



BALLYORAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Relationships & Sexuality
(RSE) Policy**

Reviewed January 2023

Introduction

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process encompassing:

- the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills; and
- the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to gender 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.

Our Policy takes into account the following policy and guidelines:

- Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- Circulars 2001/15a and 2001/15b; Relationships and Sexuality;
- Circular 2013/16; Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools;
- Circular 2015/22 Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- CCEA RSE Guidance: An update for Primary Schools 2015.

Aims

The aims of RSE are to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child;
- 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; and
- learn about keeping themselves safe and know what to do or who to go to if they feel unsafe.

Skills

The RSE curriculum and other related disciplines will contribute towards enabling 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 a 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 judgments about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgments 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.

Sharing Responsibility for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships between Home, School and Community

The effectiveness of this RSE policy and programme is dependent on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has distinctive contributions to make. Teachers, governors and parents can raise any concerns they might have about RSE issues and the Senior Management will address these or refer to the BOG if necessary.

The Role of Senior Management

A planned, structured and coherent approach to RSE will be sought throughout the school. Implementing this, and other related policies will be managed by the member of staff with responsibility for Child Protection and overseen by the Senior Management Team.

The Role of the Governors

The Governors will try to foster and support the development of our RSE policy and similar related policies by collaborating with teachers and parents. They shall facilitate the consultative process whereby the school community can respond and contribute on relevant issues. The governors of the school will seek to accommodate and be sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs of both teachers and parents while fulfilling their responsibility to ensure the availability of adequate RSE for all children.

The Role of Teachers

The classroom teacher has a significant and diverse role to play in the planning and implementation of RSE. At all times, the role must be complementary to that of

parents, taking cognisance of the individual needs, age, maturity, stage of development and family background of the child. The class teacher will strive to promote the aims of this policy and other related policies and deliver the requirements of RSE at the level appropriate to their class.

Involving Parents

Our aim is to develop a structure which enables both parents and teachers to work together. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a child's life, and especially so in the domain of relationships and sexuality. Where puberty-related changes are being covered with Year 7 classes, parents are informed about when these talks will take place, the content to be covered and the activities that the pupils will undertake.

Links across the Curriculum

The Curriculum offers opportunities to develop an RSE programme in a holistic and cross curricular way. In many instances, RSE shares content with the World Around Us (WAU), Religious Education (RE), Physical Education (PE) and Personal Development & Mutual Understanding (PDMU). Circle Time may be used as an appropriate tool to engage children in RSE.

RSE will generally 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, there will be times that teachers or other professionals will work with single gender groups (e.g., delivering aspects of Love for Life to Year 7).

Themes: Self-Awareness; Feelings and Emotions; Learning to Learn; Health Growth and Change; Safety; Relationships; Rules Rights and Responsibilities; Managing Conflict; Similarities and Differences and Learning to live as Members of the Community.

Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1

Myself

- Myself and personal attributes: how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example - hygiene, sleep, exercise. The importance of keeping healthy.
- 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 (theirs and others) - 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 – positive attitudes towards learning.

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.
- Bullying behaviour and what to do about it.
- Personal safety - simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety.
- Developing strategies on dealing with setbacks.
- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends and the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances.
- Strategies which pupils might use to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.
- Responsibilities for self and others and how to respond appropriately to conflict 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.
- Learning to live as members of the community.

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 (Year 7).
- 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 and managing our feelings, showing love and affection.
- Gender.

- 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.
- Developing strategies on dealing with setbacks.
- Effective learning strategies.
- Sustaining their health, growth and well-being.

My Relationships

- Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values.
- Responding to feelings and emotions of others
- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's views, emotions and feelings.
- Initiating and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships.
- 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.
- Causes of conflict and appropriate responses.
- 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.
- Valuing cultural differences in families and family relationships.
- Coping safely and efficiently with their environment.
- Helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different circumstances.
- Messages and images about health, gender roles and sexuality from the media, family and peers.
- Playing an active and meaningful part in life of the community and be concerned about the wider environment.

Teaching Resources

The CCEA resource *Living Learning Together* covers issues and topics related to Relationships and Sexuality Education, particularly in the yellow units. Teachers may supplement this approved resource with others but must be satisfied that the resources they plan to use:

- Reflect the ethos of the school;
- Are age-appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to the pupils' needs and experiences;
- Are factually accurate and up-to-date;
- Make clear distinctions between fact and opinion;
- Do not contain inappropriate/explicit images.

Provision for Pupils with SEN

It is widely recognised that pupils with SEN are more vulnerable to all forms of abuse and exploitation. Teachers will try to ensure that they develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of pupils to enable them to:

- identify inappropriate and exploitative behaviour;
- help develop their own prevention strategies to stay safe;
- recognise and build healthy relationships; and
- know who they can talk to.

Teaching Sensitive Issues

Sensitive issues are part and parcel of life. When teaching sensitive issues, teachers must plan for and be prepared to deal with the strong emotional responses which pupils often have.

Responding to questions in Relationships and Sexuality Education

There will be occasions when teachers will have to use their own discretion and judgement about how to deal with questions raised by a pupil or a group of pupils. Teachers will exercise their professional judgement: for example, they may need to decide whether it is appropriate to deal with the question in a whole-class forum, through circle time or if it may be more appropriate to respond on an individual basis, or to arrange time for a group discussion at another time.

Confidentiality and Child Protection

Confidentiality is always important but where there is a disclosure of abuse by a child, child protection procedures will be implemented. Confidentiality will not be promised and information will be passed on as agreed in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Related School Policies

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if feedback from parents or teachers indicate changes in the policy are required.