



## **RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

Relationship 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.

RSE is a statutory element of the NI curriculum. It is not a new area of the curriculum and Knocknagoney has been teaching aspects of RSE for many years. The revised DENI circular 2001/15 and the guidelines produced by CCEA were used as a basis for this policy

### **Values, attitudes and beliefs**

RSE should enable children to clarify what they believe and why they believe it, to develop a respect for and interest in the beliefs of others and an appreciation of loving relationships and family units. Children need opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how they affect them and others.

Children should be taught RSE within a framework that models and encourages these values:

- a respect for self;
- a respect for others that includes the recognition of the right of members of the school community to have different views and/or lifestyles;
- an appreciation that friendships and relationships should be based on mutual respect, honesty, trust and commitment;
- an appreciation that within any relationship there is a recognition of rights, duties and responsibilities;
- an appreciation of the value of loving relationships and family life.

### **Aims**

The Aims of RSE are to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child;
- develop a respect for their own and other people's bodies;
- understand the stages of development from infancy and through to adolescence (P7 with parental/carer consent);
- help the child develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships;
- promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions;
- help the child to value family life.

### **Learning objectives**

The RSE curriculum should enable children to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self;
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem;
- develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others;



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- understand the nature of relationships within families and in friendships;
- develop an awareness of differing family patterns;
- develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts;
- 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 (age-appropriate);
- acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.

### **Equality of opportunity**

The provision of RSE is an equal opportunity issue. It should meet the needs of all the participants. Children with special educational needs have the same rights and needs as all children but the content and delivery of the RSE programme may be different.

### **Implementation of the RSE programme**

The PDMU Co-ordinator (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) has the responsibility for the RSE Policy and Programme.

The role includes:

- ensuring that the programme is taught effectively and is appropriate to the age and maturity of the children;
- liaising with the principal, Board of Governors, all staff, parents, health and educational visitors on RSE matters;
- attending in-service training and disseminating appropriate information to other members of staff;
- organising training for staff as required;

All teachers are responsible for teaching aspects of RSE, appropriate to the age of their children.

It will be delivered explicitly in PDMU lessons and through the use of Circle Time and also implicitly through a range of subjects, each covering aspects of the RSE programme whilst delivering the programme of study in the NI curriculum.

The RSE programme is developmental, accessible and appropriate to the age and maturity of the children. It will meet the needs of both genders and aims to be a positive experience for all participants.

Generally, RSE will be taught in mixed groups so that boys and girls are encouraged to work with each other and gain an understanding of each other's perspective. However, where relevant, single sex groupings will be used when teaching gender specific issues to Primary 7. This would be conducted by an external organisation with parent/carers permission.

### **Specific issues**

#### **❖ Status of the family**

Family units can be made up from many combinations. They are not necessarily only those who live in their home. Staff will be sensitive to the range of family units in the



school and terminology used will reflect this.

❖ **Confidentiality and child protection**

The staff cannot give any guarantee of confidentiality to children. If details are revealed which could lead staff to suspect sexual or emotional abuse, the member of staff **must** follow the procedures outlined in the school's child protection policy.

❖ **Withdrawal from class/exclusion from RSE classes**

There is currently no legal right of withdrawal from RSE. The school is, of course, willing to discuss any concerns with parents and in doing so seeks to reach an understanding of the value placed on RSE and its importance in preparing our children to cope with a rapidly changing world.

❖ **Detail of what is taught**

All aspects of the RSE programme will be taught at an appropriate level for the age and maturity of the children and to meet the needs of genders.

❖ **Visitors and Resources**

Care will be taken to make sure that all visitors who will be making a contribution to the curriculum have read and will comply with the school policy. Their participation will complement the RSE curriculum and they should know what has been taught in preparation for their visit and how their input will be developed further.

❖ **Name-calling**

Children should be encouraged to respect the rights of other's to have different lifestyles. Bullying will not be tolerated.

**Dissemination of the policy**

A copy of this policy was made available to the teachers and the Board of Governors.

A copy of the policy will be provided, on request, to parents.

Copies of the policy will be made available to others, on request, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. Any visitor discussing issues related to RSE will be provided with a copy of the policy.

**Monitoring and evaluating**

As is the practice with other school policies, this one will be reviewed and updated periodically.

Children, staff and parents may be asked to complete evaluation questionnaires prior or post RSE programmes.