



Relationships & Sexual Education Policy

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Date of next policy review | 2028 |
| Name of person responsible for this policy | Peter Henry |
| Issued to | Staff, Governors |
| Date of issue | October 2023 |

Introduction:

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a life-long process which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs, and values as well as personal and social relationships and gender issues.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their full potential and make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI curriculum and is firmly grounded in PD&MU with a central focus on the emotional development of children, health and safety, relationships with others and the development of moral thinking, values, and actions (RSE Guidance, CCEA 2015, Section 1).

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

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).

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.

Ethos

The ethos or distinctive character and atmosphere of a school reflects the extent to which the school, under the principal's leadership, promotes the moral, intellectual, social, and personal development of all its pupils.

Largymore Primary school values all individuals as equals and is proud of its tradition of mutual respect and inclusion which it promotes through a caring pastoral provision. We seek to create an environment where every child is given an opportunity to succeed and develop.

With its Christian ethos Largymore Primary welcomes and values children from all backgrounds – religious, cultural, and social, and believes that diversity in the school community enhances the educational experiences for the children.

Largymore Primary School strives to realise the full potential of every individual to be happy, effective, and responsible members of society. This is reflected in the high expectations held by staff for pupils in terms of their attitude, approach, and application to learning, school discipline, respect for others, appearance and attendance.

The school endeavours to promote a safe, stable, caring, happy and disciplined environment which is conducive to learning and in which children, staff and parents work together to develop self-respect and respect for others.

Largymore Primary School Aims for Our Pupils

We want our pupils to:

- Have high self-esteem – respecting themselves, others, and their environment.
- Take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.
- Achieve their best in all areas of the curriculum.
- Become confident, well-motivated, inquisitive life-long learners.
- Enjoy being a pupil at Largymore Primary school.

Largymore Primary School seeks to express Christian values which include respect, forgiveness, trust, self-discipline, tolerance, and care. On this basis RSE will be taught in an atmosphere of

mutual respect and, as and when specific issues arise, they will be treated with the sensitivity that characterises all our professional judgements.

This RSE policy fits within and complements our school ethos and our Pastoral Care Policies including Anti –Bullying Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and E-Safety policy. As such it will be co-ordinated by our Pastoral Care co-ordinator, Mr Henry.

Management and Co-ordination of RSE in School

Our RSE programme will usually be delivered as part of PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) and, our ‘Keeping Safe’ Programme (NSPCC). Certain elements will also be discussed within other subject areas such as The World Around Us, Literacy, IT, Religious Education and Health Education.

Through PDMU and the World Around Us children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older and, in Year 7, will be given the opportunity for a talk with a teacher to prepare them fully for post-primary schools and the emotional and physical changes they may expect to experience over the next few years.

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils:

- to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual, and social framework.
- 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 develop a respect for their own, and other people’s bodies.
- to understand the stages of development from infancy through adolescence, to adulthood.
- to prepare pupils to cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up.
- to make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives.

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.

The value of a stable family life 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.

Teaching will be always 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.

NSPCC KEEPING SAFE PROGRAMME

In Largymore Primary School the NSPCC ‘Keeping Safe’ programme is delivered by staff to all year groups. RSE is taught through aspects of the programme including the themes of ‘healthy relationships’, ‘my body’ and ‘being safe’. The programme provides pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to understand what a healthy relationship looks like and the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Through the programme pupils are encouraged to appreciate the importance of self-discipline, dignity, respect for themselves and others.

In addition, the philosophy behind our RSE programme is displayed at whole school system level. For example:

- In Assembly, Pupil of the Week certificates celebrate the many and varied gifts and talents of our pupils.
- Differentiated activities within the classroom.
- Individual and small group support in literacy and maths helps break down barriers to learning.
- The aspiration to include all children in day and residential visits.
- Both boys and girls representing the school in various sporting events including football.
- A varied extended schools programme.

As in other areas of the curriculum teaching approaches will be varied but will include many active learning strategies such as ‘Think, Pair, Share’, ‘Circle Time’ and small group work which will be conducive to exploration of the issues involved. In general, work will take place in Mixed Ability groupings but where children have a specific need the messages/strategies employed will be adapted appropriately.

Equality of Opportunity:

The provision of RSE is an equal opportunity issue. All pupils in Largymore Primary School will receive adequate preparation for the emotional and physical changes at puberty and beyond.

Children with Special Educational needs have the same rights and needs as all children but the content and delivery of the RSE

programme should be tailored to pupils' needs in terms of content, methodology and the resources used.

Implementation of the RSE Programme:

Mr Henry is the RSE co-ordinator, with the responsibility for RSE policy and programme development included within the role. All teachers are responsible for teaching aspects of RSE, appropriate to the age of their pupils.

The RSE programme is developmental, accessible, and appropriate to the age and maturity of all the pupils. It will meet the needs of both genders and aims to be a positive experience for all participants.

Generally, RSE will be taught in mixed groups, so that boys and girls are encouraged to work with each other and gain an understanding of each others' perspectives. However, in certain circumstances, normal mixed gender classroom arrangements may be changed when it appears more appropriate to teaching gender specific issues to single sex groupings during primary six and seven.

The role of the RSE Co-ordinator

Mr Henry is the member of staff responsible for co-ordinating all issues pertaining RSE programme.

The role includes:

- ensuring that the programme is taught effectively and is appropriate to the age and the maturity of the pupils.
- liaising with the Principal, Board of Governors, all staff, parents, health, and educational visitors on RSE matters
- attending in-service training and disseminating appropriate information to other members of staff
- organising training for staff as and when appropriate
- liaising with outside agencies for curriculum purposes

The Role of all school staff

All school staff have important roles and responsibilities in relation to the effective implementation of our RSE Programme.

- All school staff will be given copies of the RSE Policy document.
- All new staff will address RSE related issues as part of a planned induction.
- Additional INSET opportunities may be available for specific and or key staff within school.
- All staff will be consulted as part of a planned review of our RSE Policy within our School Development Plan.

The Role of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors play a vital role and hold responsibilities in all aspects of our RSE policy.

- The Board of Governors will determine, approve, and adopt the RSE Policy for Largymore Primary School.
- The Board of Governors will be consulted as part of any planned review of our RSE Policy within the School Development Plan.
- The Board of Governors will be kept fully informed of issues in relation to the implementation of our RSE Policy.

Specific Issues:

Confidentiality and Child Protection:

Staff cannot give any guarantee of confidentiality to pupils. If details are revealed which could lead staff to suspect that sexual abuse is involved, the teacher must follow the procedures outlined in the Child Protection Policy.

Withdrawal from class / exclusion from RSE classes:

The school is willing to discuss with concerned parents, their expressed desire for their son / daughter to be excluded from aspects of the RSE programme.

Terminology:

All staff teaching RSE related issues should always use the proper biological names for body parts. The common slang or vernacular words should be avoided.

Use of visitors and other resources:

All resources, whether human or material (books, video, CDs etc) must be vetted before to ensure that they are consistent with this policy and the schools' ethos.

In using visiting speakers or representatives from voluntary or statutory agencies care should be taken to ascertain that they have read and are willing to comply with the school policy.

All members of the school community will be respected and valued. Pupils should allow others the right to hold different views / lifestyles.

Dissemination of the Policy:

The policy will be made available to all members of the Board of Governors and teachers. It will also be available to all parents on request to the school secretary. All health / educational visitors should adhere to all school policies.

Monitoring and Evaluating:

As is the practice with other school policies, this policy will be reviewed and updated periodically. Pupils, staff, and parents may be asked to complete evaluation questionnaires prior to or post RSE programme.

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
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- ICT and access to the internet
- Intimate Care

Appendix 1: FS, KS1 and KS2 RSE Outline Teaching Programme.

The content is based on the PDMU scheme introduced as part of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum in 2007.

In each stage this breaks down into:

Strand 1: Personal Understanding and Health

Strand 2: Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

Of relevance to RSE are the sections in the Foundation Stage on:

- Self-Awareness
- Feelings and Emotions
- Health and Safety
- Relationships with Families
- Relationships in School and the Community

In KS1 the relevant sections are:

- Self-Awareness
- Health, Growth and Change
- Keeping Safe
- Relationships with Family and Friends
- Relationships at School
- Relationships in the Community.

In KS2 there is a further section:

- Relationships with the Wider World.