



Parkhall Integrated College

Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Agreed by Board of Governors: December 2021

To be reviewed: December 2024

Rationale

Relationships and Sexuality Education contributes to the College's aims to enhance the personal and social development of each pupil; to encourage the growth of moral, spiritual and cultural awareness so that our pupils may become responsible and tolerant citizens; to develop such personal qualities as self-discipline, self-reliance, self-esteem and respect for others; and, to develop the personal and social skills necessary to cope with everyday life, both now and in the future.

Purposes

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) includes the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, and skills. It also includes the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. The College recognises that the importance of Relationships and Sexuality Education is:-

- To respects the rights of young people to a good quality education in accordance with the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which the Government has agreed to uphold;
- To promote a better understanding of diversity and inclusion;
- To help young people keep themselves safer in the digital world;
- To help young people to recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour and touch;
- To provides reliable, accurate and age-appropriate information about relationships and sexuality;
- To increase young people's awareness of sexual health and orientation

Guidelines

Through Learning for Life and Work Personal Development, Home Economics and our pastoral provision we emphasise the importance of relationships, self-esteem and the development of decision making skills.

We believe that every pupil has a right to a Relationships and Sexuality Education which:-

- complements any sex education given at home and in no way takes the place of the parents' role in this area.
- adequately prepares them for adult life.
- provides appropriate accurate and up to date factual information.
- develops skills of reflection and evaluation.
- provides opportunities for discussion of emotions and concerns within the secure environment of the classroom.
- helps young people deal with the challenges of awareness of sexuality.
- has a positive effect on self-esteem, self-confidence and respect for self and others.
- promotes a positive view of sexuality and sexual health, helping young people in the development of safe, responsible and satisfying relationships.
- encourages our pupils to examine their own values and beliefs in the light of those held by others.
- Allow pupils to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not to be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation (Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 and is available on the Equality Commission's website)
- References the recent inquiries into child sexual exploitation and the fact that RSE provides the opportunity for schools to play a preventative role by improving awareness amongst staff of the vulnerability factors and current indicators of child sexual exploitation.

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-identify.
- 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, sexuality, growth and development.
- develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.
- understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility and sexually transmitted infections.
- understand sexual development and identify and explore aspects of sexuality including sex roles, stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality.
- develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety.
- help pupils to recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations and how to take preventative action.

Specific Issues

The Status of the Family

As a school we will promote the values of stable family life, permanent loving relationships, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood. However, it is vitally important to be sensitive to young people of differing family patterns.

Confidentiality and Child Protection Issues

Staff cannot give any guarantee of confidentiality to pupils if details are revealed that would lead staff to suspect that they are in an abusive situation, the teacher must follow the child protection procedures outlined in the school policy. The Designated Teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected.

Parental Concerns

Parents will be made aware of the availability of the R.S.E. Policy in the General Office. If a parent has a particular concern the Health Education Co-ordinator/Curriculum Vice Principal will be happy to discuss it.

The Sacredness of Life

In line with the ethos of the school, the value and sacredness of life will be actively promoted during discussions on abortion and other related subjects.

The Centrality of Abstinence

In line with the school ethos, and to be consistent with the teaching in R.E., sexual abstinence before marriage and fidelity within it, will be presented as the positive and desirable option and an achievable reality.

Learning about LGBTQ+ matters should cover the importance of valuing diversity and the uniqueness of individuals, including diversity in sexual attraction and gender identity. The terms associated with sex, sexuality, gender identity and transgender, and an understanding of what they mean in real life. That homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is unacceptable and how to challenge it; and how young LGBTQ+ people can access support.

Terminology

All staff teaching R.S.E. related issues should always use the proper biological names for body parts and sexual acts. The common slang or vernacular words should always be avoided.

Pupils Seeking Advice on Personal Sexual Matters

If pupils disclose information relating to any form of sexual activity the school will always encourage them to discuss the matter with their parents/guardians. Specific issues may arise where staff will have to contact home. This will be with the knowledge of the pupil concerned. Pupils will also be directed to the Careers/Health Education Resource Room for additional information. Pupils will also be reminded that a Counsellor is available within the school.

Visitors to School/Resources

Visitors coming into school will comply with school regulations in keeping with the School Child Protection Policy. All material used both by Parkhall Staff and visitors should be consistent with this policy and in keeping with the school ethos.

The RSE Programme will be made relevant and accessible to all pupils regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or social class.

Implementation

Monitoring and Evaluating

The VPs, Head of Pastoral Care, LLW Co-ordinator and Health Education Co-ordinator are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the RSE Programme.

Staff Training

The LLW Co-ordinator or Health Education Co-ordinator will attend relevant in-service training offered by the EA and other agencies. Use will be made of opportunities such as centre-based in-service courses (ensuring good dissemination to the rest of the staff), directed time after school, and staff in-service days.

Roles and Responsibilities

The VPs, Head of Pastoral Care have responsibility for the whole programme. They will report to the Principal to ensure that a planned, structured and coherent approach to R.S.E. is adopted throughout the school.

Writing of Policy and Programme

This R.S.E. Policy and Programme has been developed by the The VPs, Head of Pastoral Care, LLW Co-ordinator, Health Education Co-ordinator in consultation with the Principal, Representatives of the Board of Governors, Parents, Heads of Departments.

Links with Other Subject Areas

The Science Programme of Study is compulsory for all Key Stage 3 & 4 pupils and offers opportunities to address many aspects of R.S.E. Topics include physical changes at puberty, reproduction, health during pregnancy, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and interpersonal relationships. Pupils will be encouraged to develop a responsible attitude to sexual behaviour.

The English Programme of Study provides opportunities for pupils to explore and reflect on the various attitudes, values, beliefs and opinions which relate to themselves, their development, their relationships with others and family life. In addition, pupils can develop the use of appropriate vocabulary in different situations and practise communications skills.

The Religious Education Programme provides opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues, relate moral principles to their personal, social and family life, and identify and explore values and attitudes that influence behaviour. Pupils have opportunity to consider Christian moral principles in relation to friendship, sexuality, preparation for marriage, single life and parenting. They will also undertake a range of activities which promote self-respect and respect for others.

In Physical Education the emphasis on enjoyment of and positive attitudes towards physical activity is significant in fostering self-esteem and confidence as well as developing a sense of fair play, sharing and co-operation.

In Art, Music and Drama pupils will experience the benefits of individual expression and non-verbal communication. Personal and social skills are developed through Drama by giving pupils the opportunities for the role play of feelings and situations.

In Careers classes pupils are encouraged to discuss issues of sexuality within the content of equal opportunity issues within the workplace. The issues of relationships and responsibilities are also addressed.

Liaising with the Wider Community

Speakers and trainers from the community are invited in to College to give presentations and workshops to pupils as appropriate to the age and ability.

These policy Guidelines are translated into action through other policies, guidance materials and procedures, for example:

CCEA Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance - An Update for Post-Primary Schools.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Curriculum Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

Chair of Board of Governors: -

Date