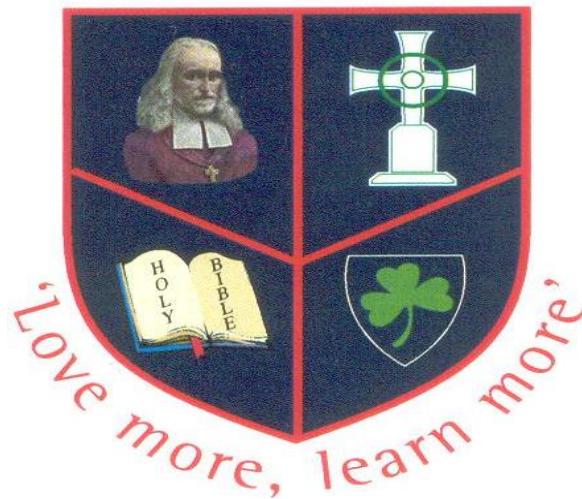


Relationships and Sexual Education Policy

St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. and Nursery Unit Toome



As a Catholic school, we at St Oliver Plunkett's aim to provide a caring, secure, inclusive and happy environment in which all children are treated as special and most precious members of our school community. We endeavour to meet their needs, while nurturing their gifts and talents. An ethos of achievement, improvement and ambition exists with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability. We seek to create a learning community where children, parents, staff and governors demonstrate a commitment to learning and support of each other. We pray together, we play together and we work together to promote excellence across all areas of the curriculum.

Our motto embodies our mission statement:

Love more, Learn more

Reviewed by Mrs Bronagh Brunton, Religion Co-ordinator
January 2022

The Department of Education Circular 2013/16 states:

"The Department requires each school to have in place its own written policy on how it will address the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education".

The circular also states that Relationships and Sexuality Education "should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles held by parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) and school management authorities".

This policy also seeks to address the requirements set out in DE Circular 2017 'Safeguarding and Child Protection: A Guide for Schools' which states that schools are responsible for developing their own policy on how they will address RSE within the curriculum, based on the ethos of their school and subject to consultation with parents and pupils.

As a Catholic school, St Oliver Plunkett's seeks to ensure all of its pupils develop to their full potential spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially. The Relationship and Sexuality Education programme is an important element in securing the holistic development of the children.

Rationale

The sacredness of human life and the uniqueness of each human being is at the heart of the school's teaching of RSE. Sexuality is an integral part of the human person and affects our capacity to give and receive love. The RSE programme is structured to teach, nurture, advise, guide and enable the children to celebrate their faith. Accordingly, the children are introduced to Jesus as the model for living an ethical life and the moral teachings of the Church to provide them with a framework for living.

RSE is taught through the revised programme The Wonder of My Being with links to the PDMU programme and other relevant cross-curricular areas. The RSE Policy takes account of the Equality Act NI 2006 and the guidance from the Equality Commission in March 2009 and seeks to promote inclusivity, equality and respect for all pupils. The pupils learn in a safe and secure environment and all are treated with respect and dignity.

There is a direct link to Child Protection issues which are addressed through the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures. The school seeks to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment in which there is an inherent respect for difference and the diversity of family life in today's society. Issues of bullying or exclusion are addressed through the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The values underpinning the RSE policy

The whole school community shares in the mission of faith formation. Our teaching of RSE will enable pupils to clarify their beliefs and develop a respect for and interest in the beliefs of others. Pupils will be given opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how adhering to this moral code will affect their behaviour and their treatment of others.

Children will be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- A respect for God and creation.

- A respect for self.
- A respect for others.
- Non-exploitation in relationships.
- Commitment, trust and bonding within relationships.
- Mutuality in relationships.
- Honesty with self and others.
- A development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others.
- An exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships.
- Compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life.
- Self-discipline.
- Distinguish between what is right and wrong.

Aims of the policy

- To help all to appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness as children of God.
- To enable children to form healthy and respectful friendships and relationships.
- To foster and promote their moral development.
- To enable the children to appreciate that sexuality is a gift from God.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To enable the children to identify and manage a range of feelings.
- To foster and develop mutual respect and understanding.
- To promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make fully informed decisions.
- To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework.
- To promote an appreciation of the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Develop an appreciation for the value and sacredness of human life and the wonder of birth.
- To develop a respect for difference, gender and race within the school and community.
- To help all to value family life in its diversity and the gift of marriage.

Objectives

The RSE curriculum will enable children to:

- Develop an awareness of the diversity of family life and family patterns.
- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth.
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts.
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change.
- Develop personal skills which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse (inappropriate behaviours, sexual abuse and exploitation).
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.

- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, growth and development.

Skills promoted

- The ability to form and maintain relationships.
- Make well-informed decisions regarding health and well-being.
- The skill of critically evaluating a wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values.
- The promotion of practical skills (supporting others and future parenting).
- Communication skills (listening to others' points of view, putting one's own view forward, dealing with conflict peacefully and being assertive).
- Decision making skills (making good choices with the relevant information at hand, making moral judgments wisely in contexts and then putting them into practice, acting responsibly as an individual or as a member of a group).
- Interpersonal skills for managing healthy relationships with confidence and with effectiveness.
- Development of a confident group member or leader.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Governors will examine and ratify the school's RSE Policy. The School Leadership Team will co-ordinate the school's approach to RSE and consult with the Board of Governors, staff, parents and health professionals as appropriate.

The staff will deliver the Wonder of My Being programme and keep parents fully informed about the content of the programme through newsletters and any other appropriate means. The parents will play a complementary role and will support the school by following up on issues raised during lessons. In all instances parents' wishes will be respected and an accommodation will be made for any parent who wishes to have his/her child withdrawn from the RSE programme.

The management and co-ordination of RSE in the school

- The Religious Education Co-ordinator will have responsibility for co-ordinating the delivery of the RSE programme and for monitoring its delivery.
- The RSE programme will be delivered through the Grow in Love Catechetical Series and the Wonder of My Being Primary 1-7.
- The RE Co-ordinator will gather and disseminate relevant information on RSE issues to inform planning and to ensure relevance. This will include the provision of training to staff as required. The Down and Connor Catholic Schools' Support Service will provide support and guidance to the RSE Co-ordinator and will be available also to assist with the delivery of in-service training.
- The RSE programme will ordinarily be delivered in mixed gender class. The school will exercise its discretion when considering the delivery of some elements of the Primary Six and Seven programmes and may deliver those aspects of the programme to single sex groups.
- The method for dealing with specific sexual issues which arise is set out in the Specific Sexual Issues section of the policy.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the inclusion of newcomer children for whom English is an additional language so that their needs are met effectively.

Specific sexual issues

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of RSE teaching. The teaching of RSE will reflect the ethos of the school and the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities. If specific sexual issues are raised these will be addressed in accordance with the ethos of the school.

A 'What's in' and 'What's out' strategy will set the parameters for discussion and will clarify the areas which will be taught. A question box approach may also be used for dealing with specific questions which arise. Parents will fulfil their complementary role and take responsibility for addressing any sensitive issues which may arise during RSE lessons with their children at home.

The 'What's In and What's Out' format should be respected at all times by pupils. Whilst each child's views and questions will be respected, there will be a clear indication of issues that will NOT be discussed in class and will instead be for parents to deal with in the context of their own family circumstances.

Confidentiality and child protection/safeguarding children

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, child protection/safeguarding children procedures will be implemented. The classroom is an open environment and confidentiality cannot be maintained. Therefore, staff and pupils are not encouraged to talk about their personal relationships or experiences during class discussions.

Use of outside agencies

Where appropriate, the school may seek to use the skills and expertise of outside agencies to support the delivery of the RSE curriculum. Only those agencies that accept and agree with the underpinning Catholic ethos of the school will be engaged in this supporting role.

Withdrawal from RSE

RSE is a statutory requirement and therefore forms part of the curriculum. Parents are informed about the content of the programme through newsletter and through the school website. The school will take account of any concerns parents may have. The school will seek to support parents and allay their concerns by providing them with the teaching materials and with guidance on the teaching approaches which will be used. Having ensured parents are fully informed about the RSE programme and its delivery, the school will respect any decision parents take regarding their wish to have their child withdrawn from participation in the RSE programme.

Links to other relevant policies and education areas (cross curricular)

- RE Policy.
- Teaching and Learning Policy

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Pastoral Care Policy.
- Health Education Policy.
- Anti-bullying Policy.
- Behaviour Management Policy.
- E-Safety and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.
- The World Around Us Policy.
- PDMU Policy.

Curriculum organisation and delivery

The statutory requirements for RSE will be taught primarily through the Religious Education programme Grow in Love and The Wonder of My Being (the Down and Connor Diocesan RSE Programme). There will be occasions when there will be links between the RSE programme and other relevant areas of the curriculum e.g. PDMU, WAU.

The primary source for the teaching of RSE include

- Grow in Love P1-P7
- The Wonder of My Being P1-P7
- Living Learning Together (NI curriculum)
- Kidscape P3 & P6
- Sarah and the Whammy P3

Appendices

Appendix 1 : A Programme Overview of The Wonder of My Being The Wonder of My Being is included, and there could be reference made to the LivingLearning-Together, which is a resource regarding the NI Curriculum in the primary school.

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	
SIGNED: (CHAIRPERSON BOARD OF GOVERNORS)	
DATED:	

APPENDIX 1

The Wonder of My Being Programme Overview

Year 1 I am Special	<p>Lesson 1 - To appreciate that I am a boy/girl.</p> <p>Lesson 2 - To appreciate that I am part of a family.</p> <p>Lesson 3 - To understand that I grew in my mother's womb.</p> <p>Lesson 4 - To learn that Jesus was part of a family.</p> <p>Lesson 5 - To appreciate that I am special.</p>
Year 2 My Family Cares for Me	<p>Lesson 1 - To understand that I needed help with everything when I was a baby.</p> <p>Lesson 2 - To understand that I have grown and changed since I was a baby.</p> <p>Lesson 3 - To understand some developmental stages of babies e.g. crawling, walking, talking.</p> <p>Lesson 4 - To appreciate that my family loves and cares for me.</p> <p>Lesson 5 - To appreciate that God chose Mary to be the mother of His Son Jesus.</p> <p>Lesson 6 - To appreciate that Mary and Joseph loved and cared for Jesus.</p>
Year 3 I Care for Others	<p>Lesson 1 - To appreciate that people celebrate weddings.</p> <p>Lesson 2 - To appreciate the qualities that are required for friendship.</p> <p>Lesson 3 - To appreciate the qualities necessary for family.</p> <p>Lesson 4 - To appreciate how a mother cares for her new baby.</p> <p>Lesson 5 - To appreciate that Jesus helped Mary and Joseph at home. Lesson 6 - To appreciate how we can help at home.</p>
Year 4 Motherhood	<p>Lesson 1 - To appreciate that Mary was told by an Angel that she was to be the mother of Jesus.</p> <p>Lesson 2 - To appreciate that an Angel appeared to Joseph to tell him he would be the one to care for Mary and Jesus.</p> <p>Lesson 3 - To appreciate the role of Mary as the mother of God.</p> <p>Lesson 4 - To appreciate the qualities and values that were part of the Holy Family of Nazareth.</p> <p>Lesson 5 - To learn the vocabulary associated with pregnancy and birth.</p> <p>Lesson 6 - To appreciate the preparations that were needed for your birth.</p> <p>Lesson 7 - To appreciate that family is a gift from God.</p>
Year 5 Each Person is Unique and Important in God's Family	<p>Lesson 1 - To appreciate the uniqueness of each person.</p> <p>Lesson 2 - To appreciate that we are all created in the image and likeness of God.</p> <p>Lesson 3 - To appreciate the importance of preparing responsibly for new life.</p> <p>Lesson 4 - To appreciate the stages of development between birth and two years.</p> <p>Lesson 5 - To appreciate we change as we grow (2 years – 9/10 years).</p> <p>Lesson 6 - To be aware of people who help us grow and develop: family, church, society.</p> <p>Lesson 7 - To revisit the Sacrament of Baptism so that the children can become aware of their place in God's family</p>
	<p>Lesson 1 - To appreciate that we are made in God's image and likeness. Lesson 2 - To appreciate the stages of growth before birth.</p> <p>Lesson 3 - To recognise significant moments in our lives to date.</p>

<p>Year 6 Created in God's Image and Likeness – The Wonder of My Being</p>	<p>Lesson 4 - To recognise that we are created by God and that our bodies are sacred. Lesson 5 - To recognise that our bodies change as we grow. Lesson 6 - To appreciate that everyone is part of the Body of Christ. Lesson 7 - To appreciate the values of friendship in our lives. Lesson 8 - To identify negative behaviour and how it can affect other people.</p>
<p>Year 7 I'm Special, You're Special</p>	<p>Lesson 1 - To appreciate that we are called by God. Lesson 2 - To appreciate the presence of God in our lives as we grow and change. Lesson 3 - To appreciate the talents that each of us has and consider how we will use these as we grow and change. Lesson 4 - To appreciate the qualities and characteristics of friendship. Lesson 5 - To understand the importance of accepting and respecting each other just as we are. Lesson 6 - To make pupils aware that they are influenced by many different people and things. Lesson 7 - To appreciate that I can be a good or bad influence on others. Lesson 8 - To help make informed decision about their lives. Lesson 9 - To enable the children to face future changes with optimism.</p>