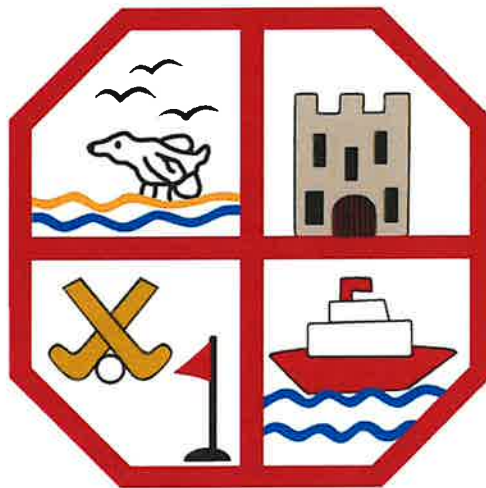


St Joseph's Primary School



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Reviewed and amended: June 2025

Vision Statement

‘A school at the heart of the community, community at the heart of our school’.

Mission Statement

In St Joseph’s Primary school we aim to provide a safe, caring, happy and stimulating environment for each and every one of the children in our care. We set very high yet realistic expectations for all our pupils and we encourage them to work hard and achieve their full potential. Our parents are key partners in laying the foundations for future learning in our school. As a Catholic school, inclusivity is central to everything we do. The Board of Governors and staff are firmly committed to promoting the spiritual, moral, academic, social, physical and aesthetic development of all our children.

In our school we aim to:

- Create a safe, enjoyable learning environment, in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
- Implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- Help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
- Value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
- Encourage pupils to respect themselves and others, and to support and care for one another;
- Equip our children with the necessary life skills, to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
- Develop and strengthen each pupil’s understanding and love of Catholic values, by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
- Involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

Rationale for RSE Policy

St Joseph's Primary School is committed to the education of all children regardless of race, religion, gender or status; inclusivity and celebrating diversity is central to our ethos as a catholic school. All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life and RSE plays an integral part in this education.

RSE is a statutory part of the curriculum within the area of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). Within the PDMU curriculum it develops children's knowledge and understanding in Personal Understanding and Health and Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community. Its themes are also very much reflected in the work we do as a Silver Aware 'Rights Respecting School' and through our Barnardo's PATHs Programme which teaches Social and Emotional Literacy.

RSE helps children and young people acquire age-appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and develops attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships.

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.

RSE in all Key Stages in the Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum is taught under the following key themes: Relationships, My Body and Development and Safety and Wellbeing. (See Appendix 1: CEA RSE Progression Framework)

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;
- examine, explore and appreciate the various relationships in their personal lives;
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life;
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives;
- use language in an inclusive way at all times.

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 within 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 relationships;
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth;
- develop the children's awareness, understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion;
- develop the children's abilities to use language in an appropriately inclusive way.

Learning Objectives

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, individuality and well-being of others;
- understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts;
- develop an awareness and an appreciation of different family patterns;
- 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 and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self- identity;
- develop personal skills which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships;
- develop strategies to protect and to try to prevent self and others from any form of mistreatment and/or abuse;
- acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction;
- acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth, development and diversity.

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, which they will experience and/or access.

They need opportunities to develop:

- **practical skills** for everyday living, for supporting others and 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 and being assertive, when appropriate;
- **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 and for developing as an effective group member or leader.

VALUES

RSE should enable pupils to clarify their beliefs 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 affect themselves and others. Children will be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- a respect for self;
- a respect for others;
- non-exploitation in relationships;
- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships;
- mutuality in relationships;
- honesty with self and others;
- a development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others;

- an exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships;
- compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care for others;
- self-discipline.

THE SCHOOL ETHOS

The ethos of St Joseph's Primary School is founded on principles where respect for self and others is paramount. It is our intention that everyone will feel valued in our school and our pupils and staff members are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment. This RSE Policy reflects the ethos of our school and our vision as 'a school at the heart of its community'.

Relationships between Home, School and Community

The effectiveness of this RSE Policy and its implementation are dependent upon a collaborative process involving staff members, parents, Governors, volunteers and other educational and health professionals, all of whom have a distinctive contribution to make. Parents will be informed of the broad content of the delivery of the RSE programme, which in the main take place through the CEA 'Living, Learning Together' weekly lessons.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

This RSE Policy relates to the following policies and documents:

- Safeguarding /Child Protection Policy;
- Addressing Bullying Type Behaviour in School Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- SEN Policy;
- PDMU Policy;
- RE Policy;
- Rights Respecting School Documentation;
- ICT/ESafety Policy.

In St Joseph's Primary School, RSE builds, in a developmentally appropriate way, on children's existing knowledge and experience of relationships, their bodies and their personal safety and wellbeing through our PDMU programme and also our continued focus on pupils' wellbeing in our Preventative Curriculum.

The RSE programme provides structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- Themselves as individuals;
- Their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth;
- Their friendships and relationships with others;
- The various changes which occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur as they get older;
- The importance of respect for themselves and others;
- The strategies and skills needed to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations, including inappropriate behaviours (including online behaviours) and inappropriate touch. (Addressed through our Preventative Curriculum)

Meeting the needs of pupils

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the RSE programme will be developmental, accessible and be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. It should meet the needs of both genders and be a positive experience for all participants.

Roles and responsibilities

- The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy.
- The Principal, together with staff, will co-ordinate the school's approach to RSE and consult with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents and external agencies, where required.
- The class teachers will furnish parents with a brief overview of the RSE programme at the beginning of each school year within the context of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Content of RSE

Whilst RSE will be delivered in an holistic, cross curricular way, through the PDMU (Living Learning Together programme), PATHs and Grow in Love programmes, there will be a standalone RSE lesson delivered twice monthly. These RSE lessons will use elements of the Flourish programme and 'The Wonder of my Being' and will also cover the non-statutory themes within RSE, with a monthly focus, for example, Internet Safety, Privacy and Consent... (See appendix 2 for full details). We endeavour to ensure that teaching is at all times appropriate to the maturity and understanding of the pupils. Teachers will be ever alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils.

The Flourish programme 'promotes the dignity and worth of every pupil whilst simultaneously providing a safe space for pupils to recognise the importance of healthy relationships and develop skills needed to form and sustain them in the future.'

It is designed to ensure pupils are taught the knowledge and life skills needed to form healthy and supportive relationships.'

In addition to our curriculum provision in St Joseph's, our P7 children attend a workshop annually in Term 2 called 'Love for Life' together with pupils from our Lecale Cluster. This workshop is led by the Down and Connor Catholic Schools Support Service and is designed to prepare children for both the physical and emotional changes of puberty and the importance of building healthy relationships. Only children with written parental/carers consent will attend this workshop.

P3 (every year) and P6/7 class (every other year) will also receive a visit from the NSPCC to deliver a workshop 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' to educate children on the importance of having a trusted adult to speak to in relation to their personal safety and wellbeing.

Statutory Requirements of the RSE curriculum within PDMU

Foundation Stage

RSE is a statutory part of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding in the Foundation Stage. Below are the statutory requirements relevant to RSE at this key stage.

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; and
- 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; and
- similarities and differences between groups of people.

Progression

As pupils progress through the Foundation Stage, they should be enabled to:

- express a sense of self-awareness;
- show some self-control and express their own feelings and emotions appropriately;
 - adopt healthy and hygienic routines and understand how to keep safe;
- form good relationships with adults and other pupils;
- show independence and know when to seek help;
- show respect when working and playing together and recognise the need for rules; and
- recognise similarities and differences in families and the wider community.

Statutory Requirements of the RSE curriculum within PDMU

Key Stage One

Teachers should enable children 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; and
- 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; and
- developing themselves as members of a community.

Statutory Requirements of the RSE curriculum within PDMU

Key Stage Two

Teachers should enable children 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; and
- how to sustain their health, growth and wellbeing 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; and
- playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community.

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

STRAND 1 – Personal Understanding and Health

Myself

- Me: how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself e.g. hygiene, sleep, exercise.
- 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 e.g. uniqueness, fingerprints, gender issues, different rates of growth.
- An introduction to the stages of human development – changes as we grow, e.g. Baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents.
- Recognising moods, feelings and concerns, together with an appropriate manner of expressing them e.g. what do I do if I feel sad or angry?
- Personal likes and dislikes.

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 e.g. communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating 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.
- Respect and caring for family members and friends e.g. 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.

Strand 2: Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

My Community/Environment

- Awareness of different types of families and the roles of individuals within families.
- Keeping safe, e.g. dangerous places, dangerous situations, the adults who will help you, how to get help from others.

- Rules at home, at school and the community.
- Respect and caring for people in the community, e.g. elderly people.

Key Stage 2

STRAND 1 – Personal Understanding and Health

Myself

- 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.
- Feeling, e.g. 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 on self and others.

- Distinguishing between right and wrong.
- Secrets – knowing the difference between good and bad secrets, what to do about bad secrets.

My Relationships

- Identify 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, e.g. identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people's point of view.
- Handling difficult situations, e.g. 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.

Strand 2: Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

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

SELECTION OF TEACHING RESOURCES

All resources used in the delivery of our RSE curriculum, will be related to the CEA RSE Progression Framework.

Examples of resources used:

- CEA 'Living, Learning Together'
- Flourish
- The Wonder of My Being
- PATHs programme
- Grow in Love
- NSPCC resources and a selection of resources from the CEA RSE Resource Hub.

In St Joseph's Primary School 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 to respect the dignity of each individual. It is important to create an atmosphere in the classroom which allows all pupils to feel comfortable to express opinions and feelings in a secure and safe manner and to explore issues which may be sensitive and personal. Every effort will be made to ensure that pupils show respect for each other and realise their responsibilities to each other. Class Charters will be drawn up through our Rights Respecting Schools work to encourage pupils to respect each other's contributions and opinions. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama and stories will be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

Confidentiality and Child Protection/Safeguarding Children

Reference should be made to our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures in the event of a disclosure of any type.

Withdrawal from RSE lessons

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parental concerns.

Sacredness of life

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of the school's RSE teaching. RSE will be delivered in an age appropriate manner.

Use of External Agencies

Where appropriate, we may use the skills and expertise of external agencies and professionals, for example, NSPCC and Down and Connor Catholic Schools' Support Service

Staff training

Training needs will be considered and will be addressed using the appropriate agencies. Where outside agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of our school.

Review of policy

This Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and Governors. It will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

Signed:  (Chairperson)

Signed:  (Principal)

Date: June 2025

Review Date: June 2028

Appendix Two

Monthly overview of non-statutory requirements delivered through our RSE programme here in St Joseph's (In addition to the statutory requirements covered in the main through the Living, Learning Together programme)

September-October: Flourish programme

November-December: The Wonder of my Being

January: RRS work on The Rights of the Child, understanding that Rights belong to everyone.

February: Internet Safety

March: Privacy and Consent

April: Positive Healthy Relationships

May: Social Media and Relationships

June: Transitions

