

Larne High School

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

September 2022

INTRODUCTION

The RSE policy reflects the ethos of the school and guidance provided by DE, CCEA and DHSS. It aims to encourage pupils to develop respect for themselves and others, to foster an understanding of healthy friendships and relationships and to develop responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions within a social, moral and spiritual framework.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process, which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues.

Elements of RSE will be delivered through Personal Development, Biology, Religious Education, Child Development and through the school's pastoral programme.

AIMS

- To develop positive, healthy responsible relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework;
- To recognise and be aware of different forms of abuse and to develop skills to help young people keep themselves safe;
- To increase understanding among pupils of pertinent issues and give accurate information to help correct misunderstanding and help the young people make informed decisions and choices;
- To encourage an appreciation of the value of marriage, family life and other long-term relationships;
- To accept the characteristics of others and their own sexuality and to develop within pupils a respect for both their own and other people's bodies;
- To prepare pupils to cope with the physical, social and emotional challenges of growing up and so help better prepare them for adult life;
- To provide pupils with the knowledge base needed to make informed decisions;
- To appreciate parents/guardians and their role within the family and the responsibilities of parenthood;
- To have coping strategies to deal with relationships when they break down;
- To appreciate the value of human life;
- To encourage pupils to make informed decisions based on the information presented to them. Also pupils who hold differing views are able to do so in an environment without threat.

DELIVERY OF RSE

- RSE will be delivered through Personal Development, though aspects will also be taught in Biology, Religious Education, Child Development, English and through the pastoral programme.
- External speakers may also deliver elements of the RSE curriculum, for example Women's Aid, Love for Life etc. The school recognises the expertise provided by individuals and those from statutory and voluntary organisations.
Before agreeing to use an external agency, teachers will: review resources that are to be used; inform parents/guardians if applicable; ensure the input is in harmony with the school's RSE programme; inform pupils of the purpose of the visit.

A teacher will be present during all presentations.

- The school recognises the changing nature of society and the influence of the home on a child's development, and lessons will be delivered in a sensitive and thoughtful manner.
- Should any pupil raise an issue that the teacher deems is beyond the level of maturity of the class, the teacher will arrange to speak to the child after class and may discuss the issue with the child's parents/guardians and inform a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- It is important to acknowledge that there may be different thoughts and perspectives between females and males and their differing views need to be respected. While pupils will usually be taught in mixed groups, it may be necessary at times to deliver areas of the programme to boys and girls in single groups.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

The Status of the Family

The school promotes the value of long-term stable relationships including marriage, while acknowledging the diversity of family life that exists within society.

Confidentiality and Child Protection Issues

Confidentiality

Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and when physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information be kept secret, it is important that the member of staff should tell the child, sensitively, that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases or alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's own sake. Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share their information only within appropriate professional contexts. This approach is supported in Child Protection training

provided to all staff (teaching and support) in August each year and in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Safeguarding and Child protection

Staff should be aware that pupils may be victims of abuse and it is accepted that it can be dealt with in two ways. Primarily to refer information that may arise to the Designated Teacher who will implement the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedure. Secondly through the teaching of the preventative curriculum, pupils may be supported through the promotion of self-esteem management of emotions and through skills of assertiveness.

Withdrawal from class

While there is no statutory right to withdraw a child from RSE class, any parents/guardians who do not wish their children to participate in RSE classes should contact the school and the school will endeavour to make alternative arrangements. Parents/guardians should contact a relevant member of staff to discuss this confidentially.

Terminology

The use of proper terms for parts of the body and body functions will be used. It is very important proper terminology is used in class activities and that the tone of discussion is respectful and genuine.

The Value of Human Life

Pupils should acquire the knowledge to make sound value judgements on issues such as euthanasia and abortion in a non-judgemental and non-confrontational atmosphere. The input of all pupils is valued.

Sexual Identity and Orientation

"All pupils have the right to learn in a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not to be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation". Equality Commission (NI)

All pupils will be valued and treated with respect regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ethnicity etc. Staff should handle the issue of sexual orientation and gender in a sensitive non-confrontational and reassuring way. Teachers, whatever their personal views, will act to counteract prejudice and support the development of self-esteem and personal responsibility in all pupils. Pupils will be encouraged to show tolerance and respect to those who hold different values to their own. The school promotes equality for all pupils.

Bullying

Bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation, is as unacceptable as it is in any other situation, where someone is mistreated or bullied because of their differences from those who are perceived to be the majority. All issues relating to bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation or identification or any other form of homophobic abuse will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Pastoral Support

The school takes its role in the promotion of student welfare very seriously. Staff endeavour to provide caring and sensitive pastoral support and make themselves approachable for pupils.

The school nurse offers a health and support service to all pupils and offers health education talks. The Familyworks counselling service and EA youth worker are available to offer additional pastoral support for all pupils.

Related Documents:

- CCEA Guidance for Post Primary Schools: Relationships and Sexuality Education 2015
- CCEA Personal Development NI Curriculum 2007
- EANI Supporting Transgender Young People 2019
- DHSS Sexual Health Promotion: Strategy and Action Plan 2008 – 2013
- DENI Circular 2010/01
- DENI Circular 2013/16
- DENI Circular 2015/22
- Equality Commission (NI) Eliminating Sexual Orientation Discrimination in NI, March 2009
- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 – Revised February 2009
- Guidance for Schools on Preventing and Responding to Sexist, Sexual and Transphobic Bullying. Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed May 2024