

**ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL  
MAYOBRIDGE**



**RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY  
POLICY**

**FEBRUARY 2017 (amended)**

## RARIONALE

DENI guidance states that RSE "should be taught in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school and in conformity with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management"

In implementing this policy, we in St. Patrick's Primary & Nursery School are mindful that God is at the heart of all we do. God's love is the model for our human love and this requires good and loving relationships. We view the development of the RSE Policy being based on our Mission Statement thus:

*'Christ is the reason for this school  
The unseen but ever  
Present teacher in its classes  
The model for its staff  
The inspiration for its children'*

Since it is increasingly evident that our primary school aged children are exposed to a highly sexualised living environment, we believe that as partners with parents we have a key role to play in redressing the balance - guiding our children sensitively and supportively towards understanding that sexuality involves all aspects of the human form that relate to being male or female and is subject to ongoing change and development throughout life

### **Introduction**

RSE seeks to equip our children with skills and values necessary to initiate and sustain healthy, mature, Christian relationships.

Relationships and intimacy 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. RSE aims to nurture a sense of self-worth, dignity and confidence in each individual thus preparing our young people to function as independent adults in society - contributing positively to the local and global community.

We recognize and fully respect that parents have the primary duty and right to be the first and principal educators of their children . As Catholic educators we seek to support and help parents to fulfil this responsibility. The attitude, beliefs and behaviour of our children in all their relationships are primarily

formed and greatly influenced by their experiences within the family and the relationship they have with their parents/guardians/carers. RSE in school is intended to supplement and complement what goes on at home.

### **Description of Policy Formation and Consultation Process:-**

In 2014 the school's RSE policy was initially formulated using the revised DENI Circular 2001/15. We have also taken guidance from CCMS. Use was made of exemplar policies. Furthermore, it takes account of the DE Circular 2013/16 RSE and The Equality Act (Sexual Discrimination) Regulations NI 2006, also most recently Circular 2016/05

The Board of Governors, Senior Leadership Team and a group of parents were consulted and invited to respond to the draft policy and amendments were made according to the recommendations arising from the consultation process. The policy is monitored on an ongoing basis by staff in liaison with parents.

### **SPECIFIC AIMS**

RSE is taught within the moral, social and spiritual framework that reflects the beliefs and ethos of our Catholic school. In line with our school ethos we seek to deliver an RSE programme which aims to:

- Help our children appreciate their uniqueness and dignity as children of God, valuing all human life
- Help them understand and develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships in school, at home and at parish/community level
- Promote a Christian vision of unselfish love, respect and commitment
- Enhance their personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing.
- Promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions
- Help our children come to value family life (within a family unit) and marriage
- Promote an appreciation of the value and uniqueness of human life and the wonder of birth
- Promote compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life
- Promote an appreciation that friendships and relationships within school and at home should be based on self and mutual respect, non - exploitation, honesty, trust and commitment
- Highlight the significance of rights, duties and responsibilities within relationships
- Ensure that respect for all people will be protected, promoting inclusion and diversity within our school community
- Develop an understanding of how human relationships grow and deepen through friendship, love and affection

## OBJECTIVES OF THE RSE CURRICULUM

RSE will be integrated and promoted primarily through the *Grow in Love/Alive O* programmes and the PDMU curriculum as well as the Transition and CASE programmes.

The RSE curriculum as part of the statutory minimum entitlement for personal development will ensure that our children are given worthwhile experiences which enable them to explore:

- Self esteem, self confidence, and to develop as individuals their own and others' feelings and emotions
- Strategies to promote personal safety and health and resist various forms of abuse
- Relationships with friends and families, valuing them as a source of love and mutual support
- The similarities and differences between people
- Dignity, uniqueness, wellbeing and sense of responsibility for themselves and others
- Differing family structures and patterns
- Strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions
- Growth and change over time
- The development of personal and inter-personal skills including communication and social interaction, in order to help establish and sustain healthy relationships.
- The impact of internal and external influences, such as peer pressure and conflict management on lifestyle and decision making

Furthermore, the RSE curriculum will develop the skills of:

- Communication - expressing views clearly and appropriately; listening to others' point of view and handling/resolving conflict amicably
- Decision Making & Problem Solving - making sensible/appropriate and responsible choices as well as sound moral judgements
- Interpersonal - managing relationships confidently, growing as a team member/leader
- Practical - engaging with and supporting others within everyday living

There will be a clear focus on the promotion of the strong morals and values of our Christian Faith which will enable the children to develop an understanding of;

- The difference between right and wrong
- Taking responsibility for one's own actions
- The long and short term consequences of their actions
- The recognition of the moral aspect of a situation

Within the **school environment** the development of the RSE programme will be facilitated by:

- A friendly atmosphere created and managed by staff/adults
- The messages relayed to our children through daily interaction, - Class, Break and Lunchtime interactions, Assemblies, Prayer Services, discussions, etc.
- The praise and encouragement we give to our children
- The standards we set and uphold - fair play, acceptance of decisions, good sportsmanship etc.
- The integration of peers from diverse backgrounds and cultures
- The provision of support for family situations where appropriate

#### **The use of outside agencies**

When Education and/or Health professionals from statutory or voluntary organisations are invited into the school, the activities which the agency or individuals undertake will complement the ongoing programmes within the school. Care will be taken to ascertain that they have read and are willing to comply with the school policy and that they know what has been taught in preparation for their visit and what will be done as follow. A member of staff will always be present when an individual or a representative from an agency is taking a class or giving a presentation to a year group.

#### **Links with other policies**

This RSE policy links with the Pastoral Care Policy, the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, the Anti Bullying Policy and the Drugs & Substances Education Policy.

#### **Arrangements for monitoring.**

This policy will be kept under review by the Principal and Senior Leadership Team in ongoing consultation with staff and parents. Feedback and staff training will inform amendments and new ideas and strategies will be incorporated appropriately. This policy will be formally evaluated and reviewed every two years i.e. in November 2018

Signed: M. Ryan (Principal)    N. Lynchehaun (Chairperson)

