



Mallusk Integrated Primary School

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

It is a statutory requirement that all schools in Northern Ireland have a 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' (RSE) Policy. A balanced and broadly based curriculum promotes the spiritual, emotional, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life by equipping them with the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) forms a strand of the 'Personal Development' area of learning.

Each school should have a written policy on RSE which is endorsed by staff and governors and communicated to parents. This policy takes account of The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. It is underpinned by the following guidelines from DENI: Circular 2001/15: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2001/15-2: Guidance for Primary Schools - Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2010/01: Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Circular 2013/16: Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools

Circular 2015/22: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Guidance

This policy has been written through consultation with parents/carers, staff, and governors. We welcome any feedback on this policy. This can be done by contacting the Principal, Mrs Kinsella.

At Mallusk Integrated Primary School, we aim to educate our pupils effectively, preparing them for adult life. Good Relationships and Sexuality Education plays an integral part in this. We aim to create an atmosphere of acceptance and trust, where each individual feels valued and respected, and is taught to respect and value others. Our pupils are encouraged to feel good about themselves, building their self-confidence.

RSE will be taught in a sensitive manner which is appropriate for the age and understanding of the pupils, in harmony with the ethos of the school and in keeping with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities.

RSE can increase informed choice by allowing pupils the opportunities to explore their own values and beliefs and those of others. This enables pupils to recognise prejudice and stereotyping and to respect the viewpoints and feelings of others. This encourages the development of understanding about attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues.

Sexuality is a complex and integral part of the human personality. It has biological, spiritual, moral, social, cultural, psychological dimensions. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore personal relationships and friendships which are based on mutual respect and how to make positive, responsible choices about themselves, others and the way they live their lives. It is concerned with friendships and with giving and receiving love.

AIMS

The aims of RSE are to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- help the child develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships
- foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework
- promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions
- help the child come to value family life and marriage
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth
- develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others
- understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts
- develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- develop personal skills which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse
- acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development

SKILLS

The RSE curriculum should enable 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 the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values.

Pupils 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 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
- **inter-personal skills** for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader

MORALS AND VALUES

RSE should enable pupils to clarify what they believe and why they believe it and develop a respect for and interest in the beliefs of others. Pupils need opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how they affect them, and others. Children should be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- a respect for self
- a respect for others
- non-exploitation in relationships
- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships
- mutuality in relationships
- honesty with self and others
- a development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others
- an exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships
- compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life
- self-discipline

As an Integrated School, we are founded on the principles of Equality, Faith and Values, Parental Involvement and Social Responsibility. We believe that this policy reflects and is supported by this ethos. It compliments and supports a range of other policies including:

- Pastoral care
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Pastoral Care
- Special Educational Needs
- Health and Safety
- ICT
- Intimate Care
- Integration
- Anti- Bullying
- Teaching and Learning

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR PUPILS

It is particularly important to It is particularly important for teaching staff to be aware of the fact that physical development may outstrip emotional maturity in the case of pupils with Special Needs and to accommodate this disparity in class lessons and experiences. 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.

OUR APPROACH

It is our belief that RSE is the responsibility of all staff and should be an integral part of the teaching and learning process in order to prepare children to cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up and give them an understanding of human reproduction. We believe it should encourage the exploration of values and moral issues, along with considerations of sexuality, sexual health and relationships. It should develop decision-making and communication skills, foster self-esteem, self-awareness and respect for oneself and others.

The atmosphere of mutual respect and the good relationships within our school should enable everyone involved to feel trust and positivity. 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 to minimise embarrassment and encourage the respect of each other's opinion. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos and stories can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

Questions will be responded to as they arise in a straightforward way, giving simple and correct information, using correct terminology for body parts and functions appropriate to the age of the child whenever possible. This includes questions on sensitive subjects, which may arise during the work undertaken through schemes of work. School staff have the right not to feel under pressure to answer difficult questions on the spot and may use distancing techniques, allowing time for discussion about the most appropriate way to answer. Children may be directed to discuss issues or concerns with parents/ carers if appropriate. 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 obliged to impart information about his/her own personal life.

Any concerns arising related to a child or any indications that a child or children are at risk of harm or in danger will be discussed with the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs Kinsella) or the DDT (Mr McGrath) in accordance with the Child Protection Policy. Staff are aware that they cannot promise to keep disclosures secret, and the child should be informed, sensitively, that others need to be involved in order to get help.

RSE will include the physical and emotional changes that occur at puberty but will not include sex education. In order to facilitate this, classes may be split by gender. School facilitates programmes from *Love for Life*. These programmes are delivered in line with the requirements of RSE within the Northern Ireland Curriculum and are age-appropriate, offering accurate information in an engaging manner, helping the children to learn, reflect and develop in their knowledge, skills and attitudes in this area. There are two separate programmes for P6 and P7. 'Choices and Changes' introduces P6 children to the physical and emotional changes they can expect during puberty, offering support as they explore and develop an understanding about the choices and changes in their lives. 'What's Inside' is a comprehensive and interactive workshop, preparing P7 pupils for both the physical and emotional changes of puberty, exploring the changes associated with the transition to post-primary school, as well as recognising the importance of building healthy relationships. Each programme is accompanied by a set of lessons plans and resources which can be used in preparation or as a follow-up to the visit.

Only children with written parental/carers consent participate in these programmes. Pupils will also have the opportunity to provide feedback about the content of the programme of RSE delivered by the school. The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of RSE teaching.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

As an Integrated Primary School, we promote the 'Anti-Bias' approach, seeking to recognise diversity and consciously explore varying identities in a holistic learning environment. Equality and respect are valued and actively promoted. Staff will challenge and discourage all forms of stereotyping, including the use of homophobic or sexist language.

Through stories, themes, assemblies etc., the children will regularly encounter opportunities to clarify and develop their attitudes and values relating to equality issues:

- gender
- race
- age
- disability
- religion
- sexual orientation
- diverse families

RSE is a statutory requirement and as an Integrated school, we believe strongly in inclusivity. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE and discourage withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parent/carer concerns.

CURRICULUM CONTENT

FOUNDATION STAGE

Self-Awareness - Exploring who they are, what they can do, identifying favourite things, what makes them special

Feelings and Emotions

- beginning to recognise how they feel
- knowing what to do if sad or lonely, afraid or angry
- telling others about feelings
- realising what makes people sad or unhappy, recognising how people feel

Health and Safety

- Being aware of caring for his/her own body
- recognising good hygiene practices
- understanding growth and change
- exploring appropriate personal safety strategies, road safety,
- medicines and drugs -safety rules

KEY STAGE 1

Self-Awareness

- Feeling positive about oneself
- awareness of own strengths, abilities, qualities, personal preferences
- recognising own feelings and emotions
- recognising and managing the effects of strong feelings – anger, sadness, loss
- acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes
- recognising how they can develop and improve learning

Health, Growth and Change

- Recognising and valuing the options for a healthy lifestyle
- having respect for their bodies and those of others
- being aware of the stages of human growth and development
- recognising how responsibilities and relationships change as you grow older
- understanding medicines and drugs
- understanding that, if not used properly, all products can be dangerous
- being aware that some diseases are infectious and some can be controlled

KEY STAGE 2

Self-Awareness

- developing self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- confidently express own views and opinions
- identify current strengths and weaknesses
- face problems and try to resolve them
- examine and explore own and others' feelings and emotions
- recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way
- develop insight into potential and capabilities
- reflect on progress and set goals
- identify and practise effective learning strategies
- be aware of different learning styles

Health, Growth and Change

- understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle
- recognise what shapes positive mental health
- know about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and other illicit and illegal substances
- understand that bacteria and viruses affect health and know that basic routines can be followed to minimise risks
- know how the body grows and develops
- be aware of physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty (Y7 only)
- be aware of the skills and importance of good parenting
- recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent

Keeping Safe

- develop strategies to resist peer pressure
- recognise the nature of bullying and the harm which can result
- become aware of the potential danger from strangers and how their attention can make you uncomfortable
- recognise appropriate road use
- develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety – at home, near water, on the internet, TV etc.
- know where, when and how to seek help
- being aware of basic emergency procedures and first aid

Opportunities will arise in other areas of the curriculum, including WAU (Science) and PE.

PARTNERSHIP WITH HOME

Children are exposed to information and messages from TV, Internet, film, music videos, books and magazines. They are influenced by family and friends and significant adults. Part of our role is to ensure that children are able to understand and not misinterpret the information they acquire and to provide contexts where they are able to consider and evaluate the information they receive.

We believe that parents have the primary role in delivering relationship and sexuality education. It is hoped that the school curriculum and the ethos of the school complements and enhances home teaching and values, giving due regard to the value of family life, loving and stable relationships. We provide parents with opportunities to discuss the school's policy and practice. Parents will be informed about the timing of the delivery and offered an opportunity to look at resources. Parents are encouraged to discuss and ask questions. Parents should make it clear which aspect of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in and put this in writing. Resources and information regarding further support and help will be made available. Any parents with concerns about this policy should discuss this directly with Mrs Kinsella, the Principal.

If parents have any cause for concern about the RSE Policy they will be asked to come into school to resolve the problem. In the unlikely event that the concern cannot be dealt with, the Governors can be contacted through the parent representatives.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by Governors and staff.

Policy agreed: November 2023