



& Nursery Unit

RELATIONSHIPS and SEXUALITY POLICY

October 2022

Reviewed: October 2022

Review: October 2025

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY

Background

Article 29 (Goals of Education): Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures.

(Rights Respecting Schools – UNICEF; The Convention on the Rights of the Child)

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 and School Nursing Service).

RSE Policy

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is clearly a part of this general aim. (RSE Guidance for Primary Schools)

Introduction:

We in Ballydown Primary School & Nursery Unit view the development and implementation of a policy in Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) as an important step towards achieving our aim to develop all aspects of a child's personality and growth, including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. The morals and values of our Christian ethos are the core principles that underpin the teaching of RSE.

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. Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships. As the learning process begins informally in the home we will endeavour to engage in full consultation with parents regarding the aims, objectives and teaching programme of this policy and their views will be considered when implementing and reviewing the policy.

Context:

The Northern Ireland curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Elements of RSE are embedded in many areas of the revised curriculum. Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, the World Around Us and Religious Education.

Cross Curricular Links:

This document reflects the core principles of other related policies. Aspects of RSE are likely to be addressed already within our school's Staff Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Pupils and Intimate Care Policy, all of which are circulated to all teaching and non-teaching staff.

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities that enable pupils to:

- Form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework,
- 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.

Aims:

In Ballydown Primary School & Nursery Unit we aim to:

- Develop a loving pride in one's family and an appreciation and understanding of the importance of Christian values,
- Promote an appreciation of the importance of the family unit (regardless of structure/composition),
- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of each child
- Help the children to develop healthy and respectful friendships within the school and at home,
- Develop an understanding of how human relationships grow and deepen through friendship, love and affection,
- Promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth.

Learning Outcomes:

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 wellbeing of others,
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships,
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction,
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, growth and development,
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change,
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Skills:

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to develop:

- Communication skills – putting one's own views clearly and appropriately; listening to others' points of view; handling and resolving conflict peacefully,
- Decision making and problem-solving skills – for sensible and responsible choices; making moral judgements about what to do in actual situations,
- Inter – personal skills for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader,
- Practical skills – for everyday living; for supporting others; for future parenting.

Morals and values:

The RSE curriculum promotes the moral values of our Christian principles and enables the children to begin to develop:

- A respect for self,
- A respect for others,
- Honesty with self and others,
- Self-discipline,
- The difference between right and wrong,
- The responsibility for ones' own actions,
- The recognition of the moral dimension to situations,
- An understanding of the long term and short term consequences of their actions.

How will we achieve our aims?

The effectiveness of this RSE policy and programme 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, governors and parents can raise any concerns they might have about RSE issues and the Senior Management will address these or refer to the BOG if necessary.

The Role of the Principal:

A planned, structured and coherent approach to RSE will be sought throughout the school. Implementing this, and other related policies will be managed by the member of staff with responsibility for Child Protection and overseen by the Senior Management. Consultation will need to be initiated with governors, staff, parents, health professionals and other relevant community representatives as necessary. The principal should ensure the policy is updated and amended as necessary.

The Role of Governors:

The governors will try to foster and support the development of our RSE policy and similar related policies by collaborating with teachers and parents where necessary. They shall facilitate the consultative process whereby the school community can respond and contribute on relevant issues. The governors of the school will seek to accommodate and be sensitive to the spiritual and cultural beliefs of both teachers and parents while fulfilling their responsibility to ensure the availability of adequate RSE for all children.

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. Most importantly **teachers treat every child with respect**, no matter what their beliefs or circumstances.

Involving Parents:

Our aim is to develop a structure which enables both parents and teachers to work together. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a child's life, and especially so in the domain of relationships and sexuality. Parents are often concerned about the information their children are receiving from their peers and from television, the internet, social media, videos, newspapers and magazines. We will attempt to provide opportunities for pupils to consider this information and ensure they receive accurate information. Where puberty-related changes are being covered with P7 classes, parents are informed about when these talks will take place, the content to be covered and the activities that pupils will undertake.

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, local doctor or other agency. It is important, therefore, for schools to consider the links that exist between RSE and the other curricular areas at each key stage. A review of existing provision will reveal where aspects of their proposed content are being covered already and where there are gaps in provision. In many instances, RSE shares content with TWAU, Religious Education, Physical Education, TSPC and PDMU. Circle Time may be used as an appropriate tool to engage children in RSE.

Equal Opportunities:

Generally, RSE will be taught in mixed groups, so that boys and girls are encouraged to work with each other and gain an understanding of each other's perspectives. However, there will be times that teachers or the school nurse will work with single gender groups, e.g. P7 Love for Life programme, to explore puberty related physical and emotional changes in both boys and girls. The programme of RSE delivered will be accessible to all pupils regardless of age, culture, disability, sexual orientation, gender or social class.

“Treat everyone with kindness, dignity and respect.”

An outline of programme for Nursery, Foundation, Key Stages 1 and 2

Nursery

Myself

- All about me – Myself and my family, what I need to live, how I grow, me as a baby
- Introduce simple body parts – head, arm, hand, leg, foot, tummy
- I am special – name, hair colour, likes/dislikes
- Respecting Differences Programme – Sharing from the start. Introduce simple feelings – happy/sad/cross/excited. Keeping healthy (Happy Healthy Kids – GRTL)

My Relationships

- Loving and caring
- Me and my family – I love my family, my family love me! Things my family do for me
- Making friends in nursery – being a good friend
- Looking after a baby
- Mother's Day/Father's Day

My Community/Environment

- Introduce different types of families (Respecting Differences Programme) at home and in other countries eg Africa (Handa's Surprise). Similarities and differences.
- Keeping safe
- People who help us (Medical, local community ie postman, police, fire, bin man etc, at school)
- Rules and routines in nursery

Foundation & Key Stage 1

Myself

- Myself, how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example, hygiene, sleep, exercise, healthy food choices.
- Naming parts of the body (basic), developing an agreed language for our bodies.
- Being myself - I am unique, my self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, respect and caring for myself.
- Similarities and differences between myself and others, for example, uniqueness, fingerprints, gender, different rates of growth etc.
- An introduction to the stages of human development, changes as we grow, for example, baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents.
- Recognising moods, feelings and concerns and developing a language and an appropriate manner of expressing them, for example, what do I do if I feel sad or angry?
- Personal likes and dislikes.

My Relationships

- My family, special people in my life - what they do for me and what I do for them.
- Friendships -getting on with each other, for example, communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating and sharing.
- Ageing - how do we know that things are alive, dead, young and old.
- Loss and mourning - death of a person or a pet. (Note: the situations of the pupils should be taken into account prior to introducing this topic.)
- Respect and caring for family members and friends, for example, caring for a new baby.
- Bullies and what to do about them
- Personal safety - simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety.
- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends and the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances.
- Strategies which pupils might use to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.

My Community/Environment

- Awareness of different types of families and the roles of individuals within families.
- Keeping safe, for example, dangerous places, dangerous situations, the adults who will help.
- How to get help from others.
- Rules at home, at school and in the community.
- Respect and caring for people in the community, e.g. elderly people.

Key Stage 2

Myself

- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy e.g. healthy breaks, school sports, Mile Challenge.
- The physical, social and emotional changes which occur during puberty (girls and boys), Love for Life Programme (P7).
- Myself and my peers -Different rates of growth and physical development, maturity.
- Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Feelings, for example, things that make me happy, sad, excited, embarrassed, angry, scared;
- Expressing our feelings, showing love and affection.
- Gender roles and promotion of non-stereotyping.
- Making choices. The influences on me and the consequences of actions for oneself and others.
- Distinguishing between right and wrong.
- Secrets- knowing the difference between good and bad secrets, what to do about 'bad' secrets.

My Relationships

- Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values.
- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's views, emotions and feelings.
- Families and how they behave. What family members expect of each other.
- Recognise and respect that families can be made up in different ways e.g. single parent, step-parents, foster parents, same sex partnerships etc.
- The meaning of friendship and loyalty; making and maintaining friendships and social relationships, for example, identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people's point of view.
- Handling difficult situations, for example, teasing, bullying, death of a family member, breakdown of a marriage/partnership.
- The meaning of relationships within families, between friends and in the community.
- Behaviour - what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate physical contact.
- Identifying dangers and risks within relationships.
- Being assertive in defending individual rights and beliefs.
- People who can help pupils when they have anxieties, concerns or questions.

My Community/Environment

- Appreciation of the family in relation to the school and the wider community.
- Cultural differences in families and family relationships.
- Respect for the different types of people we meet.
- Working with other schools in the community; Shared Education.
- Helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different circumstances.
- Messages and images about health, gender, positive role models from the media, family and peers.

Confidentiality in the Classroom

At Ballydown Primary School & Nursery Unit 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. A child does not have the right to expect that incidents in the classroom or in the wider context of the school will not be reported, as appropriate, to his or her parents and/or the principal. Both pupils and parents should be informed that confidentiality cannot be maintained if:

- physical or sexual abuse is suspected.
- a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret. The child must be told, sensitively, that the matter may need to be reported to the principal or designated teacher. The principal or designated teacher must be informed

of any disclosures which may suggest that a pupil is at risk and contact made, if necessary, with the appropriate agencies. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Department's booklet; Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: a guide for schools and in our own Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Teachers can provide general educational advice to all pupils as part of the curriculum. This general advice can be given to pupils individually or within group situations. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of the parents. There will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgment about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or by a group of pupils. An initial judgment will need to be made about whether or not it is appropriate to deal with the issues with the whole class. The teacher may wish to discuss the issues with the parents to see how they would like the matter to be handled. Teacher colleagues or the school nurse may be approached for advice. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents if this is appropriate. The first concern of parents is likely to be for the safety and well-being of their children. It is important that if pupils cannot talk or do not wish to talk to their parents, they have access to support from sympathetic teachers at school.

Answering Pupil Questions

As a school we may need to consider our responses to specific issues. Using a Worry/Feelings 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 and, if necessary, to consult with parents. ***We aim to treat every child as an individual and to treat them with respect.***

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of this Policy:

This policy will be under periodic review. Any changes in provision or policy will be relayed appropriately. The review process will be assisted by the information from teachers, which will have been gained through the teaching situation. Feedback from parents, governors, outside agencies and pupils will also impinge on the process. Necessary changes in policy will be implemented.

“Treat people the way you want to be treated. Talk to people the way you want to be talked to. Respect is earned, not given.”

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES/PROCEDURES

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

- Positive Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Mobile Phone Policy;
- ICT and access to the internet;
- Intimate Care;
- Risk Assessments.

Appendix 1: Useful Local Addresses

- Childcare Northern Ireland, 11 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1FY. Tel: (028) 9065 2713.
- NSPCC, Jennymount Court, North Derby Street, Belfast, BT15 3HN. Tel: (028) 9035 1135.
- Family Planning Association, 113 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HP. Tel: (028) 9032 5488.
- 2nd Floor, Northern Counties Building, Custom House Square, Londonderry, BT48 6AE.
Tel: (028) 7126 0016.
- Family Care Society - familycaresociety.co.uk
- Telephone helpline and advisory service providing advice and information on sexual issues. Also provides a non-directional unplanned pregnancy service. This voluntary agency also offers training for professionals.
- Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (HPANI), 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS. Tel: (028) 9031 1611. The Agency is a non-departmental public body whose remit in Northern Ireland is health promotion. It carries out its work through providing public and professional information; training and professional development; research and evaluation; and policy development for health.
- Love for Life, 6 Banbridge Road, Waringstown, BT66 7QA. Tel: (028) 3882 0555.

Appendix 2: Useful National Addresses

Childline UK, Freepost 1111, London, N1 OBR. Tel: (0800) 1111. A free national helpline for children with any problems.

Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W ODH. Tel: (020) 7730 3300.

Signed : _____ (Board of Governors) Date: _____

_____ (Principal)