



## **RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY**

**Date ratified by the Board of Governors: 11 October 2019**

## **The School Ethos**

The ethos of our school is founded on Christian 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 and it will inform the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education within school. DE circular 2013/16 states that the 'Relationships and Sexuality Education 'should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities'.

## **Aims and objectives of the policy**

- To cater for and meet the needs of all pupils; and
- To ensure clarity and consensus on how Relationships and Sexuality Education will be taught; and
- To provide a foundation for the monitoring and evaluating of Relationships and Sexuality Education provision.

## **Policy formation and consultation process**

We have consulted with staff, Governors and parents in the writing of this policy. Parents were given the opportunity to respond in writing and their views were taken into consideration in the shaping of this document. This policy has been ratified by the Board of Governors.

During the evaluation of this policy pupils will be consulted and the next review will include any relevant input.

## **Aims and objectives Relationships and Sexuality Education**

Relationships and Sexuality Education should provide pupils:

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To help children develop healthy and respectful relationships.
- To give children the opportunity to understand and deal with their feelings.
- To provide them with the skills to make decisions around their own safety.
- To promote a knowledge of and respect for themselves and others.
- To enable them to make informed choices around relationship and sexuality issues.
- To promote a healthy attitude to relationships.
- To promote an appreciation of the value of human life.
- To enable pupils to value themselves as unique individuals.
- To recognise and communicate their feelings and emotions and those of others.
- To learn about keeping themselves safe and know what to do or who to go to if they feel unsafe.

## **Skills developed through RSE**

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;

- **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** – to make informed 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.

### **School Vision, Morals and Values and how it links to Relationships and Sexuality Education**

Our school vision is 'Striving for Excellence...Caring for Children'. In Moneymore Primary School we value:

#### **HONESTY**

We will develop an atmosphere of trust, openness and fair play.

#### **RESPECT**

We will value the potential and contributions of every individual.

#### **HAPPINESS**

We will create a welcoming, caring, happy and secure school.

#### **TOLERANCE**

We will treat everybody fairly, with consideration.

#### **LOVE OF LEARNING**

We will encourage curiosity, creative thinking and a positive learning environment.

#### **COMMUNITY**

We will build on and develop our links with parents and the local community.

The values we uphold as a result of our morals include honesty, respect for self and others and are written into our school policies. Morals are essentially linked with behaviour and are reflected in what we do. They are related to our faith and experience. Our ethics are based on Christian principles.

Moneymore Primary School is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. Relationships and Sexuality are integral parts of the human personality and impact biologically, psychologically, culturally, socially and spiritually. The Christian ethos of the school is the cornerstone of our Relationships and Sexuality Policy.

RSE is a lifelong process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values. RSE is about understanding the importance of marriage for family life, developing healthy, stable and loving relationships and developing and establishing such values as respect, tolerance, love and care. While we believe that the primary responsibility for addressing these issues rests with parents, we acknowledge the vital part the school can play in supporting and complementing this. Teachers need to acknowledge that many children come from backgrounds that do not reflect such values or experiences. Sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing hurt and offence and to ensure that all children feel a sense of worth.

## **Links to other school policies**

This Relationships and Sexuality Education links to the following school policies:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Pastoral Care policies
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Internet safety/E-safety Policy
- Drugs Education Policy

## **Issues to be considered**

### **Family Status**

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of a stable family life and the importance of marriage as the ideal context for rearing children. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in school and will endeavour to treat all situations sensitively.

### **Confidentiality and Child Protection**

Where there is disclosure by a child, child protection procedures will be implemented. If a disclosure is made to a teacher they are obligated to notify the child protection/safeguarding teacher or team if they are concerned that the pupil may be 'at risk'.

### **Withdrawal from RSE**

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. MPS actively promotes the implementation of RSE and strongly discourages withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parental concerns.

### **Mixed Groups**

The delivery of the RSE programme will be mainly co-educational, however, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to speak to the pupils in single sex groups. During the third term the school nurse will visit the P7 children to speak to them about the changes that occur at puberty. The content of these sessions has been agreed between the nurse and the school. A female teacher will co-facilitate the girls' session and a male teacher the boys' session.

### **Terminology**

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

### **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, teachers will address them sensitively.

### **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 provided by the EA, Health Ed Specialists, School Health team and Clergy. Where outside Agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of the school

### **RSE Teaching and Learning Content/Detail**

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Relationships and Sexuality Education is firmly grounded in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, where the central focus is on the emotional development of children, health and safety, relationships with others, and the development of moral thinking, values and actions. 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.

### **RSE links to Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is firmly grounded in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, where the central focus is on the emotional development of children, health and safety, relationships with others, and the development of moral thinking, values and actions. The statutory content for PDMU is set out below for each Key Stage. Relationships and Sexuality Education strands are highlighted in yellow.

### **PDMU in the Foundation Stage**

The minimum content for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is set out below. Teachers should enable children to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

#### **Personal understanding and health**

Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- themselves and their personal attributes;
- their own and others' feelings and emotions;
- their dispositions and attitudes to learning;
- the importance of keeping healthy and how to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments.

#### **Mutual Understanding in the local and wider community**

Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- their relationships with family and friends;
- their responsibilities for self and others;
- how to respond appropriately in conflict situations;
- similarities and differences between groups of people;
- learning to live as a member of a community.

### **PDMU in the Key Stage 1**

The minimum content for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is set out below. Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

#### **Personal understanding and health**

- their self-esteem and self-confidence;
- their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others;
- positive attitudes to learning and achievement;
- strategies and skills for keeping themselves healthy and safe.

#### Mutual Understanding in the local and wider community

- initiating and developing mutually satisfying relationships;
- responsibility and respect, honesty and fairness;
- constructive approaches to conflict;
- similarities and differences between people;
- developing themselves as members of a community

#### **PDMU in the Key Stage 2**

The minimum content for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is set out below. Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

#### Personal understanding and health

- their self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals;
- their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others;
- effective learning strategies;
- how to sustain their health, growth and well-being and coping safely and efficiently with their environment.

#### Mutual Understanding in the local and wider community

- initiating, developing and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships;
- human rights and social responsibility;
- causes of conflict and appropriate responses;
- valuing and celebrating cultural difference and diversity;
- playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and being concerned about the wider environment.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **THE ROLE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

The principal has a key role to play in developing and implementing the RSE policy and programme. She will ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to RSE and will consult with the Board of Governors, Staff, Parents, Health professionals and others.

#### **THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS**

The governors will examine, approve and ratify the completed policy prior to its implementation in the school and should then review the policy at regular intervals. The governors of the school will ensure that the RSE policy is in line with the schools vision, values and Christian ethos.

#### **THE ROLE OF TEACHERS**

The classroom teachers will plan and implement RSE in the school. At all times teaching staff will take cognisance of individual needs, age, maturity and stage of development of the child when delivery RSE education. They will provide a link and have a complementary role with parents. Teachers will use PDMU materials and other teaching resources to deliver Relationships and Sexuality Education. Teachers will ensure that the resources which are used in a school are appropriate for the target audience and reflect the aims and objectives of the RSE programme and the morals and values of the

school. Where possible and relevant teachers will avail of training to assist in dealing with issues of a sensitive and/or challenging nature.

### **THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM/SCHOOL NURSE**

The school health team comprises the school doctor, school nurse and health visitor. Their role with school children includes encouraging them to take responsibility for their own health by the promotion of health through health education. This team can also support staff in the school when dealing with matters of a sensitive / challenging nature.

#### References:

DENI Circular 2016/05

DENI Circular 2015/22

DENI Circular 2013/16

Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance – An Update for Primary Schools (CCEA,2005)

Revised October 2019