



# St. Patrick's College Maghera



Policy Name: Relationships and  
Sexuality Education

Date of Issue: 03 / 03 / 2015

Review Date: 13 / 06 / 2018

Approved by Board of Governors:

Date of Approval: / / 2018

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## Context

At St. Patrick's College we recognise and fully respect that parents have the primary duty and right to be the first and principal educators of their children. We see ourselves as supporting and helping parents to fulfil this responsibility.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is primarily about human relationships, and has moral, ethical and religious dimensions. The attitude, beliefs and behaviour of pupils in all their relationships are primarily formed, and greatly influenced, by their experiences within the family and the relationship they have with their parents/guardians. As a Catholic College, the primacy of Catholic teaching on all matters of spiritual and moral development will be foremost in any taught classes and in any external provision organised by the College.

## Parental involvement

At St Patrick's College we regard RSE as a shared responsibility between the College and parents.

An outline of the RSE Programme will be disseminated to parents in Year 8 and copies of the policy and programme are available to parents upon request. The teaching offered by the College is intended to reinforce positive family relationships and the role of parents, highlight the importance of marriage between man and woman as a sacrament, and encourage students towards a healthy and Christian approach to all relationships.

## Rationale

- (i) We carried out an audit of the existing RSE programmes and policies within the school in December 2014 in order to find out if our current provision conforms to the Department of Education's Circulars 2001/15, 2013/16 June 2013, and the Guidance for Post-Primary Schools issued by CCEA in August 2001. We also wanted to assess the relevance of existing programmes in terms of meeting the needs of our pupils and the wider community.

The following departments contribute to the delivery of the required content of RSE:

- a. Religious Studies
- b. Science
- c. Home Economics/Child Development
- d. Personal Development

- (ii) Using a resource produced by CCEA (CCEA RSE Guidelines, pages 49-53) we consulted all members of the teaching staff to help us review curricular provision in RSE during Key Stages 3 and 4. All members of the teaching staff were provided with the opportunity to complete a questionnaire on current policy and practice in December 2014.



- (iii) The DENI Circular 2001/15 states that, "RSE is included on a statutory basis within the NI Curriculum through the Science Programme of Study and the Health Education Cross-curricular theme." The Circular acknowledges that important contributions in RSE come from: Physical Education, English, Home Economics, PD and Religious Education."
- (iv) RSE will be taught in mixed groups.

## Aims

RSE is taught within the moral, social and spiritual framework that reflects the beliefs and ethos of a Catholic school. In line with the College ethos the following is a list of the aims which the College intends to address through RSE:

The Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme aims to:

- help young people to appreciate their uniqueness and dignity as sons and daughters of God,
- help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships,
- promote a Christian vision of sexuality i.e. a vision that promotes unselfish love respect and commitment,
- help young people understand that sexuality is a gift from God that encompasses the whole person, body, mind, emotions and soul,
- promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationships with others,
- prepare the students for adult relationships within a catholic moral setting that will ensure the development of responsible and healthy behaviour in all friendships and relationships,
- promote knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, human reproduction,
- help young people understand that marriage is a sacrament and that sexual intercourse is an expression of married love; and
- present accurate, factual information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner appropriate to the age and maturity of the students within the traditions and values of the college's catholic ethos.

## Morals and Values within the RSE Programme

RSE is not intended to be value free. It should be tailored to the age, maturity and understanding of pupils. The programme therefore aims to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, set within a clear framework of Christian values and an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the value of family, marriage and permanent loving relationships, and the responsibilities of parenthood. They should be helped to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, loyalty and fidelity.



They should be enabled to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour, and to accept that both sexes must behave responsibly in sexual matters.

The following key messages are promoted through the RSE programme:

- that information of a sexual nature is not permission to act on it,
- the deferment of sexual activity until marriage,
- an appreciation of the value of family life, marriage, permanent loving relationships and the responsibilities of parenthood,
- recognition that sexual abstinence outside of marriage and fidelity within it is a positive and desirable option which is an achievable reality to which young people can aspire,
- compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care are available when people do not conform to the ideals of Christian sexual relationships,
- an appreciation that friendships and relationships should be based on self and mutual respect, non-exploitation, honesty, trust and commitment; and
- within relationships there should be a recognition that rights, duties and responsibilities are involved.
- Young people need to be able to identify dangers and become aware of strategies that they can use to protect themselves from sexual danger or abuse (including CSE and FGM)

## Organisation

The Senior Leadership Team will support the provision and development of RSE in line with this policy by providing leadership and adequate resourcing.

The Programme is co-ordinated by the RSE Coordinator in conjunction with the Deputy Director for Religious Studies. In partnership with all teachers involved in delivering the RSE programme, monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and relevance of the programme will take place on an on-going basis. This group will take into account feedback received from pupils, teachers and parents.

## Methodology

The RSE programme is largely taught through Religious Studies and Personal Development, with clear curricular links to units of work in Science, Home Economics, and PE.

Teaching and learning of the programme is based on a wide range of strategies including whole class teaching, group work, brainstorming, role play, audio-visual materials, discussion and involvement of outside speakers and qualified professionals in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the College. The delivery of RSE within the



classroom is at all times appropriate to the maturity and level of understanding of the children concerned, taking into account the personal and emotional circumstances of individual pupils, and their specific learning needs.

## Programme of Study

Pupils undertake a coherent programme of study in RSE from Year 8 -12, and as part of the College's Pastoral and Religious Studies programmes in Sixth Form. Assemblies and retreats are used as a means to enhance the positive messages received through these programmes.

### Year 8

In Year 8 a 6 week RSE module is delivered through Religious Studies in Term 3. The module focuses on the following topics:

- It's good to be me
- Relationships
  - Types of relationships
  - Gender issues in relationships
- Coping with broken relationships
- Keeping me safe and issues relating to CSE
- Changes to my body
- Influences on me

In Science the focus is on identification of male and female body parts, acquisition of appropriate language, puberty, menstruation, pregnancy and the life of the embryo. These areas are taught in Term 2.

In Personal Development, the following topics are explored in Term 1:

- An awareness of what it is to be male and female
- Uniqueness and individuality
- My abilities, talents, strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities
- Responsibility
- Maintaining positive relationships with, e.g. friends, parents, other family members and teachers
- Considering peer and other influences
- Exploring morals and values in a variety of contexts and recognising the personal implications
- The differences between the various types of relationships, e.g. parents, siblings, other family members, peers, teachers, friends and acquaintances



- The factors influencing the different lifestyles of family, friends and acquaintances
- Different types of friendships, caring and loving relationships, e.g. parents, siblings , friends , neighbours, married couples, partners, work colleagues , acquaintances
- Establishing and maintaining relationships
- Possible sources of conflict and strategies for dealing with differences

The Year 8 Pastoral Programme builds on the work of Religious Studies in the areas of Friendship, Anti-Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Social Networking.

## Year 9

In Year 9 a 6 week RSE module is delivered through Religious Studies in Term 3. The module focuses on the following topics:

- Communication and Respect
- Keeping me safe and issues relating to CSE
- Social Media Communication
- Relationships
  - Types of relationships
  - Gender issues in relationships
- Dealing with feelings
- Friendship and love
- The stages of pregnancy
- Family life
- Dealing with separation

In Personal Development the following topics are explored in Term 2:

- My abilities, talents, strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities;
- Influences on me;
- Responsibility;
- My motivation, enthusiasms, interests, viewpoints, goals, degree of independence and responsibilities;
- Recognising feelings, moods and emotions (sometimes conflicting) and knowing the language to express these appropriately;
- Maintaining positive relationships with, e.g. friends, parents, other family members and teachers;
- Considering peer and other influences;
- Exploring morals and values in a variety of contexts and recognising the personal implications;



- The differences between the various types of relationships, e.g. parents, siblings, other family members, peers, teachers, friends and acquaintances;
- Possible sources of conflict and strategies for dealing with differences;
- Making informed and responsible decisions about personal and social relationships;
- Teenage Pregnancy.

As in Year 8, the Pastoral Programme builds on the work of RS in the areas of Friendship, Anti-Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Social Networking.

## Year 10

In Year 10 a 6 week RSE module is delivered through RS in Term 3. The module focuses on the following topics:

- Self esteem
- Relationships
  - Types of relationships
  - Gender issues in relationships
- Loving relationships/dating
- Keeping me safe:
  - Issues relating to CSE
  - Issues relating to FGM
- Sex outside marriage
- Teenage pregnancy

In Personal Development the following topics are studied in Term 3:

- Uniqueness and individuality
- My abilities. talents, strengths , weaknesses and vulnerabilities
- Influences on me, competing priorities.
- Responsibility.
- My motivation, enthusiasms, interests, viewpoints. goals, degree
- of independence and responsibilities
- Respecting myself, my self-esteem and self-confidence
- Maintaining positive relationships with, eg. friends, parents, other family members and teachers
- Considering peer and other influences
- Exploring morals and values in a variety of contexts and recognising the personal implications
- Establishing and maintaining relationships
- Possible sources of conflict and strategies for dealing with differences.



- Teenage pregnancy

As in Years 8 and 9, the Pastoral Programme builds on the work of RS in the areas of Friendship, Anti-Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Social Networking.

## Year 11

In Year 11 a 4 week RSE module is delivered through RS in Term 3. The module focuses on the following topics:

- Teenage Pregnancy (I am Jack Programme)
- Relationships
  - Types of relationships
  - Gender issues in relationships
- Building and ending relationships
- Sex and the media
- STIs
- Keeping me safe:
  - Issues relating to CSE
  - Issues relating to FGM
- Sexual harassment
- Roles and responsibilities of parenting
- Self-concept and managing change

In Term 1, Home Economics students study:

- The male and female reproductive systems,
- Sexual intercourse
- Biological aspects of human fertility and conception
- Specific stages in the development of the child from conception to birth
- Types of contraception
- Family issues – parenting, childcare, lifelong responsibility and the extended family
- Fostering and adoption

In Personal Development the following topics are explored:

- The differences between the various types of relationships, eg parents, siblings, other family members, peers, teachers, friends and acquaintances.
- Media messages about relationships
- Teenage pregnancy
- Single parents – positive and negative issues
- Divorce



The Year 11 Pastoral Programme focuses on the issues of Body image, Health and Drugs, Anti-Bullying, Emotional Intelligence and Cyber-Bullying.

## **Year 12**

RSE is addressed through the CCEA Programme of Study 'An introduction to Christian ethics', specifically Personal and Family issues. Through these topics students are given opportunities to examine issues surrounding relationships in terms of human sexuality and the sanctity of life. The core areas examined are:

- Sanctity of human life;
- Meaning and purpose of sexual relationships;
- Attitudes to homosexuality;
- Pre-marital sex;
- Marriage;
- Broken relationships.

These areas are addressed in the context of the development of a moral approach based on Catholic teaching.

Biology focuses on the following topics in Term 2:

- Physical and emotional changes that occur in males and females during puberty;
- Individual variation and rates of development;
- The male and female reproductive systems;
- Sexual intercourse;
- Human fertility and conception;
- Development of child from conception to birth;
- Stages of pregnancy;
- Types of contraception;
- Difference between HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission;
- Basic hygiene and risky behaviour;
- Safer sex practices in relation to STIs, HIV and AIDS;
- An awareness of what it is to be male and female;
- Uniqueness and individuality;
- Sharing, commitment, respect, rights and responsibilities within relationships.

The Year 12 Pastoral Programme focuses on the issues of Body Image, Health and Drugs, Anti-Bullying, Emotional Intelligence and Cyber-Bullying.

## **Sixth Form**

Through the General RE Programme a range of issues are explored including the impact of drug & alcohol abuse on relationships and moral choices.



The Pastoral Programme also addresses the issues of Friendships, Anti-Bullying, Emotional Intelligence, Cyber-Bullying, Depression, Drug Education and Body Image.

## **Specific Issues**

### **Equal opportunities**

'All pupils, male and female; have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, regardless of their age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, disability status, religion or social class.' (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998)

'Children/young people with special education needs have the same rights and needs as all pupils but the content and delivery of the RSE programme will be different...tailored to pupils' needs in terms of content, methodology and resources used.' (Guidance for Primary/Post-Primary Schools, CCEA pages 16/19)

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Materials will be adapted to meet the SEN of individual pupils and, where necessary, the particular needs of groups of pupils.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Heterosexual relationships will be presented as the main context for sexual intimacy, reflecting the Christian ethos of the College. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not to be treated differently on the grounds of their perceived sexual orientation. Antagonism/bullying or other forms of abuse against pupils who reveal that they are homosexual will not be tolerated. Respect for all people regardless of sexual orientation will be promoted in line with the ethos of the College that no pupils should be isolated on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

### **Confidentiality and Safeguarding Issues**

The pupil's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. A key rule agreed in advance of any discussion in class is that no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions.

Teachers cannot promise absolute confidentiality. Pupils should be made aware that a teacher has a moral and legal responsibility to inform the Principal or Designated Teacher for Safeguarding, if a pupil discloses information that suggests he/she is at risk of, or is actually suffering from any kind of abuse, e.g. physical, sexual emotional or neglect.



## Terminology

The use of the proper biological terms during RSE is encouraged. The use of slang words, or offensive words, often indicates embarrassment, lack of knowledge, and/or a lack of respect for self and others.

## Answering Pupils' Questions

Students are guided at the beginning of each RSE module in relation to appropriate and inappropriate behaviours during RSE. Personal or leading questions should not be answered in class, nor should questions in relation to issues that may be offensive to others. Where there is a genuine issue of a personal nature, pupils should be directed to discuss the issue with their parents or the school counsellor. If a question raises Safeguarding Issues, this should be referred to Designated Teacher for Safeguarding.

## Use of Visitors and Other Resources

In St. Patrick's College the involvement of outside agencies to compliment the delivery of RSE is encouraged. The following external agencies are used as part of the delivery of RSE:

- Mood Matters
- Love for Life
- Women's Aid
- Queen's University, Belfast (If I were Jack Pilot Programme)
- LBGT
- Pro – Life groups, e.g. Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child

In addition, the School Nurse may be referred to for advice.

There should be adequate preparation and appropriate follow-up lessons in relation to all guest speakers. The RSE Co-ordinator will ensure that resource materials obtained from other agencies, and presentations by outside speakers are in harmony with the ethos of the school.

## Related School Policies:

The Relationships and Sexuality Policy is set within the broader context of Pastoral Care, and as such should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- CRED



## Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the Deputy Director for Religious Studies and in partnership with all teachers involved in delivering the RSE programme, will be involved, on an on-going basis, in monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and relevance of the programme feedback received from pupils and teachers will be considered.

Evidence of pupils learning might include:

- Pupils' RSE workbooks
- Questionnaires
- Class Contracts – 'What's in, What's out'
- Pupil evaluations at the end of each unit of study.
- Reviewing a selection of pupils' work

The use of before-and-after questionnaires, to assess the effectiveness of some lessons, regarding pupils' knowledge of and attitudes to particular issues will be utilised.

## Staff Training

Staff training will be organised by the RSE Co-ordinator, in consultation with the Deputy Director for Religious Studies and the Senior Leadership Team

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Board of Governors

- Examine and approve policy.
- Review policy.

### Principal

- Consult governors, staff, parents, pupils and relevant professionals.
- Ensure the implementation of the programme.

### RSE Co-ordinator

- Establish team.
- Oversee the writing and ratification of the policy.
- Oversee the development of and delivery of all aspects of the programme.

### Deputy Director for Religious Studies

- Assist RSE Co-ordinator in above areas



## **Parents/ Guardians**

- Parents and Guardians will be fully informed about the RSE policy and the content of the programme, and may receive a copy of the policy on request. Parents/guardians are invited to an annual information evening at the beginning of Year 8 during which the content and ethos of RSE are disseminated.

## **Staff**

- All staff should be consulted and informed about the policy and the programme.
- A team will be set up to plan and implement the delivery of the programme.
- Appropriate time, training and resources will be made available to facilitate the delivery of the Programme
- Review of policy and practice will take place biennially, led by the RSE Co-Ordinator and Deputy Director for Religious Studies. The reviewed policy will be submitted to the Board of Governors.



# Appendix 1 - A Review of Curricular Provision in RSE

## KEY STAGES 3 & 4

DECEMBER 2014

SUBJECT \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the topics covered during Key Stages 3 & 4.

	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	TERM		
						1	2	3
<p><b>Growth and Development</b></p> <p>The physical and emotional changes that occur in males and females during puberty; individual variation and rates of development.</p>								
<p>Hygienic practices associated with the physical changes at puberty.</p>								
<p>The male and female reproductive systems, what happens during intercourse; the biological aspects of human fertility and conception.</p>								
<p>The development of the child from conception to birth, including understanding of the various stages of pregnancy.</p>								
<p>Factual information about the types of contraception.</p>								
<p>The difference between HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission, basic hygiene and risky</p>								



behaviour.								
	<b>Y8</b>	<b>Y9</b>	<b>Y10</b>	<b>Y11</b>	<b>Y12</b>	<b>TERM</b>		
						<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Safer sex practices in relation to STIs, HIV and AIDS.								
Factual information about abortion.								
The range of information, the services and support which are available from relevant agencies.								
<b>Sexuality</b>								
An awareness of what it is to be male and female.								
Equality and difference.								
Uniqueness and individuality.								
My abilities, talents, strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities.								
Influences on me, competing priorities.								
Responsibility.								
My stage of development, e.g. physical, emotional, academic, spiritual, emotional, moral and sexual.								
My motivation, enthusiasms, interests, viewpoints, goals, degree of independence and responsibilities.								
Equality and difference.								
Respecting myself, my self-esteem and self-confidence.								
Stereotyping and its								



influence on attitudes and behaviour.								
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	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	TERM		
						1	2	3
Media messages about male and female behaviour.								
Male and female perspectives on a range of issues.								
Sexual identity and orientation.								
Understanding the differences in sexuality and sexual relationships including the media messages.								
Values and attitudes about sexuality and sexual relationships, including media messages.								
Encouraging sensitivity towards different ways of life, beliefs and opinions.								
The range of information, the services and support which are available from relevant agencies.								
<b>Relationships</b>  <b>Adolescence</b>  Recognising feeling, moods and emotions (sometimes conflicting) and knowing the language to express these appropriately.								
Maintaining positive relationships with, e.g. friends, parents, other family members and teachers.								



	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	TERM		
						1	2	3
Considering peer and other influences.								
Exploring morals and values in a variety of contexts and recognising the personal implications.								
<b>Relationships</b>								
The differences between the various types of relationships, eg parents, siblings, other family								
The factors influencing the different lifestyles of family, friends and acquaintances.								
Different types of friendships, caring and loving relationships, e.g. parents, siblings, friends, neighbours, married couples, partners, work colleagues , acquaintances.								
Establishing and maintaining relationships.								
Abstinence as a positive option and an achievable reality.								
Appropriate and inappropriate relationships.								
Sexual abuse and the support available to young people.								
Sharing, commitment, respect, rights and responsibilities within relationships.								
Possible sources of conflict and strategies for dealing with differences.								
Media messages about relationships.								
Making informed and responsible decisions about personal and social relationships.								



	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	TERM		
						1	2	3
<b>Family issues, e.g. parenting, childcare, lifelong responsibility and the extended family.</b>								
Fostering and adoption.								
Teenage pregnancy.								
Single parents - positive and negative issues.								
Divorce.								
Gender roles, e.g. choices, prejudice, stereotyping.								



## Appendix 2 - RSE Questionnaire for Staff

December 2014

### 1. Are you aware of the College Policy on:

- The morals and values framework for the RSE Programme
- Confidentiality
- Procedures for inviting/using visitors
- Procedures for dealing with disclosure of sexual abuse

### 2. Are you involved in any aspect of the delivery of RSE

- Yes
- No - Proceed to Question 5

### 3. In your opinion, which areas of the RSE Programme are most successful?

### 4. Which areas of the RSE Programme could be improved?

### 5. Have you received any in-service training for RSE?

- Yes
- No

### 6. Which do you consider to be most important in the delivery of RSE?

- Preparing young people for healthy relationships
- Promotion of a Christian vision of sexuality
- Enhancement of self-esteem and well being
- The ability to make informed decisions
- Promotion of the value of family life and marriage
- Strategies to promote personal safety and health
- Other:

### 7. What are your main concerns about the delivery of RSE?



## Appendix 3 – Circulars and Guidelines

RSE Guidelines Guidance for Primary/Post-Primary Schools, CCEA

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/2001-15-3.pdf>

Department of Education's Circulars 2001/15, 2013/16 June 2013

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/2001-15.pdf>

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular\\_2013\\_16\\_-\\_rse.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular_2013_16_-_rse.pdf)

