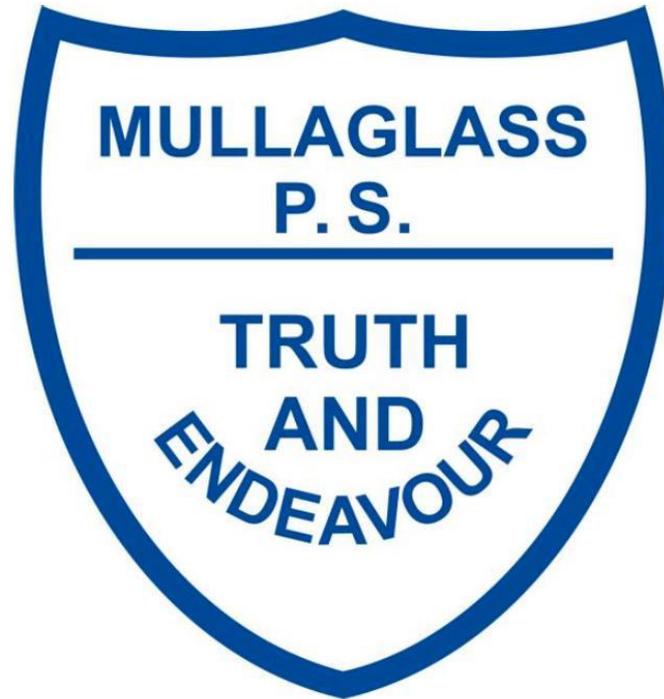


Mullaglass Primary School



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Chair of Governors: Colin Whiteside

Principal: Paul Greenaway

Date: March 2024

Review due: March 2027

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Introduction

RSE is lifelong 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.

We at Mullaglass Primary School view the development and implementation of a policy in Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) as an important step towards achieving our aim to develop all aspects of a young person's life, developing a sense of respect and inclusion for all members of the community and becoming life-long learners who show respect and concern for others in a diverse society.

RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI curriculum through PDMU, Health Education, the World Around Us and Religious Education. Health Education is taught mainly through the medium of PDMU.

In RSE all pupils will be taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The value of a stable family life 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. Through PDMU and the World Around Us children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older and, in P7, will be given the opportunities to prepare them fully for post-primary schools and the emotional and physical changes they may expect to experience over the next few years.

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 our parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place at school.

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.

At the heart of Relationships and Sexuality teaching is an understanding that:

- Human sexuality is an integral part of the human person and that it determines in a significant way our capacity to give and receive love,
- Human life is sacred,
- Each person is a unique human being created in the image and likeness of God.

Human sexuality is a fundamental component of one's personhood and plays an integral part in the development of an individual's personality and in the process of education.

Rationale

As parents / carers are the primary educators of their children, we will endeavour to engage in consultation with them regarding aims, teaching programme of this policy. Their views will be considered when implementing and reviewing this policy.

In line with our schools ethos, RSE should provide opportunities that enable pupils to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;
- help all pupils appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness;
- examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives;
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life;
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives;
- foster and develop mutual respect and understanding;
- develop a respect for difference, gender and race within school and community;
- enable children to identify and manage a range of feelings;
- help young people recognise, understand and prepare for the body changes that they and their friends will undergo in the years ahead [puberty].

Aims

The aims of RSE are to:

- help all pupils appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness;
- 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;
- enable children to identify and manage a range of feelings;
- develop a respect for difference, gender and race within the school and community;
- help young people recognise, understand and prepare for the body changes that they (and their friends) will undergo in the years ahead;
- help the child come to value family life, regardless of structure or composition.

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 and in friendships.

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, relationships, 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 life;
- 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.

MORALS AND VALUES

Mindful of the Christian principles of our school and the diversity of religious and cultural groups in the school, pupils are taught RSE within a framework that encourages the following:

- a respect for self;
- a respect for others;
- non - exploitation in relationships;
- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships;
- mutuality within relationships;
- an exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships;
- honesty with self and others;
- self-discipline;
- compassion, forgiveness and care when people do not conform to their way of life;
- a development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others.

RSE CURRICULUM

We will ensure consistency of approach and establish when and where aspects of RSE are being delivered. Lessons and resources will be developed appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils to which they are delivered. It is important that teachers delivering the programmes do so with sensitivity and care. They should also consider pupils knowledge, attitudes and beliefs and their capacity to understand issues. Details for the provision in terms of general content to be covered in each each Key Stage are listed in RSE Non-statutory Framework Guidance. [See Appendix 1]

Possible Resources:

- Living, Learning Together CCEA
- CCEA RSE Hub
- NSPCC
- Period Dignity, CCEA
- Circle Time Activities

Outside Agencies:

Helping Hands

Jeannie Graham

Internet Safety

Love for Life

EWO – transition to new school

Fire Safety

Pauline McQuillan – Newry Area Youth Services (EA)

Police talks

Mindfulness

EA Reach

Parent NI

Operation Encompass

RSE Hub

Other Relevant Policies

This policy complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- E-safety
- Positive Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Special Educational Needs
- Intimate Care
- Attendance
- PDMU
- World Around Us
- RE

SPECIAL NEEDS

It is widely recognised that pupils with SEN are more vulnerable to all forms of abuse and exploitation. 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 SEN and to accommodate this disparity in class lessons and experiences. Teachers will ensure they develop the knowledge and understanding and skills of pupils to enable them to:

- Identify inappropriate and exploitive behaviour;
- Help develop own strategies to keep safe;
- Recognise and build healthy relationships;
- Know who they can talk to.

CLASS ORGANISATION

Classroom teaching arrangements such as single gender class or mixed gender class will be at the discretion of the school. It is important that within the RSE programmes, activities are included to allow young people to talk about their interests, concerns and feelings. If boys/girls have respect for themselves, they are more likely to have respect for each other. It may be appropriate to facilitate the delivery of specific topics of RSE to boys/girls in single gender groups.

Staff Training

Training needs will be considered and will be assessed using the appropriate agencies. Where outside agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the needs of the curriculum and the ethos of the school.

Use of Outside Agencies to Support Preventative Curriculum

Where appropriate, the skills and expertise of outside agencies and professionals may be accessed. Parents/carers will be made aware in advance of the use of outside agencies such as:

- NSPCC

- PSNI
- Fire Service
- Child Protection Support Service EA
- Regional Integrated Services for Education [RISE]
- Love for Life
- Barnardos
- Woman's Aid [Helping Hands]
- Roots of Empathy programme
- CEF Crossfire programme
- Action Mental Health [Healthy Me programme]
- Education Welfare Officer
- EA Reach

Engaging with Parents and Carers

We will ensure our parents and carers are informed and up-to-date with what is being covered in our RSE lessons so that they can be supported in their role as lead educators in this sensitive area. We will endeavour to keep parents informed through the following:

- RSE policy available on website
- Parent/carer information leaflets which will support discussion at home
- Parent/carer information workshops
- Sharing resources to educate parents or carers for example on how to ensure their children are using social media safely and responsibly.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

Every School A Good School – The Governors’ Role: A Guide for Governors outlines the role and responsibilities of Governors. Section 13.40 states, “Boards of Governors should ensure that their school have a Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy and curriculum linked to their pastoral care/child protection policy. This policy and associated teaching should be the subject of consultation with staff and parents and endorsed by the Governors.

Board of Governors should:

- Foster and support the development of an RSE Policy
- Facilitate the consultative process within the school community
- Examine and approve the completed policy and programme prior to their implementation
- Review the policy regularly

Principal and Senior Management Team

The Principal and Senior Management Team co-ordinate the schools approach to RSE and consult with BOG, staff, parents and health professionals as appropriate.

RSE Co-Ordinator’s Role includes:

- Ensuring the programme is taught effectively and is age/maturity appropriate for pupils.
- Liaising with BOG, the Principal, all staff, parents and health and educational visitors on RSE matters.
- Attending in service training and disseminating to staff.
- Organising staff training as and when appropriate.

Designated Teacher/ Special Needs Co-Ordinator

Both these members of staff will provide relevant information which will ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.

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. They should not be sheltered from discussing sensitive issues which should be delivered in an age-appropriate way. Pupils should be reassured that their teacher cares about their wellbeing and be aware that there are adults they can talk to and confide in. Children must know what to do or who to go to if they feel unsafe at any time.

When discussing sensitive issues, it is important that the right to privacy for both pupil and staff is respected.

It must also be clear to pupils that while teachers will offer support, they are obligated to notify the Child Protection team / teacher if they are concerned that the pupils may be at risk.

The following Departmental guidance and Circulars have been used in the formulation of this policy:

DENI Circular 2001/15 – ‘Relationships and Sexuality Education’

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- CCEA (2001) Guidance for Primary Schools: Relationships and Sexuality Education
- The Education Order (NI) 2006
- The Equality Act Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
- DENI (2009) Every School A Good School
- DENI Circular 2010/01 – ‘Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education’
- DENI (2011) Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy
- DENI Circular 2013/16 – ‘Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools’
- DENI Circular 2013/19 – ‘Guidelines on Relationships and Sexuality Education’
- DENI Circular 2014/01 – ‘Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)’
- DENI Circular 2015/21 – ‘Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance’
- CCEA (2015) Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance (An update for Primary Schools)
- ETI (2016) An evaluation of RSE in Primary and special schools
- DENI Circular 2016/05 – ‘Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour’
- DENI Circular 2017/04 – ‘Safeguarding and Child Protection in schools – A Guide For Schools’

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE Policy:

We will monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of this policy through use of the following:

- Pupil/staff/parent/Governors consultation
- Pupil voice including minutes of School Council meeting
- Regular review of policy in light of guidance from DE, CCEA etc

The results of the evaluation will be reported to all interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will be ultimately responsible for the policy.

This policy was devised in collaboration with 9 schools within the South Armagh Schools’ Partnership and members of CPSS [18/10/2022].

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, in line with new guidance and resources or following an issue or concern to ensure its effectiveness in consultation with key stakeholders and endorsed by the Board of Governors.

Signed: Colin Whiteside (Chair of Board of Governors)

Paul Greenaway (Principal)

Foundation Stage**Relationships**

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Identifying people who care and can help
- Recognising that care can come from a variety of different people for example family or professionals
- Recognising the jobs of some professional people who provide care
- Recognising that families may be made up of different people
- Co-operating, sharing and demonstrating good manners with peers and adults
- Respecting other's choices
- Recognising the value of friendships and what a good friend is.

My Body and Development (Health, Growth and Change)

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Recognising and appreciating similarities and differences in how we look
- Naming body parts
- Understanding what private means and when privacy is necessary
- Exploring personal space and appropriate touch with different people
- Understanding basic consent
- Identifying where living things come from
- Investigating how plants and young animals grow and develop
- Recognising that all living things need to be nurtured and cared for
- Identifying the needs of a baby

Safety and Wellbeing (Self Awareness, Feelings and Emotions)

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Naming their feelings and expressing their emotions
- Recognising that feelings are the body's way of telling us what it needs so we will take action
- Recognising that body and mind both need to be looked after
- Understanding that rules are there to protect us and keep us safe
- Recognising rules that will keep them safe online
- Thinking about trust and considering who they trust.

Key Stage 1

Relationships

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Identify the meaning of 'care'
- Identifying people who care for them, exploring both physical and emotional care
- Identifying the different professionals who help children and how their role helps them in their everyday life
- Recognising that there are different types of family structures
- Appreciating and respecting diversity in family structure
- Understanding how friendships are formed and nurtured
- Considering the feelings associated with friendship
- Identifying who to go to if they are worried or concerned about peer relationships

My Body and Development (Health, Growth and Change)

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Recognising similarities and differences between males and females. Considering stereotypes and gender-biased expectations
- Identifying the parts of the body that are private
- Understanding the importance of knowing the correct terminology for private parts of the body
- Recognising that everyone has the right to privacy
- Recognising bodily autonomy, that their body is their body
- Exploring help-seeking behaviours
- Realising that all living things grow and change
- Understanding personal development and growth

Safety and Wellbeing (Self-Awareness, Feelings and Emotions)

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Recognising their personal attributes and feeling positive about themselves
- Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions
- Understanding mental health and wellbeing
- Developing a sense of what is fair
- Seeing the internet as a positive place that is fun and helps them learn when accessed safely
- Reflecting on their online behaviours
- Identifying potential dangers in online environments.

Key Stage 2

Relationships

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Knowing what human rights are and understanding that they belong to everyone
- Recognising the importance of being cared for, caring for others and caring for themselves
- Identifying what love and nurture means
- Identifying different kinds of friendships and relationships
- Appreciating diversity and showing respect for others
- Developing help seeking behaviours

My Body and Development (Health, Growth and Change)

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Naming parts of their body required to understand the changes that take place during puberty
- Recognising that their bodies change during puberty
- Knowing about the menstrual cycle and menstrual well-being and who to speak to
- Knowing where living things come from
- Understanding the needs of a baby and how they are cared for
- Responding to the topic of sexual orientation in the context of learning about love
- Considering stereotypes and gender biased expectations
- Understanding growth and change
- Knowing that a person's physical appearance does not determine their worth as a human being.

Safety and Wellbeing (Self-Awareness, Feelings and Emotions)

Teachers should be able to develop pupil knowledge and skills in:

- Promoting dignity, uniqueness, wellbeing and a sense of responsibility for themselves and others
- Understanding that decisions are made based on the values systems held
- Talking about and explaining their feelings
- Explaining how positive relationships enhance emotional wellbeing
- Knowing how to diffuse bullying and peer pressure
- Communicating effectively face to face and online
- Recognising that the internet is a positive place that is fun and can help them learn. Learning how to be a responsible digital citizen.
- Reflecting on their online behaviours
- Identifying potential or actual abusive behaviour in online environments
- Knowing that all forms of abuse are wrong
- Being informed about sources of information and support.