



RSE Policy

Reviewed: May 2025

To be Reviewed: May 2027

Introduction

Our School Ethos is:

Our school is a warm, welcoming, nurturing and safe place for the whole community. We will endeavour to provide a stimulating environment to support children of all abilities. We will celebrate their success and achievement and promote resilience and value all learning.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a **statutory** component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and the Department of Education Circular 2013/16 requires every school to have an up-to-date written policy on how it will address the delivery of RSE in their school. It has also been reviewed in line with the 2024/1 Circular ([see appendices](#)) on amendment to the RSE curriculum content.

It falls under the Curricular area of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) ([see Big Picture in appendices](#))

This policy has therefore been written in line with Department of Education N.I. requirements/circulars, the RSE CCEA Progression Framework ([see appendices](#)) and in line with equality and diversity legislation.

The policy has involved consultation with parents/carers, staff, and governors.

It has been ratified by the Board of Governors and will be monitored and updated annually, or, as appropriate, in light of new guidance/legislation and feedback from pupils, staff and parents.

This policy reflects the ethos of our school and aims to set out the whole school approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Taughmonagh Primary School.

Other related policies to RSE are:

- Positive Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Religious Education Policy
- Equality Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;

- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras Policy;
- ICT and Access to the Internet Policy / E-Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Policy on using outside agencies and vetting arrangements

The Legislative Context

- Circulars are available on the Department's website: www.deni.gov.uk
- Guidance and resources on RSE are also provided on the NI Curriculum website at www.nicurriculum.org.uk
- CCEA: <https://ccea.org.uk/>
- and relevant sections of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, available at www.unicef.org.uk/

Rationale

The Northern Ireland Curriculum, sets out a single broad aim for education;

'to empower young people to develop their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives' (DENI 2008)

We live in a rapidly changing society where values and lifestyles contrast greatly.

We recognise the difficulty that our students may have in making the transition from childhood into adulthood.

Therefore, we place great importance in establishing an effective RSE programme, which meets the needs of **all** of our students. We are committed to the education of all children regardless of race, religion, gender or status.

RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI curriculum through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, the World around Us and Religious Education and must be delivered in a sensitive manner, which is appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and the ethos of the school.

In Taughmonagh Primary, RSE will build on children's existing knowledge and experience of their bodies, relationships and the world around them and provide appropriate and accurate information to help pupils develop the skills necessary to form and maintain healthy, stable and loving relationships and to make informed choices and decisions regarding their own health and well-being.

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 the RSE Curriculum plays an integral part.

As a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, we ensure that this policy is underpinned by the UNCRC, specifically Articles 3, 29 and 30.

Aims and Learning Intentions

RSE helps children and young people acquire age-appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and develop attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, body and safety and wellbeing. Effective RSE, which is taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner, encourages children and young people to value themselves as individuals and to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. (CCEA RSE Progression Framework)

The aims of RSE and themes for Primary (Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) are:

- Healthy Relationships.
- My Body and Development (Health, Growth and Change); and
- Safety and Wellbeing (Self-Awareness, Feelings and Emotions).

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;
- acknowledge an awareness of differing family patterns;
- 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;
- 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, opinions, attitudes and values.

They need opportunities to develop:

- **practical skills** for everyday living; for supporting others;
- **communication skills** in 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 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 and for developing as an effective group member or leader.

Morals and Values

At Taughmonagh Primary we recognise that our young people and all stakeholders involved with our school, live in a society with a diverse range of cultures, religions and family types.

We recognise each member of our community as an individual, with the right to be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their class, sexuality, culture, religion or gender.

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

- appreciates the uniqueness of and **respect** for each individual pupil and promotes **inclusivity, equality** and **respect** for themselves and others.
- Helps children keep themselves **safe** including online
- Helps children develop and manage **personal and healthy relationships**
- Promotes a better holistic understanding of **diversity and inclusion**

- Provides **reliable, accurate and timely age-appropriate** information
- Promotes the use of **appropriate language**
- Helps children to recognise inappropriate behaviour and touch (**consent**)
- Ensures children know what to do or who to go to if they feel unsafe at any time.
- **Understanding and respect** to similarities and differences within our school community.

Roles and responsibility for Relationships and Sexuality Education

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

The Board of Governors will:

- Ensure that Taughmonagh Primary School provides a broad, balanced, coherent and relevant Relationships and Sexuality Education which is relevant to the lives of pupils today, yet sensitive to the **religious and cultural beliefs of both teachers and parents**
- Foster, support, facilitate, examine and ratify the development of the RSE policy.
- Support any complaints/concerns arising around this topic.

The Principal will:

- Provide an overview of the CCEA guidelines and produce an overview of our themes/topics for each key stage to staff.
- Provide time, where required, for staff to review/complete any updates within this area.
- Consult with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, and health professionals on individual scenarios that arise
- Involve Parents, Staff and Governors in the creation of said policy.
- Support any complaints/concerns arising around this topic.

The Staff will:

- Deliver the school's RSE programme sensitively, within the context of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, taking account of individual needs, age, maturity, stage of development and family background within their class.
- Complete the RSE Framework/overview specific to their class.

- In consultation with the Principal, bring matters arising to their attention to explore potential agencies to support need.

Parents will:

- Educate their children in accordance with their (the parents') wishes,
- Ensure their child receives efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Be able to request that their child is excused from participating in some or all of the RSE lessons. As this is a statutory curriculum area, parents must raise this with the school themselves. There will be no consent form sent out due to the statutory nature.

Content, detail and delivery of the RSE Curriculum at TPS

Good relationships are important in any classroom; however, they are particularly important when teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education. In RSE, learning is most effective when it takes place in a safe, secure, respectful and inclusive space, where pupils can express their feelings and opinions and participate confidently and freely without embarrassment, judgement or ridicule from their peers. 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 concerned (including those with SEN) and taught within an atmosphere of mutual respect and the dignity of each individual.

Teachers will be ever alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils and will take into account the variety of existing pupil knowledge and their differing attitudes and beliefs. Using circle time, creating a classroom charter and providing realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, art, videos and stories, which take account of the current youth culture, are effective ways to help to create a positive and safe learning environment which can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure and for teachers to provide general educational advice to all pupils as part of the curriculum.

Pupils will 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 the children's needs.

SPECIAL NEEDS

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 Special Needs and to accommodate this disparity in class lessons and experiences.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

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.

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 [Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy](#)).
- the principal or designated teacher for Child Protection/Safeguarding Children 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 Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy.

Equality

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of the RSE teaching. Any form of marginalisation, harassment, bullying and or discrimination of children on grounds of race, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

The natural inquisitiveness of children often results in teachers being asked many questions which they had not planned for. As a school we may need to consider our responses to issues. It is increasingly more common for some Key Stage 2 pupils to offer information and discuss what they watch or hear via the internet

or television at home. It is therefore possible that older pupils will raise questions about these issues.

Teachers at Taughmonagh Primary School can provide general educational advice to all pupils as part of the curriculum. 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 will encourage all pupils, where possible, to discuss what they have been learning and, or their concerns with their own parents/carers or seek advice from colleagues.

INVOLVING PARENTS

Our aim is to develop a structure which enables both parents and teachers to work together. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a child's life, and especially so in the domain of relationships and sexuality.

Parents have been involved in the review of this policy and can contact the school at any time to discuss matters that may arise.

Selection of teaching resources.

The selection of teaching resources should be:

- Consistent with the schools RSE Policy and the aims and objectives of said policy
- Consistent with the schools' 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.

The Literacy Coordinator oversees reading books within guided reading scheme which are Educated Authority approved through procurement.

We recognise that there are class/key stage libraries throughout the school. Each class teacher will know the dynamic within each family setting, individual

maturity and ensure that the books in their library will be of interest and support to the best of their professional discretion.

DEVELOPMENT & MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING ELEMENTS - Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance An Update for Primary Schools (appendices)

The following outline illustrates the range of topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in Taughmonagh Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of a variety of learning areas such as PDMU, RE, World Around Us, PE and The Arts. All teachers will deliver the RSE programme. Topics and themes are often repeated at regular intervals. The sequence in which ideas are presented below is not intended to imply a teaching order.

Foundation Stage

Self-Awareness

- exploring who they are, what they can do, identifying favourite things, what makes them special

Feelings and Emotions

- beginning to recognise how they feel
- knowing what to do if sad or lonely, afraid or angry
- telling others about feelings
- realising what makes people sad or unhappy, recognising how people feel

Health and Safety

- being aware of caring for his/her own body
- recognising good hygiene practices
- understanding growth and change
- exploring appropriate personal safety strategies, road safety,
- medicines and drugs - safety rules

Key Stage 1

Self-Awareness

- feeling positive about oneself
- awareness of own strengths, abilities, qualities, personal preferences. I am unique, my self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, respect and caring for myself.
- recognising own feelings and emotions

- recognising and managing the effects of moods, strong 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?
- acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes
- recognising how they can develop and improve learning
- recognising the similarities and differences between myself and others,
- Expressing personal likes and dislikes.

Health, Growth and Change

- Myself: how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example, hygiene, sleep, exercise.
- Naming parts of the body (basic) - developing an agreed language for our bodies.
- An introduction to the stages of human growth and development - for example, baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents.
- recognising and valuing the options for a healthy lifestyle
- having respect for their bodies and those of others
- recognising how responsibilities and relationships change as you grow older

Keeping Safe

- recognise the nature of bullying, the harm which can result and what should be done
- become aware of the potential danger from strangers and how their attention can make you uncomfortable
- recognise appropriate road use
- develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety - at home, on the road, near water and on the Internet
- understand that, if not used properly, some products can be dangerous
- being aware that some diseases are infectious and some can be controlled
- 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 maintain personal safety and protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.

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
- Loss and mourning - death of a person or a pet. (Note: the situations of the pupils should be considered prior to introducing this topic.)
- Respect and caring for family members and friends, for example, caring for a new baby.

My Community/Environment

- 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

Self-Awareness and keeping safe

- developing self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- confidently express own views and opinions
- identify current strengths and weaknesses
- face problems and try to resolve them
- examine and explore own and others' feelings and emotions
- recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way
- develop insight into potential and capabilities
- reflect on progress and set goals
- identify and practise effective learning strategies
- be aware of different learning styles
- develop strategies to resist peer pressure
- recognise the nature of bullying and the harm which can result
- become aware of the potential danger from strangers and how their attention can make you uncomfortable
- recognise appropriate road use
- develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety - at home, near water, on the internet, TV etc
- know where, when and how to seek help
- being aware of basic emergency procedures and first aid

Health, Growth and Change

Myself

- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy (including mental health and understanding medicines and drugs).
- 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.
- 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
- Responsibilities - recognising how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent
- Parenting - being aware of the skills through the Roots of Empathy Programme.

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
- 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.
- 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.
- Explore how the media presents messages and information

Outside Agencies

If an outside agency/individual is coming into the school to support the RSE programme, parents or carers should be made aware in advance. The type of

activities which will take place will be outlined to parents or carers to ensure that they have the opportunity to raise any concerns they might have before the visit.

Staff Training

Training needs will be considered and where appropriate will be provided by the EA, Health Education Specialists, School Health team etc. Where outside Agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of the school.



Appendices

