St Therese of Lisieux Primary School



Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Providing reliable, accurate and timely age-appropriate information

Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Our vision statement

"With a smile and a helping hand we inspire the children of today to become the adults of tomorrow."

St Therese of Lisieux Primary School aims to provide a supportive, positive learning environment which fosters pupil growth and development. This <u>nurturing</u> ethos is underpinned by our code of faith and pastoral care. We are committed to providing our pupils with a positive attitude towards Catholic education. Christ's values and gospel message are an intrinsic part of our ethos, daily running of the school and our curriculum. We try to ensure that we work in partnership with the home, parish and the wider community to strengthen our pupils' vision of their role as part of the Catholic community. This policy reflects the ethos of our school.

Defining RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is life long learning about physical, moral and emotional development. RSE should provide young people with the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not simply intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend.

Rationale

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values regarding personal and social relationships. For children, the learning process has begun informally, with their parents or carers, long before any education in a formal setting takes place at school. Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and it develops throughout life. It is an integral part of the human personality and affects our capacity to give and receive love. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships.

Effective RSE is essential if children are to value themselves as individuals and are to make responsible, well-informed and healthy decisions about their lives. RSE will be firmly embedded in the PDMU and the RE Curriculum as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. RSE is taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner, and in a way that is appropriate to the child's emotional and physical age and stage of development.

Consultation With Stakeholders

This policy was developed initially in 2016/7 using CCEA resources and guidance from the Down and Connor Catholic Schools' Support Service and revised through a process of consultation involving pupils, parents/carers, school staff and governors at that time, ensuring compliance with DE Circular 2013/16 and 2015/22.

In 2019 P7 pupils and their parents were consulted about preferences for teaching about puberty in single sex or mixed groups. The majority expressed a preference for single sex groupings for part of this topic. The children were also consulted about the timing of this topic and expressed a view that it should be taught earlier, reflecting the views of staff also. This led to the introduction of a module on puberty being introduced in P6.

Pupils, parents, staff and governors views on these and other issues are sought every three years as part of our School Development Plan consultation through online questionnaires and when major changes are made to policies. The results of these surveys are used to inform development priorities and identify professional development requirements.

This policy has been updated in Dec 2021 after a review using Relationships and Sexuality: Guidance Document for Primary Schools NI 2021 by the Catholic Schools' Trustee Service and consultation with staff, parents and governors.

<u>Aims</u>

In line with our ethos and CCEA guidelines our Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy provides children with opportunities to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework consistent with our Catholic ethos
- help all pupils to appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child
- To enable the children to identify and manage a range of feelings.
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect
- To enable the children to identify, manage and communicate a range of feelings.
- To develop a respect for difference within the school and community.
- To help all children to value family life in its diversity
- learn about the changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence, particularly the emotional and physical changes at puberty

• learn about keeping themselves safe and know what to do or who to go to if they feel unsafe.

The Importance of Relationships and Sexuality Education

• Respects the rights of children

St Therese of Lisieux is working towards achieving Rights Respecting School awards, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means that all children and young people in Northern Ireland have a right to a good quality education in accordance with the Convention.

Promotes a better understanding of diversity and inclusion

Schools are increasingly diverse spaces, reflecting wider societal change. We aim to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters respect for difference, challenges prejudicial attitudes and promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils. We encourage children to be confident and respectful of themselves and others.

Helps children to keep themselves safer in the digital world

Technology plays an integral role in the lives of many children in Northern Ireland today. However, whilst technological advancements provide many opportunities, along with opportunity comes risk, particularly if the children's activity is unsupervised.

In St Therese of Lisieux children are taught 'keeping safe' messages about how to behave safely and responsibly in the digital world which plays such an integral role in their lives. Children are helped to identify potential risks to their safety, and be aware of the strategies they can use to protect themselves.

• Provides reliable, accurate and timely age-appropriate information

Although the emphasis in RSE in primary schools is on friendships and healthy relationships, we also give children opportunities to learn and understand how the body grows and develops, and know about the stages of human development. In the latter part of Key Stage 2 pupils will be given the opportunity to learn about some of the emotional and physical changes that occur during puberty. The programme is tailored to be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. This knowledge forms part of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding theme of 'Health, Growth and Change'. Before puberty is covered in class, teachers will give parents/ carers the opportunity to discuss the content and resources they plan to use.

Issues around sexual orientation, gender identity and the physical act of sex are not on the primary school curriculum. However, if the children ask questions around these issues teachers will respond in a sensitive, non-confrontational and reassuring way. They may advise the child to discuss the issues at home with their parents and/or inform the parents that the child is raising these issues and may benefit from a discussion around the child's questions at home.

Helps children to recognise inappropriate behaviour and touch

Through Relationships and Sexuality Education, children develop an understanding of their own uniqueness. It is also vitally important that they know and understand that, even though they are young, their body belongs to them and them alone. When children learn about 'keeping safe' through boundaries and positive consent, it helps them to recognise what constitutes:

- appropriate and inappropriate behaviour;
- appropriate and inappropriate touch; and
- unwanted attention, or attention that makes them feel uncomfortable in any way.

Children are taught strategies to use if they feel unsafe at any time. Teachers endeavour to create an atmosphere in their classrooms where all children are valued and given time to discuss any issues or concerns they may have. All classrooms have a 'Jokes, Worries and Concerns' box in their classroom. Photos of the key staff children can approach are displayed in prominent areas throughout the school. Safeguarding messages are presented regularly throughout the year at assemblies, during Antibullying week, Internet Safety week and through the PDMU and RE curriculum.

The foundation for the effective delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education is the building of secure, trusting, respectful relationships between the teacher and their pupils. Pupils should feel reassured that their teacher cares about their wellbeing and be aware that there are adults whom they can talk to and confide in. Pupils must also know and understand that the promise of confidentiality is never an option in the classroom or school setting. It must also be clear to pupils that, whilst teachers will offer support, they are obligated to notify the child protection/safeguarding teacher or team if they are concerned that the pupil may be 'at risk'.

Engaging with parents or carers

The effectiveness of our policy and programme depends upon the involvement of teachers, parents, governors and other education and health professionals. Each of these has distinctive contributions to make to our policy. Our teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education aims to be complementary and supportive to parents/carers role as lead educators in this sensitive area, and will be delivered in the context of our Catholic ethos.

It is our role to assist parents in teaching RSE in a manner appropriate to the emotional and psychological development of the child. A copy of our policy is readily available for parents at any time. We will have regular review of our policy and on-going communication with parents. Parents will be made aware of any sensitive topics before they are discussed with the children through the weekly focus sheets and will be asked to consent to their child attending workshops/assemblies that address sensitive issues.

Materials/resources used will be available for parents/carers to view. We hold workshops for parents periodically to address issues such as keeping our children safe in a digital world and send home suitable materials from outside agencies.

If an outside agency/individual is coming into the school to support the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme, parents/ carers are told in advance. Where sensitive issues are concerned we explain the type of activities which will take place to parents / carers and seek consent. This ensures that they have the opportunity to raise any concerns they might have before the visit, lets parents/carers know what is going on and strengthens ties between home and school.

Withdrawal from Relationships and Sexuality Education

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it is part of our school curriculum. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE. The school will, however, take account of parent/carer concerns and respect their wishes. However, parents/carers should consider the social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood that the child will hear their peers' version of what happened or what was said in the classes, rather than the safe and reliable source of the teacher's. If parents/carers choose to withdraw their children from certain RSE lessons, then the children will be given the opportunity to complete work from another area of the curriculum in another class.

Strengthening the partnership between school and the wider community

We occasionally use the expertise and skills of education and health professionals from outside agencies or from individuals in the wider community, to support the children's learning. There are many benefits of this, including the following:

- Outside agencies/individuals in the wider community can bring specialist knowledge, expertise and experience into the classroom;
- The novelty of a new visitor coming into the classroom/school is often very welcomed by pupils;
- It can increase the pupils' knowledge of services which can be accessed in the local community, and teach them how to go about accessing these services if and when they need them; and

• It can enhance teachers' capacity by updating their knowledge and/or showing new pedagogy/ teaching practices used by the outside agency/individual.

We ensure that any outside agency/individual delivering a support session in a school:

- discusses and agrees the content, resources and teaching methods with staff prior to delivering a session to ensure it is respectful of the school's ethos, and complementary to the ongoing provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education.
- receives a copy of the school's Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy;
- is made aware of and adheres to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- agrees to and signs our code of conduct;
- is made aware of the issues around confidentiality;
- is vetted as appropriate.

To maximise learning from the session, teachers prepare pupils for the visit. During the session, the teacher is present at all times. Afterwards the teacher should provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss their experience(s) and honestly evaluate the session(s). We use pupils' feedback to inform future planning and provision.

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

We ensure children with SEN in mainstream schools have appropriate, accessible and relevant Relationships and Sexuality Education. When necessary resources and teaching activities are adapted to ensure that there are no barriers to participation or learning for pupils with SEN compared to their peers. It is widely recognised that pupils with SEN are more vulnerable to all forms of abuse and exploitation. Therefore, teachers must 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.

Working in mixed and single sex groups

Generally, we teach Relationships and Sexuality Education in mixed groups, where boys and girls learn together to gain an understanding and appreciation of each other's perspectives. However, when surveyed in 2019, a large majority of parents and pupils who were consulted have expressed their

preference to work in single sex groups at certain times, particularly when they are exploring puberty issues. The children Indicated that they felt more comfortable asking questions in single sex groups.

Personal backgrounds and cultural practices

We aim to be particularly sensitive to the personal circumstances and cultural background of our pupils. We recognise how pupils' views and values are influenced by their informal learning experiences and by the views of family, peers, community and the media. For example, for some pupils it might be inappropriate to address some Relationships and Sexuality Education issues in a mixed sex group lesson because of cultural or religious beliefs. Other pupils may have same sex parents or carers, so teachers need to be mindful of this. We aim to handle such issues with sensitivity and respect.

The importance of establishing good relationships in the classroom environment

Good relationships are important in any classroom; however, they are particularly important when teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education. In Relationships and Sexuality Education, learning is most effective when it takes place in a safe, secure, respectful and inclusive space, where pupils can express their feelings and opinions and participate confidently and freely without embarrassment, judgement or ridicule from their peers. Using circle time or creating a classroom charter are effective ways to help to create a positive and safe learning environment.

Approaches to teaching and learning

To ensure that Relationships and Sexuality Education is meaningful and engaging for pupils, we adopt a learner-centred approach to facilitate and guide their learning. We employ an enquiry-based approach when exploring sensitive and complex issues, and use participative methodologies. These approaches, which are underpinned by the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities framework, often lead to children gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding, and really engaging in the learning process.

Connected learning opportunities

There are many opportunities within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for other Areas of Learning to link with Relationships and Sexuality Education, which allows for a more connected learning experience for pupils. This is a particularly effective way for teachers to enable pupils to explore sensitive and complex issues, as it allows them to do so through a variety of different lenses. Through this multi-perspective approach, children will develop an appreciation of the range of different viewpoints and the reasons why people have them. For example, children can explore a range of ways of communicating and expressing feelings and emotions through the Arts, including art and design, music, and drama. Through Language and Literacy, children can

develop a vocabulary to discuss emotions and feelings through talking and listening, reading, writing, drama, and role play.

Teaching resources

Our teaching of RSE is primarily through the Religious Education programme and the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme. The Diocesan approved 'Grow in Love' and 'The Wonder of My Being' resources alongside the CCEA Living.Learning.Together packs (PDMU) helps to support our teaching.

Teachers may supplement these approved resources with others but must be satisfied that the resources they plan to use:

- reflect the ethos of our school;
- are age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to the pupils' needs and experiences;
- are factually accurate and up-to-date; and
- make clear distinctions between fact and opinion.
- do not contain inappropriate/explicit images

Period Dignity

Period dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a period, in conjunction with the removal/breaking of stigma and taboo around periods. Education is a key factor in breaking the stigma surrounding periods and promoting respect, understanding and open discussions about what people may experience when menstruating.

Through our PDMU and RSE curricula we aim to help our pupils understand:

- Changes in their body during puberty
- Menstruation, the facts
- Menstrual wellness physical and emotional wellbeing, leading up to and during periods
- Menstrual hygiene essential facts and how to deal with related situations
- Challenges pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, myths.

A supply of sanitary towels is kept in KS2 classrooms/toilets to ensure products are available when needed. It is not the policy intention to make blanket provision of period products for all pupils. However, affordability is more of a factor for some learners than others, and they may wish to avail of the free products to meet their needs throughout the academic year, in school and by taking products home. Other learners may need to access the scheme because they have started their period in school unexpectedly or have forgotten to bring period products with them.

Parents are given information about the sanitary items available for pupils in school. Children are informed of the period dignity scheme and the items available to them in school in September. They are advised of the teachers and assistants they can approach if they have any issues. Staff will be vigilant for any children who are distressed or experiencing discomfort due to menstruation. Children will be treated with care and sensitivity. Staff will work alongside parents, to ensure that absences are not caused by children unable to manage periods or lacking confidence. Parents will be informed of any issues that arise.

Teaching sensitive issues

Sensitive issues are part and parcel of life. Children are aware of them, and want to talk about and understand them, particularly those sensitive issues which are also topical. Pupils should not be denied the opportunity to explore such issues simply because a teacher feels uncomfortable discussing them, and they should not be sheltered from discussing sensitive issues in an age-appropriate way. To do either is to leave children ignorant and unprepared to engage and deal with the diverse and complex range of issues facing them in society today.

Links to other policies

This policy should not be seen in isolation and should be cross referenced with other school policies, in particular, the Pastoral Care Policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, E-safety Policy and the Anti Bullying Policy. Procedures for dealing with bullying of any kind, including cyberbullying are detailed in the Anti Bullying Policy.

Staff Development

We will avail of any staff development opportunities that are made available by the Education Authority, HSCNI, CCEA, Diocesan Advisors and Down and Connor Catholic Schools' Trustee Service.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This implementation of this policy will be monitored by the RE and PDMU coordinators to ensure that the needs of the children are being met. Monitoring and evaluation will happen through review of planning documentation, discussion with staff and pupils through focused group discussions and/or questionnaires and through consultation with parents.

Appendices

- 1. Statutory Curricular Requirements for RSE through the PDMU Curriculum
- 2. CCEA's LIVING-LEARNING-TOGETHER Summary
- 3. The Wonder of My Being Programme Overview

Relationships and Sexuality Education through the

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Curriculum

Statutory Curricular Requirements for PDMU - RSE

Foundation Stage

Theme 1: Self Awareness

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: themselves and their personal attributes.

Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their own and others' feelings and emotions.

Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: The importance of keeping healthy.

Theme 4a: Safety

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: How to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments.

Theme 5: Relationships

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their relationships with family and friends.

Theme 8: Similarities and Differences

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: Similarities and differences.

Key Stage 1

Theme 1: Self Awareness

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others.

Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: strategies and skills for keeping healthy.

Theme 4a: Safety

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: strategies and skills for keeping safe.

Theme 5: Relationships

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: and initiating mutually satisfying relationships.

Theme 8: Similarities and Differences

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: Similarities and differences between people.

Key Stage 2

Theme 1: Self Awareness

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals.

Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others.

Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: how to sustain their health, growth and well-being.

CCEA's LIVING-LEARNING-TOGETHER

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 (P1-P4)

Myself:

- How I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example: hygiene, sleep, exercise.
- Their own and others' feelings/emotions and how their actions affect others.
- 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 and 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.
- The importance of keeping healthy and safe.
- The importance of keeping healthy and strategies and skills for keeping healthy.

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: situations of the pupils should be considered prior to introducing this topic).
- Respect and caring for family members and friends for example: 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.
- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends; the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances.
- Strategies which 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 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.

Key Stage 2 (P5-P7)

Myself:

- The importance of keeping healthy and safe.
- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy.
- The physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty (girls and boys).
- 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 our feelings, showing love and affection.
- Gender roles.
- 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.

My Relationships:

- Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values.
- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's 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 for example: identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people's point of view.
- Handling difficult situations for example: teasing, bullying, death of a family member.
- 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.
- Cultural differences in families and family relationships.
- Helping agencies who can support families and individuals in different circumstances.
- Messages and images from the media, family and peers.

The Wonder of My Being Programme Overview	
	1. To appreciate that I am a boy/girl.
Year	2. To appreciate that I am part of a family.
One	3. To understand that I grew in my mother's womb.
	4. To learn that Jesus was part of a family.
	5. To appreciate that I am special.
	1. To understand that I needed help with everything when I was a baby.
Year	2. To understand that I have grown and changed since I was a baby.
Two	3. To understand some developmental stages of babies e.g. crawling, walking, talking
	4. To appreciate that my family loves and cares for me.
	5. To appreciate that God chose Mary to be the mother of his son Jesus.
	6. To appreciate that Mary and Joseph loved and cared for Jesus.
	1. To appreciate that people celebrate weddings.
Year	2. To appreciate the qualities that are required for friendship.
Three	3. To appreciate the qualities necessary for family.
	4. To appreciate how a mother cares for her new baby.
	5. To appreciate that Jesus helped Mary and Joseph at home.
	6. To appreciate how we can help at home.
	1. To appreciate that Mary was told by an Angel that she was to be the mother of Jesus.
Year	2. To appreciate that an Angel appeared to Joseph to tell him he would be the one to care for Mary and
Four	Jesus.
	3. To appreciate the role of Mary as the mother of God.
	4. To appreciate the qualities and values that were part of the Holy Family of Nazareth.
	5. To learn the vocabulary associated with pregnancy and birth.
	6. To appreciate the preparations that were needed for your birth.
	7. To appreciate that family is a gift from God
	1. To appreciate the uniqueness of each person.
Year	2. To appreciate that we are all created in the image and likeness of God.
rear	3. To appreciate the importance of preparing responsibly for new life.
Five	4. To appreciate the stages of development between birth and two years.
	5. To appreciate we change as we grow (2 years – 9/10 years).
	6. To be aware of people who help us grow and develop: family, church, medical.
	7. To revisit the Sacrament of Baptism so that the children can become aware of their place in God's
	family.
Year	1. To appreciate that we are made in God's image and likeness.
Six	2. To appreciate the stages of growth before birth.
SIX	3. To recognise significant moments in our lives to date.
	4. To recognise that we are created by God and that our bodies are sacred.
	5. To recognise that our bodies change as we grow.
	6. To appreciate that everyone is part of the body of Christ.
	7. To appreciate the values of friendship in our lives.
	8. To identify negative behaviour and how it can affect other people.
Year	1. To appreciate that we are called by God.
Seven	2. To appreciate the presence of God in our lives as we grow and change.
Jeven	3. To appreciate the talents that each of us has and consider how we will use these as we grow and
	change.
	4. To appreciate the qualities and characteristics of friendship.
	5. To understand the importance of accepting and respecting each other just as we are.
	6. To make pupils aware that they are influenced by many different people and things.
	7. To appreciate that I can be a good or bad influence others.
	8. To help make informed decision about their lives.
	9. To enable the children to face future changes with optimism.