

# Brookeborough Primary School



## Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

**The school will review this policy in March 2025**

Signed: Mr B Ovens (B.O.G.)

Date: 25.3.24

Signed: Mr A Young (Principal)

Date: 25.3.24

## Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

### Our school

**Brookeborough Primary School** has a Christian ethos, and subjects such as PDMU which encompasses RSE is taught and communicated in this context. The majority of children and staff in the school come from Christian backgrounds and attend local churches. We are also a controlled school, open to all, and welcome children and families from all backgrounds. It is important to note that nothing age inappropriate is taught at primary school and the 2024 changes to RSE education do not affect primary schools. The Christian ideals for marriage and the family unit, respect for self and others and appropriate behaviour are all promoted. In the case of specific lessons for Y7s from Love for Life (a Christian organisation) and period dignity, parents can request to withdraw their child from these additional lessons and parents will be informed when they take place beforehand.

### Relationships and Sexuality Education in the N.I. context

RSE is not a new area of the curriculum. The framework for sex education was initially established by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) in a *Guidance Circular 1987/45*. The main recommendation of this Circular was that each school should have a written policy on sex education which is endorsed by staff and governors and communicated to parents. It also stated *“sex education should be taught in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school and in conformity with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities”*

The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 further set out the legislative basis, requiring all grant aided schools to offer a curriculum which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual, and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society ...and...
- prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life

The general principles which underpin our work are those set out in Departmental guidance and the following Circulars:

**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

**Sept 2015:** CCEA - Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance: An Update for Primary Schools

<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexuality-education-guidance-primary>

**Circular 2024/1:** Guidance on Amendments to the Relationship and Sexuality Education (no impact on primary provision).

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/every-school-good-school-esags>

We further recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers in this area of personal development and acknowledge the contribution that can be made by outside agencies with skill and expertise in particular areas of the curriculum (NSPCC, Women's Aid and School Nursing Service).

## **INTRODUCTION**

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. The learning process begins informally with our parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place at school.

RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI curriculum through PDMU, Health Education, the World around Us and Religious Education. Health Education is taught mainly through the medium of PDMU in the Personal Understanding and Health strand as detailed later.

In any RSE education, all pupils will be taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The value of a stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood will be presented. As they mature, pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the importance of self-discipline, dignity, respect for themselves and others. Through PDMU and the World Around Us children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older and, in Y7, children will be given the opportunity for a talk with the Love for Life Group (a Christian organisation) to prepare them fully for post-primary schools and the emotional and physical changes they may expect to experience over the next few years. Period dignity is also taught to Y7 girls in an age appropriate manner.

Teaching always will be appropriate to the maturity and level of understanding of the pupils concerned. Teachers will be aware of, and consider, the variety of existing pupil knowledge, the different attitudes and beliefs and the pupil's capacity to understand the issues.

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to **being male or female** and is subject to development throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. For example although mostly the same psychologically, males and females do have well understood psychological differences as well. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships. Sexuality itself is not taught in any

inappropriate detail at primary school. **Appropriate education on how bodies change and how we mature is introduced in latter Key Stage 2. In year 8 at secondary school, sexual reproduction is taught, this is not taught in primary school.**

**Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils:**

- to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual, and social framework.
- to examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives.
- to learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect.
- to build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life.
- to 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;
- Support pupil wellbeing and attainment.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

RSE 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 eg. Single parent homes;
- develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts;
- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change;
- develop personal skills which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships;
- develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse;

- acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction;
- acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, growth and development;
- 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, and others, are affected by them. The importance of a moral framework is emphasised in the DfEE Circular No 5/1994 *Education Act 1993: Sex Education in Schools*:

Teachers are reminded: *"to acknowledge that many children come from backgrounds that do not reflect such values and experiences. Sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing hurt and offence to them and their families, and to allow such children a sense of worth"*.

(Paragraph 8)

### **OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES**

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

- Positive Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Special Educational Needs
- Intimate Care

## **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.

## **DELIVERING THE RSE**

**The following includes extracts from the N.I. Primary Curriculum - Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**

### **Strand - Personal Understanding and Health**

#### **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
- recognising own feelings and emotions
- recognising and managing the effects of strong feelings – anger, sadness, loss
- acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes
- recognising how they can develop and improve learning

## Health, Growth and Change

- Recognising and valuing the options for a healthy lifestyle
- having respect for their bodies and those of others
- being aware of the stages of human growth and development
- recognising how responsibilities and relationships change as you grow older
- understanding medicines and drugs
- understanding that, if not used properly, all products can be dangerous
- being aware that some diseases are infectious, and some can be controlled

## Key Stage 2

### Self-Awareness

- 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

### Health, Growth and Change

- understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle
- recognise what shapes positive mental health
- know about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and other illicit and illegal substances
- understand that bacteria and viruses affect health and know that basic routines can be followed to minimise risks
- know how the body grows and develops
- be aware of physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty (Y7 only)
- be aware of the skills and importance of good parenting
- recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent

### Keeping Safe

- 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 (Y7 ABC for Life)

**Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE Policy:**

**Brookeborough Primary School** staff are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically, important to the RSE Programme are:

- pupil feedback
- staff review and feedback
- parental feedback
- further Departmental guidance and legislative changes