



RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION of RELATIONSHIP & SEXUALITY EDUCATION:

It is a statutory requirement that all schools in Northern Ireland have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy. This policy has been written in line with the Department of Education NI requirements and Relationship & Sexuality Education Circular 2013/16 (policy) and through consultation with parents, staff and Board of Governors.

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is clearly a part of this broader aim. 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.'*

RSE is an integral part of the NI curriculum in both primary and post-primary schools and must be delivered in a sensitive manner appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and the ethos of the school. The area of Relationships and Sexuality Education-related issues resides in Personal Development & Mutual Understanding in the primary curriculum. By being grounded in Personal Development & Mutual Understanding, Relationship and Sexuality Education has a central focus on the emotional development of children, health and safety, relationships with others, and the development of moral thinking, values and actions.

The school ethos is founded on principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. It is our intention that everyone feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring supportive environment. This policy reflects the ethos of our school.

This policy has been updated with reference to Department of Education Circular 2013/16 and includes guidance from the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

The provision of RSE is an equal opportunities issue. All pupils have a right to an education, which adequately prepares them for adult life. RSE can have a positive effect on self-esteem. Schools can help to develop their pupils' self-esteem by creating a climate of trust and acceptance in which each person is valued and respected and encouraged to feel good about themselves. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their individual needs, to respect the needs of others and to develop the skills and self-esteem to become confident adults.

RSE in schools can increase informed choice by providing opportunities to examine their own values and beliefs in the light of those held by others. Deeper understanding of the values and beliefs that they hold can help pupils to clarify why they think and behave as they do, to separate fact from fiction, to recognise prejudice and to respect the views, emotions and feelings of others.

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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, social, and spiritual dimensions. It especially affects a person's capacity to give and receive love; procreation; and in a more general way the aptitude for forming relationships with others.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION:

- respects the rights of children
- promotes a better understanding of diversity and inclusion
- helps children to keep themselves safer in the digital world
- provides reliable, accurate and timely age-appropriate information
- promotes the use of appropriate language
- helps children to recognise inappropriate behaviour and touch
- encourages children to take time to think about actions and responses to peer pressure

The above points have reference to the following publications:

- 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- 2011 Department of Education research study 'Keeping Safe: the Development of an Effective Preventative Curriculum in Primary Schools in Northern Ireland';
- 2011 Department of Education's 'Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education' Policy;
- 2013 Kids' Life and Times Survey

RELATED POLICIES:

Safeguarding Policy/Child Protection

e-safety and ICT Policy

Drugs Education

Anti-Bullying Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

Health Education Policy

Teaching & Learning Policy

In Sullivan Prep we aim to develop in our pupils an understanding of the physical, emotional, biological, social, spiritual, legal and moral aspects of sex and sexuality. We teach RSE within the wider context of building self-esteem, emotional wellbeing, relationships and healthy lives beginning in the Foundation Stage classes through to P7. This prepares our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

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Examples of learning outcomes in relation to pupil maturity and age:

ATTITUDES & VALUES:

- To learn the value of respect, love and care
- To learn to value and respect others and ourselves
- To develop an understanding and value of diversity
- To promote a positive attitude to healthy lifestyle and keeping safe
- To develop an understanding of the value of family life and an appreciation of the many types of family

PERSONAL & SOCIAL SKILLS:

- To learn how to identify and manage emotions confidently and sensitively
- To develop self-respect as well as respect and empathy for others
- To develop communication skills with peers, school and family
- To learn how to assess risk and to develop strategies for keeping safe
- To develop the ability to give and secure help
- To develop an understanding of difference and an absence of prejudice

KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING:

- To recognise and name the main external parts of the body including agreed names for sexual parts
- To know the basic rules for keeping themselves safe and healthy
- To know about age appropriate human and animal life cycles
- To develop an understanding of the physical and emotional aspects of puberty
- To know who can provide help and support

THE SCHOOL ETHOS - MORALS AND VALUES

The values that the school wishes to promote are as follows:

- self-respect, self-awareness and self-worth
- a respect and tolerance towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, feelings, views and sexuality
- an awareness of the way others feel
- mutual support and co-operation
- honesty and openness
- the acceptance of the responsibility for and the consequences of personal actions
- the right of people to hold their own views within the boundaries of respect for the rights of others
- the right not to be abused by or taken advantage of by other people
- the right to accurate information about relationships

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- the value of stable loving relationships

AIMS

The aims of RSE in Sullivan Preparatory Department are to:

- offer all pupils age appropriate information about human development, relationships, sexuality and family life which is developmental and appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupil
- encourage pupils to respect and value themselves and others and to behave responsibly
- establish a school ethos which will facilitate the discussion of personal matters, among young children, parents and teachers with mutual understanding and respect
- encourage pupils to develop a positive attitude towards all body functions and to recognise, prepare for and manage growth, development and change
- encourage better communication about relationships between our pupils and their parents/carers, family and friends
- encourage pupils to develop an understanding of risk and safety and the motivation and skills to keep themselves safe

SKILLS

The RSE curriculum should enable our pupils to develop the skills necessary to form and maintain relationships and to make informed choices and decisions regarding health and welling. Pupils should also be helped to develop skills to critically evaluate a wide range of information, options, attitudes and values.

They need opportunities to develop:

- **practical skills** for everyday living; for supporting others; for future parenting
- **communication skills:** to learn how to listen, to listen to others' point of views; how to put their own view forward clearly and appropriately; how to give and receive feedback; how to handle and resolve conflict peacefully; and how to be assertive
- **decision-making and problem-solving skills:** how to make sensible choices in 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
- **interpersonal skills:** for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HOME, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY

The effectiveness of this policy and its implementation is dependent on a collaborative process involving staff, parents, governors and other health and educational professionals. Each of the partners has a distinctive contribution to make.

Keeping parents informed about the school's provision for health education is a vital element of RSE. Informal meetings may then be arranged so that interested parties can consider content or discuss children's readiness for aspects of the RSE programme, the appropriateness of the content and the methodologies proposed and the handling of sensitive issues.

The delivery of RSE must prepare pupils to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner and should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect moral and religious principles.

DE Circulars give advice on developing or reviewing their RSE policy in:

- Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Circular 2001/15a and 2001/15b
- Circular 2013/16
- Circular 2015/22

These circulars are available on DE website: www.deni.gov.uk Guidance and resources are also provided on the NI Curriculum website: www.nicurriculum.org.uk/

A RSE programme for primary schools should provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- themselves as unique human beings
- their spiritual, social emotional and physical growth
- their friendships and relationships with others
- the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur at puberty

MEETING THE NEEDS OF PUPILS

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the RSE programme should be developmental, accessible and be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. It should meet the needs of both genders and be a positive experience for all participants.

CONTENT/DETAIL

RSE will be delivered in a holistic, cross-curricular way, ensuring that teaching is at all times appropriate to the maturity and understanding of the pupils. Teachers will be aware of the personal

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and emotional circumstances of pupils in their class. RSE will include the physical and emotional changes which occur at puberty but will not include sex education. The girls and boys in P6 & P7 in our school will receive a 'Growing Up' puberty talk taken by a health care professional each year. Only children with written parental consent will attend, along with a member of staff, in each of these separate talks. An overview of the content of this talk is provided for parents in order to make an appropriate choice for their child to attend. A contact number is given for parents to request additional information as appropriate to needs.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION & DELIVERY:

The following outline of our teaching programme illustrates the topics covered through the delivery of the NI Curriculum. Many of the aspects included are also part of the Health Education, PD&MU, RE, The World Around Us, PE & Drama curriculum or in reaction to specific situations. All teachers deliver the RSE programme.

FOUNDATION STAGE & KEY STAGE 1:

Myself:

- How I grow, feed, move, use my senses and caring for myself eg: hygiene, sleep and 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 eg: uniqueness, fingerprints, gender issues, different rates of growth
- An introduction to the stages of human development: changes as we grow eg: baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents
- Recognising moods, feelings and concerns and developing a language and an appropriate manner of expressing them eg: 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 others eg: communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating and sharing
- Ageing: how do we know that things are alive, dead, young, old
- Loss and mourning: death of a person or a pet. (the situations of pupils should be taken into account prior to this area)
- Respect and caring for family members and friends eg: 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

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- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends; the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances
- Strategies that 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 eg: dangerous places, dangerous situations, the adults who will help and how to get help from others
- Rules at home, at school, in the community
- Respect and caring for people in the community eg: elderly people

KEY STAGE 2

Myself:

- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy (including life cycles)
- The physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty (P6/7 girls and boys)
- Myself and my peers: different rates of growth and physical development, maturity
- Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal weaknesses and strengths
- Feelings eg: 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 me and others
- Distinguishing between right and wrong
- Secrets: knowing the difference between good secrets and bad secrets and 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 others' 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 eg: identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people's points of view
- Handling difficult situations eg: teasing, bullying, death of a family member
- Making decisions regarding peer pressure eg: alcohol, drugs, smoking
- 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



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- People who can help pupils when they have anxieties, concerns and 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 and sexuality from the media, family and peers

Selection of teaching resources:

- Should be consistent with the school's RSE policy and the aims and objectives of the programme
- Should be consistent with the school's moral and values framework
- Should be appropriate to pupils' age, level of understanding and maturity
- Should be factually correct and respectful of its audience
- Should be likely to appeal to pupils in terms of appropriate language level, images, attitudes and values, maturity, contexts and situations, and the knowledge required
- Should be complementary to the existing programmes which the school offers
- Should encourage consideration of a range of issues, attitudes and beliefs pertinent to the topics covered

Copies of this policy will be made available for parents to view on our website. Parents may discuss any concerns with the Head of Prep. In certain circumstances alternative arrangements may be made for pupils whose parents wish them to be excused from a particular aspect of RSE lessons.

As a school we will strive to employ strategies such as:

- providing up-to-date parent or carer-friendly information leaflets which should encourage parents or carers to discuss any issues which may arise in the classroom with their children;
- holding awareness-raising workshops ; and
- sharing resources to educate parents or carers on, for example, how to ensure that their children are using social media safely and responsibly

In Northern Ireland parents or carers have the right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes. Schools can grant such requests of withdrawal on an individual basis. Parents will be asked to consider the social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of their child hearing their peers' version of what happened or what was said in the classes, rather than the safe and reliable source of the teacher's. Ultimately the school will respect the wishes of the parent or carer.

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The Use of the Wider Community in RSE:

We may use or wish to use the expertise and skills of education and health professionals from outside agencies or from individuals in the wider community. Such services may include: ASCET; PSNI; Love for Life programme; Just Ask Project (Family Planning Association); Beesafe; Action Cancer 'Health Action'; and NSPCC. There are many benefits of using professionals including:

- specialist knowledge, expertise and experience;
- the novelty of a visitor coming into a classroom is often welcomed by children;
- it can increase the pupils' knowledge of services which can be accessed in the local community and how to go about accessing these services if and when they need them;
- it can enhance teachers' capacity by updating their knowledge and/or showing new pedagogy/teaching practices used by the outside agency/individual

The Role of the Class Teacher:

In Sullivan Prep we believe it is essential that teachers create a positive classroom ethos. We often address issues through class Circle Time. We aim to be supportive and foster good self-esteem to enable our pupils to feel valued and affirmed. The climate needs to promote mutual respect and dignity for each individual. It is important to create an atmosphere in the classroom which allows all pupils to feel comfortable to express opinions and feelings in a secure manner and to explore issues which may be sensitive and personal. Every effort should be made to ensure that the whole group is at ease, with pupils showing respect for each other and realising their responsibilities to each other.

Ground rules should be agreed to help minimise embarrassment and encourage respect of each other's opinions. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama videos and stories can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

Important considerations are the:

- degree of trust, respect and positive regard for pupils
- relationships between teacher and pupils, and between pupils themselves
- need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives
- use of teaching and learning methods which involve pupils actively in their own learning and encourage the consideration of attitudes and values and the ability to make informed and healthy decisions
- need to be aware and take account of the current youth culture

In terminology, staff will use the correct biological terms for the parts of the body.

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of family life. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in the school and will endeavour to treat all situations sensitively.

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To maximise learning from RSE sessions by people from the wider school community, we will endeavour to prepare children thoroughly for such a visit. The class teacher will always check that pupils are not uncomfortable or unhappy with either the topics they are addressing or the teaching methodologies that will be used. The class teacher will always be present throughout the session. The class teacher will afterwards provide children an opportunity to discuss their experience(s) and honestly evaluate the session.

Staff will notify parents in advance of any visitors by explaining the content of the session in advance of the time so concerns can be addressed, thereby strengthening ties between home and school.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and, where there is a disclosure by a child of abuse, Safeguarding procedures will be implemented. The classroom is an open environment and as confidentiality cannot be maintained, staff and pupils are not encouraged to talk about their personal relationships or experiences during class discussions.

The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all the other pupils in the class. 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 obligated to impart information about his/her own personal life.

There will be occasions where teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular issues raised by pupils. The teacher may wish to refer the issue on to the parents or seek advice from the Safeguarding Team or it may be appropriate to respond to the issue with a group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues or concerns they might have with their parents.

Teachers are not medical professionals and will not give personal medical advice to any pupil.

Teachers should encourage where possible that the young person discuss their concerns with parents.

The Role of the Head of Prep:

The Head of Prep is the member of staff responsible for the content of this curriculum area. This role includes:

- Ensuring that the programme of study is being taught effectively
- Liaising with all staff on relationships and sexuality matters, for curriculum purposes
- Organising training for staff as appropriate
- Liaising with outside agencies for curriculum purposes
- Regularly updating staff on the policy
- Reviewing and updating the policy, when required.

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The Head of Prep, who is also the Designated Teacher, must be informed of any disclosures which occur as a result of classroom conversations. These disclosures may suggest that a child is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse may be suspected. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests the information is kept secret, the child must be told, sensitively, that the matter must be reported to the appropriate agencies. Safeguarding procedures then follow as per policy.

Staff training needs will be considered and will be accessed using the appropriate educational support body. Any outside agencies will operate under the school's aims and ethos.

The Role of the BOARD of GOVERNORS:

The RSE policy and programme will be kept under review by the Board of Governors.

WITHDRAWAL

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal. The school will however take account of parents' wishes.

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual is at the heart of RSE teaching.

There will be no direct teaching of issues such as homosexuality, AIDS, contraception etc. If such issues are raised, teachers will address them sensitively.

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APPENDIX 1

PROVISION IN THE CURRICULUM FOR P1-P7 PUPILS

We're All Stars!	Be Friendly, Be Wise!	Living Long, Living Strong!	Daring To Be Different!	Dear Diary!	Joining In And Joining Up!
Community rights & responsibilities	Making and sustaining friendships	Growing and caring for ourselves	Identity and self-esteem	Comfortable & uncomfortable feelings	Participation
Getting to know each other	Conflict resolution	Valuing differences	Diversity	Problems in relationships	Local community
Working together	Anti-bullying	Healthy eating and exercise	Peer influence & assertiveness		Fund raising activities
Marvellous Me Box (P1/ P2)	Keeping safe at home and outdoors	Goal setting and motivation			Liaison with external agencies
Sully (P1)					
Mighty Me (P5)	Caring for families				
All about me	Beesafe (P7)				
It's Our World!	Say No!	Money Matters!	Who Likes Chocolate?	People around us!	Growing Up!
Involvement in the wider community	Drugs education: medicine and legal drugs (P7)	Understanding finance and money	Fair trade (P7)	Global citizenship (P7)	Differences growing up (P6/ P7)
Local democracy (P7)			Globalisation (P7)		
Environmental awareness and sustainability awareness	Drugs education: illegal drugs and risk taking behaviour (P7)	Shopping and budgeting	Inequalities (P7)	Different identities around the world	Puberty and reproduction (P6/ P7)
Tree Trail (P6)	Feeling safe	Risk and debt (P7)	Hunger & Poverty (P7)	Challenging prejudice	Managing change & preparing for transition (P7)
Birds, bugs and bees (P4)	Anti-bullying	Goal setting and motivation	Media & stereotyping (P5-P7)	Support networks - relationships and family	Life Cycles
Autumn (P1-4)					



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<u>Term 1: Whole School</u>	<u>Term 2: Whole School</u>	<u>Term 3: Whole School</u>
Rewards & consequences	Sustainable Development Day (ECO Club)	NSPCC workshops
School and class rules	Dance Week	Walk to School Week
Eco Council elected	Science Week	Earth Day
Jeans for Genes Day	Chinese New Year	My Money Week
Class representatives for pupil issues elected	World Book Day	Europe Day
Anti-Bullying Week	Disability Awareness Day/ Sports Relief	Sports Week
Hallowe'en fireworks danger	Family Celebration Days	Summer barbecue
Spooky Fun Night event	Love for Life workshop	Sports Auction
Road Safety Week	Comic Relief Day / Sports Relief	PSNI Cyber-bullying workshops
Anti-Litter Week	Internet Safety Week	