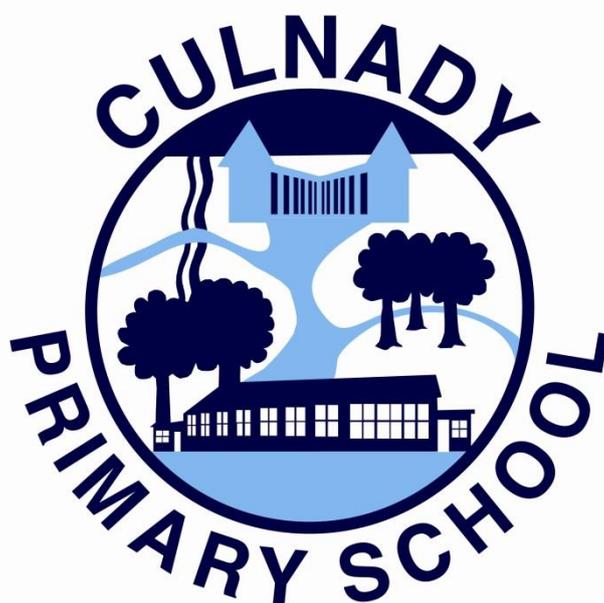


CULNADY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

(A) RATIONALE

Given the current media climate and culture where children have the opportunity to be misinformed about sexuality, RSE, has been introduced. Accordingly through RSE and other relevant areas of the Curriculum we endeavour to equip, form and prepare children for life in a moral and spiritual context thus enabling them to make positive responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives.

i. Ethos Statement:

Our ethos will value all children as individuals, raising self-esteem and a sense of self-worth whenever we can and creating a positive atmosphere through our interactions with the children and with each other. Within our Christian ethos we will nurture children's social, moral and spiritual development and aim for everyone to respect the belief and culture of others.

The **ethos** of our school which is Christ-centred and aims to develop the full potential of the human person, satisfies what is being requested by the RSE Guidelines, and is the means by which the Guidelines are interpreted.

- ii.** RSE may be taught through Religious Education and also links with other subject areas such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), Health Education, PE and World Around Us, addresses the current trends in sexual activity, albeit in a progressive and sensitive manner according to the age of the children. The increase in teenage pregnancies and sexual behaviour form the backdrop, but is only one of a series of reasons for RSE.
- iii.** Young people are directly influenced by media in all its forms which highlight sexual activity and behaviour. Accordingly young people are not interpreting such information sufficiently, hence the need for RSE in a moral and spiritual context.
- iv.**
- a) Having carried out an audit of existing policy and practice, and after consultation with staff, we can state that the existing policy not only takes account of The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 but also conforms to the requirements of the DE Circular and Guidelines.
 - b) Having used a system of consultation and discussion with staff, governors and parents the existing provision is relevant to pupils and community needs.
 - c) After an audit of the curriculum, RSE is being delivered through a variety of areas such as Assembly, RE, PDMU, Health Education, PE, World Around Us, English, Art & Design, Music and Drama.
- v** The DENI Circular 2001 states that RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI Curriculum, particularly through Health Education and Science and other spheres of influence. RSE must be taught in harmony with the ethos and values of the school. RSE is not value free and has family and marriage at its heart. Any RSE policy and programme should link up with Pastoral Care, Child Protection and any other relevant documents

(B) DEFINITIONS

i. **Relationships and Sexuality Education:**

As the title suggests there is an intricate entwining or marriage between relationships and sexuality which is a lifelong process. This process involves the whole person in terms of belief, corresponding values and relationships in the personal and social domain. Skills, attitudes and parental influence are crucial. Sexuality impacts upon the physical, spiritual, social, psychological and cultural aspects of the human person. This gift of sexuality shapes and crafts relationship through the qualities of love, respect and future new life.

ii. **Sexuality** in its very essence is a gift from God. Our gift of sexuality calls us into a relationship with Christ and encompasses the whole person. We have a sense of belonging and identity particularly in our connectedness to others, the world, ourselves and God. Faith colours and influences our sexuality so we can interpret our relationships in and through Christ.

iii. **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.

The importance of a moral framework is emphasised in the DfEE Circular No 5/1994 Education Act 1993: Sex Education in Schools;

'Sex education . . . must not be value-free; it should also be tailored not only to the age but also to the understanding of pupils. Schools' programmes of sex education should therefore aim 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 accordingly be encouraged to appreciate the value of stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood. They should be helped to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity. And 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 are exhorted: 'to 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 allow such children a sense of worth.'

The NCC discussion paper Spiritual and Moral development issued in 1993 suggests that morally educated school leavers should be able to:

- distinguish between right and wrong;
- articulate their own attitudes and values;
- take responsibility for their own actions;
- recognise the moral dimension to situations;
- understand the long and short term consequences of their actions for themselves and others;
- develop for themselves a set of socially acceptable values and principles, and set guidelines to govern their own behaviour;
- recognise that their values and attitudes may have to change over time;
- behave consistently in accordance with their principles.

(B) 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.
- . develop a respect for difference, gender and race

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.

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;
- communication skills, learning to listen, listening to others. 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.

2 SPECIFIC ISSUES

- The status of the Family, Marriage and Cohabiting
- Sacredness of Life
- Confidentiality and Child Protection
 - Right to Privacy – Teacher/Pupil
 - Disclosures and Steps
 - General Advice
 - Issues – Parents
 - Non-Medical Professional (teachers are not medical professionals)
- Homosexuality
- Withdrawal from Class and Supervision
- How much detail do you teach – define emotional and physical changes at puberty – quality/quality of programme in time given, special educational needs, fielding awkward questions
- RSE for Boys
- Working in mixed and single gender groups
- Terminology used
- Use of Visitors and Resources

The Status of the Family:

The model of family life and marriage remain at the centre of the RSE policy, particularly as it is taught through Religious Education while linking up with other curricular disciplines. There is also an inherent sensitivity to the social changes and family make-up today.

Sacredness of Life:

Life from the very moment of conception is sacred and this tenet of belief is reflected in RSE and based upon moral and spiritual principles, in no way can that life ever be compromised.

Confidentiality:

It is important that all teachers, not only those directly involved in the provision of RSE, are aware of their responsibilities regarding confidentiality. Parents should also be made aware of the confidentiality issues.

The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class.

However teachers should not 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 and/or the principal. Both pupils and parents should be informed that confidentiality cannot be maintained.

If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, the child must be told, sensitively, that the matter must be reported to the appropriate agencies. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Department's booklet *Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection* (Circular 1999/10).

The principal or designated teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected – as per the child protection procedures of the school.

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.

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.

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. (see below).

In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents. It is important that if pupils cannot talk or do not wish to talk to their parents, they have access to support from sympathetic teachers at school.

Teachers should remember that since they are not medical professionals they should not give detailed personal medical advice to any pupil. Only doctors and health professionals should give medical advice to pupils.

Homosexuality:

Within the primary school context and given media influence, children are much more aware of language in this area: 'gay', 'lesbian', 'gender bender'. Rather than going into what is really a post-primary issue, it may be important to look at issues related in the context of bullying and the use of the above names. (Please refer to the School's Anti Bullying Policy). If this issue becomes more prominent because of media or otherwise, then staff discussion is important and referral to the parent(s) of the child(ren) involved.

Withdrawal from Class and Supervision:

The DENI Circular 2001 clearly stipulates the right to withdraw from RE and children can be withdrawn from class by parent(s) over the area of RSE, particularly if taught through RE. This causes logistical problems and may mean the child going into another class or may involve parents taking responsibility during the times for RSE.

How Much Detail – Emotional and Physical Changes:

Emotional and pubertal changes are caused by hormonal activity, this is revealed in the influence of peers going through such change, relations with parents can diverge with an increase in communication difficulties. Children can begin to view themselves in an adult world and yet are very much children. Sport becomes a great release for aggression with self-awareness and self-perception becoming paramount. Bodily changes (puberty) are intricately linked with emotional changes. There needs to be options for schools to address issues in a comfortable manner with effective resources and information.

Quantity of the Programme in the Time Given – Pubertal Changes:

Issues around RSE are dealt with in a moral and spiritual framework.

Time factor for RSE is limited given the fact that other areas of the curriculum cover much of the required work.

Special Educational Needs are paramount - the given material may need to be well broken down.

Awkward questions:

- Requires the professionalism of the teacher.
- If appropriate and necessary, teachers will inform parents of the question(s) asked by the child.

RSE for Boys:

- Health perspective.
- Opportunities - interests, feelings (male and female) and attitudes.
- If boys have a respect for themselves then ultimately they will have respect for others, particularly girls. Sometimes their experience of relationships at home in how the father / husband treats his wife / partner can be mirrored in the classroom by boys.

Working in Mixed & Gender Groups:

Generally, RSE should 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 perspectives. However, it is clear that pupils and some

teachers do prefer to work in single gender groups from time to time because it is less embarrassing and so that they can explore and consider gender specific issues such as management of periods and puberty. For some children it would be against their culture to address some issues in a mixed group. It should be recognised that girls are likely to mature earlier than boys. Consideration should be given to ensuring that activities relating to the preparation for puberty are appropriately scheduled during P6 and/or P7.

Terminology:

Use of proper biological terms and language is vital and when these terms are placed in the context of respect and self-respect then their essence is understood.

The use of the expertise of Agencies and Individuals:

Schools may wish to make use of the expertise and skills of education and health professionals from statutory or voluntary organisations or of individuals from the local community. The activities which the agency or individual is to undertake should complement the on-going RSE curriculum. Pupils should be prepared for the visit, a suitable room should be allocated, the session should be uninterrupted and follow-up activities should be undertaken by the class teacher.

While many agencies and individuals are professional in their approach, teachers may find it useful to ask some or all of the following list of questions which take account of the experiences of schools involved during 1995 to 1997 in the European Network of Health Promoting Schools Project in Northern Ireland. It is reproduced with the kind permission of the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland. Similar questions should be asked in relation to pupil visits outside school.

- Does the agency / individual have a specified Child Protection Policy?
- How will the issue of confidentiality be dealt with?
- Are resources such as videos / role plays appropriate?
- Has the agency / individual worked with any other schools?
- Does the agency / individual have a clear set of aims and objectives as well as lesson plans?
- Has the agency / individual read the school's RSE Policy and are they prepared to adhere to it (especially the ethos, morals and values of the school)?
- Do parents know that an agency / individual is being used by the school?
- Will teachers be present?
- Will the input by the agency or individual be monitored?
- Will the pupils be asked how the session / class with the agency / individual went?
- Can the school terminate the work of the agency or individual if the classes or sessions are deemed inappropriate?
- Are evaluations carried out by the agency / individual and if so will the school have access to them?

3 IMPLEMENTATION

Monitoring and Evaluating:

- i) The RE Co-ordinator in conjunction with Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will be involved in monitoring and evaluating through the process of individual lessons, the actual programmes, staff feedback, pupil feedback and parental views.
- ii) The aims, as listed in the policy, will be at the forefront of any monitoring and evaluation to ascertain if they are being achieved.
- iii) Evaluating Lessons
Evidence of Pupils' Learning
- iv) Questionnaires may be created in order to gain feedback from pupils, particularly from Key Stage 2 (pre and post attitudinal questionnaires), this reveals progression.

Roles:

- i) **Board of Governors**
Collaboration with Teachers and Parents.
Examine and Approve Policy.
Review Policy.
Religious Sensitivity / Cultural Sensitivity.
- ii) **Principal**
Communication.
Co-ordination vital for RSE.
Consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents, Health Professionals and other community representatives.
Time Frame.
Draft Document
Ratification from Board of Governors.
- iii) **Parents**
Right to have children educated.
Need to give full-time education.
Accommodated in regard to RSE (respect).
Be fully informed about policy and content of programme.
- iv) **Staff**
Complementary role with parents.
Planning and implementation of RSE.
Implications of PSE material from CCEA and interpretation.
Consultation with pupils (needs).
- v) **Reluctant Teachers**
It is better that the programme is taught by someone who is positive and enthusiastic.

Writing Up A Programme:

There is currently a Curriculum Review taking place under CCEA involving working groups on personal development. RSE will become a module of 'PSE' (Personal Social Education) and piloting material is being written. There are other programmes such as the Education for Love Programme taught through Religious Education. The interpretation of CCEA materials will be considered by the school in due course.

Currently RSE may be linked and taught through Religious Education while linking up with the other areas such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), World Around Us and Health Education.

Who will teach it? This would involve the teachers within the context of the classroom with the assistance of outside agencies or indeed a specialist within the school, particularly in the event of a teacher who may be reluctant even after formation.

Keeping the post-primary school informed about the rationale and content of the RSE programme is crucial for progression and continuity

4. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – An Outline of A Programme

Appendix 2 - Resources

This policy is to be implemented alongside our Safeguarding policies which include:

- Safe Guarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Internet Safety Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy

Date of Next Review: _____

Signed: _____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

_____ (Principal)

_____ (Designated Teacher)

APPENDIX 1

AN OUTLINE OF A PROGRAMME FOR FOUNDATION STAGE TO KEY STAGES 2

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the topics that *might be* covered in an RSE programme at Key Stages 1 and 2. The outline is not intended to be definitive or prescriptive and there is an overlap of content between the key stages.

Many of the aspects included in the programme are also part of the Health Education curriculum. Topics and themes may need to be repeated at regular intervals. The sequence in which ideas are presented is not intended to imply a teaching order that is a matter for teachers to determine.

Foundation & 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 taken into account 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 which 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, and 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 from the media, family and peers.

APPENDIX 2 RESOURCES

Keeping Children Safer in the Digital World

www.saferinternet.org.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals

www.kidsmart.org.uk

Recognising & Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour and Touch

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.safertoknow.info

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Homophobic Bullying

www.stonewall.org.uk

www.the-classroom.org.uk

www.exceedingexpectations.org.uk

www.endbullying.org.uk

Guidance Documents:

Living, Learning Together

PDMU guidance booklets

PDMU progression Grids

Active Learning & Teaching Methods For KS1 & 2

Assessment for Learning – A Practical Guide

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities