

# Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

## 1. Introduction

### (a) Definition

"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.

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." CCEA Guidance for Primary Schools, Relationships and Sexuality Education 2001.

### (b) Rationale

Education is concerned with the personal, social, emotional, spiritual and moral development of young children's lives the inclusion of RSE within the curriculum is essential in preparing them for their adult life.

Our programme of RSE will not be value free, it will provide a framework of values and ideals within which the children will be given positive messages about family life, relationships and responsibilities reflecting the Christian ethos which permeates the work of the school.

### (c) Ethos

The ethos of the school acknowledges the importance of RSE and places great value upon the development of the "whole" individual. We believe in the development of pupil's confidence, self esteem, self respect, self discipline and awareness of socially acceptable standards. The importance of personal development and being able to behave in a responsible and sensitive manner is paramount and central to the school's ethos. Showing thoughtfulness and a caring attitude towards others is nurtured in the children and is promoted by all members of staff.

#### **(d) Aims**

The aims of RSE are to:-

- Support the children's personal development and self esteem
- Help the children to develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships
- Enable children to learn about human development as appropriate to their age
- Develop responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions
- Help the child to value family life and marriage
- Appreciate the value of human life and the responsibilities of parenthood

## **2. Specific Issues**

### **(a) The status of the family (marriage/co-habitation)**

The school will promote the institutions of marriage and family while being aware that this is a sensitive issue for some of our pupils.

### **(b) Confidentiality and Child Protection Issues**

In keeping with our Child Protection Policy confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and this must be made clear to children making disclosures. If a child says something or indicates that they or others may be at risk staff will immediately consult with the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Principal. Further guidance may be sought from the EANI's (North Eastern Region) Child Protection Officer.

### **(c) Programme Issues**

- Curriculum

RSE is included on a statutory basis within the Northern Ireland Curriculum through the science programme of study, health education cross-curricular theme and Religious Education.

- Parental Involvement

If, however, a parent has any concerns regarding some of the more sensitive areas of the programme they will have the opportunity to discuss these with the Principal or class teacher. The programme has already been drawn up and parents have had an opportunity to look at the materials. Parents will be given further information prior to the delivery of the lessons. If their concerns

remain they should arrange to speak to the principal about possible alternative arrangements.

- Programme Content

The content of the programme has been decided following consultation with staff, parents and governors. The programme will include material on the physical and emotional changes of puberty. It will not include material on intercourse. We realise that children may have further questions and in this area the support of parents will be appreciated.

- Terminology

All teachers will use the correct biological terms for the body as appropriate during the teaching of these lessons.

- Use of Visitors

Anyone coming into the school to support this programme shall adhere to the school's policies.

The boys and girls in Primary 7 will receive separate lessons as a direct result of parental consultation. These may be given by the class teacher with the possible support of the school nurse' programme. As is the case with all visitors, parents will be asked to complete a consent form for their child's attendance at any presentation given by outside agencies.

- The Sacredness of Life

Life is sacred and this is reflected in our RSE Policy and Programme and based upon moral and spiritual principles and in no way can this be compromised.

- LGBT

This will not be discussed at Primary School level, however, given the media influence children are much more aware of certain LGBT terminology. This terminology may be discussed if and when the need arises eg improper use of terminology.

### **3. Implementation**

#### **(a) Monitoring and Evaluating**

All teachers will be involved in the monitoring and evaluating of RSE with evidence being collated by the coordinator. It shall be monitored and evaluated

against the aims of the programme. P7 parents are consulted in advance of sensitive issues being addressed in the P7 programme.

## **(b) Staff Training**

Staff will receive training from external agencies as and when required. This will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and statutory guidelines from CCEA.

## **(c) Roles and Responsibilities**

### **1. Board of Governors**

Works in collaboration with teachers and parents.

- Examines and approves the policy.
- Reviews policy.
- Has a sensitivity in a religious and cultural manner.
- Ratifies policy and programme.

### **2. Principal**

- Consults with governors, staff, parents and appropriate outside agencies.
- Assists RSE coordinator in writing a draft policy to be given to governors, staff and parents
- Assists RSE coordinator in Reviewing policy
- Co-ordinates approach to RSE

### **3. RSE Co-ordinator**

- Be familiar with statutory content
- Draw up and review policy
- Contact outside agencies
- Attend relevant training and disseminate to staff
- Monitor programme
- Liase with principal in implementing any changes

### **3. Staff**

- Complementary role with parents
- Attend training where and when appropriate
- Planning and implementation of RSE
- Develop a programme of study
- Consultation with pupils

## **(d) Writing up a Programme**

The current situation is that requirements of RSE are being taught through the programme of Study for Science, Health Education, PE, RE, Circle Time and on any other appropriate areas of the curriculum.

The programme will be available to all pupils, including those with Special Education Needs.

All teachers will be responsible for teaching RSE.

#### **(e) Communicating with Others**

All the teaching staff were involved in formulating statements regarding the sensitive issues.

At the time of writing the original RSE policy all parents were invited to a meeting in school attended by representatives from staff, BOG and NEELB to discuss these sensitive issues. Opportunities were given to clarify any concerns.

Parents also had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire prepared by the teaching staff. The views expressed were taken into consideration by teaching staff in finalising the programme of RSE lessons.

During the redrafting process all stakeholders (parents, staff and BOG) have been consulted.

The RSE Policy is available on the school website and from the school office on request.

This RSE policy forms a part of the school's Pastoral Care Policy - which is the overarching document.

#### **4. Links with Other Policies**

Pastoral Care, WAU, Child Protection, PDMU, Health and Safety Policies

#### **Appendices:**

RSE Programme of Study (Appendix 1)

## **Appendix 1**

### **RSE YEAR GROUP SCHEMES**

#### **Primary One**

The lessons will cover the following teaching objectives:

- Pupils will identify signs of new life in Spring.
- Pupils will identify and recognise signs of new life in Spring through a Nature Walk.
- Pupils will know the names of animals and their babies.
- Children will listen to a story and be able to sequence the events of the story.
- Children will identify signs of new life in Spring. Children will draw a picture of one of the signs of new life in Spring.
- Children will recognise the features of different animals and their young. Children will be able to talk, in pairs, about the animals they have made.

#### **Primary Two**

The lessons will cover the following teaching objectives:

- Children will have an awareness of babies through discussion.
- Understand the importance of the role the parent/other family members have in providing for newborn babies.
- To have an understanding of items needed when caring for a baby and to have opportunity to add to a display of these items.
- Children will be able to identify conditions necessary for growth (seeds/bulbs).
- Children will be able to identify signs of new life outside in the school grounds.
- Children will be able to understand that a caterpillar turns into a butterfly.

#### **Primary Three**

The lessons will cover the following teaching objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the activities a baby can perform and how reliant they are on others.
- To develop an understanding of the activities toddlers can perform and how reliant they are on others. The focus is on the things they can do for themselves.

- To develop a positive attitude about their development and recognise all the things they can do independently.
- To record foot length
- To record hand length.

### **Primary Four**

The lessons will cover the following teaching objectives:

- **The New Baby** - children will appreciate the importance of the arrival of a new baby into the home. The pupils will understand that a newborn baby requires special care. The pupils will recognise the differences between their own needs and those of a new born baby.
- **How we've changed** - The pupils will understand how quickly babies grow. The pupils will appreciate that as babies grow, their needs change. The children will understand more about their own development from baby to childhood.
- **Taking Care of Baby** - The pupils will learn about the importance of keeping a baby safe both indoors and outdoors. The pupils will learn how to help a grown-up to look after a baby. The pupils will appreciate that babies are delicate and need to be handled with care.
- **When I Was Born** - The pupils will understand and appreciate how special the birth of a baby is. The pupils will understand why they were born in a hospital. The pupils will appreciate how important each family member is when a baby is born.
- **A Time to Celebrate** - The children will appreciate that the birth of a baby not only affects the immediate family but also the wider family circle, as well. The children will learn about how families celebrate the birth of a child.
- The pupils will be able to recognise and talk about different body parts of a baby.

### **Primary Five**

The lessons will cover the following teaching objectives:

- To be aware of the concept of balance.
- To know the effects of not maintaining a balanced diet.
- To know what a plant needs to grow and how to balance different requirements.
- To be aware of what different elements our bodies need to grow and remain healthy.
- To be aware of the 'Right Balance' and what constitutes a balanced diet.
- To understand the importance of good nutrition in pregnancy.
- To be aware of the different strategies to help keep us safe.

- To be aware of negative behaviour on others and strategies to use in an unsafe situation.
- How to deal positively with bullying situations.

### **Primary Six**

The lessons will cover the following teaching objectives:

- Pupils will be able to list five ways to take care of parts of the body.
- Pupils will be aware of problems concerning poor hygiene practice.
- To create posters to reinforce the ideas generated about the importance of keeping clean.
- Pupils will be able to realise how each has changed from baby to present day and be aware of future changes.
- To realise differing attitudes and perceptions, in a variety of age groups.
- To help children appreciate the importance of all ages and appreciate the 'cycle of life'.

### **Primary Seven**

The lessons will cover the following teaching objectives:

- Pupils will be able to list how their bodies have changed since being a baby.
- Pupils will have an understanding of what happens during puberty.\*
- Pupils will have an understanding of changes that have occurred/ will occur.\*
- Pupils will understand how to care for new life.
- Pupils will construct a time line for a child's first year.
- Pupils will understand how to care for their own health and hygiene.
- Pupils will construct a healthy living poster.

\* Due to the sensitivity of some of the objectives detailed above, girls and boys will be taken separately for some of the lessons.