

# **Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche**

## **RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY**

**Bealtaine/May 2018**



# SECTION 1: CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

## INTRODUCTION

We at Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche value the importance of developing all aspects of the individual, including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical and social development for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) supports this overall aim.

## PURPOSE

The provision of RSE is an equal opportunities issue. In accordance to The Equality Act (Northern Ireland) 2006, pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, and RSE plays an integral part.

Many children are maturing earlier and it is therefore important that, with the agreement of parents, pupils are provided with appropriate factual information and have opportunities to discuss their feelings and concerns. This preparation should help pupils to be better able to manage the emotional and physical changes at puberty. RSE can have a positive effect on self-esteem. RSE therefore is important at all stages of schooling but is particularly important at Key Stage 2 within the primary school context.

We can help develop the self-esteem of pupils by creating a climate of trust and acceptance in which each person is valued and respected and encouraged to feel good about themselves. Pupils are encouraged to recognize their individual needs, to respect the needs and wants of others, and to develop the skills and self-esteem needed to become confident adolescents. RSE plays a part in increasing informed choice by providing opportunities for pupils to examine their own values and beliefs in the light of those held by others. Deeper understanding of the values and beliefs that they hold can help pupils to clarify why they think and behave as they do, to separate fact from fiction, to recognize prejudice and to respect the views, emotions and feelings of others.

Many pupils cannot or are unwilling to talk to their parents about growing up and about sexual matters. We can offer information and provide opportunities to consider feelings and concerns within a secure environment. Although some pupils may have experienced sexual abuse, this is not a reason for avoiding education about relationships and sexuality. Through RSE and other related programmes we can attempt to enable pupils to challenge inappropriate and unwanted attention from others. Parents are frequently concerned about the unhelpful and confused media and peer messages and pressures experienced by their children. At Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, we can work to provide opportunities for pupils to consider these messages and ensure they receive accurate information.

## CONTEXT

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 requires schools to offer a curriculum which:

- Promotes the spiritual, emotional, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society; and
- Prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life by equipping them with the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.

All pupils, male and female; have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, regardless of their age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, disability status, religion or social class. (Section 75, The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006)

The RSE programme will meet the needs of both genders and aims to be a positive experience for all participants. It is developmental, accessible and appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. As maturity is not always determined by chronological age, teachers are sympathetic to the personal and emotional circumstances of each individual pupil. They are aware of, and take into account the variety of existing pupil knowledge, differing attitudes and beliefs and the pupil's capacity to understand issues. This is particularly important in relation to children with special educational needs where physical development may outstrip emotional maturity.

“Children/young people with special educational needs have the same rights and needs as all pupils but the content and delivery of the RSE programme will be different....tailored to pupils' needs in terms of content, methodology and the resources used.” (Guidance for Primary/Post-Primary Schools, CCEA page16/19)

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 other's 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.

## **CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS**

Relationships education is a statutory element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding. It supports the curriculum aim which is 'to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.'

Elements of RSE are embedded in many areas of the revised curriculum, through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, the World Around Us and Religious Education.

This document reflects the core principles of other related policies in place in Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, with aspects of RSE addressed already within the school's Code of Conduct for Staff, Parents and Visitors, Positive Behaviour and Pastoral Care Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Intimate Care Policy, and ICT Policy, all of which are available to parents via the school website or the school office, and are circulated to all teaching and non-teaching staff.

## **SECTION 2: AIMS and SKILLS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues. The learning process begins informally with our parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place at school.

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.

### **AIMS**

The aims of RSE are to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child;
- foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework;
- promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions;
- help the child come to value family life;
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth;
- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;
- 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.

### **SKILLS**

The RSE curriculum and other related disciplines will contribute toward enabling pupils to develop the skills necessary to form and maintain relationships and to make informed choices and decisions regarding their own 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:

- for everyday living;
- for supporting others;
- for future parenting;
- 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;
- making sensible choices in the light of relevant information;
- making moral judgments about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgments into practice;
- acting responsibly and with initiative as an individual or as a member of a variety of groups;
- managing relationships confidently and effectively;
- developing as an effective group member or leader.

## **SECTION 3: SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The effectiveness of this RSE policy and programme is dependent on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners have distinctive contributions to make. Teachers, governors and parents can raise any concerns they might have about RSE issues and these will be addressed by the principal or referred to the BOG if necessary.

### **THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**

A planned, structured and coherent approach to RSE will be sought throughout the school. Implementing this, and other related policies will be managed by the member of staff with responsibility for Child Protection and overseen by the Principal. Consultation will need to be initiated with governors, staff, parents, health professionals and other relevant community representatives as necessary.

### **THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS**

The governors will endeavour to foster and support the development of our RSE policy and similar related policies by collaborating with teachers and parents. They shall facilitate the consultative process whereby the school community can respond and contribute on relevant issues. The governors of the school will seek to accommodate and be sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs of both teachers and parents while fulfilling their responsibility to ensure the availability of adequate RSE for all children.

### **THE ROLE OF TEACHERS**

The classroom teacher has a significant and diverse role to play in the planning and implementation of RSE in the school. At all times the role must be considered to be complementary to that of parents, taking cognisance of the individual needs, age, maturity, stage of development and family background of the child. The class teacher will strive to promote the aims of this policy and other related policies and deliver the requirements of RSE at the level appropriate to their particular class.

### **INVOLVING PARENTS**

Our aim is to develop a structure which enables both parents and teachers to work together. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a child's life, and especially so in the domain of relationships and sexuality. Parents are often concerned about the information their children are receiving from their peers and from television, videos, newspapers and magazines. We will attempt to provide opportunities for pupils to consider this information and ensure they receive accurate information. Where puberty - related changes are being covered with Key Stage 2 classes, parents are informed about when these talks will take place, the content to be covered and the activities that pupils will undertake prior to lessons.

## **THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

### **We will strive to facilitate the following rights of the parents;**

In Northern Ireland, parents or carers have the right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes (CCEA RSE Guidance, 2015) in so far as this is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. Therefore, whilst 'there is no legislative provision permitting parental withdrawal from sex education', schools can grant these requests on an individual basis (Lundy, Emerson, Lloyd, Byrne and Yohanis, 2013, page 25). Parents are reminded, however, of their duty to ensure their child receives efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Any issues raised regarding the content of an element of RSE or other related programmes will be addressed and resolved in a positive manner as part of the consultation process. Although full consultation may have been undertaken, a parent may still request that their child is excused from participating in some or all of the RSE lessons. In this circumstance however, the school will request to discuss the nature of the parent's concerns, attempt to deal with any misunderstandings, identify the specific issues and lessons which are problematic and explain the implications for the pupil in terms of the parts of the statutory programmes of study which will be missed. The social and emotional effects of exclusion should be considered as well as the likelihood that pupils will discuss the content of RSE lessons outside the classroom. If a parent still wishes for their child to be excluded from RSE lessons, they will be asked to come to school to supervise their child for the duration of said lessons.

## **CURRICULUM ORGANISATION**

As highlighted by CCEA in their RSE Guidance document released in August 2015, and reiterated again in the DENI 'Safe Guarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools 2017/04', rather than approaching RSE as a stand alone subject, the primary curriculum offers opportunities to develop and deliver an RSE programme in a holistic and cross-curricular way. Issues can be integrated within specific topics, discussed in subject-related contexts, addressed through health education, pastoral work and at assembly time as well as during visits from the school nurse, local doctor or other agency. It is important, therefore, for schools to consider the links that exist between RSE and the other curricular areas at each key stage.

In many instances, RSE shares content with WAU, Science, Religious Education, Physical Education and English, as well as PDMU. Circle Time may be used as an appropriate tool to engage children in RSE.

At Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, we follow the NSPCC 'Keeping Safe' Programme, which contains three main themes, each covered every year, from Rang 1 – 7. The themes are 'Healthy Relationships', 'My Body', and 'Being Safe'. One theme is covered per term. Within each theme, a set of three lessons are taught, ideally one lesson per month. Alongside the monthly Keeping Safe lesson, teachers will continue to teach PDMU lessons from the 'Living. Learning. Together.' box from CCEA. All Keeping Safe and PDMU lessons and plans are structured and expanded upon within class 6 weekly PDMU planners.

# OUTLINE OF PROGRAMME FOR FOUNDATION STAGE, KEY STAGE 1 AND KEY STAGE 2

## Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

### Myself

- Myself, how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example, hygiene, diet, sleep, exercise.
- Naming parts of the body, developing an agreed language for our bodies.
- Discussing the difference between good touch and bad touch, and what to do if we are unhappy or uncomfortable about something.
- Being myself - I am unique, my self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, respect and caring for myself.
- Similarities and differences between myself and others, for example, uniqueness, fingerprints, gender issues, different rates of growth.
- An introduction to the stages of human development, changes as we grow, for example, baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents.
- Recognising moods, feelings and concerns and developing a language and an appropriate manner of expressing them, for example, What do I do if I feel sad or angry?
- Personal likes and dislikes.
- Secrets - knowing the difference between good and bad secrets, what to do about bad secrets.

### 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, for example, 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. (Note: the situations of the pupils should be taken into account prior to introducing this topic)
- Respect and caring for family members and friends, for example, caring for a new baby or a pet
- Bullies and what to do about them
- Personal safety - simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety.
- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends and the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances.
- Strategies which pupils might use to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.
- E-safety and participation in Safer Internet Day every February

### My Community/Environment

- Awareness of different types of families and the roles of individuals within families.
- Keeping safe, for example, dangerous places, dangerous situations, the adults who will help, how?
- How to get help from others.
- Rules at home, at school and in the community.
- Respect and caring for people in the community, eg elderly people, those with disabilities.

## Key Stage 2

### Myself

- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy.
- The physical, social and emotional changes which 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.
- Feelings, for example, 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 for oneself and others.
- Distinguishing between right and wrong.
- Secrets - knowing the difference between good and bad secrets, what to do about bad secrets.

### My Relationships

- Identifying 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, for example, identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people's point of view.
- Handling difficult situations, for example, 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.

### 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



## **CONFIDENTIALITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

At Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche we respect the child's right to privacy. A key rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions. It is equally important that the teacher shares this right and never feels obliged to impart information about his/her own personal life. However as teachers we should not promise confidentiality. A child does not have the right to expect that incidents in the classroom or in the wider context of the school will not be reported, as appropriate, to his or her parents and/or the principal. Both pupils and parents should be informed that confidentiality cannot be maintained if:

- physical or sexual abuse is suspected;
- a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret.

The child must be told, sensitively, that the matter must be reported, the principal or designated teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or to the appropriate agencies. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Department's booklet Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (Circular 1999/10).

Teachers can provide general educational advice to all pupils as part of the curriculum. This general advice can be given to pupils individually or within group situations. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of the parents. There will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgment about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or by a group of pupils. An initial judgment will need to be made about whether or not it is appropriate to deal with the issues with the whole class. The teacher may wish to discuss the issues with the parents to see how they would like the matter to be handled. Teacher colleagues or the school nurse may be approached for advice. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents if this is appropriate.

The first concern of parents is likely to be for the safety and well-being of their children. It is important that if pupils cannot talk or do not wish to talk to their parents, they have access to support from sympathetic teachers at school.

## **ANSWERING PUPILS' QUESTIONS**

As a school we may need to consider our responses to specific issues. Topics such as conception, birth, fertility, family planning, sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS are often part of the storyline of television soaps. It is therefore possible that older pupils will raise questions about these issues. In younger classes, circle times and puppets are used to encourage pupils to express their worries or anxieties. Using a Worry Box in KS2 classes, pupils can write down questions anonymously at any time and post them in the box. This strategy gives teachers time to consider an appropriate depth of response and, if necessary, to consult with parents.

## **SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF BOYS**

From an early age, boys and girls learn what is considered to be appropriate behaviour from the significant adults in their lives. However, sex education has tended to focus primarily on the concerns of girls. In order to redress this imbalance, it is important that within the RSE programme activities are included to allow boys to talk about their interests, concerns and feelings. Formal and informal opportunities can be used for pupils to explore attitudes, emotions, relationships, stereotyping and parenting from a male perspective. It is important to acknowledge that male and female perspectives may exist on issues and to respect the reasons for such differences. Sessions (with the relevant health professional if possible) will also be included to explain the physical and emotional changes at puberty to boys.

## **APPENDIX 1: USEFUL LOCAL ADDRESSES**

Childcare Northern Ireland, 11 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1FY. Tel: (028) 9065 2713.

NSPCC, Jennymount Court, North Derby Street, Belfast, BT15 3HN. Tel: (028) 9035 1135.

Family Planning Association, 113 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HP. Tel: (028) 9032 5488.

2nd Floor, Northern Counties Building, Custom House Square, Londonderry, BT48 6AE.

Tel: (028) 7126 0016.

Telephone helpline and advisory service providing advice and information on sexual issues. Also provides a non-directional unplanned pregnancy service. This voluntary agency also offers training for professionals.

Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (HPANI), 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS.

Tel: (028) 9031 1611.

The Agency is a non-departmental public body whose remit in Northern Ireland is health promotion.

It carries out its work through providing public and professional information; training and professional development; research and evaluation; and policy development for health.

Action for Children, Ballymote, Downpatrick . Tel: (028) 4461 7837

Rethink with Play Therapy, Unit 4B, Newcastle Business Centre, Main Street, Newcastle, Co.Down, BT33 0AA

Tel: 07704796214

## **APPENDIX 2: USEFUL NATIONAL ADDRESSES**

Childline UK, Freepost 1111, London, N1 0BR. Tel: (0800) 1111. A free national helpline for children with any problems.

Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH. Tel: (020) 7730 3300.

## APPENDIX 3: NSPCC WHOLE SCHOOL KEEPING SAFE PROGRAMME

	<b>Theme 1</b> Healthy Relationships	<b>Theme 2</b> My Body	<b>Theme 3</b> Being Safe
<b>P1</b>	<p>1. Children will know the names of feelings such as worried, excited, nervous and afraid.</p> <p>2. Children will understand that hands are not for hurting.</p> <p>3. Children will know what to do if they are afraid, worried, nervous or hurt.</p>	<p>1. Know proper names for body parts and what 'private means'.</p> <p>2. Children will understand that we don't share Private parts.</p> <p>3. Children will know how to be body smart. They will be able to say NO! when their body gets a 'NO' feeling.</p>	<p>1. Children will understand what safe means and identify with feelings of being safe.</p> <p>2. Children will be able to identify situations that are safe and not safe.</p> <p>3. Children will know how to tell someone if they are not feeling safe.</p>
<b>P2</b>	<p>1. Children will know that no one has the right to hurt them.</p> <p>2. Children will know what to do if they are worried about someone being hurt.</p> <p>3. Children will understand that no one has the right to continually say things to make them feel sad.</p>	<p>1. Children will know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch.</p> <p>2. Children will understand they have the right to say no if your body feels 'no'.</p> <p>3. Children will be able to tell the difference in good and bad secrets and know who and how to tell.</p>	<p>1. Children will identify 'safe' people in their lives.</p> <p>2. Children will understand the importance of asking for help from an adult while online.</p> <p>3. Children will know what to do in unsafe situations.</p>
<b>P3</b>	<p>1. Children will know that it's OK to say no to a friend.</p> <p>2. Children will understand that it's OK to feel angry but we don't hurt others physically or emotionally because of this.</p> <p>3. Children will know what to do if they feel hurt by anyone, even adults.</p>	<p>1. Children will know that Privates are not for sharing.</p> <p>2. Children will understand that their body belongs to them.</p> <p>3. Children will know to talk about secrets that upset them, even if it involves someone they or their family know very well.</p>	<p>1. Children will learn to be body smart. Know the signs when our body feels unsafe.</p> <p>2. Children will know how to keep themselves safe online.</p> <p>3. Children will be able to devise rules that would keep them safe in public places.</p>

<p><b>P4</b></p>	<p>1.Children will understand that they have the right to be in a happy and caring environment.</p> <p>2. Children will understand some of the reasons for anger and how to deal with it.</p> <p>3. Children will know what a real friendship should look like.</p>	<p>1. Children will know that no one should make them do things that they don't want to, they will know how to say no.</p> <p>2. Children will understand the importance of not keeping secrets about their private parts.</p> <p>3. Children will be able to recognise bribe and threats and know what to do.</p>	<p>1.Children will identify people whom they would go to for help in different situations.</p> <p>2. Children will know that it is not safe to share personal information online.</p> <p>3. Children will understand that 'You can't judge a book by its cover' (Misconceptions).</p>
<p><b>P5</b></p>	<p>1. Children will understand what cruelty is and how we can stop it.</p> <p>2. Children will understand that trying to control someone is wrong. They will know how to stand up for themselves and be assertive.</p> <p>3. Children will know about online bullying and how to stop it.</p>	<p>1. Children will understand that their body belongs to them and they are entitled to privacy.</p> <p>2. Children will know what is appropriate and inappropriate for their age.</p> <p>3. Children will understand the potential dangers with taking and sending photos online.</p>	<p>1 .Children will understand what is safe to share online and offline.</p> <p>2. Children will understand that when online there are things they should not accept or open as they may not be reliable.</p> <p>3. Children will know that they need to tell an adult if they are being asked for personal information online or being asked to meet someone they have met online.</p>
<p><b>P6</b></p>	<p>1. Children will understand the problems that can occur with online friendships and understand how online friendships differ from personal friendships.</p> <p>2. Children will be able to identify all forms of bullying and reasons for it.</p> <p>3. Children will be able to demonstrate strategies for dealing with bullying.</p>	<p>1. Children will understand the dangers of sharing personal information online</p> <p>2. Children will know that private areas should never be shared even with people you know and respect.</p> <p>3. Children will be able to recognise a bribe/threat and know how to deal with it.</p>	<p>1. Children will know the difference in needs and wants and understand they have a right to feel safe and secure.</p> <p>2. Children will understand how their body reacts when they are angry or feel threatened.</p> <p>3. Children will know their rights as a child, and that there are laws to protect children.</p>

**P7**

- 1. Children will know what domestic violence is and understand that it is wrong.**
- 2. Children will understand that all relationships and families are different but they should not suffer.**
- 3. Children will be able to recognise an unhealthy relationship and know how to deal with it.**

- 1. Children will know the 4 main forms of abuse and a brief definition. (neglect, sexual, physical and emotional)**
- 2. Children will understand the problems some people face in telling about abuse.**
- 3. Children will be able to develop skills in communicating their feelings/problems with adults.**

- 1.Children will understand what is meant by Cyberbullying, how and why it happens and how to deal with it.**
- 2. Children will research the work of organisations that help children who have been abused.**
- 3. Children will be able to educate younger children in the school about 'Keeping safe'.**