

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
- ◇ Helps children to recognise inappropriate behaviour and touch

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 'Flourish' resources, written specifically for Catholic schools in Ireland, alongside the CCEA (PDMU) *Living. Learning. Together* packs help 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 the school;
- ◇ are age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to the pupils' needs and experiences;
- ◇ are factually accurate and up-to-date;
- ◇ make clear distinctions between fact and opinion.
- ◇ do not contain inappropriate/explicit images

Outside Agencies

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, including the following:

- ◇ NSPCC
- ◇ Down and Connor Trustee Service
- ◇ Choices and Changes –Love for Life
- ◇ What's Inside-Love for Life
- ◇ Smokebusters -Cancer Focus NI
- ◇ Building Up Programme –YMCA



Summary of Relationships and Sexuality Policy

*Providing reliable, accurate and timely
age-appropriate information*

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Summary

In primary schools the emphasis in RSE is on developing and sustaining friendships and healthy relationships. Children are also given opportunities to learn and understand how the body grows and develops, and 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 and meets the needs of both boys and girls. 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. As a Catholic school, RSE is presented through the Religious Education programme, as well as the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme.

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.

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.

RSE is taught in mixed groups, where boys and girls learn together and gain an understanding and appreciation of each other's perspectives. However, there are times that pupils and teachers prefer to work in single-sex groups, particularly when they are exploring puberty issues.

Aims

Relationships and Sexuality Education provides children with opportunities to:

- value themselves as unique individuals and children of God;
- respect themselves and others;
- develop respect for difference within the school and community
- begin to develop their own moral thinking and value systems;
- learn about friendships, healthy relationships and behaviours with others;
- recognise and communicate their feelings and emotions and those of others;
- help each child to value family life
- 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.

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 on request.

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it is part of our school curriculum. As a school we actively promote the implementation of age appropriate RSE. If parents/carers have concerns about RSE and choose to withdraw their child from these lessons, we will respect their wishes. However, parents/carers should consider the social/emotional effects of this as well as the likelihood that the child will hear their peers' version of what happened or what was said in the lesson, rather than the teacher's safe and reliable information.