

**Relationships and**

**Sexuality Education**

 **Policy**

**Commitment to keeping policies live.**

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| **Date the plan came into effect** | **2020** |
| **Who is responsible for this document** | **Principal, SLT, SMT, staff, BoG** |
| **Issued to** | **Staff, BOG, parents** |
| **Reviewed** | **June 2023 with PFG****October 2024****Covid-19 reviewed** |
| **Related Policies** | **Child Protection & Safeguarding, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Positive Behaviour and Citizenship, E:safety.** |

**Euston Street Primary School & Nursery Unit**

**RSE Policy**

**Mission**

*‘Achieving Excellence Together’*

 *‘To work together for excellence in: our learning; our school; our community; and our future’.*

Our purpose therefore is to be an excellent school. We continually strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this aim we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our School Development Plan.

**Vision**

In order to achieve excellence in each aspect of school life, our vision is:

 *'To create a safe, happy learning community. A community where together, we inspire and equip our pupils so that they fulfil their potential, use their talents and follow their dreams now and always.’*

**Values**

We believe that our school is a place where the child is at the centre.

*‘We value kindness, integrity, hard work and mutual respect.'*

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil’s education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

**Introduction**

The purpose of this policy, as with all of our policies, is to support us as we strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this, we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our engagement with parents and guardians.

This policy outlines the procedures that are followed when promoting RSE in school.

**Definitions**

RSE – Relationships and Sexuality Education

PDMU –Personal development and Mutual understanding

DENI – Department of Education Northern Ireland

SEN – Special Educational Needs

**Purpose of the RSE Policy**

Schools are diverse communities and places that are an important part of their community both locally and nationally. Euston Street Primary School & Nursery Unit is a coeducational controlled school with pupils ranging from age 3/4 in nursery to age 11 in year 7. There are approximately 350 pupils and 35 staff working in the school environment.

Part of a pupil’s place in our school and in their community will naturally involve the development of their understanding of friendly, family and wider social relationships. RSE is not a new area of the curriculum. The framework for sex education was initially established by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) in Guidance Circular 1987/45. The main recommendation of this Circular was that each school should have a written policy on sex education which is endorsed by staff and governors and communicated to parents. It also stated “sex education 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 authorities”

The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 further set out the legislative basis, requiring all grant aided schools to offer a curriculum which … •‘promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society …and… •prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.’

The general principles which underpin our work are those set out in Departmental guidance and the following Circulars:

* 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

We further recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers in this area of personal development and acknowledge the contribution that can be made by outside agencies with skill and expertise in particular areas of the curriculum.

Every School a Good School states that... ’There are many children for whom school is not just a place to learn but also a safe haven from a difficult and sometimes dangerous home life… Society is changing rapidly and we must respond to that change to best meet the needs of our children and young people… Our vision is of schools as vibrant, self-improving, well governed and effectively led communities of good practice, focusing not on institutions but on meeting the needs and aspirations of all pupils through high quality learning, recognising the centrality of the teacher.’

School, in partnership with parents and outside agencies, will provide opportunity for pupils to develop an age appropriate knowledge and understanding of sexuality and relationships.

Through lessons and input from outside agencies, learners will have opportunity to:

* Recognise safe boundaries and learn about inappropriate touch
* Learn about rights and responsibilities
* Know who to talk to in school and know the members of the school Safeguarding Team
* Receive counselling opportunities and resilience workshops
* Understand the importance of anti-bullying (all types considered)
* Understand healthy relationships
* How to be safe including safe and positive online usage
* Understand about body changes including puberty changes (Year 6 & 7)
* Receive Period Dignity talks (Year 6 and 5 as required)
* Know how babies develop and are born

Our RSE policy reflects our school ethos, vision, values and our PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) curricular framework. The policy explains how we will monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning of RSE and how we share this responsibility with our parents and wider community. This policy document will help form part of the wider self-evaluation process of the school.

RSE forms part of our PDMU whole school curricular framework. This is integrated within the wider school curriculum and complements and overlaps with the general Christian ethos and life of the school. Pupils will experience age appropriate opportunity to learn about relationships, bodily development and sexuality in classroom activities taught through the thematic strands of PDMU including: ‘Self-Awareness; Feelings and Emotions; Health, Growth and Change; Safety; Relationships; and Similarities and Differences.

The policy is in written line with DENI circulars 2013/16 and 2015/22. This policy is also written with relation to our other school policies including, but not only, Pastoral Care, Safeguarding/Child Protection, Special Educational Needs, e:Safety, Behaviour and Citizenship, PDMU, and Teaching & Learning. This policy is to be reviewed on a 2 year cycle by the school leadership, Board of Governors, pupils and parents. It will be displayed on the school website. There will also be a trifold shortened version of the RSE policy sent home every 2 years.

**Aims of the RSE Policy**

The aims will cover Years 1 – 7 but not every Year Group will cover all aspects of the aims written below.

**We aim to:**

* Provide a planned, age appropriate scheme of work, designed to capitalise on the fascination and interest that children have about themselves, their own growth and development;
* Offer reassurance that such changes are normal and natural;
* Provide the opportunity for pupils to express themselves within a trusted and safe environment, following agreed ground rules;
* Reassure children of their value and self-worth including aspects of dignity, self- respect and self-restraint;
* Help them to have a responsible attitude towards personal relationships including mutual respect and care;
* Develop sensitivity towards the needs of others and provide knowledge of loving relationships;
* Inform children on matters of personal hygiene and related health and healthy lifestyle issues;
* Encourage exploration of values and moral issues taking into account physical and moral risks associated with certain behaviour including alcohol and drug abuse;
* Educate against discrimination and prejudice and help prepare children to make informed choices about relationships;
* Teach pupils the skills of making good choices about relationships;
* Teach pupils the skills of and reasons for making the safest and best choices about e:Safety;
* Provide pupils with skills to understand and articulate what makes them feel happy and safe;
* Help prepare pupils for the physical and emotional changes of growing up;
* Help pupils develop self-expression and their ability to communicate their feelings and emotions;
* Develop within our pupils an attitude of respect for all others;
* Teach pupils to understand the value of stable family life, marriage, love, care and respect;
* Teach the importance of appropriate physical contact between people and what to do if they are worried about this;
* 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;
* Provide an overview of our planned, age appropriate, scheme of work;
* Provide an overview of how teaching and learning in RSE is monitored and evaluated to staff, governors and parents;
* Raise awareness and promote agencies who can inform and help pupils and parents throughout their lives;

**SHARING RESPONSIBILTIY FOR RSE**

**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 Principal will address these or refer to the Board of Governors if necessary.

The Role of 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 Board delegate the operation of the policy and practice to the school principal.

The Role of Teachers

The classroom teacher has a significant and diverse role to play in the planning and implementation of RSE in the school. At all times the role must be considered to be complementary to that of parents, taking account 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 particular 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. Parents are often concerned about the information their children are receiving from their peers and from social media, television, videos, newspapers and magazines. ESPS will attempt to provide opportunities for pupils to consider this information and ensure they receive accurate information. Where puberty-related changes are being covered with Year 6/7 pupils, parents are informed about when these talks will take place, the content to be covered and the activities that pupils will undertake. The first concern of parents is likely to be for the safety and wellbeing of their children. It is important that if pupils cannot talk or do not wish to talk to their parents they have access to support from sympathetic teachers at school.

**Home/School Partnership and Pupil Withdrawal**

We believe that parents have the primary role in the delivery of relationship and sexuality learning at home. We therefore actively encourage the need to discuss RSE issues at home without embarrassment. Central to our RSE is the development of pupils’ self-esteem. If young people feel positive and good about themselves they are more likely to take care of themselves, think positively of other people and therefore, develop non-exploitative, caring relationships. They are also less likely to be exploited by others. It is hoped therefore 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, marriage and loving stable relationships.

We provide parents with opportunities to discuss the school’s policy and practice through a parental consultation opportunity given at the end of each 2 year review cycle. All of our parents are given opportunity to make comment on all school policies every 2 years via shortened policy documents. Information leaflet distribution and the school website are the main methods of communication about RSE with our whole school community.

Under the 1993 Education Act parents have the right to withdraw their child from part or all of our Relationships and Sexuality Education. Parents should discuss this matter with the Principal or Vice-Principal. 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.

We would ask parents to reinforce the information and values being taught in Euston Street Primary School & Nursery Unit. As written in our e:Safety policy, we ask parents to monitor and be responsible for e:Safety at home.

**SEN**

Pupils with specific difficulties will be treated with sensitivity and teaching will be reasonably adapted according to their needs in relation to available resources. Parents with a child with SEN will be consulted, as appropriate to the child’s need, as to their preferences regarding RSE. RSE however, in a mainstream school should ideally be provided for all children including those with physical, emotional or learning difficulties.

**Disability**

If the school has any children with disabilities who require special assistance their needs will be fully considered. Their parents will be consulted.

**Confidentiality and safeguarding**

Pupils and staff who report anything of an intimate nature will be fully supported via the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and procedure in school. All school staff are trained in Child Protection/Safeguarding each September. We have a school Safeguarding team (see Safeguarding leaflet or school website for information). The Designated Teacher is Mr Fulton and the Deputy Designated Teachers are Mr Armstrong (Principal), Mrs McKersie (Head of Nursery) and Mrs McKeown (SENCO). Mr Shivers is the Board of Governors representative and Mr Young is the Board of Governors Chairperson.

**Whole School approach to teaching RSE**

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. It should be provided for all children including those with physical, emotional or learning difficulties. RSE should develop decision-making and communication skills, foster self-esteem, self-awareness and respect for oneself and others.

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.

**Staff Rights**

School staff have the right not to feel under pressure to answer difficult questions on the spot or answer questions that they believe to be matters relating to Child Protection/ Safeguarding. Staff may use distancing techniques such as referring the question to a question box or communicating with the Principal, Safeguarding team or parents if appropriate, allowing time for discussion about the most suitable way to answer what has been posed. Again, any concerns arising regarding a child or any indications that a child or children are at risk of harm or in danger will be discussed with the school Safeguarding Team in line with school policy.

The main delivery of RSE is through Personal Development Mutual Understanding (PDMU), but some aspects are also taught through other subject areas such as WAU (World Around Us), RE (Religious Education) and PE (Physical Education). It is taught by the class teacher, and where possible supportive outside agencies including NSPCC, Love for Life and on occasion possibly the Health and Social Care Trust.

We teach pupils about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss issues that they are concerned about. We use the correct biological terms for body parts and their functions. We encourage children to ask for help, providing reassurance that change is part of life’s cycle*.* In Year 6 there is a greater emphasis on the changes that occur due to puberty and we are supported by a nurse from our Heath Service to disseminate this information.

**Monitoring and reviewing**

In school the Safeguarding Team, PDMU co-ordinator and senior leadership team will monitor the teaching of RSE every June and feedback will be given to staff. The school’s governing body are updated on the progress of RSE and will review the school policy along with the school Principal and relevant staff members as well as parents every 4 years. When the policy is reviewed the governing body will give serious consideration to any comments from parents about the RSE programme, and make note of all such comments.

RSE will also always feature in the 3 year school development planning.

**Role of Principal**

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that:

* Policy and practise is developed in accordance with good practice guidelines and recommendations;
* Teaching RSE/PDMU is carried out effectively in each classroom;
* The policy is reviewed and monitored and approved by governors;
* Staff and parents are informed about policy;
* Staff receive appropriate training and support;
* External agencies adhere to the school policy.

**Complaints Procedure**

In the unlikely event that parents have any cause for concern about the RSE Policy they will be asked to come into school to resolve the problem in line with the school Complaints Procedures.

**Useful websites**

[www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[www.childnet.com/teachers](http://www.childnet.com/teachers)

[www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

[www.safertoknow.info](http://www.safertoknow.info)

[www.exceedingexpectations.org.uk](http://www.exceedingexpectations.org.uk)

[www.endbullying.org.uk](http://www.endbullying.org.uk)

https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse

**Other complementary school policy documents**

E:Safety & Acceptable Use

Safeguarding and Child protection

Pastoral Care

Positive Behaviour and Citizenship

Anti-Bullying

PDMU

Teaching and Learning

SEN

Complaints