



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

2022-2024

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Introduction

As stated in DE circular 2013/16:

The revised curriculum aims to prepare young people for all aspects of life and the Department of Education recognises the importance of delivering appropriate age-related relationship and sexuality education within a clear values framework as a means of developing the child as a whole. RSE is an integral part of the revised curriculum in both primary and post primary schools and must be delivered in a sensitive manner which is appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and the ethos of the school.

The school accepts the Department of Education definitions as set out in DE circular 2001/15a:

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 our parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place at school.

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.

Relationships

“Human relationships are the building blocks of healthy development. From the moment of our conception to the finality of death, intimate and caring relationships are the fundamental mediators of successful human adaptation.”

(National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000)

Harmony Hill Primary School agrees with the Department of Education that 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 moral and religious principles held by parents / carers and the school management authority. The key moral value of Harmony Hill Primary School is ‘respect for self and others.’

It is also mindful of the need to take account of guidance produced by the Equality Commission on eliminating sexual orientation discrimination (Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006). All students/pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. This will be set alongside the Christian ethos of the school and the emotional well-being of the majority of our pupils.

The CCEA Guidance document which outlines Relationships and Sexuality Education states:

Relationships and Sexuality Education is most effective when it is taught;

In a sensitive and inclusive manner and in a way that is appropriate to the child's emotional and physical age and stage of development.

As stated in section 2 of DE Circular 2001/15a

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 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.

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 value family life including blended families;
- Appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- Promote an appreciation of the value of human life.

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.

Organisation of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme

Mrs Nixon, PDMU co-ordinator, in conjunction with Mrs Johnston, the Principal, will co-ordinate the planning and delivery of the RSE programme. They will also be supported by Mr Anderson, the Vice Principal, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mr Hyndman and the RE co-ordinator, Miss Murdock.

The delivery of the RSE programme will be carried out in mixed groups as well as single sex groups as appropriate. The RSE programme will form part of the School Development Plan, and when appropriate, an action plan for implementation will be drawn up and monitored by the co-ordinator and Board of Governors.

All class teachers will be responsible for the delivery of the programme. The RSE programme will be infused in the R.E., Personal Development and Mutual Understanding and The World Around Us curriculum and will be developmental and appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils to ensure that the programme is relevant and accessible to all pupils regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or social class. Great care will be taken to ensure that the resources which are used in our school are appropriate for the age of the children and reflect the aims and objectives of the RSE programme and the school's overarching Christian ethos.

Related requirements in the key areas of learning:

The World Around Us

Includes statutory requirements to enable pupils to explore:

- Who am I and what am I?
- Am I the same as everyone else?
- 'Me' in the world;
- How do things change?

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Includes requirements to enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

- Their self-esteem and self-confidence and how they develop as individuals;
- Their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others;
- Strategies and skills for keeping themselves healthy and safe.
- Their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others;
- How to sustain their health, growth and well-being and how to cope safely and efficiently with their environment.
- Initiating, developing and sustaining mutually satisfying & respectful relationships.

R.E.

The Religious Education curriculum addresses many aspects of the RSE programme. It provides opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues, relate moral principles to their personal, social life and family life, and identify and explore values and attitudes that influence behaviour.

Specifically learning objective 3: morality states that:

Pupils should develop their ability to think and judge about morality, to relate Christian moral principles to personal and social life, and to identify values and attitudes that influence behaviour.

Puberty

It is recognised that children are maturing earlier. It is therefore important that, with the agreement of parents, pupils are provided with appropriate factual information and have opportunities to discuss their feelings and concerns to help pupils to be better able to manage the emotional and physical changes at puberty. The use of outside agencies such as 'Love for Life', 'Made for More', and 'Moving On', may be used to support the delivery of the RSE programme to Primary seven. Attendance at such workshops is by parental consent and a contribution towards the cost of the programme may be requested.

Safeguarding programme

The school is aware of the abuses that can occur in society and integrates personal safety programmes into the preventative curriculum. Children are made aware of key safeguarding personnel through assemblies, posters and circle time activities. Guest speakers are invited into school e.g. PSNI, Childline, NSPCC.

The Relationships and Sexual Education Programme will take cognisance of the legislation laid down in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Child Centred Approach as to how the programme will be drawn up and delivered will reflect the Every School A Good School document from the Department of Education which is recognised as an effective evaluative tool for schools.

Training

Although there may be use made of some outside agencies, it will still be important that full time teaching staff within the school are trained appropriately in Relationships and Sexuality Education. The school will avail of such courses and capacity building opportunities to enhance the delivery of the programme and the expertise within the school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will monitor and evaluate progress through

- Reviewing policy regularly considering guidance from DE, CCEA and available resources.
- Teachers being able to identify RSE related topics through schemes of work.
- Co-ordinator and key staff discussion and developments of schemes of work, training, and approaches.
- Use of surveys
- Reporting to Governors for open review.

Internet Safety

Due to continuing advances in technology, Relationships and Sexuality Education is very closely aligned to Internet Safety. There will be age-appropriate lessons taught in relation to internet safety and this will be complemented with parental awareness sessions.

Relationships and Sexuality Education Progression

Class	Topics / Lessons Covered
P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings / People who are important to me. • Exploring feelings and related behaviours. • Relationships within families / friendships. • Similarities and differences in families and communities. • Responding appropriately to different situations. • Internet Safety.
P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniqueness and Value – personal qualities and abilities. • Managing a variety of feelings. • Valuing your own feelings and emotions. • Self-awareness. • Knowing what makes others happy and sad – empathy. • Identifying special people in your life. • Internet Safety.
P3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Safety. • Rules about medicines. • Making choices in friendships. • Becoming an independent thinker. • Internet Safety.
P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an understanding of self-esteem / confidence. • Becoming aware of your strengths, abilities, qualities, achievements and goals. • Acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes and this helps us learn. • Exploring our bodies and senses. • Resolving conflicts. • Internet Safety.

P5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping healthy – Food, exercise and personal hygiene. • Understanding the benefits of a healthy lifestyle including exercise, a healthy diet, rest and hygiene. • Changes in responsibility as you get older. • Internet Safety. • Respect for others. • Internet Safety.
P6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity and self-acceptance, uniqueness and talents. • Feelings and others. Dealing with difficult feelings. • Harmful impact of smoking, alcohol and drugs on our bodies. • Peer pressure. • Growing up. Stages in life – baby, child, teenager, adult, senior citizen. <i>(This does not currently include puberty)</i> • Empathy, managing conflict and prejudice. • Internet Safety.
P7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene and health, keeping clean, showering, using deodorant. • Smoking, alcohol, drugs and medicines • Looking at how we are unique and special – our talents, abilities, family, friends, relationships. • Awareness of the harmful effects to you and others from smoking. • Puberty for boys and girls. Use of ‘Love For Life’ to deliver lesson. • Internet safety talk to children and parents. This may be outsourced to an outside agency to ensure that all information is current.