

St Dallan's Primary School

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy (RSE)

(updated 2016-17)



Our School Vision

Our vision in St Dallan's Primary School is one where each child and staff member feels valued, respected and loved; where talents and abilities are nurtured to enable all to reach their potential, in an inclusive environment committed to our shared Christian values.

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.'

Context

In St Dallan's PS we believe that RSE is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. Such education should be taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner appropriate to the pupil's emotional and physical age and stage of development. The focus is to provide pupils with the skills to build healthy and respectful relationships and providing information to encourage self-esteem, positive beliefs and mutual respect to develop their physical, social and emotional well-being in an ever changing world.

Relationships and Sexuality Education in the N.I. context

The general principles which underpin our work are those set out in Departmental guidance and the following Circulars:

Circular 2001/15: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2001/15-2: Guidance for Primary Schools - Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2007/06:

Circular 2010/01: Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education **Circular 2013/16:** Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools

Circular 2015/22 Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance: An Update for Primary Schools

INTRODUCTION

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. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships.

RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI curriculum through PDMU, the World around Us and Religious Education.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Relationships and Sexuality Education is firmly grounded in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, where the central focus is on the emotional development of children, health and safety, relationships with others and the development of moral thinking, values and actions.

(Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance: An Update for Primary Schools page 3).

In RSE all pupils will be taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The value of a stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood will be presented. As they mature, pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the importance of self-discipline, dignity, respect for themselves and others. Through opportunities within the Northern Ireland Curriculum and the Grow in Love programme, children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older and in P7 will be given the opportunity to participate in the Love for Life Programme. Through Love for Life, they learn about the emotional and physical changes they may expect to experience over the next few years. It is delivered by individuals with specialist knowledge, expertise and experience in the classroom, whilst respecting the ethos of the school.

Teaching at all times will be appropriate to the maturity and level of understanding of the pupils concerned. Teachers will be aware of, and take into account, the variety of existing pupil knowledge, the different attitudes and beliefs and the pupil's capacity to understand the issues.

Effective RSE is essential if children are to value themselves as individuals and are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives.

Teaching RSE should provide children with opportunities to:

- value themselves as unique individuals
- respect themselves and others
- begin to develop their own moral thinking and value systems
- learn about friendships, healthy relationships and behaviours with others
- recognise and communicate their feelings and emotions and those of others
- learn about the changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence, particularly the emotional and physical changes at puberty
- learn about keeping themselves safe and know what to do or who to go to if they feel unsafe.

In keeping with best practice, photographs of our Safeguarding Team are displayed throughout the school and our Child Protection board is prominent with visual reminders for the children of who their trusted adults might be. A Worry Box is also available for children to share their worries and concerns which are addressed by a member of the safeguarding team and the class teacher concerned.



Why is RSE important?

RSE is important because:

- **It respects the rights of children;**

Northern Ireland is a signatory in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which deems that all children have a right to a good quality education, this includes RSE.

- **It promotes a better understanding of diversity and inclusion;**

School is a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment; it fosters respect for difference. We encourage children to be confident and respectful of themselves and others and prepare them for life after school. In school we recognise the diversity of family life in today's society and are respectful of difference ensuring sensitivity to family and home circumstances.

- **It helps children to keep themselves safer in the digital world;**

Technology plays an integral role in the lives of many children in Northern Ireland today: they use the internet to watch programmes, play games, listen and download music, carry out research for school, chat with their friends and make new friends. However, whilst technological advancements provide many opportunities, along with opportunity comes risk, particularly if the children's activity is unsupervised (see E-Safety Policy). Cyber bullying, the use of chat rooms, online grooming and child exploitation, sexting, access to inappropriate content, the acting out of inappropriate sexualised behaviours and the sending and receiving of explicit images are just some of the ways in which online and digital technology can negatively affect the lives of children (see Anti-Bullying Policy). Through Relationships and Sexuality Education, children are taught 'keeping safe' messages about how to behave safely and responsibly in the digital world. Children need to be able to identify potential risks to their safety and be aware of the strategies they can use to protect themselves (NSPCC – Speak Out , Stay Safe Programme).

- **It provides accurate and timely age-appropriate information**

When teaching children, their natural inquisitiveness can result in teachers being asked questions which they may not have planned for. When this happens teachers will use their own professional judgement as to whether or not it is appropriate to deal with that question on a whole class forum or on an individual basis. A teacher may need to discuss questions asked with parents/carers or a member of the safeguarding team if concerns are raised; in this instance teachers will follow procedures as set out in our school's Safeguarding Policy.

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.

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; for future parenting;
- **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 group
- **inter-personal skills** for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader.

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.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

This policy complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of the Internet
- ICT Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

Special Needs

In St Dallan's our teaching staff are aware of the fact that physical development may outstrip emotional maturity in the case of some of our pupils and they will aim to accommodate this disparity in class lessons and experiences.

DELIVERING THE RSE PROGRAMME

The Northern Ireland Curriculum offers many opportunities through other Areas of Learning to link with RSE e.g. children can explore a range of ways of communicating and expressing feelings and emotions through art and design, music and drama as well as through language and literacy with opportunities within talking and listening, reading, writing, drama and role play.

However the RSE Curriculum is taught mainly through PDMU and within the context of Grow in Love. The following includes extracts from the N.I. Primary Curriculum - Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.

Foundation Stage

Strand 1 - Personal Understanding and Health

Self-Awareness – themselves and their personal attributes.

- Exploring who they are
- What they can do
- Identify their favourite things
- Recognise what makes them special.

Feelings and Emotions – their own and other's feelings and emotions.

- Begin to recognise how they feel and develop ways of expressing those feelings
- Know what to do if they feel sad or lonely, afraid or angry and when it is important to tell others about their feelings
- Realising what makes their friends feel sad, happy, angry or lonely.

Health, Growth and Change – the importance of keeping healthy

- Being aware of caring for their own body to keep it healthy and well
- Recognising and practise basic hygiene skills
- Realising that growth and change are part of the process of life and are unique to each individual.

Safety – how to keep safe in a familiar and unfamiliar environment

- Exploring appropriate personal safety strategies
- Identify situations that are safe and those where personal safety may be at risk
- Understand that many substances can be dangerous
- Know the safety rules that apply when taking medicines

Strand 2 - Mutual Understanding in the local and wider community

Relationships – their relationships with family and friends

- Find out about their own family
- Talk about what families do together
- Recognise how they relate to adults and other children
- Identify who their friends are
- Explore what they do together
- Know how to treat others

Similarities and differences

- Begin to recognise similarities and differences in families and the wider community
- Understand that everyone has equal worth and that it is acceptable to be different
- Celebrate special occasions

Key Stage 1

Strand 1 - Personal Understanding and Health

Self-Awareness – their self-esteem and self confidence

- Feeling positive about oneself and develop an understanding of their self-esteem and self confidence
- Become aware of their strengths, abilities, qualities, achievements, personal preferences and goals

Feelings and emotions - their own and others feelings and how their actions affect others

- Begin to recognise, name and manage their own feelings and emotions and realise that they are a natural, important and healthy part of being human
- Begin to recognise and manage the effects of strong feelings – anger, sadness, loss

Health, Growth and Change – strategies and skills for keeping healthy

- Recognising and valuing the options for a healthy lifestyle including the benefits of exercise, rest, healthy eating and hygiene
- Have respect for their bodies and those of others
- Be aware of the stages of human growth and development
- Recognising how responsibilities and relationships change as they grow and develop
- Understand that medicines are given to make you feel better and some drugs are dangerous
- Understanding that, if not used properly, all products can be dangerous
- Be aware that some diseases are infectious and some can be controlled

Safety – Strategies and skills for keeping safe

- Know what to do and who to seek help from when feeling unsafe
- Be aware of different forms of bullying and develop personal strategies to resist unwanted behaviour
- Know about potential dangers and threats in the home and environment
- Develop simple safety rules and strategies to protect themselves from

potentially dangerous situations

Strand 2 - Mutual Understanding in the local and wider community

Relationships – and initiating mutually satisfying relationships

- Examine the variety of roles in the family and each members contribution
- Be aware of their contribution to home and school life and the responsibilities this can bring
- Know how to be a good friend
- Understand that they can take on some responsibility in their family and friendship groups

Similarities and differences

- Appreciate ways we are similar and ways we are different for example, age, culture, disability, gender, hobbies, race, religion, abilities and work
- Be aware of their own cultural heritage, it's traditions and celebrations
- Recognise and value the culture and traditions of another group in the community
- Discuss the causes of conflict in their community and how they feel about it
- Be aware of the diversity of people around the world.

Key Stage 2

Strand 1 - Personal Understanding and Health

Self-Awareness – their self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals

- Develop self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- Know how to confidently express own views and opinions in unfamiliar circumstances
- Identify current strengths and weaknesses
- Face problems and try to resolve and learn from them
- Recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent
- Explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour
- Develop strategies to resist unwanted peer/sibling pressure and behaviour

Feelings and emotions – their management of a range of feelings and emotions and those of others

- Examine and explore their own and other's feelings and emotions
- Know how to recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way
- Recognise that feelings may change at a time of change and loss

Health, Growth and Change – how to sustain their health, growth and well-being

- Understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle including the benefits of exercise, rest, healthy eating and hygiene
- Recognise what shapes positive mental health
- Know about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, solvents and other illicit and illegal substances can have on themselves and others
- Understand that bacteria and viruses affect health and that risks can decrease when basic routines are followed
- Know how the body grows and develops
- Be aware of physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty and how babies are conceived, grow and are born (P7 only)
- Be aware of the skills and importance of good parenting
- Recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent

Safety – Coping safely and effectively with their environment

- Develop strategies to resist unwanted peer/sibling pressure and behaviour
- Recognise the nature of bullying and the harm which can result
- Become aware of the potential danger from strangers including good and bad touches
- Develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety
- Know where, when and how to seek help
- Be aware of basic emergency procedures and first aid

Strand 2 - Mutual Understanding in the local and wider community

Relationships – Initiating and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships

- Examine and explore the different types of family that exist
- Recognise the benefits of friends and family
- Find out about sources of help and support for individuals, families and groups
- Explore and examine what influences their views, feeling and behaviour
- Consider the challenges and issues that can arise:
 - At home
 - At school
 - Between friends

And how they can be avoided, lessened and resolved.

Similarities and differences – valuing and celebrating cultural differences and diversity

- Examine and explore the different types of family that exist, the roles and responsibilities within them
- Know about aspects of their cultural heritage, including the diversity of cultures that contribute to northern Ireland
- Recognise the similarities and differences between cultures in Northern Ireland
- Recognise that people have different beliefs that shape the way they live
- Develop an awareness of the experiences, lives and cultures of people in the wider world.
- Recognise how injustice and inequality affect people's lives.
- Recognise similarities and differences between different cultures of the wider world e.g. food, clothes, symbols and celebrations
- Understand that similarities and differences between people arise from a number of factors including cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity, gender and disability.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE Policy:

St Dallan's PS staff are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically, important to the RSE Programme are:

- pupil feedback
- staff review and feedback
- parental feedback
- Board of Governor feedback
- further Departmental guidance and legislative changes

Signed: _____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

_____ (Principal)

Date: _____