



Howard Primary School & Nursery Unit

***Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy***

Date Agreed \_\_\_\_\_

Next Review Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Chair of B.O.G \_\_\_\_\_

## **The School Ethos**

The ethos of Howard Primary School & Nursery Unit 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. At Howard Primary School teachers, parents and governors work together to develop each child spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically within our school ethos so that by realising their potential, they can maximise it and have an appreciation of self-worth and self-learning.

## **Rationale**

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 requires all grant aided 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, responsibility and experiences of life by equipping them with the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.*

*The Policy takes account of The Equality Act (Sexual orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)*

The policy will contribute to Every School a Good School, Together Towards Improvement and Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy;  
[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

The Department of Education's Circulars have been used to devise this RSE Policy. These include:

- Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- Circulars 2001/15a and 2001/15b);
- Circular 2013/16; and
- Circular 2015/22 Relationships and Sexuality Education.
- CCEA RSE Guidance: An update for Primary Schools 2015

These circulars are available on the Department's website: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)  
Guidance and resources on RSE are also provided on the NI Curriculum website at [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

This policy reflects the ethos of our school and it will inform the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) 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'.

This policy was drawn up by staff with parent and governor consultation through discussion and the document being placed on our website for parents to view and comment on areas of concern. The Principal and Governors will review comments.

When ratified it will be placed on the school website which also will translate to other languages.

A copy will also be available upon request.

### **What is Relationships and Sexuality Education?**

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. It is about helping children to build effective relationships and learn to value themselves and others, making well-informed decisions about their lives.

At Howard Primary School we value the importance of RSE to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. This policy is linked closely to Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), The World Around Us (WAU) and Religious Education (RE). The policy is also linked to the Relationships and Sexuality Guidance issued by CCEA.

RSE supports the curriculum aim which is 'to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.' The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides 'all children with the right to express their views in matters affecting them.'

### **Aims and objectives of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

The aims of RSE in Howard Primary School are:

- To develop a loving pride in one's family and an active association in the local community.
- To encourage pupils to examine and explore the various relationships in their lives and learn how to develop and enjoy friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect within the school and at home.
- To promote an appreciation of the importance of the family unit (regardless of structure /composition).
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To provide pupils with the information and skills to evaluate critically the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today in order to make informed decisions.
- To develop their self-esteem and self-worth and in so doing take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Pupils learn to avoid behaviours which could be harmful to themselves and / or others.
- To acquire and develop moral and religious values and a respect for the belief and values held by others in the society in which we live.

## **Morals and Values Framework**

Mindful of the Christian principles promoted by Howard Primary School and the diversity of religious and cultural groups in the school, pupils are taught RSE within a framework that encourages the following:

- A respect for self.
- A respect for others.
- Equal opportunities for all.
- Commitment, trust and bonding within relationships.
- An exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships.
- A sensitive and caring attitude towards the needs of others.
- Development of personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy, personal relationships.
- Honesty with self and others.
- Self-discipline.
- The difference between right and wrong.
- The responsibility for one's own actions.
- A development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others

## **RSE should**

- Be relevant, accessible and age appropriate to all young people.
- Be set in a moral framework which is inclusive with respect to culture, religion, sexual orientation and social background.
- Seek to develop and clarify values and attitudes towards gender, sexuality and relationships and to encourage respect for and empathy with the values and attitudes of others.
- Respect the diversity of cultural identity and encourage pupils to be aware of the traditions and beliefs of others, promoting respect, mutual understanding and tolerance.
- Include activities to allow both genders to talk about their interests, attitudes, emotions, concerns and feelings.
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## **Learning outcomes**

- The RSE curriculum in Howard Primary School should enable pupils to:
- Develop a sense of self awareness, self-esteem and self-worth.
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.
- Develop personal and inter-personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.

- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, gender, growth and development.
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change.
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

## **Skills**

The RSE curriculum in Howard Primary School 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:

- *Communication skills* – putting one's own views forward clearly and appropriately; listening to others' points of view; handling and resolving conflict peacefully.
- *Decision making and problem solving skills* – for sensible and responsible choices; making moral judgements about what to do in actual situations.
- *Inter-personal skills* – for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader.
- *Practical skills* – for everyday living; for supporting others; for future parenting.

## **Confidentiality**

The classroom is an open environment and confidentiality cannot be maintained. Therefore, staff and pupils are not encouraged to talk about their personal relationships or experiences during class discussions.

## **The role of the teacher**

- Teachers cannot promise confidentiality.
- Teachers 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.
- Teachers can provide all pupils with information about where, and from whom, they can receive confidential advice and support.
- Teachers encourage young people, where possible, to discuss their concerns with parents or guardians.
- Only appropriate medical professionals should give medical advice to pupils.
- Any disclosures that might suggest a pupil is at risk are reported as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **How will we achieve our aims?**

### *At home*

- As first educators, parents are expected to lay the foundations for acceptable patterns of behaviour, leading by example, and sharing with school the joint task of bringing the child through to the age of eleven with a balanced understanding of life and a healthy appreciation of the human relationships they form in years to come.

### *At school*

- the positive climate and constructive every-day interactions between pupils and staff, both inside and outside the classroom.
- the messages we give out to children through religious celebrations, assemblies, discussions, workshops etc.
- the encouragement we give and the standards we uphold in terms of sportsmanship, fair play, accepting decisions and taking both winning and losing in the same spirit.
- the respect we have for and show to all members of our community.

## **Equal Opportunities**

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the RSE programme should be developmental, accessible and 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. 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, there will be times that teachers or the school nurse will work with single gender groups, e.g. P7 Love for Life programme, to explore puberty related physical and emotional changes in both boys and girls.

## **Links to other policies**

- PDMU
- WAU
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Pastoral Care
- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- Health Education
- Drugs Education
- SEN
- E-Safety and Acceptable Use of the Internet
- Policy on Using Outside Agencies

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Mrs McWilliams Principal is the Co Ordinator for RSE

- *Board of Governors* – examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy.
- *Principal* – co-ordinates the school's approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents / carers, and health professionals.
- *Staff* – provide a link and have a complementary role with parents / carers and deliver the school's RSE programme within the context of the NI Curriculum.

## **RSE Programme in Howard**

RSE is 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 always 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.

The P7 pupils in Howard Primary School will work with the 'Love for Life' and/or school nurse who will deliver appropriate puberty related talks with a member of the teaching staff present in each case. Children in P1-P7 will have the opportunity to participate in NSPCC Workshops. Only children with written parental/carers consent receive these talks.

## **Curriculum Organisation and Delivery**

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in Howard Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of PDMU, RE, World Around Us or in reaction to specific situations. All teachers will deliver the RSE programme.

Topics and themes are often repeated at regular intervals. The sequence in which ideas are presented below is not intended to imply an exact teaching order.

## **Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1**

### **Myself**

- Myself: how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example, hygiene, sleep, exercise, healthy lifestyles; personal likes and dislikes;
- Naming parts of the body (basic) - developing an agreed language for our bodies
- Being myself - I am unique, my strengths, things I am good at, 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

### **My Relationships**

- My family, special people in my life - what they do for me and I for them (Teachers should be sensitive to different family situations)



- Friendships, getting on with each other, for example, communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating and sharing.
- Respect and caring for family members and friends, for example, caring for a new baby.
- Dealing with Bullying, stay safe and speak out, who to talk to in school.
- Personal safety - simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety.
- The difference between good and bad touches; (NSPCC Workshop)
- 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.

### **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 to get help from others.
- Rules at home, at school and in the community.
- Respect and caring for people in the community, e.g. elderly people.

## **Key Stage 2**

### **Myself**

- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy; how to sustain health, growth and well-being.
- The physical, social and emotional changes which occur during puberty.  
(Primary 7 Love for Life)
- Myself and my peers –Differences and similarities.
- Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses; self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Feelings, for example, things that make me happy, sad, excited, embarrassed, angry, scared.
- Expressing and managing our feelings.
- 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.
- Developing strategies to deal with setbacks.
- Effective learning strategies.

## **My Relationships**

- Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values.
- Responding to feelings and emotions of others.
- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's views, emotions and feelings; valuing and celebrating differences and diversity.
- Families and how they behave. What family members expect of each other; (Teachers should be sensitive to different family situations)
- 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
- Causes of conflict and appropriate responses.
- The meaning of relationships within families, between friends and in the community.
- Behaviour - what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate physical contact. (NSPCC Workshop)
- 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.
- Valuing cultural differences in families and family relationships when appropriate.
- Helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different circumstances.
- Messages and images about health, gender roles from the media, family and peers.
- Playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and be concerned about the wider environment.

## **Selection of Teaching Resources**

The selection of teaching resources will be:

- consistent with the school's RSE policy and the aims and objectives of the RSE programme.
- consistent with the school's morals and values framework.
- appropriate to pupils' age, level of understanding and maturity.
- factually correct and respectful of its audience.
- likely to appeal to pupils in terms of appropriate language level, images, attitudes and values, maturity, contexts and situations, and the knowledge required.
- complementary to the existing programmes which the school offers.

## **Teaching RSE – The Classroom Environment**

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of our RSE teaching. In Howard 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 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 should be made to ensure that the whole group is at ease, with pupils showing respect for each other and realising their responsibilities to each other.

Ground rules should be agreed to help to minimise embarrassment and encourage the respect of each other's opinion. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos and stories can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

#### **Provision for Pupils with SEN**

Staff will be sensitive to the needs of SEN pupils and will take their specific needs into account when planning for RSE.

#### **Important considerations are the:**

- degree of trust, respect and positive regard for pupils.
- relationships between the teacher and pupils, and between the pupils themselves.
- need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives.
- use of teaching and learning methods which involve pupils actively in their own learning and encourage the consideration of attitudes and values and the ability to make informed and healthy decisions.
- need to be aware and take account of the current youth culture.

#### **Specific Issues**

##### **Family Status**

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of family life. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in school and will endeavour to treat all situations sensitively.

##### **Withdrawal from RSE**

RSE in Howard Primary School is taught across the curriculum and it is not possible to separate the lesson content. However, when Primary 7 receive puberty information, though our 'Love for Life programme' parents will be informed that the workshops are taking place and they will have the option to withdraw their child from this should they wish. These children that are withdrawn will be accommodated in another classroom.

##### **Sensitive Issues**

There will be no direct teaching of issues such as homosexuality, contraception etc. However, if these issues are raised by pupils, the 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.

Any Health Professionals and Visitors who are invited to deliver aspects of the curriculum will be required to provide an overview of the content and teaching methods to the principal and class teacher. A member of staff will remain in the lesson throughout.

### **Staff Training**

Training needs will be considered and will be accessed using the Education Authority, Public Health Agency and / or other appropriate health agencies. Where outside agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of the school.

### **Examples of Events and Activities to support curriculum planned activities for the delivery of RSE**

- Visitors to assembly – ministers, charity workers
- Celebration Assembly – certificates presented weekly, literacy and numeracy presentations.
- End of Year Prize Assembly
- Use of 'Love for Life'.
- 'Moving On' Day – EWO service.
- 'Mind Over Matter' KS2 Programme
- Visits to secondary schools.
- Residential Trips
- School Visits
- Internet Safety workshops
- Anti-Bullying Week – Assemblies and classroom activities for all ages.
- First Aid – Individual Care Plans for individual children.
- Healthy Breaks
- Nursery, P1 Induction Booklet
- Regular Information Meetings for parents- Nursery, P1
- Inclusion & Diversity Service CFER Plans
- School Council & ECO Council – P4-7
- Charity work –
- NSPCC
- Parent consultations

### **Monitoring, review and evaluation of this policy**

This policy has been written in line with Department of Education N.I. requirements and through consultation with parents/carers, staff and governors and has been ratified by the Board of Governors.

Howard Primary School staff are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically, important to the RSE programme are:

- pupil feedback
- staff review and feedback.
- parental feedback
- further Departmental guidance and legislative changes.

This policy is approved by the Board of Governors

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Principal.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson of the Board of Governors

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

The policy will be reviewed in January 2027