



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

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1. VISIONARY FRAMEWORK

Our school motto

Learn to Love, Love to Learn

Mission

In St Mary's on the Hill, we will create a safe, nurturing, inclusive environment. As a school, we will inspire all in our community to develop their knowledge and skills, enabling everyone to reach their full potential.

Our core values



RESPECT KINDNESS RESILIENCE
GROWTH CURIOSITY CREATIVITY
FUN INTERGRITY

2. Rationale

All young people have the right to an education, of which good quality Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part, which adequately prepares them for adult life.

At St Mary's on the Hill PS, we view the development and implementation of a policy in Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) as an important step towards achieving our aim to develop all aspects of a young person's personality and growth.

The morals and values of our Catholic ethos are the core principles which underpin the teaching of RSE.

We recognize each human person as an intrinsically social being and we value the teaching and learning about relationships as a fundamental journey for each of our pupils; one should equip students with the skills needed to build meaningful relationships built on love, honesty and mutual respect.

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male and female and develops throughout life. It is one complex dimension of human life and relationships.

In line with our school's ethos, **RSE should provide opportunities that enable pupils to:**

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework consistent with our Catholic ethos
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect
- build the foundations for developing more positive personal relationships in later life
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives

The following will be actively promoted throughout the school:

- An appreciation that friendships and relationships should be based on self and mutual respect, empathy, non-exploitation, honesty, trust and commitment
- Compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care for self and others are essential skills and dispositions needed to develop healthy relationships
- An appreciation of the value of family life, of loving relationships and the responsibilities of parenthood
- A recognition that people of different genders, faiths and nationalities are to be appreciated, respected, valued and seen as equal, different and complimentary
- A positive view of sexual orientation and identity
- An understanding that all relationships involve a balance of each individual's rights, duties and responsibilities

- An understanding that the dignity of the human person should be at the centre of every human relationship and interaction.

3. AIMS:

Our approach to RSE is underpinned by Catholic teaching on love, social responsibility, and respect for the dignity of the human person.

In line with the school's ethos and CCEA guidelines our school aims to:

- help all pupils to appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness as children of God
- enable children to form healthy and respectful friendships and relationships
- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
 - foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships within a moral, spiritual and social framework
- foster and develop mutual respect and understanding
- enable children to identify and manage a range of feelings
- help all children to value family life in its diversity and the gift of marriage
 - help young people recognise, understand and prepare for the bodily 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

4. Objectives of RSE as part of the preventative curriculum

We will deliver lessons which:

- Provide children with accurate, age- appropriate information to help them understand their physical, emotional, and social development.
- Equip pupils with skills to recognise and respond safely to risks, including those associated with social media and online content including bullying and cyber bullying.
- Create an open, safe, and supportive environment where questions are welcomed and answered sensitively.

5. Skills Promoted (including personal and social)

Pupils will develop:

- Communication skills - Listening to other's points of view, putting one's own view forward, dealing with conflict peacefully and being assertive; discussing their feelings, growth and development using an appropriate vocabulary.
- Decision making skills - Making good choices with the relevant information at hand, making moral judgments wisely in contexts and then putting them into practice, acting responsibly as an individual or as a member of a group.
- Interpersonal skills - Managing healthy relationships with confidence and with effectiveness

Personal skills – a positive sense of self awareness, self-esteem and self-worth; develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse (inappropriate behaviours, body shaming, sexual abuse and exploitation).

6. Meeting the Needs of Pupils

At St Mary's on the Hill, we celebrate each pupil's individuality and strive to deliver an inclusive curriculum. We affirm that all pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, regardless of their age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, disability status, religion or social class. We will ensure that our delivery of RSE is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils in respect of differing abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture, and that RSE is taught in a way which does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help children to understand the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help

7. Relationships between Home, School and Community

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

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

Parents and carers will be kept informed about the school's provision for RSE and informal sessions may be arranged so that interested parents and carers can consider issues such as readiness of children for aspects of the RSE programme, and the handling of sensitive topics.

We encourage parents and carers to come and speak to us at school if they have any questions or wish to discuss anything that comes up in discussions at home. Above all, we ask parents and carers to talk with your child about what they are learning at school and share their views with them.

8. Selection of Teaching Resources

- 'Grow in Love' Catechetical Series (P1-P7) (Veritas)
- 'Flourish' programme (Down and Connor Diocese)
- Living Learning Together: PDMU Programme (CCEA)
- PANTS programme (NSPCC)

9. Teaching RSE and the Classroom Environment

In St Mary's on the Hill PS, 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 expressing opinions and feelings in a secure and safe manner and exploring 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 one another.

Ground rules should be agreed to help to minimise embarrassment and encourage the respect of others' opinions. 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 amongst the pupils themselves;
- need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives;
- use of teaching and learning methods which encourage pupils to be actively involved 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.

10. RSE as a Statutory Requirement

“The statutory curriculum for personal development and mutual understanding at primary ... includes high level prescribed content for RSE at each key stage; this is the minimum entitlement that all young people must legally receive.”

Ref:

DENI:

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

Since RSE is a legal requirement, it should be inclusive. An absence of RSE provision may leave children with a learning and skills deficit, making them vulnerable and more susceptible to inappropriate behaviours including bullying (including cyber bullying, coercive control, sexual abuse, and exploitation.)

As such, we actively promote the school-wide implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parent and carer concerns and will work with families to ensure that each child's RSE provision is age and stage appropriate.

11. Terminology

Use of proper biological terms and language is vital and when these terms are placed in the context of respect and self-respect then their essence is understood.

Teachers will use the correct biological terms for parts of the body in an age appropriate way.

Teachers and pupils will be guided about appropriate terminology through the teaching of the NSPCC PANTS programme, including the use of the words penis, vagina and vulva. Following NSPCC guidance, we believe it is important safeguarding practice to use correct vocabulary for parts of the body to ensure that the young people in our care can be as articulate as possible about the health, safety and welfare of themselves and others.

More information for parents about the NSPCC PANTS programme is available at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/advice-and-info/pants/pants-2018/pants-parents-guide-online.pdf>

12. Use of Visitors

All outside agencies and individuals used by the school have a specified Child Protection Policy. All resources used in any lesson will be viewed in advance and agreed by the school. The class teacher will agree the aims and objectives of the lessons in advance. All agencies/individuals used by the school will have access to a copy of the school's RSE Policy and will indicate that they are prepared to adhere to it. Parents will be informed in advance that the agency/individual will visit the school and the reason for the visit. Teachers should be present during these sessions.

13. Monitoring and Evaluating

Class teachers in conjunction with the Pastoral lead will be involved in monitoring the programme. This requires staff feedback, pupil feedback, and the views of parents. The aims listed in the policy will be at the forefront of any monitoring and evaluation to ascertain if they are being achieved. The Principal and Senior Leadership Team will evaluate the effectiveness of the programme.

14. Policy Formation and Consultation

This policy was drafted by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Pastoral lead, Margaret Magee in March 2026.

All staff members, all parents and a focus group of Key Stage Two pupils will be consulted on the draft policy, and recommendations will be considered and actioned.

The policy will be presented to the BOG for consultation and ratification in May, 2026.

15. Review Date

This policy will be reviewed in the first term of 2028, or sooner if changes or

relevant guidance or legislation requires it.

Appendix 1 Flourish Programme Overview

Primary 1

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.

Primary 2

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.

Primary 3

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.

Primary 4

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?

Primary 5

Myself

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

Myself and Others

- Different types of friendship. 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.

Primary 6

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.

Primary 7

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 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.

APPENDIX 2 STATUTORY CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS FOR PDMU – RSE

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: their own and others' feelings and emotions.
Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: The importance of keeping healthy.
Theme 4a: Safety Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: How to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments.
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.

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: 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 dev

Theme 4a: Safety Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: strategies and skills for keeping safe.
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.

Key Stage 2

Theme 1: Self Awareness 18 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 well-being.

Living-Learning-Together

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

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, cooperating 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: 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 (P5-7)

Myself:

- The importance of keeping healthy and safe.

- My 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.

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- Cultural differences in families and family relationships.

- Helping agencies who can support families and individuals in different circumstances.

Messages and images about health, gender roles and sexuality from the media, family and peers.