

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY (RSE)



Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
March 2024	March 2025	Mr. Smith

Background to this policy update

As I review this policy there is currently a DENI review of RSE and both DENI's and CCEA's website reflect the uncertainty of proposed new guidance.

Consultation 4.1. The Department consulted on the Statutory Rule from 1 September to 24 November 2023. The Department received 13,000 responses and will publish its response in due course (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Explanatory%20Memorandum%20-%20SR%202023%20No.%20222.pdf>).

To reiterate, this policy is being reviewed at a time of controversy regarding leaks of proposed changes to the RSE curriculum. Therefore, this policy and the school practices have not yet been changed to reflect any potential new requirements. Once these requirements are made clear the policy will be rewritten.

Creation of this Policy

In the creation of this policy the school's Board of governors consulted with pupils and parents as well as teaching staff.

Introduction

The ethos of our school is to promote the spiritual, emotional, physical, moral and intellectual well being of the children in our care. It is our aim to allow each child to develop in these areas and allow them to reach their full potential. We aim to provide a caring and tolerant environment where each child feels valued and shows respect for others. It is our goal that each child will have self-confidence and the skills which will enable them to become happy and useful members of an adult society.

Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality, and has biological, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions. In Sexuality Education, we seek to provide children with opportunities to acquire some knowledge and understanding of human

sexuality, through process which will lead to form values, and establish behaviours within a moral, social and spiritual framework.

While the overall education of children lies primarily with their parents we accept that our school will play an important role in supporting and complementing them in this task, including Relationships and Sexuality Education.

Definition

The general aim of education is to enhance the development of all aspects of the individual. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an important element of this process, which is a lifelong task of acquiring knowledge and understanding. It encompasses beliefs, personal and social values, and is influenced by parental attitudes and skills. It is inclusive of the physical, spiritual, social, psychological and cultural aspects of each individual. We at Earlview Primary School and Nursery believe that each child is unique and special, and regard sexuality as a gift, which along with love and respect, shapes and nourishes relationships. All these have fundamental effects on future life.

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 and female and is subject to change and development throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality having biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. It especially concerns the capacity to give and receive love, procreation and, in a more general way, the aptitude for forming relationships with others.

Moral and Values

Morality is essentially linked with our behaviour, and based on what we actually do. The values that we uphold as a result of our morals include honesty, self respect and respect of others.

Any offensive language including that of a racist, sectarian, homophobic or stereotypical nature will be discouraged. Prejudice should not go unchallenged in encouraging an atmosphere of social tolerance.

Aims

1. To promote self-respect and respect for others as an ideal.
2. To promote the moral, spiritual, social and emotional development of each child.
3. To develop the life skills necessary for forming and maintaining fulfilling relationships.
4. To assist young people to develop the ability to make informed choices and begin to form their own beliefs and values systems.
5. To prepare children to cope with the physical and emotional changes of growing up.
7. To be able to communicate about feelings, sexuality and development.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

The Family

Earlview Primary School and Nursery recognizes that it is of great importance to teach responsibility and to value a stable, happy family life. Our school recognizes that there are many in our school family who reflect the wider definition of family life, and all such situations will be equally valued.

Confidentiality

Teachers will provide support to children on RSE issues in a sensitive manner, but will not promise confidentiality. If a pupil reveals information that suggests that he/she is at risk of abuse, the teacher responsible for Child Protection will be informed and the correct procedures (as outlined in our Child Protection Policy) will be implemented. The advice given to pupils will be supportive of the parents' role. In all cases pupils will be

encouraged to discuss any issues and concerns with their parents. Our staff will not offer medical advice to pupils.

Withdrawal from class

Should a parent wish to withdraw their child from classes involving RSE, alternative arrangements will be made, although there is no statutory parental right for withdrawal. The need for this will be minimized through parental consultation regarding the content of any RSE programme.

Implementation

Until the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) programme is available, RSE will be taught in a holistic cross-curricular way, through Science, Health and Social Education, and Religious Education. Staff will use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches in keeping with the maturity of the pupils. This will also include the usage of the correct terminology, as appropriate. The majority of the RSE programme will be delivered by the class teacher. However, occasions will arise where the expertise of outside agencies and other professionals will be used (eg. school nurse). Normal classroom arrangements will prevail during RSE related activities. **Where it is necessary to alter this, the consent of parents will be sought.**

We will not be encompassing such areas as sexual intercourse, contraception, pregnancy, abortion or sexually transmitted diseases. Co-education will continue in RSE as in other areas of the curriculum, except in the case of Primary 7 pupils when puberty is discussed, in this instance girls are taken separately from the boys.

Parental consent must be given before the school the 'Growing-Up' talk is given to any P7 girl. Please note that a male member of staff is not present at this talk. If the P7 class is taught by a male then alternative arrangements will be made to ensure that a female member of our staff is always present when the school nurse or external organisation is talking to the girls.

Any resources used to support the implementation of RSE will be examined beforehand to assess suitability.

Monitoring and Evaluating

As opportunities become available, staff will engage in training for RSE.

The RSE programme will be monitored and evaluated against the aims stated above.

Feedback will be sought from teachers and pupils on past teaching and learning.

As with any area of the curriculum, the implementation of RSE in Earlview Primary School and Nursery will be reviewed at appropriate intervals. This review will involve staff, parents, pupils and Governors. The BOG will be consulted in writing, approving and reviewing the policy and programme.

Keeping children safer in the digital world – Useful links

www.saferinternet.org.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre have produced a range of resources to help schools teach pupils about staying safe online. These resources include a range of games, films, quizzes and advice and are pitched at children between 3–11 years old.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) ‘thinkuknow’ website contains advice and resources for teachers exploring the risks which children and young people are exposed to when online. CEOP have produced targeted advice and guidance for parents or carers and teachers, and for children aged 5–7 and 8–10 years old.

www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals

Childnet International provides in-depth advice for teachers in their ‘hot topics’ section, covering issues such as sexting, online grooming, cyberbullying and online gaming safety. There is also an online resource bank which contains lesson plans and activity ideas suitable for children of primary school age – this is available at www.childnet.com/resources.

www.kidsmart.org.uk

This website contains useful support for teachers, including resources for teaching children about staying safe online.

Recognising and challenging inappropriate behaviour and touch

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.safertoknow.info

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland’s (SBNi) website contains useful information and resources to raise awareness on child sexual exploitation.

Sexual orientation, gender identity and homophobic bullying

www.the-classroom.org.uk

This website provides detailed advice on many aspects of teaching and learning to make LGBT people visible in education. It includes presentations, detailed lesson plans and a range of inclusive teaching resources celebrating diversity.

www.exceedingexpectations.org.uk

The ‘exceeding expectation initiative’ is designed to tackle homophobia and address sexuality with young people. This website is divided into three main sections and provides useful background information on what homophobia is, responding to homophobic bullying, and the homophobic bullying experiences of young people.

www.endbullying.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum includes resources on cyberbullying and homophobic bullying.