

St. John's Primary School

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

NEXT REVIEW: Autumn 2026

Rationale:

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) 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 and gender issues. The learning process begins informally with parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place at school.

RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI curriculum through Religious Education, PDMU, Health Education and World around Us. The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 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.

St. John's is a Catholic Primary School and in RSE all pupils will be taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect within our Catholic ethos. The value of a stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood will be presented. As they mature, pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the importance of self-discipline, dignity, respect for themselves and others. We look at how pupils interact with each other, focussing on the need to make pupils feel safe and confident. Through PDMU and World Around Us children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older.

We will employ the FLOURISH RSE programme which is supported by our Bishops. (see appendix 3 for the lesson outline for each class).

Teaching at all times will be appropriate to the maturity and level of understanding of the pupils concerned. Teachers will be aware of, and take into account, the variety of existing pupil knowledge, the different attitudes and beliefs and the pupil's capacity to understand

the issues. An improving awareness will be developed amongst staff of the vulnerability factors and current indicators of child exploitation. Effective RSE provision will help pupils recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations and how to take preventative action.

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to give and receive love; procreation and, in a more general way, the aptitude for forming relationships with others. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships. We, as a school will be seeking to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships-RSE is underpinned by a theology of relationship. Pupils will come to understand more about themselves, others and the beauty of creation.

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils:

- to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;
- to examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives;
- to learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- To appreciate the sanctity of human life.
- to build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life;
- to make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives.
- To appreciate the values of respect, trust, honesty and compassion
- To understand the importance of personal safety and the dangers of abuse.
- To understand that love is the central basis of all relationships
- To develop a respect for difference, gender and race.

Consent of parents will be sought for inclusion in RSE lessons. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from RSE lessons.

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.
- to develop a respect for difference, gender and race

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- 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;
- develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

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. They 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.

Confidentiality and Child Protection/safeguarding Children (in keeping with school policy and legal obligation) is paramount. Links to other policies-Religious Education, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Health Education, Teaching and Learning will be utilised. Links to relevant Department of Education legislation/guidelines/circulars etc. will be made.

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, and others, are affected by them.

Special Needs

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.

DELIVERING THE RSE PROGRAMME

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

Religious Education

- Life is a gift from God (Catechism of the Catholic Church CC 2260).
- Stories which help children distinguish right from wrong and help children to make moral judgements about situations.
- Moral values such as sharing, caring, love, forgiveness and friendship.
- The importance of family and care of the earth.

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

Religious Education

- My family is a gift from God.
- Christians respect their bodies and the bodies of others because they were created by God [CCC (Catechism of the Catholic Church) 364; CSRE (from the Joint Syllabus of the 4 Churches) 3a).
- The importance of looking after ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually.

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
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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 (Y7 ABC for Life)

Religious Education

- The importance of looking after ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- Life is precious and God-given.

The Use of the Expertise of Agencies and Individuals

If there are services of health professional or others, to assist in delivering aspects of the RSE curriculum, the school may engage them when appropriate. The activities will complement the RSE curriculum. Pupils are prepared for any visit and parental permission is sought.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE Policy:

Policy will be disseminated to parents and staff following adoption and any reviews. St. John's Primary School staff are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically important to the RSE Programme are:

- Religious sensitivity within our Catholic School Ethos in St. John's Primary School
- Pupil feedback
- Staff review and feedback
- Parental feedback
- Further Departmental guidance and legislative changes

Signed: _____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

_____ (Principal)

Date: September 2023

Review due: Autumn 2026

Appendix 1 :

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

Irish Episcopal Conference, Share the Good News (2010)

Bishop's Conference of Ireland, Guidelines on Relationships and Sexuality Education (2013).

Love is for Life – No 7

Irish Episcopal Conference, Love is for Life (1985)

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2004/05/03/supporting-marriage-and-the-family/>

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
Flourish RSE Programme and the Catholic Trustee Service

APPENDIX 2

Updated Resource Guidance for aspects of RSE

a) CONSENT

- Conversation cards from 'Moments a Day'. (all classes Y1-Y7)
- Y7 Unit 7 in Living Learning Together- Informed Decision-Making. CEA
- NSPCC Pants programme-all classes Y1-Y7
- <https://youtu.be/h3nhM9UIJjc>
- Flourish

b) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Women's Aid Helping Hands programme and activities

- Expect Respect Educator's Toolkit-lessons for Y1-Y7
- Flourish

c) HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- Living Learning Together –CEA
- Flourish

d) LGBTQ+

- Grow in Love Y1-Y7 teaches the uniqueness of each child and promotes their support and welcome to help them thrive.

e) INTERNET SAFETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- These are addressed within the policies and practice for E-Safety and include resources from Thinkuknow, Evolve etc.
- Flourish (Catholic Trustee Service approved resource)

Appendix 3
Flourish Programme

Class	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8
Year 1	I am me	My Body	I have a family	I have friends				
Year 2	Growing and Changing	Keeping Safe	My family	I can make choices				
Year 3	I am Unique	My body	My family loves me	My neighbourhood				

Year 4	The wonder of new life	We have feelings	Friendship and fairness	Decisions and consequences				
Year 5	Growing and Changing	Making the right choices	Positive role models	Why have rules?				
Year 6	Feelings	Bullying	Puberty	Environmental Care				
Year 7	Puberty	Emotions and Relationships	Love	Safe Internet	Body Changes	Caring for New Life	Where Babies Come From	It's OK to Say 'No'

