



WELLINGTON COLLEGE BELFAST

Relationships & Sexuality Education  
Policy

Reviewed by Board of Governors June 2020

## Introduction

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a statutory element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. DENI circulars 2001/15, 2001/15a, 2001/15b, 2010/01 and circular 2013/16 and 2015/22 with the Guidelines produced by CCEA, including 'Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance- An Update for Post-Primary Schools' (CCEA, 2015), were used as a basis for this policy.

Relationships & 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 College is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, and RSE plays an integral part. Sexuality is an inherent part of being human. The College believes that the development of healthy sexuality is a right for all young people. We believe that all young people who attend our school have a right to education that will help them develop the knowledge and skills to enable them to make informed decisions about their sexual expression in a way that:

- Keeps them safe
- Respects their individual beliefs
- Shows respect for others
- Helps them develop and manage personal and sexual relationships

## Aims

The aims of RSE are:

- To provide positive, purposeful, safe and structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality and to explore issues around relationships and gender which will enable them to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- 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.
- To provide pupils with the information and skills to evaluate critically the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today.
- To encourage pupils to avoid behaviours which could be harmful to themselves and/or others.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the young people in the College.
- To provide an environment in which young people can discuss relationships in a secure and controlled environment.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral and social framework.

- To develop among skills of ‘empowerment’, decision-making and assertiveness which may be needed to process society’s pressures.
- To provide accurate information and if necessary to correct misunderstandings pupils may have gained from their peers.
- To educate young people on how to keep themselves safe in the digital world.
- To promote better understanding of diversity and inclusion, encouraging values of respect for difference, while encouraging pupils to challenge prejudicial attitudes.

## Morals and Values Framework

Mindful of the Christian principles on which the College was founded and the diverse 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
- non-exploitation in relationships
- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships
- an exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships
- honesty with self and others
- a development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others
- an acknowledgement and understanding of diversity regarding religion, culture and sexual orientation

## Inclusion

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 attitude towards sex, 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
- explore sexual orientation and stereotyping from a range of perspectives

## 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.

- Teachers cannot promise confidentiality if a disclosure is made
- Teachers can provide all pupils with information about where and from whom, they can receive confidential advice and support
- Teachers should encourage young people, where possible, to discuss their concerns with parents or guardians.

In line with the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, teachers should inform the Designated Teacher for Child Protection of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk.

## The Role of the Teacher

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.

Only appropriate medical professionals should give medical advice to pupils.

Any disclosures that might suggest a pupil is at risk should be reported as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## Ground Rules for RSE

It is important to remember that all pupils have a right to age appropriate, accurate and objective information no matter how sensitive the issue is. There will be occasions when teachers will be required to exercise discretion in dealing with particularly explicit issues raised by individual pupils. It is not normally appropriate to deal with such issues with the whole class. It may be appropriate to discuss the pupil's concerns with the Pastoral staff alongside the parents, and if necessary, individually with the pupil.

No one (pupil or teacher) is allowed to ask or is expected to answer any personal questions.

No-one is forced to take part in a discussion. (Participants have the 'right to pass'.)

The use of proper terms for parts of the body and body functions is encouraged so that these terms are given a status and respectability.

Everyone's contribution will be valued and respected.

## The Use of External Agencies

When visiting speakers and external agencies are used in RSE, the College checks the aims, objectives, lesson plans and resources to ensure they are appropriate and support the ethos of the College. Visiting speakers will be given a copy of the RSE and Child Protection Policies and asked to adhere to them. The College will ensure that visitors are clear about the limits of confidentiality and that the Designated Teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected. Parents/guardians will be informed when an outside agency is being used. A teacher is present when a visitor is taking a class.

The current Relationships and Sex Education Programme is covered through:

- Curriculum subjects
- LLW
- Workshops
- Assemblies

The objectives and skills of the RSE are also reinforced by the positive climate and constructive everyday interactions between pupils and staff, both inside and outside the classroom.

At Key Stage 3, pupils have opportunities to:

- explore the qualities of relationships including friendship
- explore the qualities of a loving, respectful friendship
- develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios
- develop strategies to avoid and resolve conflict
- explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual activity

At Key Stage 4, three of the skills that pupils develop are:

- recognising, assessing and managing risk in a range of real-life contexts
- developing their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationship
- self-discipline regarding their sexuality

### RSE AT KS3 and KS4 in the Curriculum (see Appendix 1)

Many of the objectives and skills of RSE, such as decision making, problem solving and working with others, are part of every subject and so all staff contribute, directly or indirectly, to RSE.

Issues are presented in a way which is free from sensationalism and bias, and sensitively pitched to the pupils' needs and situations. Pupils are provided with a balanced and non-judgmental view which respects a range of religious and cultural beliefs and also the differing experiences and circumstances of our pupils.

**Science**, which is compulsory for all Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, offers opportunities to address many aspects of RSE. Although the emphasis is on factual, biological issues, pupils are encouraged to develop a responsible attitude to sexual behaviour.

**English** provides opportunities for pupils to explore and reflect on the various attitudes, values, beliefs and opinions which relate to themselves, their development, their relationships with others and family life. In addition, pupils can develop the use of appropriate vocabulary in different situations and practise communication skills.

**Home Economics** provides opportunities for pupils to consider the contribution of positive family relationships to the personal and social development of family members.

The **Religious Studies** curriculum addresses many aspects of the RSE Programme. It provides opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues, relate moral principles to their personal, social and family life, and identify and explore values and attitudes that influence behaviour. Pupils undertake a range of activities which promote self-respect and respect for others. They have opportunities to consider moral principles in relation to friendship, sexuality, preparation for marriage, single life and parenting based on Christian and other major world religions.

The **Personal Development Programme** provides opportunities for pupils to explore a range of issues including: individuality, self-respect and respect for others, peer pressure and media influences, values and attitudes about sexuality and personal implications. Pupils are helped to make informed and responsible decisions about relationships.

## PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The College recognises that parents/guardians have a major influence on all aspects of a young person's life, especially in the area of relationships and sexuality. The College endeavors to help support parents/guardians in this role. The RSE programme is accessible to pupil regardless of age, culture, disability, religion, sexual orientation or social background. It is tailored to the pupils' needs in terms of content, methodology and the resources used.

There is no statutory parental right to withdraw a child from RSE. The College, however, tries to take account of any parental concerns. It will, as far as possible, make alternative arrangements for any pupil whose parent/guardian requests exemption from specific RSE activities.

Where issues of a sensitive nature arise teachers encourage pupils to discuss these with their parents/guardians.

## APPENDIX 1

### Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

#### KS3 Relationships and Sexuality Education mapping exercise

Subject area	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
<b>Pastoral programme</b>	Being part of a Team Growing up/changes/health and well being Feelings and emotions All about you Anti-bullying Peer pressure Teenage years  Online Safety Talk	Online Safety Talk	Online Safety Talk
<b>Science/Biology</b>	Changes during puberty Reproductive structures in boys and girls (Sperm and ovum as a specialized cell) Fertilisation (sexual reproduction) Development and birth of a baby How twins are formed Needs of a baby in early years Contraception (basic-condoms, pill, surgery) Outline of sexually transmitted infections Agony aunt session – questionnaire to deal with misconceptions		
<b>Religious Studies</b>	‘All about me’ unit  Family relationships	Self esteem  Self-worth  Body image	Adolescence  Relationships and Sexuality
<b>Home Economics</b>	Family Structures Family roles and responsibilities	Effective parenting	Needs of family members (physical, social, emotional)

	Family relationships – resolving conflict	Needs of family members (physical, social, emotional and intellectual) – baby/infant and older adults	and intellectual) – adolescents – including body image and impact of media, peer pressure, relationships with family members
--	---	---	--

### KS4 & 5 Relationships and Sexuality Education mapping exercise

Curriculum area	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14
<b>Pastoral programme</b>	6-week programme on relationships and sexuality  Guest speaker from Relate  Talking about Consent (Nexus talk)	Talking about Consent (Nexus talk)		
<b>Biology</b>		Physical changes that occur during puberty Male and female reproductive systems, what happens during intercourse; the biological aspects of human fertility and conception The development of the child from conception to birth Factual information about types of contraception		

		Causes of infertility and IVF as a possible treatment; controversies associated with these techniques and their ethical implications Communicable diseases eg. HIV		
<b>Food &amp; Nutrition</b>	Nutritional needs at pre-conception and during pregnancy			
<b>Religious Studies</b>	<b>Non-exam</b> Sexual relationships Same sex relationships Marriage	<b>GCSE</b> Sexual relationships Same sex relationships Family Marriage and divorce Surrogacy	Surrogacy Same sex family	FGM Gender equality
<b>Government and Politics</b>				Feminism
<b>Sociology</b>			Gender differences in education Sexual harassment in schools Gender differences in the family	Gender differences in the media Gender differences in crime and the reporting of crime