

Rosstulla School
‘Together Towards Tomorrow’
Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy Key Stage 3/4

Rationale

In the Northern Ireland Curriculum, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory component of Personal Development. RSE is an essential element of Personal Development. In the context of our society, we acknowledge that students will be receiving messages regarding sexuality through the media- including the internet. These messages may conflict with those we wish to promote through school. Therefore, accounting for the vulnerability of many of our students, we endeavour to provide clear and accurate information which will prepare students for adult life.

School Ethos

To provide a happy secure and stimulating environment in which each individual is valued and afforded the opportunity to develop to his/her full potential. The ethos of the school is reflected in the school aims.

Values Rosstulla is promoting

- Respect for self and others
- Honesty with self and others
- Self-discipline
- Commitment, trust and bonding within relationships.

RSE is concerned with the special relationships between self and others and the experiences that influence the development of self-respect, self-esteem and our interactions with each other.

Purposes

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of the student.
- To help the student develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships.
- To promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework.
- To help prepare the student for adult life.

Specific Issues:

The status of the family

While being sensitive to the variety of home arrangements from which students come, emphasis will be on the value of commitment in marriage/long term relationships as the basis for stable family life in the caring and nurturing of the individual and the promotion of respect, loyalty, tolerance and the valuing of self and others.

Sensitive issues

Sensitive issues such as family planning, contraception, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases and sexual health issues will be addressed within the RSE programme as deemed appropriate for the maturity level of the individual students. Within this context emphasis will be placed on the rights and responsibilities of the individual with regards to such issues as health, personal safety and self-protection. The programme will acknowledge different lifestyles and foster respect and tolerance for individuals regardless of gender, culture or sexual orientation- teachers will counteract prejudice (legal obligation for teachers) and support the development of self esteem and a sense of responsibility in every student.

Promoting Equal Opportunities

Students have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life.

Age Appropriate Information

Young people will be provided with appropriate factual information and will have opportunities to discuss their feelings and concerns. RSE should help students to be better able to manage the emotional and physical changes at puberty.

Coping with Life's Challenges

During Key Stages 3 and 4 for some young people this may be marked by the first significant experiences of sexual attraction, by boyfriend/ girlfriend relationships and by the experience of falling in and out of love. For some students there is greater freedom, increased responsibility, and exposure to a bewildering variety of messages about sexuality and gender issues. RSE can help students deal with these challenges.

Sexuality and Sexual Health

RSE can help to promote a positive view of sexuality and sexual health by helping young people to feel good about themselves, to respect others and to be able to make safe, responsible and satisfying relationships.

Supporting Communication

'Many students cannot or are unwilling to talk to their parents about growing up and about sexual matters.' (CCEA, 2007, p.13). RSE can offer information and provide opportunities to consider feelings and concerns within a secure environment.

Challenging Inappropriate and Unwanted Attention

'While it is recognised that some students will have experienced sexual abuse, this is not a reason for avoiding education about relationships and sexuality.' (CCEA, 2007, p.13). Sensitive, effective teaching enables students to challenge inappropriate and unwanted attention from others.

Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections

'Northern Ireland has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Europe, with approximately 650 babies born each year to young women under 20 years. The incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continues to rise.' (CCEA, 2007, p.13). Teaching about safer sex remains one of the key strategies in combating the spread of STIs- including knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

Boys and Young Men

'Health, education and social services professionals have also identified that the current provision may not address sufficiently the experiences and concerns of boys and young men.' (CCEA, 2007, p.13). RSE will be provided for and made relevant to the needs of our male students.

Guidelines

Consultation Process: RSE Policy and Resources

- Co-ordinator to consult with Principal, staff and EA PD Advisor.
- Consult and inform parents.
- Consult and inform Board of Governors.

The Rights and Responsibilities of Parents

- Parents will be encouraged to recognise their responsibility in supporting the aims of the RSE Policy.
- There is no statutory parental right to withdraw a child from RSE- however; Rosstulla will endeavour to take account of any parental concerns expressed.
- Rosstulla will make alternative arrangements for any student whose parent wishes him/her to be excused from particular, or all, RSE classes.
- Parents have the right at any time to contact Mrs. C Gordon with any queries they may have or opportunities to view resources.

Providing Advice to Young People Under 16 Years

- Teachers may provide all young people with information about where, and from whom, they can receive confidential advice, treatment and support including Counselling Service in school. **Personal medical advice not to be given to individual students. Teachers to advise students to seek advice from parents or medical practitioners.**
- Students to be reminded that the legal age of consent in Northern Ireland is 16 years.

Sexual Abuse

Refer to Department of Education's booklet *Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (Circular 1999/10)*. Teachers who can deliver RSE with ease and comfort may demonstrate to young people that they are adults who can be confided in. However, they must make explicit statutory provision regarding disclosure of abuse.

Confidentiality in the Classroom

Refer to Department of Education's booklet *Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (Circular 1999/10)*.

- Student's right to privacy respected at all times- teacher to make it clear in advance of any discussion that no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions.
- Teachers should not promise confidentiality.

Confidentiality and Child Protection

Should a student seeking counselling on sexual matters approach a member of staff, or should there be concerns with regard to sexual matters, the matter will be referred to the designated teacher (Mrs Fryers) or her deputy (Mrs. Sloan) for Child

Protection. The designated teacher or her deputy will then act in accordance with the guidance, as outlined in the school Child Protection Policy.

Taking/releasing student for the morning after pill

Should a girl disclose that she has had unprotected sex the night before, and request to be released from school, she will be referred directly to Mrs. Fryers/Mrs. Sloan who will act in accordance with school's Child Protection Policy.

Use of visitors and other resources

All resources, whether human or material (books, videos, TV programmes, internet sites etc.) must be vetted before use to ensure that they are consistent with this policy and the school's ethos:

- Prior to any visit the agency/individual must be made aware of the content of the school's RSE, Confidentiality and Child Protection policies.
- The activities undertaken will form an integral part of the RSE programme as directed by the teacher.
- The suitability of outside agencies and individuals will be vetted e.g. contact with advisor or schools which have used them in the past.
- School will ensure that invited speakers have a clear understanding of the expected learning outcomes and of the age, ability, maturity and confidence level of the students. A teacher will be present at the lessons/talks.
- Written consent will be sought from parents/ guardians having provided them with relevant information about content of proposed programme.

These guidelines are translated into action through other policies and procedures for example:

Child Protection; Personal Development; Home Economics; Religious Education and Emotional Intelligence initiative.

Implementation

Teaching RSE

RSE will be delivered through the Personal Development curriculum. The Personal Development co-ordinator, will work closely with staff responsible for delivering other areas of the curriculum where RSE issues may be addressed e.g. Religious Education, Home Economics, Science and Emotional Intelligence initiative. RSE may be delivered to small groups of students, withdrawn for work in specific areas e.g. based on level of emotional maturity. The use of proper terms for parts of the body and bodily functions will be encouraged throughout the programme. Teaching methods and strategies will allow students to be actively involved in the process of their own learning. Substitute teachers must not teach RSE.

Monitoring and evaluating

- Staff, parents and Board of Governors will be involved in the monitoring and evaluating process.
- The aims and delivery of the programme will be monitored, evaluated and redrafted accordingly.

- Feedback from teachers and students will be sought.
- Evidence of students' learning- e.g. samples of work.

Staff training

Appropriate training from CASS, other outside agencies and INSET as and when necessary, both for individuals and whole staff. The designated co-ordinator will support staff.

Reference

CCEA (2007) *Personal Development at Key Stage 3- A Guide for Teachers and Co-ordinators*, Belfast, CCEA

C Gordon & R. Wright (January 2016)