

St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon



Relationships and Sexuality Policy (Draft)

'Achieving Excellence Together'

June 2022

This policy was reviewed and consulted on in May/June 2022. Approved by Governors 21 June 2022
To be reviewed: 1 June 2024

SCHOOL AIMS

As members of the school community of St Patrick's Academy, we will strive to work in harmony to:

- Nurture our Catholic faith;
- Celebrate our Irish culture;
- Appreciate and respect all cultures;
- Experience a stimulating, challenging curriculum;
- Establish an ethos of support and encouragement;
- Respect ourselves, each other and our shared environment;
- Achieve our full potential;
- Develop as confident, independent, self-motivated, life-long learners;
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians;
- Contribute actively to the wider community.

Mission Statement: 'Achieving Excellence Together'

We believe that we will help our young people to succeed by providing them with opportunities to:

- Become actively involved in individual and collective worship and in practical Christian living;
- Experience high-quality, well-resourced teaching;
- Evaluate their own learning and focus on areas for improvement;
- Work collaboratively with their teachers and their peers;
- Participate in a process of personal development;
- Develop their self-esteem and respect for others so that they can appreciate the diverse community in which they live;
- Participate in a rich, diverse programme of extra-curricular activities, cultural, sporting, recreational and environmental;
- Develop an understanding of the importance of equality in society at local, national and global levels;
- Prepare for the workplace;
- Develop habits of good attendance and punctuality;
- Develop their ability to become effective learners through the application of their ICT skills.

In addition:

Emphasising the importance of St. Patrick as the patron of our school, we will endeavour to be:

- **P** – Partners in the pursuit of excellence;
- **A** – Achievers who reach their full potential;
- **T** – Team workers, who value the contributions of others;
- **R** – Respecters of human dignity;
- **I** – Inspirers, who set good example;
- **C** – Creators of a caring and generous community;
- **K** – Keepers of the faith and tradition.

RSE Policy

RATIONALE

This policy will provide the information our pupils need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships. RSE is about the pupil's knowledge and understanding of him/herself as a sexual being and should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a successful marriage or committed partner. RSE is firmly embedded in the RE, PD, Home Economics, LLW and Science curricula and will be delivered in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

In St Patrick's Academy, our programme will seek to enshrine Catholic virtues relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It will promote qualities such as faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion so that our pupils can respond to God's call of loving others and respecting the dignity of the human body. We aim to:

- promote a Catholic vision of sexuality that reflects selfless love, respect and commitment within a moral, social, spiritual framework;
- help young people appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness as children of God;
- enable young people to appreciate sexuality as a gift from God;
- promote an appreciation of the value and sanctity of human life and the wonder of life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death;
- value the gifts of marriage and the family, and to persevere in a love strengthened by the virtues of generosity, commitment, fidelity and patience;
- understand marriage as the sacramental sign of God's love for his Church;
- enable young people to grow in holiness by acting responsibly and generously towards others;
- value the concept and qualities of consent in relationships and understand the law in relation to consent;
- recognise that compassion, forgiveness, mercy and tolerance are essential dispositions to develop within relationships;
- Understand that being single and chaste is a virtuous, positive and fulfilling option;
- promote respect for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender or creed;
- encourage the young to witness to human dignity at all times online;
- encourage the young to see social media as another tool to reach people with the message that sexuality is a gift from God, not to be squandered and abused.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

In line with the school's ethos, as well as DENI and CCEA guidelines, the Relationships and Sexuality Curriculum attempts to enable pupils to:

- realise that relationships can cause strong feelings and emotions including sexual attraction;
- Know the features of positive and stable relationships (including trust, mutual respect, honesty, equality and those of unhealthy relationships including imbalance of power, coercion, control, exploitation, abuse of any kind);

- help pupils cope with the breakdown of a relationship and the effect of change, including loss, separation, divorce and bereavement;
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, and the skills for building and maintaining self-esteem;
- acquire and develop an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality and development;
- cope with the social, physical and emotional challenges of growing up;
- understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility and sexually transmitted infections and diseases;
- value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- understand different family structures, and the diversity of family life;
- recognise the need for self-control and the importance of the virtue of chastity;
- explore the moral and ethical issues surrounding sexuality;
- recognise peer pressure and have strategies to manage it;
- recognise the need for online safety;
- recognise the impact of drugs and alcohol on choices and sexual behaviour;
- be aware that the media portrayal of relationships may not reflect real life and understand the possible impact of this on people's expectations of relationships;
- help young people to become aware of the pervasive prevalence of pornography on the internet which can destroy and degrade human sexuality and relationships and reduce people to objects for gratification.

SKILLS PROMOTED

Pupils will develop the ability to:

- Form and maintain healthy, positive relationships which reflect the dignity of the human person;
- Make sound judgements and choices;
- Manage emotions and conflict with sensitivity and dignity;
- Develop essential communication skills and critically evaluate a wide range of information, attitudes and values;
- Develop strategies to respond appropriately to unhealthy or abusive situations and to be able to access support for oneself or others at risk;
- Develop skills that will challenge sexist, homophobic, disablist, or racist language;
- Evaluate the impact of alcohol and drugs use on decision-making,
- Develop coping strategies that encourage positive mental health and build resilience against unwanted pressures.

INCLUSION

In St Patrick's Academy, our aim is to ensure that RSE is sensitive to the different needs of the individual pupils in respect to maturity, ability and personal circumstances and is delivered in a way that does not subject our pupils to discrimination. RSE lessons will help our pupils to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, such as bullying or prejudice-based language, and to know how to respond and ask for help.

DELIVERING RSE

RSE will be delivered to all pupils through a blend of formally-taught programmes, use of guest speakers and presentations by external agencies. Since we are a co-educational grammar school, pupils will be taught in mixed gender classes, however, we will facilitate the delivery of specific topics in single gender groups as and when required.

RSE shall be taught within the context of the Catholic ethos with emphasis on respect for human dignity, marriage and family. The programme shall seek to develop awareness and understanding of different viewpoints, relevant scientific information and, also the law in relation to RSE issues. The school aims to provide young people with a balanced programme that allows them to explore and understand different viewpoints but that also promotes Catholic Teaching with respect to RSE.

RSE teaching resources will reflect the ethos of our school, be age-appropriate, accurate and sensitive to the needs of the pupils. Resources include:

- PD Booklet/Schemes of work for Years 8 – 11;
- N-Sync programme for KS3;
- CCEA LLW textbook for GCSE;
- Materials produced by relevant NGOs;
- Fully Alive 1, 2 & 3 for KS3 Religious Studies;
- GCSE Religious Studies “An Introduction to Christian Ethics”.

The establishment of clear, professional boundaries is of paramount importance from the outset as the delivery of RSE will require trust, positive regard for pupils and mutual respect at all times. The teacher will set clear expectations, goals and learning objectives at the beginning of each lesson and will employ a range of teaching strategies including debate, discussion, role-play and brainstorming.

Where appropriate, outside agencies and professionals may be accessed e.g. ACCORD, Life NI, Love for Life. Guest speakers will be approved by the Principal and/or RSE coordinator after a preliminary visit and discussion of ethical/practical considerations of their presentations. Prior to any visit, resource materials to be used in these presentations should be checked to ensure they are in line with the school’s ethos and rooted in Catholic principles and practice. Parents will be made aware of such visits in advance and a teacher will be present at all times during the presentation.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELIVERY

The programme will be led by a cross-curricular working party comprising of specialists from different areas of the curriculum. RSE will be delivered by a wide range of staff including form tutors, class teachers, PD specialists and the RE department. The programme will be supported by:

- The Trustees who will maintain oversight of ethos of the school;
- The Board of Governors who will ensure that the school has an RSE Policy in place and who will approve the completed policy prior to its implementation. They will seek to accommodate the differing religious and cultural beliefs of staff and pupils while fulfilling their responsibility of ensuring adequate RSE provision for all pupils;
- The Principal and Senior Leadership Team will ensure that there is co-ordinated approach to RSE that is in keeping with the ethos of the school. The Principal and Vice-Principal will consult and update the Board of Governors, staff and parents and other professionals, as and when required.
- The RSE Working Party will ensure that the Policy is delivered in accordance with the school’s ethos. They will consult with the Principal/Vice-Principal before booking guest

speakers, liaise with staff, parents and other relevant personnel, attend in-service training, organise staff training and disseminate appropriate information to other staff members.

Linked Documents

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Homework Policy
- I.C.T. Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Pastoral Care/Personal Development Policy
- Period Dignity Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Professional Boundaries in Teacher-Pupil Relationships Policy
- RE Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- School Trips Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Principal, RSE Working Party and Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff and for publication on the school website.

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Board of Governors during term one of 2022.

Date of Policy: June 2022

Date of next review: June 2024