# ST BRIGID’S PRIMARY/NURSERY SCHOOL AND SPECIAL UNITS

**Relationships and Sexuality Education**



**Policy Reviewed: *Summer 2023***

**Next Review Date: *Summer 2026***

Signed:  (Chair of Governors)

Signed:  (Principal)

**RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY**

This policy takes account of Department of Education Circular 2015/22 *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Guidance* and Circular 2016/05 *Children who display sexualised behaviour.* A sub-committee of governors, teachers and parents agreed and discussed the content. The parents/carers were surveyed to take account of their views.

**RATIONALE**

**Ethos Statement**

The Catholic Ethos pervades St. Brigid’s Primary, Nursery School and Special Classes and is the foundation of the pupils’ whole educational experiences. We develop attitudes and values based firmly on the Gospel. We seek to develop each child spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically in order that they may realise their full potential and have an appreciation of their self-worth.

Through Relationships and Sexuality Education and other relevant areas of the curriculum, we endeavour to equip, and prepare children for life in a moral and spiritual context, enabling them to make positive, responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives.

RSE is taught through Religious Education/PDMU and linking with other subject areas such as Health Education, PE and World Around Us, in a progressive and sensitive manner, according to the age of the children.

**PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION:**

* the school seeks to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships.
* the school recognises its role in this area in partnership with parents.
* the Catholic school should reflect Catholic moral teaching on sexual matters
* the dignity, privacy and modesty of each individual child must always be respected
* the sanctity of human life
* sexuality is a gift from God
* relationships should be based on love and self-giving
* the virtues of modesty and chastity
* the values of respect, trust, honesty and compassion
* the importance of personal responsibility
* the importance of marriage and the family
* the importance of personal safety and dangers of abuse

**AIMS OF RSE**

* To help young people recognise their worth and dignity as children of God and to celebrate their own uniqueness and full potential as human beings.
* To enable young people to understand that love is the central basis of all relationships.
* To help young people celebrate the God-given gift and sanctity of life.
* To help young people to grow in their understanding of how to develop, nurture and sustain relationships.
* To help young people become more confident in listening and talking about relationships.
* To encourage and promote respect for all within the context of the school among staff, pupils and parents.
* To enable young people to appreciate sexuality as a gift from God.
* To know, by name, the various parts of the human body, at an appropriate age.
* To help young people recognise, understand and prepare for body changes that they will undergo in the years ahead (puberty).
* To help pupils develop healthy lifestyles and learn how to keep themselves safe and to ask for help or advice when needed.
* To foster the growth of values which impact on moral behaviour personally and socially.
* To develop a respect for difference, gender and race.

**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, 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;
* 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 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, sexuality, growth and development: (cross curricular links WAU/RE/PDMU) – Mind up programme,
* 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 a 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.

**MORAL VALUES**

RSE should enable pupils to clarify what they believe and why they believe it and also to 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.

**OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES**

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

* Positive Behaviour Anti-Bullying
* Child Protection and Safeguarding
* Pastoral Care
* Additional Educational Needs
* First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
* Health and Safety
* UICT – E safety
* Intimate Care
* Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras and social media
* Nurturing school

**ADDITIONAL NEEDS**

Teaching staff at St. Brigid’s Primary School are aware of the fact that physical development may outstrip emotional maturity in the case of pupils with Additional Needs and to accommodate this in class lessons and experiences.

**RSE IN A CHRISTIAN CONTEXT**

**Catholic Preschool and Primary School Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland**

**Preschool**

* God made me.
* Jesus was part of a family: I am part of a family.
* I can love, share, express thanks, and care for myself and for others.
* I can show respect and kindness.
* I can say ‘sorry’ when I hurt other people.
* I can help people who are poor and people who are hungry.
* Include: Stories which convey right and wrong actions and moral values such as sharing, caring, love, forgiveness and friendship.
* Stories that encourage an awareness of others and respect for difference.

**Year 1 and 2**

* God made me.
* God gave me feelings.
* Importance of caring for my body.
* Jesus grew in his mother’s womb. I grew in my mother’s womb.
* Jesus was part of a family. God gave me my family.
* Include: Stories that encourage an awareness of others and respect for diversity and difference.
* Stories which help children distinguish right from wrong and help children to make moral judgements about situations.
* Stories of saints, of good versus bad of right and wrong actions, that convey moral values such as sharing, caring, love, forgiveness, friendship, being kind to others, importance of family, and care of the earth.

**Year 3 and 4**

* My family cares for me.
* Qualities and values of the Family.
* Jesus’ love is present when our parents/guardians love each other and love us.
* Each member of a family has responsibilities to others.
* Christians respect their bodies and the bodies of others because they were created by God.
* It is important to prepare responsibly for new life which comes from God.
* Jesus is present with us as we grow and change.
* Include: Stories of good vs bad, of right and wrong actions; that convey Christian values such as peace-making, charity, social justice, interdependence, care for the sick, care for the earth, forgiveness, friendship, being kind to others, importance of family.
* Stories that facilitate an understanding of fairness and two or more points of view.

**Year 5 and 6**

* Work on the fifth commandment should foster a respect for human life and for all creation, and the importance of care for the body.
* The human body shows us that we are mortal and limited – dependent on God who gives and sustains our life.
* The importance of looking after ourselves physically, mentally emotionally and spiritually.
* As I grow, I change spiritually through greater love of God, family, friends and neighbours.

**Year 7**

In addition to the the ‘Love for Life’ programme, pupils will learn the following:

* Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.
* The human body is sacred – the visible image of God.
* God created male and female in God’s plan for creation.
* Sexual difference (the difference between males and females) is part of the variety of God’s gifts.
* Sexuality is good because it is a gift from God.
* Sexuality gives the possibility for sharing pure love.
* Sex is a great gift of God who placed the ability to generate life in the human body, thereby sharing his creative power with us.
* Chastity is a spiritual power that helps us love and respect ourselves and others. It helps us to see them as persons to respect because they were created in the image of God.
* Life is precious and God-given from the moment of conception to natural death.

**GUIDANCE ON WITHDRAWING PUPILS FROM RSE**

The Catholic School respects and supports the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their children from RSE.

**Withdrawal from Relationships and Sexuality Education**

**Northern Ireland; RSE is a statutory requirement.** (DENI Circular no 2013/16 June 2013) Parents or carers have the right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes. Therefore, whilst ‘there is no legislative provision permitting parental withdrawal from sex education’, schools can grant these requests on an individual basis (Lundy, Emerson, Llyod, Byrne and Yohanis 2013, page 25). Schools should consider how they can support parents or carers who choose to withdraw their child from all or part of Relationships and Sexuality Education.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATING**

The Senior Leadership Team and RE/PDMU Coordinator will be involved in monitoring and evaluating throughout the process; on individual lessons, the actual programme, staff feedback, pupil feedback and parental views.

The aims as listed in the policy will be at the forefront of any monitoring and evaluation to ascertain if they are being achieved.