



Ashfield Boys' High School Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Reviewed September 2017

INTRODUCTION

The School's Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy is designed to reflect the ethos and values of the School and be compatible with the rights of the child as detailed in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order, 1995. It aims to encourage pupils to develop mutual respect, self-esteem and well-being within the context of healthy and respectful friendships and relationships and in doing so develop responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions. It seeks to foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude towards, human sexuality and relationships within a moral, social and spiritual framework and to help the child come to value family life and marriage and to appreciate the responsibility of parenthood.

The policy has been written in accordance with the guidance provided in DE Circulars 2010/01, 2013/16 and 2015/22 and "Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance – An Update for Post-Primary Schools" (CCEA, August 2015). It also takes account of The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

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.

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, spiritual and social skills to enable them to have a positive impact on their own lives and the lives of everyone they encounter.

POLICY FORMATION AND REVIEW

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

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 them.

Article 12 of the UNCRC “provides all children with the right to express their views in matters affecting them and for those views to be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.” As part of the School’s commitment to facilitating the pupil voice, pupils will be involved in reviewing the RSE policy and in the School’s on going evaluation and review of RSE provision to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils.

OBJECTIVES OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues.

Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has spiritual, social, cultural, biological and psychological dimensions.

The underlying objectives of the RSE programme are:

- To respect the rights of children and young people.
- To develop within pupils a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth.
- To enable pupils to develop skills in forming and maintaining healthy relationships.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to explore the moral and ethical issues surrounding sexuality.
- To develop within pupils a respect for their own and other people’s bodies.
- To develop pupils’ skills in recognising and protecting themselves from abuse.
- To help pupils keep themselves safer in the digital world.
- To give accurate information to correct misunderstandings that pupils may have gained from their peers or from other unhealthy influences e.g. popular culture.
- To enable pupils to communicate about feelings, sexuality and development using appropriate language.
- To enable pupils to understand the influence of messages from peers and media on their own values.
- To develop the skills of pupils to resist detrimental peer pressure and exert positive pressure on others.
- To prepare pupils to cope with the social, physical and emotional challenges of growing up and so prepare them for adult life.
- To increase the pupils’ awareness of sexual health.
- To promote amongst pupils a better understanding of diversity and inclusion.

A FRAMEWORK FOR MORALS AND VALUES

Relationships and Sexuality Education must not be value free. Teachers need to acknowledge that many children come from backgrounds that do not reflect such values or experiences. Sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing hurt and offence to them and their families; and to allow such children to feel a sense of worth.

The morals and values reflected within the teaching of RSE are in line with the School's ethos:

- An appreciation of the value of stable family life, marriage, permanent loving relationships based on trust and commitment and responsibilities of parenthood.
- An acknowledgement of singleness and celibacy as equally valuable and fulfilling options and a recognition that sexual abstinence is a positive option which is an achievable reality to which young people can aspire.
- The deferment of sexual activity until young people are physically and emotionally mature enough to understand the inherent responsibilities.
- Recognition of the positive benefits of seeking sexual fulfilment within a permanent committed relationship with one person.
- An appreciation that rights, duties and responsibilities are involved within any relationship.
- An appreciation of the value and sacredness of human life.
- The promotion of respect for all people regardless of sexual orientation and an appreciation of the need to treat others with dignity and respect and the right of others to hold different views from oneself without aggression or antagonism.
- An appreciation that self-discipline, self-restraint and non-exploitation are important values in developing responsible behaviour in sexual matters.

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

The child's right to privacy will be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. However, staff cannot give any guarantee of confidentiality to pupils. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to inform the Designated Teacher (Mr. Millar) or Deputy Designated Teacher (Mr. Duffield or Mr. McKnight) for Child Protection of any disclosures which may suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical, sexual or other abuse is suspected. Such disclosures should be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in the School's Child Protection Policy.

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, Personal Development, Home Economics and ICT)

Personal Development strand – Key Stage 3

Key Concept – Self Awareness	Subject
Explore and express a sense of self , for example, <i>temperament, feelings and emotions, personal responsibility, personal needs, aspirations, etc.</i>	LLW, RE, PD
Explore personal morals, values and beliefs , for example, <i>the origin of personal values, developing a moral framework, personal integrity, etc.</i>	RE
Investigate the influences on a young person , for example, <i>peer pressure, media, social and cultural trends, fears, anxieties, motivations, etc.</i>	LLW, RE, PD
Explore the different ways to develop self-esteem , for example, <i>enhanced self-awareness, sense of security and self-worth, setting achievable targets, developing resilience, new interests and skills, learning to recognise achievement, etc.</i>	RE, PD
Key Concept –Personal Health	
Explore the concept of Health as the development of a whole person , for example, <i>defining what makes up a whole person; the need to develop his/her physical, mental, social, moral, cognitive self, etc.</i>	LLW, Science, RE, PD, PE
Investigate the influences on physical and emotional/mental personal health , for example, <i>immunisation, regular physical activity, personal hygiene, diet, stress, addiction, life/work balance, etc.</i>	LLW, Science, PD, PE
Develop understanding about, and strategies to manage, the effects of change on body, mind and behaviour , for example, <i>puberty, body image, mood swings, etc.</i>	LLW, Science, PD
Develop strategies to promote personal safety , for example, <i>responding appropriately to different forms of bullying, abuse and physical violence; developing safe practice in relation to the internet and getting home; understanding and managing risk; the place of rules and boundaries, etc.</i>	LLW, ICT
Key Concept – Relationships	
Explore the qualities of relationships including friendship , for example, <i>conditions for healthy relationships, types of relationships, healthy boundaries,</i>	RE, PD
Explore the qualities of a loving respectful relationship , for example, <i>how choices within a relationship affect both physical and emotional development, friendships, etc.</i>	RE
Develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios , for example, <i>sibling rivalry, caring for relatives, domestic violence, teenage rebellion, child abuse, sexism, change in family circumstances, coping with rejection, loneliness, loss, etc.</i>	RE, PD
Develop strategies to avoid and resolve conflict , for example, <i>active listening, assertiveness, negotiation, mediation, etc.</i>	PD
Explore the implications of sexual maturation , for example, <i>sexual health, fertility, contraception, conception, teenage pregnancy, childbirth, etc.</i>	LLW, Science
Explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual activity , for example, <i>personal values, attitudes and perceptions, the Law, STIs, the impact of underage parenting, etc.</i>	LLW

Personal Development strand – Key Stage 4

Key Concept – Self Awareness	Subject
Explore and express a sense of self , for example, <i>temperament, feelings and emotions, personal responsibility, personal needs, aspirations, etc.</i>	LLW
Explore personal morals, values and beliefs , for example, <i>the origin of</i>	RE

<i>personal values, developing a moral framework, personal integrity, etc.</i>	
Investigate the influences on a young person , for example, <i>peer pressure, media, social and cultural trends, fears, anxieties, motivations, etc.</i>	LLW
Explore the different ways to develop self-esteem , for example, <i>enhanced self-awareness, sense of security and self-worth, setting achievable targets, developing resilience, new interests and skills, learning to recognise achievement, etc.</i>	LLW
Key Concept – Personal Health	
Explore the concept of Health as the development of a whole person , for, <i>defining what makes up a whole person; the need to develop his/her physical, mental, social, moral, cognitive self, etc.</i>	LLW, Science, RE
Investigate the influences on physical and emotional/mental personal health , for example, <i>immunisation, regular physical activity, personal hygiene, diet, stress, addiction, life/work balance, etc.</i>	LLW, Science
Develop understanding about, and strategies to manage, the effects of change on body, mind and behaviour , for example, <i>puberty, body image, mood swings, etc.</i>	Science
Develop strategies to promote personal safety , for example, <i>responding appropriately to different forms of bullying, abuse and physical violence; developing safe practice in relation to the internet and getting home; understanding and managing risk; the place of rules and boundaries, etc.</i>	LLW, ICT
Key Concept – Relationships	
Explore the qualities of relationships including friendship , for example, <i>conditions for healthy relationships, types of relationships, healthy boundaries, gender issues in relationships, etc.</i>	LLW, RE
Explore the qualities of a loving, respectful relationship , for example, <i>how choices within a relationship affect both physical and emotional development, friendships, etc.</i>	LLW, RE
Develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios , for example, <i>sibling rivalry, caring for relatives, domestic violence, teenage rebellion, child abuse, sexism, change in family circumstances, coping with rejection, loneliness, loss, etc.</i>	RE
Develop strategies to avoid and resolve conflict , for example, <i>active listening, assertiveness, negotiation, mediation, etc.</i>	LLW
Explore the implications of sexual maturation , for example, <i>sexual health, fertility, contraception, conception, teenage pregnancy, childbirth, etc.</i>	LLW, Science, RE
Explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual activity , for example, <i>personal values, attitudes and perceptions, the Law, STIs, the impact of underage parenting, etc.</i>	LLW, RE

Home Economics strand – Key Stage 3

Key Concept – Home and Family Life	Subject
Explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals within a variety of home and family structures , for example, <i>sharing roles within the family, role reversal, etc.</i>	HE
Develop awareness of parenting skills , for example, <i>how parents or carers can nurture physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral development.</i>	HE
Investigate some of the changing needs of family members at different stages of the life cycle , for example, <i>physical (including nutritional),</i>	HE

<i>intellectual, emotional, social needs.</i>	
Explore strategies to manage family scenarios , for example, <i>managing changes in family circumstances such as sibling rivalry, caring for relatives, etc.</i>	HE

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.

SEXUAL IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

All members of the school community, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, gender, colour, religion etc., will be respected and valued and have the right to learn in a safe environment. Pupils should allow others the right to hold different views/lifestyles from them in a peaceful manner.

The issue of sexual orientation and sexual identity will be handled in a sensitive, non-confrontational and non-judgemental way. Pupils will be reminded that no one under 16 years old can legally consent to any homosexual act. Within the Religious Education curriculum, homosexuality is dealt with in the topic of personal and family issues.

Pupils will be spoken with if they call each other names such as “gay” or “lesbian” in a derogatory manner.

Homophobic bullying, in any form including any demonstration of negative attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students or those who are perceived to be such, will not be tolerated by the school.

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 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 some 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.

