



St Clare's Abbey Primary School

Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Article 7

You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 8

You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9

You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13

You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 15

You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Article 16

You have the right to privacy.

Article 17

You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Article 19

You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 28

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Consultation with staff 09/11/22

Consultation with Parent working group 16/11/22

Ratified by BOG November 22- Virtual meeting.

Our RSE policy is part of a suite of policies which promote PDMU in our school. Please refer to PDMU policy for full detail. It is also closely linked to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy and our School 'Code'.

St Clare's Abbey Primary School aims to provide a supportive, positive learning environment which fosters pupil growth and development. This ethos is underpinned by our code of faith and pastoral care. We are committed to providing our pupils with a positive attitude towards Catholic education. Christ's values and gospel message are an intrinsic part of our ethos, daily running of the school and our curriculum. We try to ensure that we work in partnership with the home, parish and the wider community to strengthen our pupils' vision of their role as part of the Catholic community. This policy reflects the ethos of our school.

Rationale

Legislative Context-

- **UNCRC 1989**
- **2007 Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum as per education NI order 2006 established RSE as a statutory component of PDMU**
- **2015 RSE educational guidance CCEA**
- **RSE Guidance Document for Primary Schools NI 2021 Catholic Schools Trustee Service**
- **DENI circular 2015/22 RSE Guidance**
- **ETI 2016 – an evaluation of RSE in Primary and Special Schools**
- **Pope Francis – 'Amoris Laetitia' (The Joy of Love)**

Our school's philosophy for RSE

1. The school is involved in relationships and sexuality education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals. It complements our school aims and motto which aims to create children who love God, Love Others and Love Learning.
2. RSE will be firmly embedded in the PDMU and the RE Curriculum as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.
3. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values regarding personal and social relationships. For children, the learning process has begun informally, with their parents or carers, long before any education in a formal setting takes place at school. Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to gender and it develops throughout life. It is an integral part of the human personality and affects our capacity to give and receive love. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships.

4. Effective RSE is essential if children are to value themselves as individuals and are to make responsible, well-informed and healthy decisions about their lives. As a Catholic school, RSE is presented through the Religious Education programmes; Flourish and Grow in Love, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (we are currently a silver award school and working towards Gold) as well as the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme and Love For Life Programme.
5. Schools are increasingly diverse spaces, reflecting wider societal change. We aim to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters respect for difference, challenges prejudicial attitudes and promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils. We encourage children to be confident and respectful of themselves and others. Given that we are blessed to have a centre for children with additional needs (ECPD), a high percentage of children with SEN, children for whom English is an additional language and children whose religion is not Christian, we are very aware of the importance of ensuring that RSE is delivered to all children in a way that is appropriate to their learning needs and cultural backgrounds. Teachers go to great lengths to ensure that all learning is accessible for all children and sensitive to differences.
6. Children are taught strategies to use if they feel unsafe at any time. Teachers endeavour to create an atmosphere in their classrooms where all children are valued and given time to discuss any issues or concerns they may have. Photos of the key staff children can approach are displayed in prominent areas throughout the school. Safeguarding messages are presented regularly throughout the year at assemblies, during Anti-bullying week, Internet Safety week and through the PDMU and RE curriculum.
7. The foundation for the effective delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education is the building of secure, trusting, respectful relationships between the teacher and their pupils. Pupils should feel reassured that their teacher cares about their wellbeing and be aware that there are adults whom they can talk to and confide in. Pupils must also know and understand that the promise of confidentiality is never an option in the classroom or school setting. It must also be clear to pupils that, whilst teachers will offer support, they are obligated to notify the child protection/safeguarding teacher or team if they are concerned that the pupil may be 'at risk'.
8. Technology plays an integral role in the lives of many children in Ireland today. However, whilst technological advancements provide many opportunities, along with opportunity comes risk, particularly if the children's activity is unsupervised. In St Clare's Abbey children are taught 'keeping safe' messages about how to behave safely and responsibly in the digital world which plays such an integral role in their lives. Children are helped to identify potential risks to their safety, and be aware of the strategies they can use to protect themselves. (Techno's Safety Rules)
9. Relationships and Sexuality Education is delivered 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.
10. Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it is part of our school curriculum. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE. The school will, however, take account of parent concerns and respect their wishes. However, parents should consider the social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood that the child will hear their peers' version of what happened or what was said in the classes, rather than the safe and reliable source of the teachers/ external partner. If parents choose to withdraw their children from certain RSE lessons, then the children will be given the opportunity to complete work from another area of the curriculum in another class.

Policy Formation and Consultation Process

Consultation during formation was undertaken with (see minutes appendix 3):

- Child Protection Support Services
- Parental working group
- Staff
- School Council
- School Governors.

Dissemination arrangements:

With staff & governors-

Policy was disseminated to all staff and ratified by BOG

With parents-The effectiveness of our policy and programme depends upon the involvement of teachers, parents, governors and other education and health professionals. Each of these has distinctive contributions to make to our policy. Our teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education aims to be complementary and supportive to parents' roles as lead educators in this sensitive area, and will be delivered in the context of our Catholic ethos. We see our role as being that of complementing and supporting the role of the parent who are the first, and most important, educators of our children as recognised by Pope Francis in his encyclical 'Amoris Laetitia'.

It is our role to assist parents in teaching RSE in a manner appropriate to the emotional and psychological development of the child. The policy was discussed with a working group of parents. A copy of our policy is readily available for all parents at any time.

Materials/resources used will be available for parent to view as appendices to this policy. We engage with our parents periodically to address issues such as keeping our children safe in a digital world and make available (through SEESAW and/or our website) suitable materials from outside agencies.

If an outside agency/individual is coming into the school to support the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme, parents are told in advance. Where sensitive issues are concerned we explain the type of activities which will take place to parents and seek consent. This ensures that they have the opportunity to raise any concerns they might have before the visit, lets parents know what is going on and strengthens ties between home and school.

Aims

Relationships and Sexuality Education provides children with opportunities to:

- value themselves as unique individuals and children of God;
- respect themselves and others;
- develop respect for difference within the school and community
- begin to develop moral thinking and value systems in line with our Catholic Ethos
- learn about friendships, healthy relationships and behaviours with others;
- recognise and communicate their feelings and emotions and those of others;
- help each child to value family life and the diversity of family patterns;
- 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.
- Develop coping strategies for life's difficulties and to protect self and others from various forms of abuse (in appropriate behaviour, sexual abuse and exploitation).

Pupils will develop important skills, as they do in other subject areas, which are transferable and lead to them becoming capable citizens in our every changing world. They will develop:

Communication Skills – Listening to other's points of view, putting one's own view forward, dealing with conflict peacefully and being assertive

Decision Making Skills – Making good choices with the relevant information at hand, making moral judgements wisely in context and then putting them into practice, acting responsibly as an individual or as a member of a group.

Interpersonal skills – managing healthy relationships with confidence and with effectiveness

RSE Approaches

Love For Life

Although the emphasis in RSE in primary schools is on friendships and healthy relationships, we also give children opportunities to learn and understand how the body grows and develops, and know about the stages of human development. In the latter part of Key Stage 2 pupils will be given the opportunity to learn about some of the emotional and physical changes that occur during puberty. The programme which is delivered by one of our external partners is tailored to be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils and meets the needs of all genders. This knowledge forms part of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding theme of 'Health, Growth and Change'.

Flourish

This programme is delivered across all year bands. Please see appendix 1 for an overview of each year's provision.

Grow In Love

Grow in love, our RE programme which promotes Gospel values underpinning relationships is used in all year bands.

Nurture provision:

We have a DE funded Nurture class and all staff have undertaken nurture training and committed to the principles of 'Nurture.' This is grounded in the importance of respectful, healthy relationships and provide a perfect backdrop against which to implement our RSE policy.

Roots of Empathy:

We use Roots of Empathy (an evidence-based classroom programme) to increase prosocial behaviours such as caring, sharing and inclusion. It is designed for teaching empathy to children between the ages of 5 to 13. Observing the emotional state of an infant is used to promote positive emotional and social development in our pupils. This programme not only impacts the individual

child's social and emotional development, but also positively impacts the classroom and school, through aiming to promote emotional awareness and responsibility for self and others.

Outside Agency Involvement

Women's Aid

NSPCC

Using a combination of above, RSE is addressed in each class using a timetabled slot. Generally, we teach Relationships and Sexuality Education in mixed groups, where boys and girls learn together to gain an understanding and appreciation of each other's perspectives. However, there are times that pupils and teachers/external partners prefer to work in single-gender groups, particularly when they are exploring puberty issues.

Good relationships are important in any classroom; however, they are particularly important when teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education. In Relationships and Sexuality Education, learning is most effective when it takes place in a safe, secure, respectful and inclusive space, where pupils can express their feelings and opinions and participate confidently and freely without embarrassment, judgement or ridicule from their peers. Using circle time or creating a classroom charter are effective ways we use to help to create a positive and safe learning environment. As such we expect that class teacher rather than sub or relief teacher, teaches RSE lessons.

Key roles and responsibilities in RSE provision:

Principal/ VP/PDMU&RE coordinator:

Overarching responsibility for the implementation of the RSE programme lies with the Principal- Mrs Monaghan, VP&DT teacher for Safeguarding –(Mrs Donnelly) and PDMU/RE/Pastoral Care coordinator (Mrs Doherty). Mrs Doherty will liaise with outside agencies agreeing the content, resources and teaching methods prior to delivering a session to ensure it is respectful of the school's ethos, and complementary to the ongoing provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education. Alongside the principal, Mrs Doherty will ensure that outside agencies:

- are made aware of and adheres to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- are made aware of the issues around confidentiality;
- are vetted as appropriate.

Class teachers:

The RSE programme will be taught by each class teacher, supported by the classroom assistants and external organisations.

Trustee Governors:

It is the responsibility of the BoG – specifically Trustee reps (Sr. Julie and Canon Brown) to ensure that the RSE content is compatible with the Catholic ethos of our school.

Parents:

Parents and carers can access our policy through our website. They sign a consent form on entry to our school which confirms that they have read the policy. We need parents to familiarise themselves with policy and all communication relating to linked visits from external agencies so that they are equipped to follow up, on any questions that their children may have.

Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the RE/ PDMU coordinator in consultation with Principal and Vice Principal (designated teacher) to ensure that the needs of the children are being met. Monitoring and evaluation will happen through review of planning documentation, discussion with staff and pupils through focused group discussions and through consultation with parents. This will happen at least once during the course of a school development cycle or as needed if earlier.

Appendix 1

Relationships and Sexuality Education through the

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Curriculum

FOUNDATION STAGE

Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- themselves and their personal attributes;
- their own and others' feelings and emotions;
- the importance of keeping healthy
- how to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments.
- their relationships with family and friends;
- their responsibilities for self and others;
- how to respond appropriately in conflict situations;
- similarities and differences between groups of people;
- learning to live as a member of a community.

KEY STAGE 1

Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- their self-esteem and self-confidence;
- their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others;
- strategies and skills for keeping themselves healthy
- strategies and skills for keeping themselves safe
- initiating and developing mutually satisfying relationships;
- responsibility and respect, honesty and fairness;
- constructive approaches to conflict;
- similarities and differences between people;

KEY STAGE 2

Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- their self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals;
- 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

- coping safely and efficiently with their environment.
- initiating, developing and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships;
- human rights and social responsibility;
- causes of conflict and appropriate responses;
- valuing and celebrating cultural difference and diversity;

Appendix 2

Overview of Flourish Programme

Primary 1

Myself

- I am Me – God loves me.
- I have a wonderful body. My body is a gift from God. I must look after it.

Myself and Others

- I have a family. We love each other. Jesus had a family too.

Myself and the Wider World

- I have friends. Jesus is my friend.

Primary 2

Myself

- I am growing. My body is changing. God loves us as we grow and change.
- I keep myself safe. I look out for other people. Jesus asked us to care for each other.

Myself and Others

- I have feelings. Others have feelings too. I want to be a good friend. I am kind like Jesus.

Myself and the Wider World

- Sometimes I need help. I ask for help. I can always ask for God's help.

Primary 3

Myself

- I am unique. God loves me as I am.

Myself and Others

- Other people are special too. I respect other people. Jesus wants us to respect everyone.
- My space, your space. I am gentle and understanding as Jesus asked me to be.

Myself and the Wider World

- Some people are not as lucky as I am. I care about them too. Jesus cared for others.

Primary 4

Myself

- My body is amazing. I am grateful to God for all that I can do.

Myself and Others

- I am loyal to my friends. I don't let them

down. Jesus asked us to be loyal.

Myself and the Wider World

- People I admire. There are lots of good people. Jesus was a role-model.
- Dangerous situations. What should I do? Who can help?

Primary 5

Myself

- My gender is part of who I am. God loves me as I am.

Myself and Others

- Different types of friendships. Jesus had many friends.
- I support my friends.

Myself and the Wider World

- My neighbourhood – showing love to everyone. God wants us to show love in many different ways.

Primary 6

Myself

- I am growing into my adult body. God designed me perfectly.
- Good choices, bad choices. The choice is mine. My conscience will guide me.

Myself and Others

- My words and actions can hurt others. Jesus asks us to use words and actions carefully.

Myself and the Wider World

- We need to look after the earth. The environment is God's creation. He asked us to look after it.

Primary 7

Myself

- My sexuality is part of who I am. God loves me as I am.
- Puberty – welcome changes. I am perfectly designed by God.

Myself and Others

- I am attracted to other people. I respect them. God made us to be compatible with each other.

Myself and the Wider World

- Social media can be good and bad. Respect is the key. God wants us to respect

each other.