

Gracehill Primary School



RSE Policy

Autumn 2020

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

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/guardians/carers, staff and governors and has been ratified by the Board of Governors.

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.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in primary schools 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.'

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to give and receive love; procreation and, in a more general way, the

aptitude for forming relationships with others. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships.

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;
- 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.

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, human sexuality and 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 and the wonder of birth.

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 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, sexuality, 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 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 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;
- compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life;
- self-discipline.

THE SCHOOL ETHOS

The ethos of our school is founded on 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.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HOME, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

The effectiveness of this policy and its implementation is dependent on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents/carers, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has distinctive contributions to make.

We recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/guardians/carers. Keeping them informed about the school's provision for health education is a vital element of RSE. We also acknowledge the contribution that can be made by outside agencies with skill and expertise in particular areas of the curriculum, such as NSPCC.

The delivery of RSE must prepare pupils to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner and should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles.

Department of Education Circulars providing advice on developing or reviewing the RSE policy is provided in:

Circular 2001/15: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2001/15-2: Guidance for Primary Schools – Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2010/01: Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2013/16: Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools

Circular 2015/22: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Guidance

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/relationships-and-sexuality-education>

The RSE Hub provides access to a range of up-to-date, relevant resources and sources of support for this area of the curriculum:

https://ccea.org.uk/search-api?search_api_fulltext=RSE

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

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

- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Pastoral Care
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Teaching and Learning
- Special Education Needs
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- E-Safety
- Drugs

In primary schools, RSE builds, in a developmentally appropriate way, on children's existing knowledge and experience of their bodies, relationships and the world around them. RSE and Health Education are complementary since both emphasise the development of a positive self-image, and a respect for self and for others, as well as the provision of appropriate and accurate information.

An RSE programme for primary schools should provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- themselves as unique human beings;
- their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth;
- their friendships and relationships with others; and
- the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur at puberty.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF PUPILS

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 both genders and be a positive experience for all participants.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy.
- The Principal and Safeguarding Team co-ordinates the school's approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents/guardians/carers, and health professionals.

- The staff provide a link and have a complementary role with parents/guardians/carers and deliver the school's RSE programme within the context of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

CONTENT/DETAIL

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 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. However, the children in Gracehill Primary School receive 'the growing up talk' in the summer term of their P7 year. Only children with written parental/carer consent receive this talk. The school nurse delivers the talks with a member of the teaching staff present in each case.

Pupils should 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. In Gracehill Primary School this is done through consultation with the School Council.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION and DELIVERY

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in Gracehill Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of the Health Education curriculum, Personal Development & Mutual Understanding, RE, World Around Us, PE, Drama or in reaction to specific situations. All teachers will deliver the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme.

Topics and themes are often repeated at regular intervals. The sequence in which ideas are presented is not intended to imply a teaching order. (See Appendix)

SELECTION OF TEACHING RESOURCES

The selection of teaching resources should 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 audience;
- 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;
- encouraging consideration of a range of issues, attitudes and beliefs pertinent to the topics covered;

TEACHING RSE IN THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

In Gracehill Primary School we believe it is essential that teachers create a classroom environment which is supportive, where self-esteem is fostered and where the pupils feel valued and affirmed. The climate of the classroom needs to promote mutual respect and the dignity of each individual. It is important to create an atmosphere in the classroom which allows all pupils to feel comfortable to express opinions and feelings in a secure and safe manner and to explore issues which may be sensitive and personal. Every effort should be made to ensure that the whole group is at ease, with pupils showing respect for each other and realising their responsibilities to each other.

Ground rules should be agreed to help to minimise embarrassment and encourage the respect of each other's opinion. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos and stories can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

Important considerations are the:

- degree of trust, respect and positive regard for pupils;
- relationships between the teacher and pupils, and between the pupils themselves;
- need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives;
- use of teaching and learning methods which involve pupils actively in their own learning and encourage the consideration of attitudes and values and the ability to make informed and healthy decisions; and
- need to be aware and take account of the current youth culture.

TERMINOLOGY

In teaching issues related to RSE, teachers will use the correct biological terms for parts of the body.

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.

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 must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. A key rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions. It is equally important that the teacher shares this right and never feels obliged to impart information about his/her own personal life. However:

- teachers cannot promise confidentiality. A child does not have the right to expect that incidents in the classroom or in the wider context of the school will not be reported, as appropriate, to his or her parents/carers and/or the principal. (Refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).
- the principal or designated teacher for the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, the child must be told, sensitively, that the matter must be reported to the appropriate agencies. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- teachers can 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. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of the parents/guardians/carers;
- there will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or by a group of pupils. An initial judgement will need to be made about whether or not it is appropriate to deal with the issues with the whole class. The teacher may wish to discuss the issues with the parents/carers to see how they would like the matter to be handled. Teacher colleagues or a member of the school's Leadership Team/Safeguarding Team might also provide useful guidance. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents/carers;
- teachers are not medical professionals and will not give detailed personal medical advice to any pupil. Only doctors and health professionals should give medical advice to pupils;
- Teachers encourage young people, where possible, to discuss their concerns with parents/carers.

WITHDRAWAL FROM RSE

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

SACREDNESS 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 homosexuality, AIDS, contraception etc. However, if these issues are raised by pupils, the teachers will address them sensitively.

RACE EQUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their race, gender, disability or ability. Teachers plan work that is differentiated so that all groups and individuals can achieve their potential and are committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation, harassment or any other form of bullying. In this school everyone has a right to be safe and a responsibility to keep others safe.

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 EA, 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.

REVIEW OF THE RSE POLICY

Gracehill Primary School staff are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. The RSE policy will be evaluated by the Safeguarding Team.

The Safeguarding Team consists of:

Designated Teacher : Mrs A Cousley

Deputy Designated Teachers : Mrs J Rowe, Mr N McCullough and Mrs E McKenna

Principal : Mr R McCombe

Designated Governor : Mr R Hall

Chair of Governors : Bishop S Groves

- Review of this policy will be in the Autumn Term 2023 or as appropriate in light of new Departmental guidance/legislative changes.
- This policy has been approved by the Board of Governors

Appendix

Statement of Minimum Requirement:

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

The minimum content in the relevant themes is set out below. The statutory requirements are set out in **bold** with the Relationships and Sexuality Education strands highlighted in **yellow**. Additional non-statutory guidance are set out in plain text.

THEME 1: SELF-AWARENESS		
Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing:		
Strand 1 Themselves and their personal attributes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore who they are. • Recognise what they can do. • Identify their favourite things. • Recognise what makes them special. 	Strand 1 and 2 Their self-esteem and self-confidence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel positive about themselves, and develop an understanding of their self-esteem and confidence. • Become aware of their strengths, abilities, qualities, achievements, personal preferences and goals. 	Strands 1 and 2 Their self-esteem and self-confidence and how they develop as individuals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem. • Know how to confidently express their own views and opinions in unfamiliar circumstances. • Identify current strengths and weaknesses. • Face problems, trying to resolve and learn from them. • Recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour. • Develop strategies to resist unwanted peer/sibling pressure and behaviour.
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THEME 2: FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS		
Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing:		
Strand 1 Their own and other's feelings and emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to recognise how they feel. • Develop ways of expressing how they feel. • Know what to do if they feel sad, lonely, afraid or angry and when it is important to tell others about their feelings. • Realise what makes their friends feel happy or sad. • Recognise how other people feel when they are happy, sad, angry or lonely. 	Strand 1 Their own and other's feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to recognise, name and manage their feelings and emotions and realise that they are natural, important and healthy part of being human. • Begin to recognise and manage the effects of strong feelings such as anger, sadness or loss. 	Strand 1 Their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine and explore their own and others' feelings and emotions. • Know how to recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way. • Recognise that feelings may change at times of change and loss.

THEME 4: HEALTH, GROWTH AND CHANGE

Foundation Stage

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 2

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing:

Strand 1

The importance of keeping healthy.

- Be aware of how to care for their body in order to keep it healthy and well.
- Recognise and practise basic hygiene skills.
- Realise that growth and change are part of the process of life and are unique to each individual.

Strand 1

Strategies and skills for keeping healthy.

- Recognise and value the options for a healthy lifestyle including the benefits of exercise, rest healthy eating and hygiene.
- Have respect for their bodies and those of others.
- Be aware of the stages of human growth and development.
- Recognise how responsibilities and relationships change as people grow and develop.
- Understand that medicines are given to make you feel better, but that some drugs are dangerous.
- Understand that if not used properly, all products can be harmful.
- Be aware that some diseases are infectious and some can be controlled.

Strand 1

How to sustain their health, growth and well-being.

- Understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity, healthy eating, rest and hygiene.
- Recognise what shapes positive mental health.
- Know about the harmful effects tobacco, alcohol, solvents and other illicit and illegal substances can have on themselves and others.
- Understand that bacteria and viruses affect health and that risks can decrease when basic routines are followed.
- Know how the body grows and develops.
- Be aware of the physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty.
- Know how babies are conceived, grow and are born.
- Be aware of the skills for parenting and the importance of good parenting.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent.• Know AIDS is a prevalent disease throughout the world and is a major health issue for many countries.
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THEME 4A: SAFETY

Foundation Stage

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 2

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing:

Strand 1

How to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments.

- Explore appropriate personal safety strategies.
- Identify situations that are safe and those where personal safety may be at risk.
- Begin to realise the importance of road safety.
- Understand that many substances can be dangerous.
- Know the safety rules that apply when taking medicines.

Strand 1

Strategies and skills for keeping safe.

- Know what to do or whom to seek help from when feeling unsafe.
- Be aware of different forms of bullying and develop personal strategies to resist unwanted behaviour.
- Explore the rules for and ways of keeping safe on the roads cooperating with adults involved in road safety.
- Know about the potential dangers and threats in the home and environment.
- Develop simple safety rules and strategies to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.
- Identify ways of protecting against extremes of weather, for example being safe in the sun and in freezing conditions.

Strands 1

Coping safely and efficiently with their environment.

- Develop strategies to resist unwanted peer/sibling pressure and behaviour.
- Recognise, discuss and understand the nature of bullying and the harm that can result.
- Become aware of the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances, including good and bad touches.
- Become aware of:
 - Appropriate road use;
 - How to apply the Green Cross Code;
 - How conspicuity reduces road collisions;
 - Passenger skills including boarding and disembarking from cars and home to school transport; and
 - How bicycles are best maintained and ridden.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety.• Know where, when and how to seek help.• Be aware of basic emergency procedures and first aid.
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THEME 5: RELATIONSHIPS**Foundation Stage****Key Stage 1****Key Stage 2**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing:

Strand 2**Their relationships with family and friends.**

- Find out about their own family.
- Talk about what families do together.
- Begin to recognise how they relate to adults and other children.
- Identify who their friends are.
- Explore what they do together.
- Know how to treat others.

Strand 2**Initiating mutually satisfying relationships.**

- Examine the variety of roles in families and the contribution made by each member.
- Be aware of their contribution to home and school life and the responsibilities this can bring.
- Know how to be a good friend.
- Understand that they can take on some responsibility in their family and friendship groups.

Strand 2**Initiating and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships.**

- Examine and explore the different types of families that exist.
- Recognise the benefits of friends and families.
- Find out about resources of help and support for individuals, families and groups.
- Explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour.
- Consider the challenges and issues that can arise:
 - At home;
 - At school; and
 - Between friends and how they can be avoided, lessened or resolved.

THEME 8: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Foundation Stage

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 2

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing:

Strand 2

Similarities and differences.

- Begin to recognise the similarities and differences in families and the wider community.
- Understand that everyone is of equal worth and that it is acceptable to be different.
- Celebrate special occasions.

Strand 2

Similarities and differences between people.

- Appreciate ways we are similar and different, for example age, culture, disability, gender, hobbies, race, religion, sporting interests, abilities and work.
- Be aware of their own cultural heritage, its traditions and its celebrations.
- Recognise and value the culture and traditions of another group in the community.
- Discuss the causes of conflict in their community and how they feel about it.
- Be aware of the diversity of people around the world.

Strands 2

Valuing and celebrating cultural differences and diversity.

- Examine and explore the different types of families that exist, the roles within them, and the different responsibilities.
- Know about aspects of their cultural heritage, including the diversity of cultures that contribute to Northern Ireland.
- Recognise the similarities and differences between cultures in Northern Ireland, for example food, clothes, symbols and celebrations.
- Acknowledge that people differ in what they believe is right or wrong.
- Recognise that people have different beliefs that shape the way they live.
- Develop an awareness of the experiences, lives

		<p>and cultures of people in the wider world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise how injustice and inequality affect people's lives. • Recognise the similarities and differences between different cultures of the wider world, for example food, clothes, symbols and celebrations. • Understand that differences and similarities between people arise from a number of factors, including cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity, gender and disability.
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All teachers will deliver aspects of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme which are relevant within their year group.