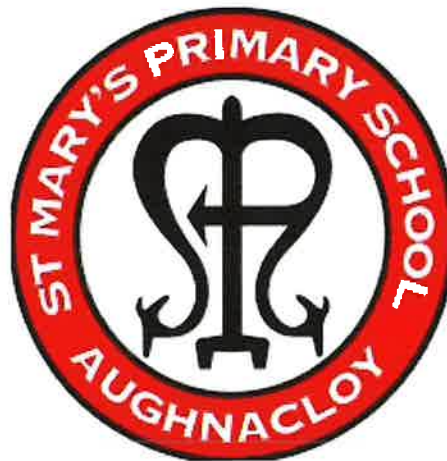




RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

DRAFTED- 01/09/2024

St Mary's Primary School  
Aughnacloy



## **Introduction**

We in St Mary's Primary School Aghnacloy aim to provide 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. **Through our shared school ethos, we encourage our children to protect what is good, to change that which requires changing and to appreciate the beauty in our world. Respect for ALL life is paramount and lies at the core of our efforts to develop an appreciation of and belief in God's love. The three core values underpinning our school ethos are:**

### **THREE RS**

- Respect for Ourselves
- Respect for Others
- Respect for the Environment

## **RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY**

### **Consultation**

Consultation between parents, pupils, staff and governors was sought to inform this policy. A letter was sent to all parents/carers (8/11/23) providing a background to the RSE Primary resource for Catholic schools - Flourish (Please see the letter in appendix 4 at the end of the policy document).

Mr Matthew McFadden (parent, qualified teacher, certificates in theology and youth ministry and 8 years' experience as Director of Chaplaincy Services in St, Catherine's College and Mount St. Catherine's P.S. in Armagh) delivered the Flourish Programme in the 23/24 academic year.

The resoundingly positive feedback from the children, staff and parents to the format, approach and resources of the adopted RSE programme (Flourish) delivered by Mr Matthew McFadden underpins the basis of our school's RSE policy.

### **Dissemination**

The policy will be given to all members of the Board of Governors, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents and careers along with details of the content of the RSE curriculum on the school's web site.

### **Context**

The school's RSE policy has been developed within the context of current legislation as outlined below.

#### ➤ **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

The UNCRC (1989) states in Articles 28 & 29 that children and young people are entitled to good quality education while at the same time acknowledging (Article 24e) that parents have the right to 'access education' for their children. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Protocol 1, Article 2 of the Right to Education states, No person shall be denied a right to an education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure that such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

#### ➤ **RSE Guidance Document for Primary Schools (NI) 2021 –Catholic Schools' Trustee Service**

#### ➤ **Northern Ireland RSE Curriculum**

Since September 2007, the (revised) Northern Ireland Curriculum in all grant-aided schools as required under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, establishes Relationships and Sexuality Education as a statutory component of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.

In 2015, the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), supporting the delivery of the NI curriculum, provided non-statutory guidance for schools on delivering PDMU which includes information on Relationships and Sexuality Education.

In this 2015 'Relationships & Sexuality Education Guidance' CCEA stated that:

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Relationships and Sexuality Education is firmly grounded in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, where the central focus is on the emotional development of children, health and safety, relationships with others, and the development of moral thinking, values and actions.

#### ➤ **Department of Education NI Policy and Guidelines**

The Department of Education policies, Every School a Good School (2009) and Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) 2011, outline how each school should provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment with an inherent respect for difference and the diversity of family life in today's society.

Issued by the Department of Education in June 2013, the DENI 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 parents and school management authorities'. The circular reminds schools that RSE is an integral part of the revised curriculum, recognises the importance of RSE in the development of young people and states that it must prepare them to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner. This circular also points out that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not to be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. More recently, DENI Circular 2015/21 and CCEA (2015) provided specific guidance for schools in the preparation of the RSE policy.

#### **Rationale**

The school is involved in relationships and sexuality education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals. The emphasis of the Flourish programme is on forming positive relationships and showing respect for ourselves and other people reflecting our school values and ethos.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. RSE will be firmly embedded in the Personal Development & Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and the Religious Education (RE) Curriculum as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSE will be delivered in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from.

The RSE programme is structured to teach, nurture, advise, guide and enable the children to celebrate their faith. 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.

St Mary's Primary School is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life.

In line with our school's ethos, RSE will provide opportunities which enable pupils to:

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

In partnership with parents, we aim to provide children and young people with a positive and prudent sexual education which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

### **The Centrality of Virtue**

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

- A respect for God and creation.
- To be able to distinguish between what is right and wrong.
- A respect for self.
- A respect for others.
- Self-discipline.
- A responsibility for one's own actions and an understanding of the long term and short term consequences of their actions.
- Non-exploitation in relationships.
- Commitment, trust and bonding within relationships.
- A development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others.
- Compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life.

### **Definition of RSE**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a complex and vitally important area of a school's curriculum. RSE is about more than simply educating children about biological sexual reproduction, particularly in primary schools. Relationships and Sexuality Education is defined as a lifelong process encompassing:

- the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills; and
- the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.

RSE is life- long learning about physical, moral and emotional development. RSE should provide

young people with the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not simply intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend.

## **Aims**

The first line of St Mary's school ethos poem (composed and evaluated by our student council and focus groups from all classes) outlines 'Everyone in our school and broader community is treated with fairness, respectfulness and kindness.'

The last line of our school's ethos poem indicates 'We try to share our Christian faith and values with everyone and we try to be the best people that we can possibly be.'

We believe that RSE plays an integral part in nurturing and supporting the children 'to be the best people we can possibly be.'

In line with the ethos of St. Mary's and CCEA guidelines, the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy of St. Mary's Primary School aims to:

- Promote a Catholic vision of sexuality that reflects selfless love, respect and commitment within a moral, social, spiritual framework.
- Help all pupils to appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness as children of God.
- Enable young people to appreciate sexuality as a gift from God and that love is the central basis of all relationships.
- Enable children to form healthy and respectful friendships and relationships.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
- To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To foster and develop mutual respect and understanding.
- To develop a respect for difference, gender and race within the school and community.
- To enable the children to identify and manage a range of feelings.
- To help all children to value family life in its diversity and the gift of marriage.
- To help young people recognise, understand and prepare for the body changes that they (and their friends) will undergo in the years ahead (puberty).
- promote respect for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender or creed

## **Objective of RSE**

Effective Relationships and Sexuality Education is essential if children are to value themselves as individuals and are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. In line with the ethos of St. Mary's and CCEA guidelines, the Relationships and Sexuality 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 the diversity of family life and family patterns.
- Use decision making and problem solving strategies.
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.
- Discuss their feelings, growth and development using an appropriate vocabulary.
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse (inappropriate behaviours, sexual abuse and exploitation).

### **Skills**

The RSE curriculum will 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 will also be helped to develop skills to critically evaluate a wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values.

#### **They will be given 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.

### **RSE Curriculum**

RSE will have scheduled lessons that take place in each year group throughout the year. It is important that within the RSE programmes, activities are included to allow young people to talk about their interests, concerns and feelings. If boys/girls have respect for themselves then ultimately they will have respect for others. It may be appropriate to facilitate the delivery of specific topics of the RSE programme to boys/girls in single gender groups.

St Mary's have reviewed and quality-assured all the resources (working closely with Mr Matthew McFadden) chosen before the students use them to ensure that they are inclusive and consistent with our moral and value framework.

RSE Teaching Resources will:

- Reflect the ethos of the school
- Be age appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to the pupils' needs and experiences and
- Be factually accurate, up to date and make clear distinctions between fact and opinion.

Inappropriate images will not be used under any circumstances and we will ensure that we protect pupils from accessing unsuitable material on the internet. We will inform parents or carers about any materials that pupils will be exposed to particularly if these are of a sensitive nature.

The main resource that we will use to teach RSE in school is called '**Flourish**'. This resource has been developed by the Council for Catechetics of the Irish Bishops Conference, with the support of CPSMA. Flourish has been adapted to meet with Northern Ireland's curricular requirements and these resources are available on the Catholic Schools Trustee Service's website - <https://catholiceducationni.org/about-us-2/rse-resources/>

In the light of the RSE Policy, and in the context of the ethos of the Catholic school, the statutory requirements for RSE are taught through the religious education programme *Grow in Love* and *Flourish*, while linking with the significant and relevant areas of the curriculum such as PDMU and Safeguarding. Teachers will cover themes in Circle Time, RE and PDMU (Verbal Wellbeing Programme).

The Verbal Wellbeing Programme is a mental health literacy programme that integrates & harnesses the power of behavioural science with brilliant stories, great technology and data to support children & young people. The digital platform contains different programmes each with a series of specially treated short story collections for a range of ages and abilities that can be read aloud together and are combined with evidence based therapy type questions that will spark an insightful, reflective conversation. Curriculum topics addressed include:

- ✓ Developing Healthy Relationships
- ✓ Bullying
- ✓ Managing Emotions
- ✓ Building Resilience Together
- ✓ Transitions

We encourage active learning strategies e.g. mind mapping, discussion techniques, reporting back, listening exercises, role-play, questionnaires and quizzes.

*Connected Learning Opportunities-* There are many opportunities within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for other Areas of Learning to link with Relationships and Sexuality Education, which allows for a more connected learning experience for pupils. Teachers in Mary's will enable pupils to explore sensitive and complex issues through a variety of different lenses. For example, children will explore a range of ways of communicating and expressing feelings and emotions through the Arts, including art and design, music, and drama. Through Language and Literacy, children will develop the vocabulary needed to discuss emotions and feelings through talking and listening, reading, writing, drama, and role play. RSE will be delivered in a holistic, cross curricular way, ensuring that teaching is at all times appropriate to the maturity and understanding of the pupils. Teachers will cover themes in Circle Time, RE and PDMU. We encourage active learning strategies e.g. mind mapping, discussion techniques, reporting back, listening exercises, circle time, role-play, questionnaires and quizzes. St. Patrick's will use resources that reflect the ethos of the school and are age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to the pupils' needs and experiences. The selection of teaching resources should be:

- consistent with the school's RSE policy and the aims and objectives of the RSE programme;
- consistent with the school's morals and values framework;
- appropriate to pupils' age, level of understanding and maturity;
- factually correct and respectful of its audience;
- likely to appeal to pupils in terms of appropriate language level, images, attitudes and values, maturity, contexts and situations, and the knowledge required;
- complementary to the existing programmes which the school offers;
- encouraging consideration of a range of issues, attitudes and beliefs pertinent to the topics covered.

### **Assessment of RSE**

The nature of RSE is strongly orientated towards Personal Development which does not necessarily lend itself to summative assessment. RSE is not easily measurable as it is qualitative rather than quantitative.

### **Use of Outside Agencies**

Where appropriate, sensitive issues may be addressed by experts from outside agencies, for example, Love for Life Programme, BEAM Creative Network, NSPCC. Planning and materials to be used will be discussed in advance with the class teacher. St. Mary's Primary School will ensure that the contribution from outside agencies are in harmony with the aims and ethos of the school and that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice. All outside visitors/speakers must be approved by the Principal. All external agencies supporting RSE will be asked to sign a service agreement (see Appendix 3) agreeing with the RSE policy of the school and the underpinning ethos of the school. This record will be kept in a safe place as part of the delivery of RSE and for authenticity.

Parents/carers will be made aware in advance of the use of outside agencies. St. Mary's will explain the type of activities which will take place to ensure that parents and carers have the opportunity to raise any concerns they might have before the visit.

### **Parents and Carers**

An outline of the RSE programme (brochure/ppt/letter) will be issued to parents prior to the commencement of the programme each year. Parents will be fully informed of the content, timing and delivery of the programme in order to enable them to support the work of the school and to enable parents to discuss the topics and issues raised by the programme with their children. This policy will also be made available to parents on our school website.

### **Ensuring the Curriculum is Balanced**

While promoting Catholic values and virtues, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information. Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our school's promotion of Catholic teaching. We will ensure that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals and to relate to other individuals in a mature and respectful way.

## **Responsibility for Teaching the Programme**

### **Other Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Trustees**

The Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction, organisational nature and ethos of their respective schools. The Bishop is responsible for Catholic schools in his Diocese as evidenced by Canon Law 806§ which states that, *'The diocesan bishop has the right of supervision, visitation and inspection of Catholic schools in his diocese, even those established or directed by members of religious orders. He also has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools.'*

#### **Board of Governors**

*Every School a Good School - The Governors' Role: A Guide for Governors* outlines the role and responsibilities of Governors. Section 13.40 states,

*"Boards of Governors should ensure that their schools have a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy and curriculum linked to their pastoral care/child protection policy. This policy and the associated teaching should be the subject of consultation with staff and parents and endorsed by the Governors."*

The Board of Governors will foster and support the development of a RSE policy and programme by collaborating with teachers and parents. The governors have examined and approved the completed policy and programme prior to their implementation in the school and will review the policy at regular intervals.

At all times the governors of the school should seek to accommodate and be sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs of both teachers and parents while fulfilling their responsibility to ensure the availability of adequate RSE for all young people.

#### **Principal and Senior Leadership Team**

As with all subject areas, it is the role of the Principal to make possible a coherent and co-ordinated approach to RSE in keeping with the ethos of the school. The Principal will disseminate appropriate information to other staff members, organise training for staff and liaise with outside agencies where appropriate.

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team will consult the Board of Governors, staff, parents/carers and health professionals, as appropriate.

### **Designated Teacher/Special Needs Coordinator (Mrs Harper)**

Will provide relevant information which will ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.

### **Chaplain**

The role of the chaplain is to:

- support the teaching of RSE where possible;
- meet with the RSE co-ordinator to discuss the RSE programme and its delivery in school;
- witness to Gospel values.

### **Diocesan Advisor/Diocesan Advisor Support Service**

The Diocesan Advisor supports schools in the development and delivery of an RSE policy and programme which reflects the Catholic ethos and respects the wishes of parents. To ensure consistency all school policies should strive to be consistent and coherent within the framework of the overall school development plan.

The RSE policy is developed in this context and shares links with, the following policies:

- Religious Education
- Teaching and Learning
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Children
- Pastoral Care Programme
- Health Education
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Internet Safety Policy/E-safety Policy
- World Around Us
- PDMU
- Use of outside agencies and vetting arrangements.

### **Meeting the Needs of Pupils**

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the RSE programme should be developmental, accessible and be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. It should meet the needs of both genders and be a positive experience for all participants. The content of the RSE curriculum in St. Mary's will be carefully planned and will be relevant for boys as well as girls.

In St. Mary's, sessions with 'Love for Life' will also be included to explain the physical and emotional changes at puberty (Year 7/Term 3).

### **The Classroom Environment**

In St. Mary's Primary School, we believe 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 should 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. St. Mary's will use strategies such as circle time to help to create a positive and safe learning environment. Ground rules should be agreed to help to minimise embarrassment and encourage the respect of each other's opinion. 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 and encourage the consideration of attitudes and values and the ability to make informed and healthy decisions;

### **Delivering Inclusive RSE**

Relationships and Sexuality Education in St. Mary's will promote inclusivity, equality and respect for all pupils. Children and young people must feel comfortable and confident in themselves without fear of being bullied or being viewed as different. St. Mary's will handle the issue of sexual orientation and gender identity in a sensitive, non-confrontational and reassuring way. St. Mary's will teach about difference in Relationships and Sexuality Education and in the wider Personal Development and Mutual Understanding curriculum. Equality and respect will be valued and actively promoted in St. Mary's. Staff will challenge and discourage all forms of stereotyping, including the use of homophobic or sexist language. Through stories, themes, assemblies etc., the children will regularly encounter opportunities to clarify and develop their attitudes and values relating to equality issues.

### **Digital Safety**

The RSE Programme will teach students how to safely navigate the digital world. Technology plays an integral role in the lives of students which poses both opportunities and risks. The RSE Programme will raise awareness of potential threats or dangers posed by the Internet such as sexting, cyber-bullying, pornography, abuse and exploitation. Students will explore the implications of the law, the strategies they can use to protect themselves and where they can access advice and support if they are at risk.

### **Special Education Needs (SEN)**

RSE is a priority for all our pupils in St. Mary's, and this includes learners with SEN who have social, emotional and mental health needs and learning disabilities. St. Mary's Primary School is committed to the education of children which adequately prepares them for adult life, regardless of their age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, disability status, religion or social class. We will ensure that children with SEN in St. Mary's Primary School will have appropriate, accessible and relevant Relationships and Sexuality Education. We recognise that pupils with SEN are more vulnerable to all forms of abuse and exploitation.

Therefore, in St. Mary's, we will ensure that RSE for learners with SEN should be accessible, appropriate and relevant to them and their life experiences. St. Mary's will adapt resources and teaching activities to ensure that there are no barriers to participation or learning for pupils with SEN compared to their peers. We will ensure that RSE is accessible to all and is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances.

### **Confidentiality and Child Protection/Safeguarding Children**

At St Mary's Primary School, we respect the child's right to privacy. A key rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions. It is equally important that the teacher shares this right and never feels obliged to impart information about his/her own personal life. However, as teachers, we should not promise confidentiality. Where a teacher in St. Mary's suspects that a child is a victim of or is at risk of abuse, they are required to follow the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

### **Responding to Pupil's Questions and Sensitive Issues**

The school's RSE policy and approach to teaching and learning will be sensitive to specific issues that arise in the life of pupils and in the overall life of the school. When teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education, the natural inquisitiveness of children often results in the teachers being asked many questions which they had not planned for. There will be occasions when teachers will have to use their own discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular questions raised by a pupil or a group of pupils. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of the parents. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents, if this is appropriate. Teachers should exercise their professional judgement: for example, they may need to decide whether it is appropriate to deal with the question in a whole-class forum, through circle time, or if it may be more appropriate to respond on an individual basis, or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. The teacher may also wish to discuss the questions the children have asked with the parents or carers and/or a senior member of staff to ascertain how they would like to handle the matter. Teachers will advise pupils to seek advice from parents or carers and health professionals. If any question asked raises child protection issues, this should be referred to the designated teacher for child protection. St. Mary's Primary School will:

- Teach the fundamental principle of respect for human persons.
- Challenge any discriminatory remarks.
- Deal firmly with any acts of bullying including homophobic, transphobic and cyberbullying
- Follow school procedures for accessing outside support for any pupil requiring additional help.
- Support the parents. Parents may want to speak to someone at the school about one or more of these issues.

- Arrange a meeting with the parents and relevant support agencies to consider any appropriate measures of support that may be needed to ensure the needs of the pupil are met.
- Follow school procedures for monitoring the well-being of pupil/s.
- Provide time and safe spaces for young people, in an age and stage appropriate way, to engage at a deep level with these issues, to dialogue with their peers and their teacher around them and to be invited into a rich understanding of the Church's teaching in these areas.

#### **Withdrawal from RSE**

The NI Curriculum Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance 2015 states that: Whilst Relationships and Sexuality Education is a statutory component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, parents or carers have a right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes. Therefore, whilst 'there is no legislative provision permitting parental withdrawal from sex education', schools can grant these requests on an individual basis. This may require the student going to another class for the duration of the lesson. We will take account of parental/carer concerns and treat issues on an individual basis and support and allay concerns. Students will be provided with the teaching materials for home use on request and with the proper guidance.

***Policy Date October 2024***

*Signature of Principal* 

*Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors*



# Appendices

## Appendix 1

## Flourish Programme overview

### Primary 1

#### **Myself**

- I am Me – God loves me.
- I have a wonderful body. My body is a gift from God. I must look after it.

#### **Myself and Others**

- I have a family. We love each other. Jesus had a family too.

#### **Myself and the Wider World**

- I have friends. Jesus is my friend.

### Primary 2

#### **Myself**

- I am growing. My body is changing. God loves us as we grow and change.
- I keep myself safe. I look out for other people. Jesus asked us to care for each other.

#### **Myself and Others**

- I have feelings. Others have feelings too. I want to be a good friend. I am kind like Jesus.

#### **Myself and the Wider World**

- Sometimes I need help. I ask for help. I can always ask for God's help.

### Primary 3

#### **Myself**

- I am unique. God loves me as I am.

#### **Myself and Others**

- Other people are special too. I respect other people. Jesus wants us to respect everyone.
- My space, your space. I am gentle and understanding as Jesus asked me to be.

#### **Myself and the Wider World**

- Some people are not as lucky as I am. I care about them too. Jesus cared for others

### Primary 4

#### **Myself**

- My body is amazing. I am grateful to God for all that I can do.

#### **Myself and Others**

- I am loyal to my friends. I don't let them down. Jesus asked us to be loyal.

#### **Myself and the Wider World**

- People I admire. There are lots of good people. Jesus was a role-model.
- Dangerous situations. What should I do? Who can help?

### Primary 5

#### **Myself**

- My gender is part of who I am. God loves me as I am.

#### **Myself and Others**

- Different types of friendships. Jesus had many friends.
- I support my friends.

## Appendix 2 Statutory Curricular Requirements for PDMU - RSE

### Foundation Stage

<b>Theme 1: Self Awareness</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: themselves and their personal attributes.
<b>Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their own and others' feelings and emotions.
<b>Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: The importance of keeping healthy.
<b>Theme 4a: Safety</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: How to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments.
<b>Theme 5: Relationships</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their relationships with family and friends.
<b>Theme 8: Similarities and Differences</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: Similarities and differences.

### Key Stage 1

<b>Theme 1: Self Awareness</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their self-esteem and self-confidence.
<b>Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others.
<b>Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: strategies and skills for keeping healthy.
<b>Theme 4a: Safety</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: strategies and skills for keeping safe.
<b>Theme 5: Relationships</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: and initiating mutually satisfying relationships.
<b>Theme 8: Similarities and Differences</b> Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: Similarities and differences between people.

### Key Stage 2

<b>Theme 1: Self Awareness</b>
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Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals.

**Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others.

**Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: how to sustain their health, growth and well-being.

## Appendix 3 Service Level Agreement for External Agencies

I/We acknowledge the school's ethos and policies of St Mary's Primary School and agree to abide by its ethos and policies:

- In working with young people and,
- In the delivery of the programmes outlined below:

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I am/we are, willing to provide full details of material content to:

Senior Leadership, Teachers, Parents, Governors and other Appropriate Bodies and agree to fully implement any changes deemed necessary by the above representatives.

I accept the right of the school to withdraw the invitation issued to support the school in the education of our young people.

I/We formally accept the above terms of reference and in so doing I/We will acknowledge the agreement made.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (External Agency)

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Countersigned \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal/Board of Governors)

Dated \_\_\_\_\_



St. Mary's Primary School  
Caledon Road  
Aughnacloy  
BT69 6AJ

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory component of the NI Curriculum area PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding). Over the last number of years, the Council for Catechetics of the Irish Bishops, has been engaging with principals, governors, teachers and parents in developing an RSE resource for use in Catholic Primary Schools. The RSE Primary resource for Catholic schools is called *Flourish* and commencing from term 1B (after Halloween) will be used with all classes in St Mary's Primary School from Primary 1 (Junior Infants) to Primary 7 (Fifth Class).

The emphasis of the Flourish programme is on forming positive relationships and showing respect for ourselves and other people. Flourish has been adapted to meet with Northern Ireland's curricular requirements and these resources are available on the Catholic Schools Trustee Service's website - <https://catholiceducation-ni.org/about-us-2/rse-resources/>

We are so appreciative that Mr Matthew McFadden will be leading in the teaching and dissemination of this programme. Mr McFadden will begin to teach one lesson to KS2 (P5-P7) each Wednesday from 15<sup>th</sup> November to 13<sup>th</sup> December. Foundation stage and KS1 will be taught from January 2024.

The core gospel values Mr McFadden will reflect when teaching the Flourish programme are:

- That human life is a gift from God and must be protected.
- Each person must be treated with dignity. Bullying and disrespect of all kinds are reflected on in a Christian context.
- Respect, mercy and forgiveness are central. Forgiving ourselves for making mistakes and showing the same understanding to others.
- Integrity to our beliefs. Parents, teachers and students, through their discussions, help establish beliefs which children can articulate and stand over when they are faced with difficult decisions.
- Respect for others and their beliefs.

Every lesson in the Flourish programme finishes with either a reflection or prayer. This gives the child a chance to reflect on what they have learned and discussed and helps them to internalise it for themselves.

Please come and talk to us at school if you have any concerns or wish to discuss anything that comes up in your discussions at home.

Please read a statement from Matthew McFadden below-

*I am delighted to have been invited to deliver the Flourish Programme to our children in St Mary's. As a teacher, chaplain and youth worker I have previous experience of delivering RSE to young people and children. When delivered in the appropriate format it adds value to the holistic education development of our children especially in a Catholic School context. I can assure you there is nothing to fear from the material I will deliver. I am very proud to be from a rural area where children are allowed to be children and their beautiful country innocence is protected. There is plenty of time for growing up and the challenges that it presents. My approach to delivery is very Christ centred, reminding our children that they are special and unique, chosen by God and that God has a great plan for them. As a parent I would like to reassure you that the programme will be kept age appropriate for children in our rural context.*

Yours sincerely,  
Mr McCaughey

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## **Myself and the Wider World**

- My neighbourhood – showing love to everyone. God wants us to show love in many different ways.

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## **Primary 6**

### **Myself**

- I am growing into my adult body. God designed me perfectly.
- Good choices, bad choices. The choice is mine. My conscience will guide me.

### **Myself and Others**

- My words and actions can hurt others. Jesus asks us to use words and actions carefully.

### **Myself and the Wider World**

- We need to look after the earth. The environment is God's creation. He asked us to look after it.

## **Primary 7**

### **Myself**

- My sexuality is part of who I am. God loves me as I am.
- Puberty – welcome changes. I am perfectly designed by God.

### **Myself and Others**

- I am attracted to other people. I respect them. God made us to be compatible with each other.

### **Myself and the Wider World**

- Social media can be good and bad.

Respect is the key. God wants us to respect each other.