



# RSE

## POLICY

Ratified by Board of Governors on \_\_\_\_\_

*Progress Through Partnership*

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## **Vision Statement**

To be an inclusive, caring School where childhood and community are valued; one, which inspires learning for life and develops the personal qualities needed to succeed in a rapidly changing World. This vision will be best realised as we undergo a continual journey of collaboration and progress through partnership.

## **Mission Statement**

**We believe that each child will succeed through experiencing quality in:**

- ☐ A broad and challenging curriculum
- ☐ Innovative teaching and an investigative approach to learning
- ☐ A stimulating learning environment
- ☐ An enriching programme of extra-curricular activities and visits
- ☐ A rich, varied and up-to-date range of learning resources
- ☐ An ethos of support, challenge and encouragement to succeed
- ☐ Learning partnerships between the school, home and parish community

**We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by:**

- ☐ Striving for continuous improvement in all that we do
- ☐ Working collaboratively towards common goals

## **Aims for the Pupils**

St. Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit (Annaclone), promote high achievement and learning for life by working with the staff and children to:

- ☐ Develop enquiring minds and a spirit of curiosity
- ☐ Promote well-being and the importance of a healthy work/life balance
- ☐ Encourage excellence and the development of new skills
- ☐ Ensure the children in our school are immersed in their community but are also forward facing and expansive in outlook
- ☐ Achieve their highest standards in all areas of the curriculum
- ☐ Have high self esteem – respecting themselves, others and the environment by our positive approach to behaviour thus ensuring that each individual is motivated to do his/her best
- ☐ Utilise and provide opportunities to develop their thinking skills enabling them to work independently or collaboratively
- ☐ Be an integral part of the Parish community – one which fosters a faith commitment to Christ and prepares pupils for a fuller participation in the life of the Church
- ☐ Seek to extend themselves in mind, body and spirit



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- ❑ Become highly motivated life-long learners
- ❑ Gain advanced technological skills and an awareness of Global Issues
- ❑ Be flexible and adaptable for the modern world

**Our School Values:**

- **Happiness and enjoyment**
- **Effort, attitude and perseverance**
- **Team, school and community spirit**
- **Honesty, fairness and trustworthiness**
- **Respect and tolerance**
- **Politeness, kindness and caring**
- **High standards of behavior**
- **Partnerships and collaboration**



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## Ethos of the School

St Colman's Primary School sets out to create a caring and supportive environment, where all children can develop intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially, morally and spiritually.

In addition, the delivery of the curriculum is designed to develop interest and motivation in children using enthusiastic teaching and interesting, relevant learning activities.

- Children are encouraged to achieve high standards and are given as much help as they may need in order to achieve success.
- There are many extra curricular activities that encourage co-operation and discipline through team games. Children are further encouraged through a variety of musical/dramatic productions to develop self-discipline.
- Within this context there is a code of discipline that is consistently enforced to ensure that the education of children takes place in an orderly and caring environment.
- Through continual monitoring of individual children's achievements, class teachers provide work pitched at a level that challenges each child yet does not frustrate.
- Good relationships within the School are vital. The staff set an example by working well together with a harmony of purpose and providing an interesting and caring environment within their classrooms.
- As part of the pastoral dimension of the School, children are taught how to care for others, to respect other people's points of view and to respect property. Children are encouraged to contribute to charity and to help people who are less fortunate than themselves.
- **We are** a Catholic maintained co-educational school seeking to promote throughout the school community an ethos, which reflects Christian teaching and values
- **We see** the school as part of the wider community, responsible to it and providing an important community service. We take seriously our links with the community and encourage the involvement and interests of parents and others in the welfare of individual children and the school as a whole.
- **We seek** to provide an excellent educational service – one that is planned and developed to the highest professional standards so that each pupil may benefit to the full.



## **RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY**

### **Rationale**

The area of PDMU has two separate strands, the first is personal development of young people and second encouraging mutual understanding. St Colman's Primary School is committed to the educational 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. In the Northern Ireland Primary School Curriculum, one of the areas of learning is Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). An integral part of the PDMU curriculum is the provision of RSE. As a Catholic school, St. Colman's Primary School advocates the promotion of a 'Personal Development' approach to RSE whereby children in our care are given the skills to help them resist peer and media pressure, and make informed decisions based on their own internal self-respect and self-esteem. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their individual needs to respecting the needs and wants of others. RSE is a lifelong process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values.

### **Background and Aim**

Relationships and sexuality is a major issue for our young people. There has been a disturbing rise in young people's sexual activity and the number of underage pregnancies as well as STIs, partly as a result of contradictory messages from the media. Men and women are promoted as sexual objects and engaging in sexual activity appears to carry no responsibility or consequence. Little consideration is given to the complex set of emotions and interactions required to sustain a healthy, loving relationship.

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.



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Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework
- examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect
- build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves, others and the way they live their lives

## **AIMS**

The aims of RSE are to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child;
- help the child develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships;
- foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework
- promote responsible behavior and the ability to make informed decisions;
- help the child come to value family life and marriage;
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self;
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth;
- develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others;
- understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts;
- develop an awareness of differing family patterns;
- develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts;
- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity



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- develop personal skills which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships;
- develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse;
- acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction;
- acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development

### **SKILLS**

The RSE curriculum 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:

- practical skills for everyday living; for supporting others; for future parenting;
- communication skills - learning to listen, listening to others points of view; putting one's own view forward clearly and appropriately; giving and receiving feedback; handling and resolving conflict peacefully; being assertive;
- decision-making and problem-solving skills for sensible choices made in the light of relevant information; making moral judgements about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgements into practice; acting responsibly and with initiative as an individual or as a member of a variety of groups;
- inter-personal skills for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader.

### **MORALS AND VALUES**

RSE should enable pupils to clarify what they believe and why they believe it and develop a respect for and interest in the beliefs of others. Pupils need opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how they affect them, and others.

Children should be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- a respect for self;
- a respect for others;
- non-exploitation in relationships;
- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships;
- mutuality in relationships;
- honesty with self and others;
- a development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others;
- an exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships;
- compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life;
- self-discipline.



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## **THE SCHOOL ETHOS**

The ethos of our school is founded on 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.

This policy reflects the ethos of our school.

## **Parental Partnership & Background of framework**

We recognise that parents have the prime responsibility for bringing up their children and that no school programme can be a substitute for their role in educating for love. As a school, we will therefore seek to ensure that our RSE programme complements and builds on the foundations laid by parents.

The effectiveness of this policy and its implementation is dependent on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents/carers, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has distinctive contributions to make.

The delivery of RSE must prepare pupils to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner and should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles.

The materials used in school were devised by St Mary's University College, Diocesan advisors and school principals and teachers. They link closely with the Religious Education programmes ***Alive-O/Grow In Love*** and are cumulative, built upon each year, to help provide a firm foundation for building positive relationships.

Department of Education Circulars providing advice on developing or reviewing their RSE policy is provided in:

- Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Circulars 2001/15a and 2001/15b
- Circular 2013/16
- Circular 2015/22 Relationships and Sexuality Education

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



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In primary schools, RSE builds, in a developmentally appropriate way, on children's existing knowledge and experience of their bodies, relationships and the world around them. RSE and Health Education are complementary since both emphasise the development of a positive self-image, and a respect for self and for others, as well as the provision of appropriate and accurate information.

An RSE programme for primary schools should provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- themselves as unique human beings;
- their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth;
- their friendships and relationships with others; and
- the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur at puberty.

## **MEETING THE NEEDS OF PUPILS**

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the RSE programme should be developmental, accessible and be 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.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy.
- The Safeguarding Team coordinates the school's approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, and health professionals.
- The staff provide a link and have a complementary role with parents/carers and deliver the school's RSE programme within the context of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

## **CONTENT / DETAIL**

RSE will be 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 be ever 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.

Pupils should also have the opportunity to provide feedback about the content of the programme of RSE delivered by the school so that it can be responsive to their needs.



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**CURRICULUM ORGANISATION and DELIVERY**

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in St. Colman's Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of the Health Education curriculum, PDMU, RE, the World Around Us, PE, Drama 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 a 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.
- Naming parts of the body (basic) - developing an agreed language for our bodies.
- Being myself - I am unique, 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 what I do for them.
- Friendships, getting on with each other, for example, communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating and sharing.
- Ageing- how do we know that things are alive, dead, young and old.
- Loss and mourning - death of a person or a pet. (Note: the situations of the pupils should be taken into account prior to introducing this topic.)
- Respect and caring for family members and friends, for example, caring for a new baby.



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- Bullies and what to do about them.
- Personal safety - simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety.
- The difference between good and bad touches.
- 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.

**Primary One Overview**

- To appreciate that I am a boy/girl
- To know that I belong to a family
- To learn that Jesus was part of a family
- To realise that I am special

**Primary Two Overview**

- To understand that I needed help with everything when I was a baby
- To recognise how I have grown and changed when I was a baby.
- To understand the developmental stages of babies such as crawling, walking, talking
- To appreciate that my family loves and cares for me
- To know that God chose Mary to be the mother of his son Jesus
- To know that Mary & Joseph loved and cared for Jesus

**Primary Three Overview**

- To appreciate that qualities are necessary for friendship and family
- To realise how a mother cares for her new baby



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- To know that Jesus helped Mary & Joseph at home
- To realise that we too can help at home

### **Primary Four Overview**

- To recognise that an angel told Mary she would be the mother of Jesus and to tell Joseph he would be the one to care for them
- To know that Jesus grew in Mary's womb – 'a special place where a new baby grows'
- To learn vocabulary associated with pregnancy and birth, words such as birth, labour, pregnant, womb and delivery through story
- To appreciate that a new baby is a gift from God

## **KEY STAGE 2**

### **Myself**

- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy.
- The physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty (girls and boys).
- Myself and my peers - different rates of growth and physical development, maturity.
- Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Feelings, for example, things that make me happy, sad, excited, embarrassed, angry, scared; expressing our feelings, showing love and affection.
- Gender roles.
- 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.

### **My Relationships**

- Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values.



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- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's views, emotions and feelings.
- Families and how they behave - what family members expect of each other.
- 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.
- The meaning of relationships within families, between friends and in the community.
- Behaviour - what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate physical contact.
- Identifying dangers and risks within relationships.
- 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.
- Cultural differences in families and family relationships.
- Helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different circumstances.
- Messages and images about health, gender roles and sexuality from the media, family and peers.

**Primary Five Overview**

- To appreciate the uniqueness of each person and that we are all created in the image and likeness of God
- To realise that it is important to prepare responsibly for new life
- To know the stages of development between birth and two years
- To revise the sacrament of Baptism as becoming part of God's family

**Primary Six Overview**



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- To recognise significant moments in our lives to date
- To realise that our bodies change as we grow
- To appreciate the values of friendship in our lives
- To identify negative behaviour and how it affects other people

## **Primary Seven Overview**

- To appreciate the presence of God in our lives as we grow and change
- To understand the importance of accepting and respecting each other just as we are
- To make children aware that they are influenced by many different people and things
- To know that I can be a positive or negative influence to others
- To help make informed decisions about their lives
- To enable children to face future changes with confidence

### **SELECTION OF TEACHING RESOURCES**

The selection of teaching resources should 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;
- encouraging consideration of a range of issues, attitudes and beliefs pertinent to the topics covered;

In St.Colman's 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.



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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; and
- need to be aware and take account of the current youth culture.

**Confidentiality and Child Protection/Safeguarding Children**

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, Child Protection/Safeguarding Children procedures will be implemented.

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 child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. A key rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions. It is equally important that the teacher shares this right and never feels obliged to impart information about his/her own personal life. However:

- **teachers cannot promise confidentiality.** A child does not have the right to expect that incidents in the classroom or in the wider context of the school will not be reported, as appropriate, to his or her parents/carers and/or the principal. (Refer to our Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy).
- the principal or designated teacher for Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, the child must be told, sensitively, that the matter must be reported to the appropriate agencies. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy.
- teachers can 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. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of the parents/carers;
- there will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or by a group of pupils. An initial judgement will need to be made about whether or not it is appropriate to deal with the issues with the whole class. The teacher may wish to discuss the issues with the parents/carers to see how they would like the matter to be



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handled. Teacher colleagues or a member of the school's Leadership Team/Safeguarding Team might also provide useful guidance. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents/carers;

- teachers are not medical professionals and will not give detailed personal medical advice to any pupil. Only doctors and health professionals should give medical advice to pupils;
- Teachers encourage young people, where possible, to discuss their concerns with parents/carers.

**WITHDRAWAL FROM RSE**

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parent/carer concerns.

**SACREDNESS OF LIFE**

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of RSE teaching.

**SPECIFIC ISSUES**

There will be no direct teaching of issues such as homosexuality, AIDS, 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.

**STAFF TRAINING**

Training needs will be considered and will be accessed using the 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.

**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:



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- Pastoral Care Policy
- Personal Development Curriculum Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Misuse of Substances/Drugs Education Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Storage and Administration of Medication policy



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