



Ashfield Boys' High School Relationship & Sexuality Education Policy

Reviewed September 2016

INTRODUCTION

RSE is a statutory element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The revised DENI circular 2015/22 and the Guidelines produced by CCEA were used as a basis for this policy.

It is intended that the policy and programme is a flexible, working document and one that involves pupils, staff, Board of Governors and parents of the School. The Pastoral Vice Principal and key Pastoral staff will review the policy at the end of each working year.

The School recognises the importance of input and support from staff and parents on the development of this policy and the RSE programme and welcomes feedback from all stakeholders.

RATIONALE

All young people have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life and good Relationships and Sexuality Education plays an integral part. Many young people are maturing earlier and parents tend to allow young people increased independence during their years at post primary school and greater freedom to participate in a wider range of social activities. This stage of development may also be marked by the first significant experience of sexual attraction.

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 the ability to form relationships with others generally, the capacity to be affectionate, give and receive love, and reproduce.

Relationships and sexuality education is a lifelong process where there is a need to acquire information and develop attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues. The learning process begins informally with parents/carers, and continues throughout their school and adult life.

SCHOOL ETHOS

We strive to create a safe, secure school community based on good conduct and respect for all, which recognises the worth of the individual.

We will aim to provide a balanced academic and extended curriculum so that each pupil will have the opportunity to achieve his full potential and enable him to make informed career choices.

We will aim to encourage pupils to develop their physical, aesthetic and social skills to enable them to have a positive impact on their own lives and the lives of everyone they encounter.

A FRAMEWORK FOR 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. There should be an appreciation that friendships and relationships should be based on self and mutual respect, non exploitation, honesty, trust and commitment. Within relationships there should be recognition that rights, duties and responsibilities are involved.

Relationships and Sexuality Education should be tailored to the age, maturity and understanding of pupils. The programme therefore aims to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, set within a clear framework of values and an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate the value of family, marriage, and permanent loving relationships, and the responsibilities of parenthood. They should be helped to consider the importance of respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity. They should be enabled to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour and to accept that both sexes must behave responsibly in sexual matters. Teachers should however acknowledge that many children come from backgrounds that do not reflect such values and experiences. Sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing hurt and offence to them and their families, and to encourage the development of their sense of worth.

The following key messages will be promoted throughout the school:

- An appreciation of the value of family life, marriage, permanent loving relationships, and the responsibilities of parenthood.
- The deferment of sexual activity until marriage/young people are physically and emotionally mature enough to understand the inherent responsibilities.
- A recognition of the positive benefits of seeking sexual fulfilment within a permanent committed relationship with one person.
- A recognition that sexual abstinence outside of marriage and fidelity within it, is a positive (and desirable) option which is an achievable reality to which young people can aspire.
- A recognition that sexual responsibility belongs to each person. How we respond to our sexual feelings is our responsibility.
- A recognition that both genders, male and female, are to be appreciated, respected, valued and seen as equal, different and complimentary.
- An appreciation that friendships and relationships should be based on self and mutual respect, empathy, non exploitation, honesty, trust and commitment.
- Compassion, forgiveness, tolerance and care are essential skills and dispositions to develop in relationships.
- Within relationships there should be recognition that rights, duties and responsibilities are involved.

Our school wish to include the following values in our RSE Policy.

- *a respect for self;*
- *a respect for others;*
- *non-exploitation in relationships;*
- *commitment, trust and bonding within relationships;*
- *mutuality in relationships;*
- *honesty with self and others;*
- *a development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others;*
- *an exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships;*
- *compassion, forgiveness, tolerance and care in relationships*
- *self-discipline.*

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The RSE aims to be a positive experience for all participants. It is developmental, accessible and appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. Teachers are aware of, and take into account the variety of existing pupil knowledge, differing attitudes and beliefs and the pupil's capacity to understand issues. This is particularly important in relation to children with special educational needs where physical development may outstrip emotional maturity.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

There is no statutory legislation relating specifically to confidentiality. Ashfield Boys' High school recognises that pupils need and expect a certain level of confidentiality, but as we have responsibility for the welfare and safety of young people within the school environment, it is not always possible to offer confidentiality. It is essential that at all times confidentiality operates within the boundaries of the school's Child Protection Policy and the Children's (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. All teaching staff must follow the following procedures;

- Confidentiality must be discussed and clarified with pupils before beginning an RSE programme or one off session. Ground rules should be agreed with pupils.
- Pupils should be informed that there are instances when confidentiality cannot be held (for example in cases of suspected abuse). Pupils should be fully informed of action that will be taken.
- Pupils must be fully aware that they have the right to report inappropriate attitudes and/or behaviour by any member of the school personnel.
- Where teachers are unsure when confidentiality should not be maintained they should in the first instance consult with Mr.T.Finn (Teacher in charge of Child Protection)

CURRICULUM

Opportunities to explain the elements of RSE present themselves throughout the school curriculum. Encouraging discussion in the different subject areas helps place RSE in the context of life and social skills learning. This encourages young people to see it as an inherent part of human relationships and their own development.

The following topics will be addressed in the RSE programme across the curriculum (through Science, LLW, Religious Education)

KS3 Science –

- Reproductive Organs
- Sex
- Fertility Treatment
- Periods
- Pregnancy
- Healthy Foetus
- Giving Birth
- Growing Up
- Life Cycles

KS3 RE –

- Self Image and Identity

KS3 LLW –

- Relationships – bullying/ peer pressure
- Health of the whole person – physical, mental, emotional, sexual, spiritual
- Relationships – qualities needed to establish healthy relationships with family/ peers/ classmates
- Sexual morality

KS3 ICT –

- Staying safe in the digital world

KS3 Personal Development –

- Being special and unique
- Perception – recognising own skills/ qualities
- Memes/ slogans/ affirmations – complimenting themselves and others
- Recognising the impact of peer pressure
- Creating positive friendships
- Conflict – understanding and controlling anger
- Understanding sexuality

KS4 Science –

- Human Reproduction and its Control
- Human Reproductive Systems
- Fertilisation
- Developing Babies
- Healthy Pregnancy
- Birth
- Contraception

KS4 RE –

- Friendships
- Relationships
- Marriage vs Cohabitation

- Divorce
- Abortion

KS4 LLW –

- Morality – sexual morality

KS4 ICT –

- Staying safe in the digital world

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Issues such as sex outside marriage, contraception, sexual identity and abortion can attract a wide range of beliefs or values. The teaching of all issues including those that may be perceived as sensitive will be consistent with the ethos of the school even though that may be a contradiction to the lifestyle or experiences of some pupils and their parents, and even teachers within the school. The school must ensure that the pupils receive information that is balanced, non-judgemental and respectful of the diversity of values that are reflected in society.

TERMINOLOGY

The use of biological terms for parts of the body and body functions should be encouraged and used at all times.

AGE OF CONSENT

As part of the curriculum, teachers can provide general information to pupils about the types of contraception and the risks to health. They can provide all pupils with information about where and from whom they can receive advice, treatment and support. Personal medical advice must not be given to individual pupils. Teachers must advise pupils to seek advice from their parents or medical practitioners.

Pupils should be reminded that the legal age of consent in Northern Ireland is 16 years regardless of whether you are heterosexual, gay or bisexual. This is the same age for people who live in England, Scotland & Wales.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Staff should handle the issue of sexual orientation in a sensitive, non-confrontational and reassuring way. Confusion and anxiety about one's own sexuality is a natural part of an adolescent's development. Teachers should seek to confront prejudiced, aggressive stereotyping. Pupils should be reminded that a male under the age of 17 years cannot legally consent to any homosexual act. It is only legal if it is in private, both parties are over 17 years and both consent.

ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME

The school addresses a number of RSE issues through its Pastoral Assembly Programme, Healthy School's Assembly Programme and assemblies delivered during National Anti-Bullying Week. The assembly material engages our boys on areas including but not confined to staying safe in the digital world, sexual health and the use of homophobic language.

EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS

The school recognises that the expertise of education and health professionals from statutory or voluntary bodies or individuals from the community can provide a value added dimension to the RSE programme.

The school's Pastoral Care Team will strive to identify and organise programmes for all Key Stages. Before agreeing to use an external agency or individual, teachers must;

- ensure that the agency or individual receives a copy of the school's RSE policy.
- ensure that issues around confidentiality and the school ethos are highlighted
- ensure parental consent through agreement in writing for participation in programmes where deemed to be appropriate
- be present for the whole programme or session
- ensure that the input complements the schools RSE programme and will incorporate preparation and follow up activities
- inform pupils of the purpose of the visit
- ensure that the work is evaluated

Stand alone events are organised to cover the following topics –

- What is a relationship
- Who do we have relationships with
- What makes a good relationship/ what makes it not so good
- Discussing a relationship – is it good/ bad, what are the boundaries and attitudes and who sets them
- Sexual exploitation
- Legal age for sex – discussion
- Why do young people have sex so young
- Peer pressure
- Reasons for use and correct use and disposal of condoms
- Risky behaviours

WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASS

The school is willing to discuss with concerned parents, their expressed desire for their son to be excluded from aspects, or the entire RSE programme. Whilst the School acknowledges and understands parental concerns, it is important to note that there is no 'legal right' for withdrawal from RSE. Therefore, the School will encourage all pupils to complete the 'RSE' programme.

EVALUATION

As is the practice with other school policies, this policy will be reviewed and updated periodically by a working party consisting of the Pastoral Vice-Principal, the Personal Development Coordinator, the Counselling Coordinator and the Heads of Science, RE, ICT and LLW Departments.