledge, differing attitudes and beliefs and the pupil's capacity to understand issues. This is particularly important in relation to children with special educational needs where physical development may outstrip emotional maturity.



## **The Involvement of Parents**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process which begins at home. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a young person's life, particularly in the sphere of RSE. It is understandable that many parents and carers are anxious about when, what and how their children will be taught RSE. Concerns range from parents or carers thinking that their child is too young to participate in these classes, to worrying that exposure to sex related issues will lead their child to become more sexualised. At VPS we will consult closely with parents and carers to allay these fears and support them to keep their children safe.

There is no statutory parental right to withdraw a child from classes in R.S.E. The school will consider any parental concerns, attempt to deal with any misunderstandings, identify the specific issues and lessons which are problematic and explain the implications for the pupils 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 the R.S.E. lesson outside the classroom. However, the school will, as far as possible, try to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution.



## **Specific Issues for Consideration**

### **Confidentiality and Child Protection**

Staff cannot give a guarantee of confidentiality to pupils around issues relating to child protection. If details are revealed that would lead staff to suspect that sexual abuse is involved, the teacher must follow the child protection procedures outlined in that policy.

### **Answering Pupils' Questions**

If pupils raise questions that are beyond the maturity level of the majority of the class, staff will make time to speak to them individually. If the teacher feels the question was a genuine one, he/she may liaise with parents or may decide to answer it in a sensitive way in the presence of a colleague. If the question asked raises child protection issues, this will be referred to the designated teacher for child protection.

### **Terminology**

All staff teaching R.S.E. related issues will use the proper biological names for body parts and sexual acts, where appropriate and relevant to the R.S.E. programme. The use of common slang will be avoided where possible.

### **The Use of Resources and Outside Agencies**

All resources (books, video clips, TV programmes, internet sites, CD roms etc) are vetted before use to ensure that they are consistent with the school's policies and ethos.

When education and/or health professionals from statutory or voluntary organisations are invited into the school, the activities which the agency or individual undertake will complement the ongoing programmes within the school. Care will be taken to ascertain that they have read and are willing to comply with the school policy, and that they know what has been taught in preparation for their visit and what will be done as a follow-up.


**The teacher will always be present when an individual or a representative from an agency is taking a class. Such a visit is not to be seen as the RSE programme, but as an integral part of it.**

### **Dissemination of the Policy**

The contents of this policy will be made available to all members of the Board of Governors teaching and support staff. It will also be available to all parents on request and can be found on the school website. All health or educational visitors discussing issues related to R.S.E, will be provided with a copy of the school policy and will be encouraged to adhere to and follow its aims and objectives.

This document is freely available to the entire school community and is available on the school website. It will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**Signed – Chair of Governors:** 

**Signed – Principal:** 

**Date: May 2023**

**Review Date: 2026**