ST CLARE’S

PRIMARY SCHOOL

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RSE

POLICY

Policy

**March 2023**

**Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy**

Name of school: St Clare’s Primary School,

323 Cupar Street Upper,

Belfast,

BT13 2SE

Tel: 02890330852

Date of policy: March 2023

Members of staff responsible for drawing up policy: Miss Quinn (RSE coordinator), Mrs Bell (RE Coordinator), Mrs Welsh (SENCO), Mr Birt (Vice Principal), Mr O’Doherty (Principal), Mrs Corey (BOG teacher representative)

**Description of Policy Formation and Consultation Process**

The RSE Co-ordinators drafted the RSE policy, in consultation with teachers and parents using the revised CCEA 2015 RSE guidance, CCMS Circular 2013 and Catholic Schools’ Trustee Service RSE Guidance Document for Primary Schools (NI) 2021

**Legislation and Circulars**

This policy was written taking into consideration the following Department of Education Circulars

* 1999/10
* 2001/15
* 2007/06
* 2010/01
* 2013/16
* Community Relations Equality and Diversity Policy

**CCEA Documents**

* Living Learning Together
* PDMU Understanding Guidance Booklet
* PDMU Understanding Progression Grids
* Active Learning and Teaching methods
* Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
* Period Dignity Policy Guidance 2021

**Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy**

**School Mission Statement**

In St Clare’s we create a caring, supportive and respectful environment for all. We inspire each child to reach their full potential by promoting and celebrating their achievements.

The atmosphere in the school is based upon good relationships between staff, pupils and parents. As a staff we work as a team, respecting each other’s roles and recognising individual talents and expertise.

**School ethos**

In St Clare’s Primary School our ethos is founded upon Christian principles. Religious education and faith, is an essential and integral part of the life of our school. The person of Jesus Christ is placed at the heart of the education we provide, inspiring and animating every action of the school’s life.

We are committed to providing to all pupils, the highest level of pastoral care in a safe, caring and attractive learning environment. We believe in the holistic development of the child and endeavour to nurture their spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, physical and aesthetic capabilities through promoting attitudes and values according to the Catholic tradition.

This policy reflects the ethos of our school.

# Rationale

RSE is a complex and vitally important area of our curriculum; it is a lifelong process that encompasses:

* the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills: and
* the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.

At the heart of RSE teaching is an understanding that:

* Human sexuality is an integral part of the human person, and 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

Through RSE we endeavour to equip, form and prepare children for life in a moral and spiritual context thus

enabling them to make positive responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives.

**Aims:**

**The aims of RSE are to:**

* Help pupils to appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness as children of God
* Enable young people to appreciate that sexuality is a gift from God
* Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child
* Help each 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 each child come to value family life in its diversity and the gift of marriage
* Appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
* Promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth.
* Foster and develop mutual respect and understanding
* To enable pupils to identify and manage a range of feelings
* To help young people recognise, understand and prepare for the body changes that they (and their friends) will undergo in the years ahead (puberty)
* Promote respect for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender or creed

**Objectives**

**“The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their full potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Relationship and Sexuality education is firmly grounded in PDMU, where the central focus is on the emotional development of the child, health and safety, relationships with others, development of moral thinking, values and actions”**

**The RSE curriculum will 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 the diversity of family life and 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
* 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, growth and development.

**Skills**

The RSE curriculum will 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 will also be helped to develop skills to critically evaluate a wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values.

**They will be given 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 wisely 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**

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.

RSE should be tailored to the age, maturity and understanding of pupils, including those with SEN. Pupils should be helped to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity. They should be enabled to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour. Teachers should however acknowledge that many children come from backgrounds that do not reflect such values and experiences. Sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing hurt and offence to them and their families, and to encourage the development of their sense of worth.

Children will be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

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

**Relationships between Home, School and Community**

RSE is a lifelong process which begins in the home, however, in view of the significant amount of time children spend in school, parents or carers entrust teachers to help educate their children in this sensitive and important area of their lives.

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. It is our role to assist the work of parents and to teach RSE in a manner appropriate to the emotional and psychological development of the child.

In developing our policy we have consulted parents. A copy of our policy is readily available for parents to consult at any time. We will have regular review of our policy and on-going communication with parents.

**Links to other Policies**

* Religious Education
* Teaching and Learning
* Child Protection/Safeguarding Children
* Pastoral Care
* Health and Wellbeing
* Anti-bullying Policy
* Positive Behaviour Policy
* Internet Safety/E-Safety Policy
* World Around Us
* PDMU
* Homework Policy
* Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
* Period Dignity Policy
* FGM Policy
* Rights Respecting School
* PE Policy
* Confidentiality Policy
* Use of outside agencies and vetting arrangements

**Roles and responsibilities**

* The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school’s RSE Policy
* It is reviewed during the cycle of each three-year School Development Plan
* The Principal and Senior Leadership Team co-ordinate the school’s approach to RSE and consult with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, and health professionals as appropriate.
* The staff provide a link and have a complementary role with parents/carers and deliver the school’s RSE programme within the context of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

**Content / detail**

Grow in Love is at the centre of our RSE programme and RSE will be delivered in a holistic, cross curricular way, ensuring that teaching is at all times appropriate to the maturity and understanding of the pupils. Teachers will be ever alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils. RSE will include the physical and emotional changes that occur at puberty for children in Primary 6 and 7 but will not include sex education.

In the summer term, P6 children attend a workshop on puberty entitled ‘Choices and Changes’ delivered by trained staff from ‘Love for Life’ in our assembly hall. P7 children attend a workshop on puberty entitled ‘What’s Inside?’ Only children with written parental/carer consent receive this talk. Course content will be shared in advance with parents via a ‘Birds and Bees’ workshop, also delivered by staff from ‘Love for Life’ in the assembly hall; this workshop takes place in March.

In corelation with this, lessons will be created using selected material from the Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Primary School Programme, (see Period Dignity Policy) and delivered by school staff.

Pupils also have the opportunity to provide feedback about the content of the programme of RSE delivered by the school so that it can be responsive to their needs.

**Curriculum organisation and delivery**

The following outline illustrates the topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of the Health Education curriculum, PDMU, RE, the World Around Us, PE, Drama or in reaction to specific situations. All teachers will deliver the RSE programme.

Within our RSE programme, teachers will enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills through exploring the following strands:

**Foundation Stage:**

**Theme 1: Self Awareness**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing themselves and their personal attributes.

**Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing themselves and their own and others’ feelings and emotions. (PDMU, RE programme, Emotional Literacy)

**Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing the importance of keeping healthy. (Healthy Living Policy, Health Curriculum)

**Theme 4a: Safety**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing how to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments. (NSPCC, Road Safety programme, Heart Start Programme)

**Theme 5: Relationships**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing their relationships with family and friends.

**Theme 8: Similarities and Differences**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing similarities and differences. (Global Policy)

**Key Stage 1:**

**Theme 1: Self Awareness**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing their self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing themselves and their own and others’ feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others.

**Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing strategies and skills for keeping healthy. (Healthy Living Policy, Health Curriculum, Heart Start First Aid Programme, Active Communities Healthy Eating Programme)

**Theme 4a: Safety**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing strategies and skills for keeping safe. (NSPCC, Road Safety programme, Heart Start Programme, NI Cancer Dangers of smoking)

**Theme 5: Relationships**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing and initiating mutually satisfying relationships.

**Theme 8: Similarities and Differences**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing similarities and differences between people. (Global Policy)

**Key Stage 2:**

**Theme 1: Self Awareness**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing their self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals.

**Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others.

**Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing how to sustain their health, growth and wellbeing. (Healthy Living Policy, Health Curriculum, Heart Start First Aid Programme, Inside Out, NI Cancer, Active Communities Healthy Eating Programme)

The sequence in which ideas are presented below is not intended to imply a teaching order.

***Foundation stage and key stage 1 (P1-P4)***

***Myself***

* Myself: how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example, hygiene, sleep, exercise.
* Their own and others’ feelings/emotions and how their actions affect others.
* Naming parts of the body (basic) - developing an agreed language for our bodies.
* Being myself - I am unique, my self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, respect and caring for myself.
* Similarities and differences between myself and others, for example, uniqueness, fingerprints, gender issues, different rates of growth.
* An introduction to the stages of human development - changes as we grow, for example, baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents
* Recognising moods, feelings and concerns and developing a language and an appropriate manner of expressing them, for example, what do I do if I feel sad or angry?
* Personal likes and dislikes.
* The importance of keeping healthy and safe.
* The importance of keeping healthy and strategies and skills for keeping healthy.

***My Relationships***

* My family, special people in my life - what they do for me and what I do for them.
* Friendships, getting on with each other, for example, communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating and sharing .
* Ageing- how do we know that things are alive, dead, young and old.
* Loss and mourning - death of a person or a pet (Note: the situations of the pupils should be taken into account prior to introducing this topic) .
* Respect and caring for family members and friends, for example, caring for a new baby.
* Bullies and what to do about them.
* Personal safety - simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety.
* The difference between good and bad touches.
* Realise that adults and older children are not always friends; the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances.
* Strategies which pupils might use to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.

***My Community/Environment***

* Awareness of different types of families and the roles of individuals within families.
* Keeping safe, for example, dangerous places, dangerous situations, the adults who will help, how to get help from others.
* Rules at home, at school and in the community .
* Respect and caring for people in the community, e.g. elderly people.

***Key Stage 2 (P5-P7)***

***Myself***

* The importance of keeping healthy and safe.
* The body, how it works and how to keep it healthy.
* The physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty (girls and boys).
* Myself and my peers - different rates of growth and physical development, maturity.
* Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses.
* Feelings, for example, things that make me happy, sad, excited, embarrassed, angry, scared; expressing our feelings, showing love and affection.
* Gender roles
* Making choices - the influences on me and the consequences of actions for oneself and others.
* Distinguishing between right and wrong.
* Secrets - knowing the difference between good and bad secrets, what to do about bad secrets.

***My Relationships***

* Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values.
* Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people’s views, emotions and feelings.
* Families and how they behave - what family members expect of each other.
* The meaning of friendship and loyalty; making and maintaining friendships and social relationships, for example, identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people’s point of view.
* Handling difficult situations, for example, teasing, bullying, death of a family member.
* The meaning of relationships within families, between friends and in the community.
* Behaviour - what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate physical contact.
* Identifying dangers and risks within relationships.
* Being assertive in defending individual rights and beliefs.
* People who can help pupils when they have anxieties, concerns or questions.

***My Community/Environment***

* Appreciation of the family in relation to the school and the wider community.
* Cultural differences in families and family relationships.
* Helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different circumstances.
* Messages and images about health, gender roles and sexuality from the media, family and peers.

**Teaching Resources**

The selection of teaching resources are consistent with the school’s RSE policy and the aims and objectives of the RSE programme. They are age-appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to the pupils’ needs and experiences. They are factually accurate, up-to-date and make clear distinctions between fact and opinion.

The CCEA resource *Living Learning Together* helps to support the delivery of the PDMU area of learning. It covers issues and topics related to RSE, particularly in the yellow units.

P6 and P7 lessons will be created using a combination of ‘Love for Life’s ‘Choices and Changes’ and ‘What’s Inside?’ programme along with selected material from the Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Primary School Programme (see Period Dignity Policy)

**Connected Learning Opportunities**

Through the Arts including art and design, music and drama and Language and Literacy, children can develop a vocabulary to discuss emotions and feelings through talking and listening, reading, writing, drama and role-play.

**Confidentiality and Child Protection/Safeguarding Children**

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, Child Protection/ Safeguarding Children procedures will be implemented. The classroom is an open environment and confidentiality cannot be maintained. Therefore, staff and pupils are not encouraged to talk about their personal relationships or experiences during class discussions.

The child’s right to privacy will be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class.

**Withdrawal from RSE**

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it is part of our school curriculum. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parent/carer concerns.

Parents will be provided with teaching materials for home use on request.

**Sanctity of life**

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of RSE teaching.

**Specific Issues**

There will be no direct teaching of issues such as sexual orientation, contraception etc. However, if these issues are raised by pupils, the teachers will address them sensitively in keeping with The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations Northern Ireland 2006.

**Responding to questions in RSE**

There will be occasions when teachers will have to use their own discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular questions. Teachers should exercise their professional judgement: for example, they may need to decide whether it is appropriate to deal with the question in a whole-class forum, through circle-time, or if it may be more appropriate to respond on an individual basis. The teacher may also wish to discuss the question asked with the parents/carers and/or a senior member of staff to ascertain how they would like to handle the matter.

**Use of Visitors**

Where appropriate, we may use the skills and expertise of outside agencies and professionals. Where this occurs, the school will be satisfied that contributions from informed outsiders are an integral part of the whole programme and in harmony with the aims and ethos of the school.

**Staff Training**

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

**Monitoring and Evaluating**

The Religion co-ordinators and class teachers will monitor and evaluate the programme, which will include feedback from:

* + - * pupils
      * teachers
      * parents and
      * any outside agencies used

The policy will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis – next review March 2026

**External Agency Involvement**

* NSPCC
* Road Safety DOE
* Sustrans
* Heart Start Red Cross
* NI Cancer
* PSNI
* Medics in Primary School
* Barnardos All Star Resilience Programme
* Active Communities Healthy Eating Programme
* Love for Life

**Flourish Class by Class**

**P1**

**Myself**

* **I am Me – God loves me.**
* **I have a wonderful body. My body is a gift from God. I must look after it.**

**Myself and Others**

* **I have a family. We love each other. Jesus had a family too.**

**Myself and the Wider World**

* **I have friends. Jesus is my friend.**

**P2**

**Myself**

* **I am growing. My body is changing. God loves us as we grow and change.**
* **I keep myself safe. I look out for other people. Jesus asked us to care for each other.**

**Myself and Others**

* **I have feelings. Others have feelings too. I want to be a good friend. I am kind like Jesus.**

**Myself and the Wider World**

* **Sometimes I need help. I ask for help. I can always ask for God’s help.**

**P3**

**Myself**

* **I am unique. God loves me as I am.**

**Myself and Others**

* **Other people are special too. I respect other people. Jesus wants us to respect everyone.**
* **My space, your space. I am gentle and understanding as Jesus asked me to be.**

**Myself and the Wider World**

* **Some people are not as lucky as I am. I care about them too. Jesus cared for others.**

**P4**

**Myself**

* **My body is amazing. I am grateful to God for all that I can do.**

**Myself and Others**

* **I am loyal to my friends. I don’t let them down. Jesus asked us to be loyal.**

**Myself and the Wider World**

* **People I admire. There are lots of good people. Jesus was a role-model.**
* **Dangerous situations. What should I do? Who can help?**

**P5**

**Myself**

* **My gender is part of who I am. God loves me as I am.**

**Myself and Others**

* **Different types of friendships. Jesus had many friends.**
* **I support my friends.**

**Myself and the Wider World**

* **My neighbourhood – showing love to everyone. God wants us to show love in many different ways.**

**P6**

**Myself**

* **I am growing into my adult body. God designed me perfectly.**
* **Good choices, bad choices. The choice is mine. My conscience will guide me.**

**Myself and Others**

* **My words and actions can hurt others. Jesus asks us to use words and actions carefully.**

**Myself and the Wider World**

* **We need to look after the earth. The environment is God’s creation. He asked us to look after it.**

**P7**

**Myself**

* **My sexuality is part of who I am. God loves me as I am.**
* **Puberty – welcome changes. I am perfectly designed by God.**

**Myself and Others**

* **I am attracted to other people. I respect them. God made us to be compatible with each other.**

**Myself and the Wider World**

* **Social media can be good and bad. Respect is the key. God wants us to respect each other.**