

**STRAIDBILLY PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**A Policy for Relationships and Sexuality  
Education**

**Date Ratified by Board of Governors: February 2024**

**Date of Review: February 2028**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is a statutory requirement that all schools in Northern Ireland have a 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' (RSE) Policy. This policy has been written in line with Department of Education N.I. requirements and through consultation with parents/carers, staff, and governors, has been ratified by the Board of Governors. It will be updated annually.

*The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is clearly a part of this general aim. (RSE Guidance for Primary Schools)*

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and must be delivered in a sensitive manner, which is appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and the ethos of the school. The provision of RSE is an equal opportunities issue. All pupils have a right to an education, which adequately prepares them for adult life, and good RSE plays an integral part. It can have a positive effect on self-esteem. Schools can help to develop their pupils' self-esteem by creating a climate of trust and acceptance in which each person is valued and respected and encouraged to feel good about themselves. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their individual needs, to respect the needs and wants of others, and to develop the skills and self-esteem to become confident adolescents. RSE in schools can increase informed choice by providing opportunities for pupils to examine their own values and beliefs in the light of those held by others. Deeper understanding of the values and beliefs that they hold can help pupils to clarify why they think and behave as they do, to separate fact from fiction, to recognise prejudice and to respect the views, emotions and feelings of others.

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.'*

## **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 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

## **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 strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- 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

## **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 other 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**

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 affect them, and others. Children should 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
- self-discipline

## **THE SCHOOL ETHOS**

The ethos of Straidbilly Primary School is founded on Christian principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. It is our intention that everyone feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment. This policy reflects the ethos of our school, and it will inform the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) within school.

DE Circular 2013/16 states the following:

*'Relationships and Sexuality Education should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities'*

This RSE Policy reflects the ethos of our school.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

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 ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

Teachers cannot promise confidentiality. Teachers provide general educational advice to all pupils as part of the curriculum. This general advice can be given to pupils individually or within group situations. In Straidbilly Primary School, teachers will encourage young people, where possible, to discuss their concerns with parents or guardians. Only appropriate medical professionals should give medical advice to pupils. Any disclosures that might suggest a pupil is at risk is reported as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR AIMS?**

Children in Straidbilly Primary School will learn on a day-to-day basis from the Christian example set by adults:

### **At home:**

Straidbilly Primary School believes that parents have the primary and chief responsibility to teach on subjects relating to relationships and sex education. As first educators, parents are expected to lay the foundations for all acceptable patterns of behaviour through leading by example. We, as a school, will support parents by bringing their child through primary school with a balanced understanding of life and a healthy appreciation of the human relationships they form in years to come.

### **At school:**

- The positive climate and constructive everyday interactions between pupils and staff, both inside and outside the classroom.
- The messages we give out to children through religious celebrations, assemblies, discussions, workshops etc.
- The encouragement we give and the standards we uphold in terms of sportsmanship, fair play, accepting decisions and taking both winning and losing in the same spirit.
- The respect we have for and show to all members of our community.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the RSE programme should be developmental, accessible and be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. It should meet the needs of gender and be a positive experience for all participants. Boys and girls are encouraged to work with each other and gain an understanding of each other's perspectives. However, there will be times that teachers or outside professionals will work with single gender groups e.g., P7 Love for Life programme, to explore puberty related physical and emotional changes in both boys and girls. The programme of RSE delivered will be accessible to all pupils regardless of age, culture, disability, sexual orientation, gender or social class.

## **LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

- PDMU
- WAU
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Pastoral Care
- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- Health Education
- Drugs Education
- SEN
- E-Safety and Acceptable Use of the Internet

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Board of Governors – examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy.
- Principal – co-ordinates the school's approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents / carers, and health professionals.
- Staff – provide a link and have a complementary role with parents / carers and deliver the school's RSE programme within the context of the NI Curriculum.

## **RSE PROGRAMME IN STRAIDBILLY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

RSE is delivered in a holistic, cross curricular way, ensuring that teaching is always appropriate to the maturity and understanding of the pupils. Teachers will ever be alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils. RSE will include the physical and emotional changes that occur at puberty **but will not include sex education.**

## **CURRICULUM ORGANISATION & DELIVERY**

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the topics covered through the delivery of the NI Curriculum in Straidbilly Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of PDMU, RE, the World Around Us and PE or in reaction to specific situations i.e., P7 'Love for Life' programme. Topics and themes are often repeated at regular intervals. The sequence in which ideas are presented below is not intended to imply an exact teaching order.

## **FOUNDATION STAGE AND KEY STAGE 1**

### **Myself / Relationships**

- Unit 1 – Wonderful me  
There's no-one Quite Like Me  
The Real Me
- Unit 2 – How do I feel?  
Sometimes I feel  
Growing Means Changing
- Unit 3 – Keeping Healthy/Staying Safe  
Taking Care of Me

### **My Community / Environment**

- Unit 4- Belonging & Co-Operating  
Getting along with others  
Friendships
- Unit 5 – Caring & Sharing  
I am Learning To  
Money Matters
- Unit 6 – You & Me  
Living With Difference

I am..You are..We can..

- Unit 7 – Living Together  
Where I live  
Who Influences Me?

## **KEY STAGE 2**

### **Myself / Relationships**

- Unit 1 – Myself & My Attributes  
Who Am I?  
What Makes Me, Me?
- Unit 2 – I have Feelings  
Dealing With Feelings  
Thinking & Feeling
- Unit 3 – Stay Safe & Healthy  
Healthy Habits  
Fit for The Future

### **My Community / Environment**

- Unit 4 – Up & Downs  
Working At Harmony  
Moving On
- Unit 5 – Valuing Self & Other  
Speaking Up For Me  
Says Who?
- Unit 6 – Learning More About Others  
Check It Out First  
Who Cares?
- Unit 7 – Making Good Choices  
Decisions! Decisions!  
New Horizons

Please visit <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/living-learning-together> for more information on these topics.

## **SELECTION OF TEACHING RESOURCES**

The selection of teaching resources will be:

- Consistent with the school's RSE policy and the aims and objectives of the RSE programme.
- Consistent with the school's morals and values framework.
- Appropriate to pupils' age, level of understanding and maturity.
- Factually correct and respectful of its audiences.
- Likely to appeal to pupils in terms of appropriate language level, images, attitudes and values, maturity, contexts and situations, and the knowledge required.
- Complementary to the existing programmes which the school offers.

## **SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **Family Status**

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of family life. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in school and will endeavour to treat all situations sensitively.

### **Withdrawal from RSE**

RSE in Straidbilly Primary School is taught across the curriculum and it is not possible to separate the lesson content. However, when Primary 7 receive puberty information, parents will be informed that the lesson is taking place and they will have **the option to withdraw their child** from this should they wish.

### **Sensitive Issues**

There will be **no** teaching on issues relating to same-sex relationships, abortion, gender identity, contraception, AIDS etc. However, if these issues are raised by pupils, teachers will encourage pupils to speak with their own parents/guardians. RSE will include the physical and emotional changes that occur at puberty but **will not** include sex education.

### **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. Any Health Professionals and Visitors who are invited to deliver aspects of the curriculum will be required to provide an overview of the content and teaching methods to the principal and class teacher. A member of staff will remain in the lesson throughout.

### **Staff Training**

Training needs will be considered and will be accessed using the Education Authority, Public Health Agency and / or other appropriate health agencies. Where outside agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of the school. Examples of events and activities to support the curriculum for the delivery of RSE include:

- Love for Life workshops.
- NSPCC – assembly and workshops with P6 and P7.
- Visitors to assembly – ministers, charity workers etc.
- Class assemblies and other school performances.
- Pupil of the Week/School Value Award
- School prize day.
- EWO P7 talk – ‘Moving On’.
- Visits to local post primaries.
- School visits.
- P6 and P7 residential.
- Internet safety Day/workshops.
- Anti-bullying week – class and assembly activities.
- First Aid – specific needs of individual children recognised.
- Healthy breaks.
- P1 induction.
- School council and ECO council.
- Charity work – All Tex Recyclers.
- Parent consultations.

## **MONITORING REVIEWING & EVALUATION OF POLICY**

This policy has been written in line with the Department of Education NI requirements. It will be monitored and evaluated annually to ensure its effectively. This will be done through:

- Parental feedback
- Pupil feedback
- Staff review & feedback
- Development of legislation

