

St Mary's Primary School



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE)

RATIONALE:

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 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 Religious Education, PDMU, Health Education and World around Us. The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 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.

St Mary's is a Catholic Primary School and in RSE all pupils will be taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect within our Catholic ethos. 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. We look at how pupils interact with each other, focussing on the need to make pupils feel safe and confident. Through PDMU and World Around Us children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older.

"...children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities...they should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex, and young people have the right to be stimulated to make sound moral judgement based on a well-informed conscience and to put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment..."(Gravissium Educationis, Para.3, Second Vatican Council)

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. An improving awareness will be developed amongst staff of the vulnerability factors and current indicators of child exploitation. Effective RSE provision will help pupils recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations and how to take preventative action.

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.

We, as a school will be seeking to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships-RSE is underpinned by a theology of relationship. Pupils will come to understand more about themselves, others and the beauty of creation.

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 appreciate the sanctity of human life.
- to build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life;
- to make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives.
- To appreciate the values of respect, trust, honesty and compassion
- To understand the importance of personal safety and the dangers of abuse.
- To understand that love is the central basis of all relationships
- To develop a respect for difference, gender and race.

Consent of parents will be sought in September for inclusion in RSE lessons. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from RSE lessons.

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.

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.

Confidentiality and Child Protection/safeguarding Children (in keeping with school policy and legal obligation) is paramount.

Links to other policies-Religious Education, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Health Education, Teaching and Learning will be utilised.

Links to relevant Department of Education legislation/guidelines/circulars etc. will be made.

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.

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

- Religious Education
- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- ICT and access to the internet
- Intimate Care
- PDMU

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.

DELIVERING THE RSE PROGRAMME Appendix 2

The RSE programme 'In the Beginning' will form the basis for resourcing the programme, along with Alive-O, Grow in Love series and the 'Do This In Memory' Programme .

Additional support and guidance will be accessed through other agencies, such as the School Nurse or the Derry Diocesan Team.

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

Confidentiality and Child Protection/Safeguarding Children

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, Child Protection/Safeguarding Children procedures will be implemented.

The classroom is an open environment and confidentiality cannot be maintained. Therefore, staff and pupils are not encouraged to talk about their personal relationships or experiences during class discussions.

The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. 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, teachers cannot 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/carers and/or the principal. **(Refer to our Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy).**

The principal or designated teacher for Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected. If 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 must be reported to the appropriate agencies. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding Children 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/carers;

There will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or by a

group of pupils. An initial judgement 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/carers to see how they would like the matter to be handled. Teacher colleagues or a member of the school's Leadership Team/Safeguarding Team might also provide useful guidance. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils, gender groups 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/carers;

Teachers are not medical professionals and will not give detailed personal medical advice to any pupil. Only doctors and health professionals should give medical advice to pupils;

WITHDRAWAL FROM RSE

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE. On a yearly basis, all parents will be asked for permission to allow their child(ren) to receive RSE.

The DENI Circular 2001 clearly stipulates the right to withdraw from all or part of Relationships and Sexuality Education. If a parent or carer chooses to withdraw their child from part or all of the lessons, they must discuss their decision with the Principal. This may mean the child going to another class for the duration

MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING THE RSE POLICY:

Teachers will plan, monitor and evaluate RSE lessons. As the response to discussions can be personal there will often be no right or wrong answer. Praise will be given at all times for participation.

The policy will be reviewed by staff on an annual basis or as appropriate in light of new guidance/legislation. The Board of Governors will review this policy annually.

A full copy of the policy is available to parents from the school office.

Foundation Stage Focus

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

Religious Education

- Life is a gift from God (Catechism of the Catholic Church CC 2260).
- Stories which help children distinguish right from wrong and help children to make moral judgements about situations.
- Moral values such as sharing, caring, love, forgiveness and friendship.
- The importance of family and care of the earth.

Key Stage 1 Focus

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

Religious Education

- My family is a gift from God.
- Christians respect their bodies and the bodies of others because they were created by God (CCC 364; CSRE 3a).
- The importance of looking after ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Key Stage 2 Focus

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
- 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 use
- develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety – at home, near water, on the internet, TV etc
- know where, when and how to seek help
- being aware of basic emergency procedures and first aid

Religious Education

- The importance of looking after ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- Life is precious and God-given.

Appendix 1 :

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

Irish Episcopal Conference, Share the Good News (2010)

Bishop's Conference of Ireland, Guidelines on Relationships and Sexuality Education (2013).

Love is for Life – No 7

Irish Episcopal Conference, Love is for Life (1985)

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2004/05/03/supporting-marriage-and-the-family/>

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

Appendix 2

RSE 'IN THE BEGINNING' OVERVIEW



RSE 'In the Beginning...' Program

"In The Beginning..." is a carefully constructed vehicle, designed in such a way as to enable teachers and parents to explore life and life issues with children through natural, appropriate and purposeful conversation, and through tasks & visual prompts which stimulate further discussion within the bounds of suitability.

Our relationship with God sits at the very heart of this programme and the teachings of Jesus Christ provide the blueprint for ways we should relate to each other as human beings (and as members of God's global family), and to the world around us.

INTRODUCTION:

Set within a strong Christian framework the programme itself is made up of 8 pupil workbooks held together by a common thread...

The workbooks carry the child along pathways of discovery -

- Discovering our world and the many life forms it holds
- Discovering how life comes to be, and how precious life is
- Discovering ourselves ... how we touch the world and how the world touches us, and in so doing ...
- Discovering God - Our Father, Our Creator, our friend.

Each of the 8 pupil workbooks comes with a corresponding PARENTS ADVICE BOOKLET offering helpful guidance on a page by page basis.

Each of the booklets are enhanced by appropriate work designed to reinforce religious beliefs, strengthen moral values and raise awareness of our responsibilities as human beings ... central to this being the way we form lasting and loving relationships with our family and friends, with our peers and our community, with the wider world and with God.

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME:

Primary 1

The 'In the beginning...' program does not be used. Instead 'God Loves Me' RE Educational Program creates the foundation for the RSE program to start in Primary 2.

It presents 'Jesus as my friend'. The program focuses on the family unit and uniqueness of all as individuals.

Primary 2:

Booklet 1 - "In The Beginning"

It presents God's great plan - CREATION It recognizes all living things, divided into families and within these families divided into male and female. It shows families made up of adults and young, and eventually places humans into the picture. It concludes with a reflection on the way God wants us to live together in friendship, in love and in Him.

Primary 3:

Booklet 2 - "God Made Us"

It puts the child in the context of their own family, surrounded by love and care. It explores the individuality of the child and recognizes their value within a family structure which is unique and therefore SPECIAL. Every family is special because every family is DIFFERENT! And each individual member is special! It presents the word 'sex' as a division of gender. The booklet goes on to explore the human body:

- Naming parts including penis and vagina
- Recognising our medical needs
- Accepting our looks and our shape (with confidence)
- Treating the body with respect
- Care and hygiene
- Making choices and accepting responsibility for our actions
- Citizenship.

Primary 4:

Booklet 3 - "God - The Master Designer"

It uses FLOWERS as its focus and develops

- Male and female parts and functions
- Pollination and fertilization
- Producing new life
- Life cycle

Primary 5(a):

Booklet 4 – “God – The Caring Protector”

It uses FISH as its focus and develops

- Male and female identification (naming parts)
- Homebuilding and courtship
- Laying of eggs and fertilizing with sperm
- Aftercare and protection of young
- The responsibilities of parenthood
- Life cycles

Primary 5 (b):

Booklet 5 – “God – The Great Provider”

It uses BIRDS as its focus and develops

- Male and female identification (naming parts)
- Courtship and homebuilding
- Passing of sperm from male to female (mating)
- Fertilization of eggs inside female
- Sharing the responsibilities of parenthood
- Incubation and feeding each other
- Hatching and aftercare (role of both parents)
- Partnerships for life
- Life cycles

Primary 6:

Booklet 6 – “God – The Friend & Neighbour”

It uses RABBITS as its focus and develops

- Male and female identification (naming parts)
- Courtship and mating
- Passing of sperm from male via penis
- Fertilization of female eggs via vagina
- Homebuilding
- Birth and feeding (suckling)
- Aftercare of young
- Responsibilities of parenthood
- Life cycles

Primary 7 (a):

Booklet 7 – “God – The Image Maker” Pt 1

It uses HUMANS as its focus and develops

- A (late teens) boy meets girl relationship which passes through its most recognized stages of development – attraction, friendship, falling in

love, engagement, planning a future, marriage, setting up home, having a family

- Male and female body parts and functions
- The act of making love (producing new life)
- The passing of sperm via penis
- The fertilization of eggs via vagina
- The developing embryo
- Pregnancy and associated care of both mother and child
- The joy of birth
- Human life cycle

Primary 7 (b):

Booklet 8 – “God – The Image Maker” Pt2

It continues from the point of birth (God the Image Maker Pt.1) and develops

- The helplessness of a new-born baby and the need for support
- Growth towards limited independence (early years)
- Physical growth and support
- Problem solving
- Spiritual growth (through sacraments) and support
- The uniqueness of the individual through – genes, family characteristics, outward appearances, inner feelings and attitudes (with Christ as the example)
- Personal timelines – past, present and future
- Influences which could make or break a successful future
- Loving relationships 9exploring one’s sexuality
- Summary (of the whole scheme)
- A call for God/Christ to enter our lives and help us to become what he intended us to be.