

LARNE HIGH SCHOOL
RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2020

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1. Aims

Through our PSHE programme, we aim to provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. In providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective RSE to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens.

At Larne High School, RSE is taught within the LLW and Science education curriculum.

RSE is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral and emotional development. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices.

The aims of Relationships, Sex and Health education (RSHE) at Larne High School are to:

- Provide a consistent standard of relations, sex and health education across the school
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Promote responsible behaviour
- Create a positive culture of communication around issues of relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Give pupils an understanding of reproduction and sexual development
- Ensure that all pupils, by the time they reach secondary school age, are well equipped and on an equal footing, to deal with the secondary RSHE curriculum.
- To provide all pupils with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to make positive and healthy choices concerning relationships as they grow up and deal with risk.
- Combat exploitation.

2. Definition

Within this policy, Relationships Education is defined as teaching about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to respectful friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults, including online.

For the purpose of this policy, Health Education is defined as teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, focusing on recognising the link between the two and being able to make healthy lifestyle choices

Sex Education is defined as teaching children how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived and born. This draws on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science. For the purposes of this policy, we specifically identify any non-statutory Sex Education that falls outside of Science and those related elements (the physical changes associated with puberty) within statutory Health Education.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

3. Curriculum

We have developed the curriculum taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an age appropriate manner so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online.

Key objectives of the statutory Relationships Education curriculum are outlined below:

Families and people who care for me

Children should know:

- that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.
- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships

Children should know:

- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.

- that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to physically or verbally aggressive behaviour is never right.
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

Respectful relationships

Children should know:

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- the conventions of courtesy and manners.
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority.
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help.
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive.
- the importance of permission-seeking and granting in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

Online relationships

Children should know:

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.
- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.
- how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.
- how information and data is shared and used online.

Being safe

Children should know:

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context).
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and others.

- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

4 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE
- Monitoring progress

Teachers will reply to, and answer, children's questions sensitively and openly. Teachers will need to answer questions that may arise through the direct teaching of sex education, as well as those that may be asked at other times. All questions will be handled sensitively and set within a general context.

5 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

6 Parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

- Will carry out our statutory duty to consult with parents and governors on the contents of this policy
- Inform parents about the school's RSE policy and practice; this includes informing parents by letter or email before beginning to teach a unit of RSE
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE of their child; this includes providing opportunities for parents to view the resources that are used in lessons
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school
- Acknowledge parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE. However, this rarely happens as, by working in partnership with parents, they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education

- Keep a register of any pupils who are removed from lessons and distributed to all teachers involved.

7. Parents' right to withdraw

As previously stated the RSE curriculum consists of both statutory and non-statutory elements:

- Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from statutory health education or the science curriculum.

Parents wanting to withdraw their children are invited to speak to the Principal.

8. Confidentiality

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse or exploitation. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw these to the attention of the designated person responsible for child protection or the headteacher as a matter of urgency. Disclosure of female genital mutilation must be reported to the police (either by the teacher to whom it is disclosed or by the DT).

Legally, the school cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. We aim to ensure that pupils' best interests are maintained and try to encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers to provide support. If confidentiality has to be broken, pupils are informed first and then supported by the designated teacher throughout the whole process.

9. Special Educational Needs

Pupils with special educational needs will be given the opportunity to fully participate in RSE lessons, and a differentiated program will be provided where necessary, to ensure that all pupils gain a full understanding.

10. Complaints Procedure

Any complaints or concerns about the Relationships and Sex Education programme should be made to the class teacher in the first instance. Parents can choose to follow the Kilmorie complaints procedure if they feel things are not resolved.

11. The School Environment

The school will ensure that the whole school environment reflects the values of respect for themselves and others. It will:

- Ensure that posters and displays use positive images and celebrate difference and diversity.
- Ensure that communication between staff and pupils is welcomed and encouraged, and children know how to access members of staff.
- Provide provisions for pubertal girls, including sanitary ware and free sanitary towels.
- Ensure that discriminatory behaviour is always challenged in any context.

12 Equal Opportunities

Larne High School is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life. In RSE this will include:

- Examining and challenging gender stereotyping,
- Celebrating difference and diversity
- Ensuring a programme of Relationships Education that is relevant to all pupils