

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit



Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) Policy

Ratified by Board of Governors:

As per statement on Website

INTRODUCTION

It is a statutory requirement that all schools in Northern Ireland have a 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' (RSE) Policy.

This policy has been written in line with Department of Education N.I. requirements and through consultation with parents/carers, staff, and governors and has been ratified by the Board of Governors. It will be updated annually.

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)

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and must be delivered in a sensitive manner, which is appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and the ethos of the school.

Ensuring the availability of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is a matter of equal opportunities. Every student has the right to receive an education that effectively equips them for adult life, with quality RSE playing a crucial role in this preparation. RSE, when well-implemented, can positively impact self-esteem. Schools have the opportunity to foster students' self-esteem by cultivating an environment of trust and acceptance, where each individual is valued, respected, and motivated to feel a sense of pride in themselves. Students are encouraged to understand their unique needs, show respect for the needs of others, and acquire the skills and self-esteem essential for becoming confident adolescents.

Implementing Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) in schools can enhance informed decision-making by offering students the chance to examine their own values and beliefs in comparison to those of their peers. A more profound comprehension of their own values and beliefs empowers students to understand the reasons behind their thoughts and actions, distinguish between reality and misconception, identify biases, and appreciate the perspectives, emotions, and sentiments of others.

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. 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.

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) should create opportunities for students to:

- Develop values and shape behaviour within a moral, spiritual, and social context.
- Investigate and understand the diverse relationships present in their personal lives.
- Acquire the skills to cultivate and appreciate personal relationships and friendships grounded in responsibility and mutual respect.
- Lay the groundwork for cultivating deeper personal relationships in the future.
- Make constructive and responsible decisions concerning themselves, others, and the manner in which they lead their lives.

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, 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 other points of view; putting one's own view forward clearly and appropriately; giving and receiving feedback; handling and resolving conflict peacefully; being assertive;
- decision-making and problem-solving skills for sensible choices made in the light of relevant information; making moral judgements about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgements into practice; acting responsibly and with initiative as an individual or as a member of a variety of groups;
- inter-personal skills for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader.

MORALS AND VALUES

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

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

- A respect for self
- A respect for others
- Equal opportunities for all
- Commitment, trust and bonding within relationships
- An exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationship
- Sensitive and caring attitude towards the needs of others
- Development of personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Honesty with self and others
- Self-discipline
- The difference between right and wrong.
- The responsibility for one's own actions.
- A development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others.

THE SCHOOL ETHOS

The ethos of Enniskillen Integrated Primary School is founded on principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. Our aim is to create an environment where everyone feels valued, and both pupils and staff are nurtured to reach their full potential within a caring and supportive setting. At Enniskillen Integrated Primary School, collaboration among teachers, parents, and governors is key to fostering the holistic development of each child—spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically—aligned with our school's ethos. This RSE Policy mirrors the values of our school.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HOME, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

The effectiveness of this RSE Policy and its implementation is dependent upon a collaborative process involving staff members, parents/carers, Governors, volunteers and other educational and health professionals. Each partner plays a unique and valuable role in this process. Maintaining open communication with parents/carers regarding the school's health education offerings is a crucial aspect of RSE. Parents/carers are encouraged to participate in discussions about matters such as assessing children's readiness for specific aspects of the RSE program, evaluating the suitability of resources, reviewing proposed content, and addressing the handling of sensitive topics.

The delivery of RSE must prepare pupils to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner and should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the school's moral and religious principles. The Department of Education's Circulars have been used to devise this RSE Policy.

These include:

- Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- Circulars 2001/15a and 2001/15b);
- Circular 2013/16; and
- Circular 2015/22 Relationships and Sexuality Education.

These circulars are available on the Department's website: www.deni.gov.uk. Guidance and resources on RSE are also provided on the NI Curriculum website at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

This RSE Policy relates to the following policies & documents:

- Safeguarding /Child Protection Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Positive behaviour policy
- Online Safety Policy
- PDMU Policy;
- RE Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- SEN policy
- Period Dignity policy
- Intimate care policy

Within primary schools, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) progressively enhances children's understanding in a manner suited to their developmental stage, building upon their pre-existing knowledge and experiences concerning their bodies, relationships, and the world. RSE aligns seamlessly with Health Education, as both prioritize cultivating a positive self-image, fostering respect for oneself and others, and delivering appropriate, accurate and reliable information.

An RSE programme for primary schools should provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- themselves as unique human beings;
- their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth;
- their friendships and relationships with others; and
- the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur at puberty.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF PUPILS

In order to guarantee that the learning encounters are impactful, positive, and relevant for all students, the RSE program should be progressive, accessible, and tailored to the age and maturity level of the pupils. It should cater to the needs of both genders, ensuring a positive experience for all participants.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy.
- The Principal and Senior Leadership Team co-ordinates the school's approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, and health professionals.
- The staff provide a link and have a complementary role with parents/carers and deliver the school's RSE programme within the context of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

CONTENT OF RSE

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 be alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils.

Pupils will have the opportunity to provide feedback about the content of the programme of RSE delivered by the school so that it can be responsive to the children's needs. In Enniskillen Integrated Primary School this is done through consultation with Primary 6 and 7 classes.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the range of topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in Enniskillen Integrated Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of a variety of learning areas such as Health Education, PDMU/ PATHS, Keeping Safe, RE, World Around Us, PE and Drama. All teachers will deliver the RSE programme. Topics and themes are often repeated at regular intervals. The sequence in which ideas are presented below is not intended to imply a teaching order

FOUNDATION STAGE AND KEY STAGE 1

Myself

- Myself: how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example, hygiene, sleep, exercise.
- 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 issues, different rates of growth.
- 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 considered 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.
- The difference between good and bad touches.
- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends; 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.
- The physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty (girls and boys).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different circumstances.
- Messages and images about health, gender roles and sexuality from the media, family and peers.

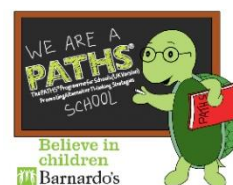
SELECTION OF TEACHING RESOURCES

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;

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School delivers our RSE Policy through:

- The PATHS Programme Years 1 – 7
- Roots of Empathy Programme Year 5
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Curriculum
- Hangout/ FIND centre drug awareness programme (Y7)
- Student Council
- ECO Council
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors Programme – accredited school
- PANTS Rule
- Active Schools Travel Programme
- E-Safety Programme – 6-week lesson scheme for each year group
- Uberheroes – year 7
- Keeping Safe Programme Years 1 – 7
- Period Dignity lessons Years 6 and 7



TEACHING RSE IN THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

At EIPS, we emphasize the importance of teachers establishing a classroom setting that is nurturing, promoting self-esteem and ensuring that pupils feel both valued and affirmed. The classroom environment should encourage mutual respect and uphold the dignity of each individual. It is crucial to foster an atmosphere where all students feel at ease expressing opinions and emotions securely, even when addressing sensitive and personal topics. Every effort should be made to cultivate a sense of comfort within the entire group, with pupils demonstrating respect for one another and recognizing their responsibilities to their peers.

Establishing agreed-upon ground rules is essential to reduce embarrassment and promote respect for each other's opinions. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos, and stories can facilitate discussions on various issues without necessitating personal disclosure from pupils.

Key considerations include:

- 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; and
- need to be aware and take account of the current youth culture.

TERMINOLOGY

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

FAMILY STATUS

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of family life. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in school and will endeavour to treat all situations sensitively.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Assurance of confidentiality is not guaranteed. In cases where a child discloses abuse, Child Protection/Safeguarding Children procedures will be activated. Given that the classroom is an open environment, confidentiality cannot be preserved. Consequently, both staff and pupils are discouraged from discussing 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 indicating potential risk to a pupil or suspicion of physical or sexual abuse. If a child shares information with a staff member while requesting confidentiality, the child should be informed, with sensitivity, that the matter needs to be reported to the relevant agencies. Subsequent decisions will be made following the procedures outlined 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 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;
- Teachers encourage young people, where possible, to discuss their concerns with parents/carers.

WITHDRAWAL FROM RSE

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal.

SACREDNESS OF LIFE

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of RSE teaching.

SPECIFIC TOPICS

There will be no direct teaching of issues such as homosexuality, AIDS, contraception etc. However, if these issues are raised by pupils, the teachers will address them sensitively.

USE OF VISITORS

When deemed suitable, we may engage the skills and expertise of external agencies and professionals. In such instances, the school will ensure that contributions from knowledgeable external parties are seamlessly integrated into the overall program and align with the school's objectives and ethos.

STAFF TRAINING

Training needs will be considered and will be accessed using the EA, Public Health Agency and/or other appropriate health agencies. Where outside Agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of the school.

REVIEW OF THE RSE POLICY

The RSE policy will be evaluated by the SMT.

The SMT to evaluate the RSE policy consists of:

Principal and member of the Safeguarding Team: Adele Kerr

Vice Principal and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Nick O'Neill

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection: A. Kerr

The SMT will review this policy annually or as appropriate in light of new guidance/legislation.

The policy is approved by the Board of Governors.

Signed:

_____ (Principal)

_____ (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

_____ (Date)