



NENDRUM COLLEGE COMBER

RSE POLICY

This policy is founded on the principles of the UNCRC and particularly with regard to Article 13: ‘Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information as long as it is within the law’

Ratified at Board of Governors Meeting:

June 2022



RSE POLICY

Description of Policy Formation and Consultation Process

The RSE Co-ordinator and their team drafted the RSE policy, using the revised DENI circular 2015/22 and the CCEA guidelines (RSE Guidance an update for post primary schools).

Members of staff, governors, parents and selected pupils were consulted and invited to respond to the draft policy. All responses were discussed and any appropriate amendments were made to the policy document.

The policy closely links with the School Pastoral Care Policy and the DENI Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection.

The aim of Nendrum College is to provide a disciplined yet caring and supportive environment in which each pupil is encouraged to attain their true potential both academically and personally.

The work of the Form Teacher is supplemented by the Learning for Life and Work programme of Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability, which is delivered in a manner which is conducive to the ethos of the College and is underpinned by the United Nations Convention of The Rights of The Child (UNCRC).

The school encourages its pupils to consider and assess different viewpoints in relation to issues of morality. The experience gained through the working out of this policy and through respecting the needs of minority groups and individuals enriches the whole life of the school. The school gives its pupils the opportunity to explore the humanities, sciences, arts, business studies and technical subjects. In addition it provides religious, moral and physical education in order to meet its founding objectives of supporting pupils in achieving their full academic potential and preparing them for participation in civic society and working life.

A code of conduct has been published after consultation with parents, staff and pupils and the following excerpts illustrate how the ethos of the school operates on a daily basis:

- *Discipline is founded on the principles of respect for people, environment, property and safety. All rules follow from these basic principles which are intended to create and maintain a happy and stable community.*
- *The best way in which the school can operate with the maximum happiness and fulfilment for everybody is if the maximum courtesy and respect is shown for other people. Pupils at the school are expected to respect the dignity of other pupils, teachers and other staff in the school and have the right to expect that their own dignity will be respected.'*
- *Equality ACT, UNCRC, ESAGS, TTI (DENI equality act) RRSA ref to WSAP*



Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

Aims of Relationships and Sexuality Education

1. To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the young person.
2. To develop self-respect and self confidence
3. To help the young person learn how to develop and enjoy healthy and respectful friendships and relationships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect.
4. To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework.
5. To promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions.
6. To help the young person value family life, positive relationships and the responsibilities of parenthood.
7. To promote an appreciation of the value of all human life.

Objectives of RSE

The RSE curriculum, as part of the statutory minimum entitlement for personal development, should ensure that pupils are given worthwhile experiences which enable them to explore:

- self esteem, self confidence, and how they develop as individuals
- their own and others feelings and emotions
- strategies to promote personal safety and health and resist various forms of abuse
- relationships with friends and families, valuing them as a source of love and mutual support
- similarities and differences between people
- dignity, uniqueness, wellbeing and sense of responsibility for themselves and others
- differing family structures and patterns
- strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions
- growth and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self identity



- the development of personal and inter-personal skills including communication and social interaction, in order to help establish and sustain healthy relationships
- the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, identity, growth and development
- the impact of internal influences and external influences (such as peer pressure and conflict) on lifestyle and decision making
- sexual development and identity including aspects of sexuality such as gender roles, stereotyping and cultural influences
- the physical, social and emotional changes which occur during puberty
- how babies are conceived, grow and are born

Sharing Responsibility for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Nendrum College believes that the responsibility for relationships and sexuality education should be appropriately shared between all teaching staff, parents and the school community as a whole including the school nurse. Its effectiveness depends on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents, 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, providing an opportunity for teachers, governors and parents to raise any issues and concerns they might have about the RSE policy and programme.

Teaching RSE

All teachers are responsible for teaching aspects of RSE, appropriate to the age, maturity, stage of development, and family background of their pupils. It will be delivered primarily through the personal development curriculum but also through a range of subjects each covering aspects of the RSE programme. Appendix 1 shows how and where RSE is taught through-out the school.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school

1. Arrangements regarding the teaching of the program and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal.



2. **Informing and Involving Parents:**

Parents are the primary educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important. Relevant sections of this RSE policy will be included in the school's *Information for Parents* booklet, published annually in August. This policy has been designed in consultation with Parents' Association representatives and the views expressed by parents will be taken into account when reviewing the policy. A copy of this policy will be made available to any parent on request to the school Office.

3. **Offering Advice:**

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. Teachers may provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. their doctor or other suitable agency. Advice offered should not be directive and should be appropriate to the age of the pupil.

4. **Explicit Questions:**

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from HOY, PD Co-coordinator or the Designated teacher. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

5. **Confidentiality:**

It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The Designated Teacher will decide whether to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling.

The following is also school policy:

- a) teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality;
- b) pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Designated Teacher and possibly to parents if the Designated Teacher or Principal decides that it is in the best interests of the pupil to notify parents;
- c) teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information;
- d) teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.

The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools state in 4.1.1. and 4.2.1.

4.1.1. *If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he/she should, without delay,*



report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Designated Liaison Person. The need for confidentiality at all times, as previously referred to in Chapter 1 Paragraph 1.2 of these guidelines, should be borne in mind. The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

4.2.1 If the Designated Liaison Person is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation he/she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.

6. The division between biological and non biological aspects of sex education:

The school policy is that the Science Department deals primarily with the biological aspects of reproduction.

7. Withdrawing pupils from the RSE programme:

1. Relevant sections of this policy are made available to parents in the school publication entitled *Information for Parents* together with details about the parent's right to withdraw their child from sensitive aspects of RSE – parents will always be provided with a full copy of this policy following a request to do so.
2. Issues such as over population and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and RE. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the RSE Programme.
3. Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so - sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent. (See also appendix 1)

8. Using visiting speakers and others

- a) It is school policy that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However visitors can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of RSE.
- b) The PD Co-ordinator will provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of this RSE policy. After gaining approval from the Principal for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme. Issues to consider are:
 - i) the degree of explicitness of the content and presentation;
 - ii) will the visitor be accompanied by teaching staff?
 - iii) will the staff take an active role in the visitor's activities?
 - iv) how will the visitor be prepared for the visit?
 - v) how will the visit be built upon and followed up?
- c) Visitors should be given advance notice of the composition of the class and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work.
- d) In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group and to make better use of the time of the visitor it is advisable for the group to draw up questions in advance and these should be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the pupils in



the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them - it also facilitates planning.

e) The Office should be informed of the date and name of the visitor.

f) Where applicable, refreshments should be arranged with the catering staff.

g) The visitor should be welcomed at the main door.

h) At the end of the session a vote of thanks should be given by a pupil and the visitor escorted to the main door after refreshments.

9. **LGBTQIA+**

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that sexual orientation and gender identity will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning sexual orientation and gender identity is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussions should be appropriate to the age of the pupils.

10. **Contraception**

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way.

11. **Special Educational Needs**

Children with special needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.

Training:

1. All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. The skills acquired in general teaching apply also to health education. Furthermore, many teachers have training in related areas such as counselling. Some teachers have expert training in the specific areas of health, relationships and sexuality education and will be encouraged to train other teachers.
2. The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field, bearing in mind the overall budgetary framework and the need for the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the school to continue with as little disturbance as possible.

Resources:

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school resources allow. We will also use the CCEA resources and utilize the RSE Hub.



Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE programme:

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the RSE Programme are:

- a) pupil feedback;
- b) staff review and feedback;
- c) parental feedback.