



# **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

"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 sexual identity, relationships and intimacy."

"Effective Relationships and Sexuality Education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It should provide them with the opportunity to develop the skills to build healthy and respectful relationships, stay safe and develop their own moral thinking and value system and up-date, accurate and accessible information about reproduction, sex and sexual health matters."

*CCEA Guidance for Post-primary Schools: 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' - August 2015*

## **Rationale**

Coleraine Grammar School offers a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual development of our pupils; and fosters their personal and social development. We also acknowledge that all pupils have a right to an educational provision that prepares them for the experiences, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of that provision, one aspect of a lifelong process that encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills: and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues.

This policy is intended to provide a framework through which young people can develop the skills, attitudes and values necessary to deal with the challenges which they will meet in this very sensitive area. We recognise the significant role which we play in helping and encouraging our young people to make informed, responsible decisions about their relationships and sexual health.

Coleraine Grammar School's Relationships and Sexuality Education policy is in keeping with the school's ethos and is underpinned by the Northern Ireland Department of Education's guidance and circulars.

In 2001 the Department of Education commissioned CCEA to produce guidance for Relationships and Sexuality. In August 2001 DENI issued Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). This aimed to support the guidance materials and required all schools to have a policy setting out how the school would address RSE within the curriculum. This was reviewed further through the introduction of the (revised) Northern Ireland Curriculum under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

Furthermore, Coleraine Grammar School's RSE policy endeavours to support The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006 which requires that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not to be treated less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Finally, the RSE policy attempts to deliver on the principles cited in the guidance published by CCEA in August 2015 – Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance – An Update for Post-Primary Schools.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of RSE is to provide accurate, balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of relationships both sexual and nonsexual. RSE encompasses learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It explores the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect within relationships, fosters caring and endeavours to promote a positive, responsible vision for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive values and attitudes. There are many influences on how relationships and sexuality are judged and perceived due to family, social and religious backgrounds. A primary objective of this policy is to encourage understanding and tolerance of a diversity of opinions and experiences with regard to relationships and sexuality such that our pupils can make informed decisions and that their education on these issues reflects our ethos.

Our RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour and to enhance their confidence and self-esteem such that they value themselves and others.
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual, family, social and other relationships.
- communicate effectively by using and developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues. There is much lewd and malicious vocabulary associated with sex and sexuality which impacts negatively on attitudes, diminishes respect and can be very offensive. Usage of this type of language is highly inappropriate within the school community.
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality.
- challenge sexism and prejudice and promote equality and diversity.
- avoid being exploited, exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- understand the arguments and benefits for delaying sexual activity.
- recognising that abstaining from sexual relations at a young age may have health and emotional benefits and should be respected as a positive individual life choice.
- understand the reasons for having protected sex and have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves from unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary.
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.

At Coleraine Grammar School we believe that RSE should:

- be an entitlement for all our pupils.
- support family values where commitment, love, respect, affection, responsibility and openness are promoted. The term “family” is a broad concept and should not simply be regarded as a stereotypical nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure and our education program should accept and be sensitive to these different structures.
- encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other’s views and to generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- recognise that Parent-carers are central to the teaching of children about sex, relationships and growing up and that they should be informed and consulted about their child’s education on these issues.

RSE in this school plans to cover the following areas in order to achieve our aims and objectives:

### **Attitudes and Values**

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices.
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships & marriage.
- learning about the nurturing of children.
- learning the value of respect, love and care.
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.
- challenge myths, misconceptions and false assumptions concerning sexual issues and attitudes to relationships.

### **Personal and Social Skills**

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- learning to make choices without ignorance or prejudice.
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices.
- promote openness and help to manage conflict.
- empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.

- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the health and emotional benefits to be gained from such delay.
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy but also where to seek advice should unwanted pregnancy arise.

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education in the Curriculum**

The RSE programme is delivered primarily through the Personal Development Stand of the Revised Curriculum at Key Stages 3 and Key Stage 4. Opportunities for RSE also arise across the curriculum through the Tutor Programme and in subjects such as Science, Home Economics, Physical Education, Religious Education, Drama and English. Relationships and sexuality issues are explored from a variety of perspectives and teaching strategies are in accordance with the Revised Curriculum.

The programme aims to meet the needs of both genders and is generally taught in mixed groups to enable boys and girls to work alongside one another, thus promoting positive relationships with each gaining an understanding of the other's perspective.

### **RSE at Key Stage 3**

RSE at KS3 is predominantly covered within the Personal Development Strand of Learning for Life & Work (LLW), with guidance materials provided through the CCEA 'In-sync' programme. All pupils receive one period per week, with the exception of Year 10 pupils, who receive one period every two weeks. Home Economics also makes a significant contribution to the subject along with some input from Year 10 Science in the areas of puberty, human reproduction, sexually transmitted infections & contraception.

RSE is also covered within Religious Education at Key Stage 3 under "Morality". Pupils are given the opportunity to consider relationships and responsibilities towards:

- Family
- Peers
- People with special needs
- Gender equality issues
- Ethnic and religious groups

Also included are physical changes at adolescence and puberty and that sexuality is a gift from God. Pupils learn what the Bible says about sex and how there are responsibilities and consequences attached to its issues. These consequences are explored from a moral, physical, emotional and social perspective. The KS3 Home Economics key concept Home & Family Life also has a contribution to the delivery of RSE.

### **RSE at Key Stage 4**

RSE at KS4 is predominantly covered within the Personal Development Strand of Learning for Life & Work (LLW). Year 11 pupils receive one period per week or one period per fortnight. A similar arrangement exists in Year 12 although there are some pupils who do not have timetabled LLW lessons.

There is some extended input to RSE from GCSE Single Award Science and GCSE Child Development on areas such as the biology concerning human reproduction, sexually

transmitted infections and contraception but as these subjects are optional this detail is not available to all pupils.

Also, pupils who opt to follow the GCSE Religious Education course will explore RSE as part of the “Christian Ethics” unit of work. Pupils will learn and discuss issues including:

- The meaning and purpose of sexual relationships
- What is a sexual relationship?
- Christian views on homosexuality
- Civil partnerships
- Pre-marital sex
- Marriage & divorce

## **External Agencies**

Some aspects of the RSE programme are delivered and supported by external agencies such as Love for Life, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Policing Board and CC&G. These programmes supplement and complement internal provision. At least one teacher is always present when an external agency is delivering an aspect of the RSE programme.

Care is taken to ensure that external agencies comply with the School Policy and that there is collaboration between internal and external staff regarding the content and also follow-up and progression.

## **Inclusion**

It is important that all our pupils have appropriate access to RSE regardless of their ability, background or sexual orientation.

### **Students with Special Needs**

We aim to ensure that all young people receive sex and relationship education at an appropriate level, and we will attempt to tailor provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

### **Ethnic and Cultural Groups**

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

### **Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation**

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer or direct an individual for support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.

## **RSE and Public Displays of Affection.**

Being overtly affectionate in school does not create or is conducive to a positive learning environment. Therefore, pupils and other members of the school community should refrain from inappropriate intimate behaviour on the school premises or at school related events and activities. Pupils and all members of the school community are expected to conduct themselves respectfully at all times. Public displays of affection are not appropriate for the school environment. Such behaviour may result in an initial meeting with Parent-carers followed by possible serious sanctions if inappropriate behaviour continues. The expression of feelings of affection towards others is a personal concern between two individuals and not of others surrounding them therefore good taste and respect for others is the guideline for appropriate behaviour.

## **Right of Withdrawal of Students from RSE**

Parent-carers will be consulted on the implementation of our RSE policy and are encouraged to share in the responsibility of this element of their child's education. Parent-carers may wish to independently educate their child on certain aspects of RSE and have the right to withdraw their children from sections of the sex and relationship education beyond those included in the statutory national curriculum. Parent-carers are encouraged to discuss their concerns and are welcome to review any RSE resources the school uses. If deemed necessary by parental request alternative arrangements can be made to withdraw pupils from RSE lessons and work from other areas of the curriculum will be provided.

## **Issues Arising Including Confidentiality and Disclosures**

Where a "disclosure" is made regarding a sensitive child protection issue staff are advised to listen, reassure and record factual details of the disclosure. The pupil should be advised that the member of staff must share the information with the school's Designated Safeguarding Teacher (Mr Hamilton) who will follow up the disclosure to support the pupil. Examples include disclosure of abuse or where a teacher discovers that a pupil is having or contemplating sexual intercourse.

## **Sharing responsibility for Relationships and Sexuality Education**

Coleraine Grammar School believes that the responsibility for relationship and sexuality education should be shared between teachers, Parent-carers and the school community as a whole. Its effectiveness depends on a collaborative process involving teachers, Parent-carers, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has distinctive contributions to make and the school will endeavour to define and fulfil its responsibility.

While there is no statutory parental right to withdraw a pupil from RSE classes, the school will respond to any parental concerns.

## **Specific Responsibilities**

In Coleraine Grammar School the responsibility for Relationships and Sexuality Education is appropriately shared in partnership with teachers, Parent-carers and external agencies. Each of the partners has a distinctive contribution to make and the effectiveness of the RSE programme depends on regular communication and collaboration.

- **The Board of Governors**  
The Board of Governors has overall responsibility and works in collaboration with the Principal, staff and Parent-carers. They examine and ratify the policy and programme, ensuring it adheres to DENI guidelines and is in keeping with the ethos of the school.
- **The Headmaster**  
It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to ensure the development and implementation of an RSE Policy and a planned, coherent and progressive programme that meets the needs of all pupils. The Headmaster consults with Governors, staff, Parent-carers, pupils and relevant professionals to ensure the implementation of the programme.
- **Vice Principals**  
Mr Hamilton as Pastoral Vice-Principal is responsible for overseeing all issues related to the RSE policy and programme development. He is also responsible for its monitoring and evaluation.
- **The LLW Team**  
Ms Murphy is LLW Coordinator with responsibility for Personal Development. In relation to Relationships and Sexuality Education this role involves.
  - Writing the schemes of work and distributing resources.
  - Planning and coordination of curricular provision.
  - Liaison with external agencies re curriculum provision.
  - Attendance at in-service training and dissemination of appropriate information to relevant staff.
  - Liaison with LLW teachers regarding RSE as part of Personal Development (KS3 and KS4).

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

As is the practice with other school policies, this policy will be reviewed and updated periodically. Pupils and teachers will be asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire relating to the school's RSE programme.

The on-going process of monitoring and evaluation will be linked to assessment for learning within the revised curriculum and developed as an integral part of the programme. The LLW programme at Coleraine Grammar School allows the pupils to periodically self-evaluate the LLW lessons. These evaluations indicate the development of individual pupils and they are also used to develop and improve the LLW programme for subsequent teaching and learning.

## **Related School Policies**

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- SEN & Inclusion Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Social Networking Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- CRED Policy