



Newtownstewart Model P S

Relationships

&

Sexuality

Education Draft

Policy

Policy Date:

Review Date

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Relationships and Sexuality Education in the N.I. Context

RSE is not a new area of the curriculum. The framework for sex education was initially established by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) in a *Guidance Circular 1987/45*. The main recommendation of this Circular was that each school should have a written policy on sex education which is endorsed by staff and governors and communicated to parents. It also stated “***sex education should be taught in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school and in conformity with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities***”

The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 further set out the legislative basis, requiring all grant aided schools to offer a curriculum which:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society ... and...
- Prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life

The general principles which underpin our work are those set out in Departmental guidance and the following Circulars:

Circular 2001/15: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2001/15-2: Guidance for Primary Schools - Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2010/01: Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2013/16: Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools

Circular 2015/22: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Guidance

We further recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers in this area of personal development and acknowledge the contribution that can be made by outside agencies with skill and expertise in particular areas of the curriculum (NSPCC, **Women’s Aid (Helping Hands Programme)**).

Our Ethos

Underlying our work as educators, are fundamental values and principles to which we are committed:

- We believe that education is concerned with the development of the whole person – academically, physically, socially, culturally, morally and spiritually.
- We believe that all children have the right to the best possible education, irrespective of gender, race, religion or ability.
- We believe that the educational process is a partnership between teachers, children, parents, Board of Governors and the local community.

This policy reflects the ethos of our school.

INTRODUCTION

Relationships and Sexuality Education (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 our parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place at school.

RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI curriculum through **PDMU, Health Education, The World Around Us** and **Religious Education**. Health Education is taught mainly through the medium of PDMU in the Personal Understanding and Health strand as detailed later.

In **RSE** all pupils will be taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The value of a stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood will be presented. As they mature, pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the importance of self-discipline, dignity, respect for themselves and others. Through **PDMU** and the **World Around Us** children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older and, in **P6/7**, school will endeavour to provide the opportunity for a talk with a **nurse or appropriate professional** in order to prepare them fully for post-primary schools and the emotional and physical changes they may expect to experience over the next few years.

RSE is about understanding the value of family life, developing healthy, stable and loving relationships and developing and establishing such values as respect, tolerance, love and care. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in school and will endeavour to treat all situations sensitively. While we believe that the primary responsibility for addressing these issues rests with parents, we acknowledge the vital part the school can play in supporting and complementing this.

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.

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to give and receive love; procreation and, in a more general way, the aptitude for forming relationships with others. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships.

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils:

- To form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;

- To examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives;
- 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 provide them with the skills to make decisions around their own safety.
- To promote a knowledge of and respect for themselves and others.

AIMS

The aims of RSE are to:

- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child;
- Help the child develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships;
- 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 and marriage;
- Appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- Promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth.
- Make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others about the way they live their lives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self;
- 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, in friendships and

In wider contexts;

- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns;
- 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 and 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;
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

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 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 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.

MORALS AND VALUES

RSE should enable pupils to clarify what they believe and why they believe it and develop a respect for and interest in the beliefs of others. Pupils need opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how they, and others, are affected by them.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

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

- Positive Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Special Educational Needs

- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety
- Intimate Care
- Drugs policy

Sharing Responsibility For RSE

Relationships between home, school and community.

The effectiveness of this RSE policy 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, parents and governors can raise any concerns they might have about RSE issues and the senior management will address these or refer to the B.O.G. if necessary.

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.

DELIVERING THE RSE PROGRAMME

Curriculum Organisation

The 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.

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

The following includes extracts from the N.I. Primary Curriculum - **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**
Strand - Personal Understanding and Health

Foundation Stage

Self-Awareness - Exploring who they are, what they can do, identifying favourite things, what makes them special

Feelings and Emotions

- Beginning to recognise how they feel
- Knowing what to do if sad or lonely, afraid or angry
- Telling others about feelings
- Realising what makes people sad or unhappy, recognising how people feel

Health and Safety

- Being aware of caring for his/her own body
- Recognising good hygiene practices
- Understanding growth and change
- Exploring appropriate personal safety strategies, road safety,
- Medicines and drugs -safety rules

Key Stage 1

Self-Awareness

- Feeling positive about oneself
- Awareness of own strengths, abilities, qualities, personal preferences
- Recognising own feelings and emotions
- Recognising and managing the effects of strong feelings – anger, sadness, loss
- Acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes
- Recognising how they can develop and improve learning

Health, Growth and Change

- Recognising and valuing the options for a healthy lifestyle
- Having respect for their bodies and those of others
- Being aware of the stages of human growth and development
- Recognising how responsibilities and relationships change as you grow older
- Understanding medicines and drugs
- Understanding that, if not used properly, all products can be dangerous
- Being aware that some diseases are infectious and some can be controlled

Key Stage 2

Self-Awareness

- Developing self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- Confidently express own views and opinions
- Identify current strengths and weaknesses
- Face problems and try to resolve them

- Examine and explore own and others' feelings and emotions
- Recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way
- Develop insight into potential and capabilities
- Reflect on progress and set goals
- Identify and practise effective learning strategies
- Be aware of different learning styles

Health, Growth and Change

- Understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle
- Recognise what shapes positive mental health
- Know about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and other illicit and illegal substances
- Understand that bacteria and viruses affect health and know that basic routines can be followed to minimise risks
- Know how the body grows and develops
- Be aware of physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty (**P6/7**)- **nurse or appropriate professional** to talk to children after meeting with P6/7 teachers in school to discuss content
- Be aware of the skills and importance of good parenting
- Recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent

Keeping Safe

- Develop strategies to resist peer pressure
- Recognise the nature of bullying and the harm which can result
- Become aware of the potential danger from strangers and how their attention can make you uncomfortable
- Recognise appropriate road safety.

Answering pupils' questions.

As school, we may need to consider our response to specific issues. Topics such as conception, birth, fertility, family planning, sexual orientation are often part of the storyline of television programmes or are found online content or in books. It is therefore possible that older pupils will raise questions about these issues.

Using a **worry box**, pupils can write down questions anonymously at any time and post them in the box. This strategy gives teachers time to consider an appropriate depth of response.

Teachers will be alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils. RSE will include the physical and emotional changes that occur at

puberty but will not include sex education. There will be no direct teaching of issues such as homosexuality, AIDS, contraception or gender. However, if these issues are raised by pupils, the teachers will address them sensitively.

Helping Hands Programme-Key Stage 2

This programme is delivered across Key Stage Two.

This programme has been matched against the Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum's statutory requirements for **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding** and uses different tools and techniques to meet varying learning styles in order to maximise pupil potential. The programme is about safety, empowerment, self-esteem, assertiveness and valuing yourself. It is used to develop skills and abilities, which are vital for personal safety, stress reduction and promotion of self-worth.

As a school, we have a **pastoral responsibility to protect children from all forms of harm**. As stated in the DENI publication-'Pastoral Care in schools-Child Protection',

"In particular, schools are expected to do whatever is reasonable in all the circumstances of the case, to safeguard or promote their child's safety and well-being. **Children cannot learn effectively or develop unless they feel secure**. Every school should therefore, work to create an ethos which contributes to the care, safety and well- being of children." (DENI, 1998;5)

Special Needs

It is particularly important for **teaching staff** to be aware of the fact that **physical development** may outstrip **emotional maturity** in the case of pupils with Special Needs and to accommodate this disparity in class lessons and experiences.

Terminology

In teaching issues related to RSE, teachers will use the correct biological terms for parts of the body.

Confidentiality and Child Protection

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Where there is disclosure made by a child of abuse, child protection procedures will be implemented.

Withdrawal from RSE

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. We actively promote the implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parental concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Board of Governors - examines, approves and ratifies the RSE Policy.
- The Principal - ensures a co-ordinated approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, Staff, Parents, Health professionals and others.
- 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.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE Policy:

Newtownstewart Model Primary School staff are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically, important to the RSE Programme are:

- Pupil feedback e.g '**Helping Hands**' evaluation from **KS2 programme**
- Staff review and feedback
- Parental feedback
- Further Departmental guidance and legislative changes

Signed: _____ (**Chair of Board of Governors**)

_____ (**Principal**)

Date: