



ANAHILT

Primary School

Relationships & Sexuality Education Policy (R.S.E.)

Policy Ratified: June 2017

Policy Reviewed: March 2025

New Review Date: March 2027

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY

(R.S.E.)

School Ethos:

In Anahilt Primary School our pupils are at the heart of everything we do. It is a happy and welcoming place where children's learning and personal development are central.

Set amidst the drumlins of County Down, the school has been in existence for over 200 years and we are very proud of our rich history. The school offers a happy, safe and caring environment in which pupils, parents and staff are valued. As a school we are committed to the well-being, happiness and success of all our pupils.

School Values:

At Anahilt Primary School **our shared vision** is **'Helping Children Think for Themselves.'** We aim to prepare children to make reasonable and informed decisions for life's challenges. Our **mission** is **'to develop the intellectual, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and social characteristics of children in order to enhance the quality of their lives, both in the present and in the future'**. The **aims** of the school are to ...

1. Provide a happy, safe and secure atmosphere in which learning is enjoyable and where children grow in confidence and interdependence.
2. Provide a bright, stimulating and welcoming environment in which the children take pride.
3. Promote a school where members of staff are caring and approachable.
4. Develop the characteristics of confidence and encourage creativity.
5. Help children develop a moral code in the context of the school, community and global society.
6. Develop children spiritually, making them aware of religious teaching and providing opportunities for collective worship.
7. Develop the intellect, by developing thinking, study and practical skills so that children can make full use of the learning environment to enable them to be better equipped for life within and beyond primary school.
8. Provide the children with educational experiences to include the NI Curriculum.
9. Help develop children physically.
10. Enter a partnership with parents/carers so that children can achieve their potential.

The **values** we wish to promote include:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • Confidence, independence and interdependence | Responsibility |
| • Respect | Trust |
| • Honesty | Perseverance |
| • Co-operation | Resilience |
| • Compassion | Self-discipline |

Rationale for a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy:

RSE is about building friendships, negotiating relationships and respecting each other as well as learning about health and safety and understanding the changes that occur as children grow. Learning about friendships, growing up and keeping safe are all important parts of RSE for primary school children and set the foundations for positive relationships in the teenage years and beyond. We live in a time where messages about relationships, gender differences and body image are often around us and the availability of digital media means children can access information and be exposed to certain pressures anytime and anywhere. Helping to equip children with skills to resist peer and media pressure and to make informed decisions based on their own values, is a crucial element of RSE. Anahilt Primary School is committed to the education of children which adequately prepares them for adult life and RSE plays an integral part in this education. We aim to work with parents to achieve this. (Refer to Appendix 2)

The Importance of RSE:

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. One of the 'Areas of Learning' (in the Northern Ireland Curriculum) is Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). An integral part of PDMU is the provision of RSE which is a **statutory** element of the curriculum. In Anahilt Primary School, the central focus of RSE is on the personal and emotional development of children, health and safety, relationships with others and the development of moral thinking, values and actions. RSE is essential if children are to value themselves as individuals and are to make responsible and well-informed decisions.

AIMS of RSE:

In line with our school ethos and CCEA guidelines, the Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum aims to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- help children develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships
- promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make well-informed decisions
- develop the children's awareness, understanding and appreciation of diversity
- prepare children to enable them to cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up

OBJECTIVES of RSE

In line with our school ethos and CCEA guidelines, the Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum attempts to enable pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of themselves
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth
- develop within pupils an appreciation of the uniqueness and well-being of others
- understand the nature and development of relationships
in wider contexts;
- develop personal skills which will help them to establish and sustain healthy relationships
- develop coping strategies to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse

- develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- help children foster respect for themselves and others
- develop skills to deal with peer pressure and influence others positively
- acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- make pupils aware of the social, physical and emotional challenges of growing up, to prepare them for adult life

SKILLS OF RSE:

The RSE Curriculum should enable pupils to develop the necessary skills 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 that exist. They need opportunities to develop:

- **practical skills** for everyday living, for supporting others and for the future.
- **communication skills**- learning to listen, listening to others' point of view; putting one's own view forward clearly and appropriately; giving and receiving feedback and handling and resolving conflict peacefully.
- **decision-making and problem-solving skills** – to make sensible choices 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 group.
- **Inter-personal skills** – for managing relationships confidently and effectively and for developing as an effective group member.

Approaches to Learning and Teaching RSE:

It is our intention that every pupil will feel valued in our school. Teachers will create a classroom environment which is supportive, where self-esteem is fostered and where pupils feel valued and affirmed. The atmosphere in the classroom should allow pupils to feel comfortable to express opinions and feelings in a secure and safe manner. RSE will be taught in an inclusive manner, and in a way that is appropriate to the child's emotional and physical age and stage of development. Children will be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages our school values (see pg 1). To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant, the programme will be developmental (*See Appendix 1 for specific details*). The RSE Curriculum will provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- themselves as unique human beings
- their feelings and emotions
- the importance of keeping healthy
- how to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments
- their friendships and relationships with others
- similarities and differences between people
- how to sustain their health, growth and well-being
- the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur at puberty (P7 only)

Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN):

Teachers in Anahilt Primary School will engage in the careful planning and adapting of resources and teaching activities as required to ensure that there are no barriers to participation or learning for pupils with SEN.

Provision:

RSE will be taught in a holistic, cross curricular way, which is at all times, appropriate to the maturity and understanding of the pupils. Teachers will be alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils in the class.

Anahilt Primary School will give P7 pupils opportunities to learn and understand how and why the body grows and develops. This knowledge forms part of the PDMU theme of *Health, Growth and Change*. Sessions will be included to explain the physical and emotional changes at puberty to both boys and girls in single gender groups. This will be taught by skilled professionals from an outside agency, in the latter part of Term 3 of Primary 7. Parents will be fully informed of the content prior to the sessions being delivered to the children.

Withdrawal from RSE:

We believe that as 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 and will respect the wishes of the parent or carer should they request withdrawal for their child/children. We will endeavour to organise supervision for those children who are withdrawn from certain aspects of the programme.

Engaging with Parents or Carers:

RSE is a lifelong process which begins in the home. We recognise that the home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a child's life, particularly in the sphere of RSE. Anahilt Primary School is mindful of this fact and we consider our role to be complementary to that of the parents or carers.

We aim to:

- inform P7 parents prior to any 'Health Growth and Change' lessons *about when these talks will take place, the content to be covered and the activities that pupils will undertake.*
- provide up-to-date parent friendly information leaflets to help parents/carers follow-up learning or discuss any issues with their children.
- share resources to educate parents/carers, e.g. on how to ensure that their child/children are using social media safely and responsibly.

Confidentiality and Dealing with Disclosures: (Child Protection/Safeguarding Children)

Anahilt Primary School has the responsibility to safeguard and keep children from harm. The foundation for the effective delivery of RSE is the building of secure, trusting, respectful relationships between the teacher and their pupils. Pupils should feel reassured that their teacher cares about their wellbeing and be aware that there are adults with whom they can talk to and confide in. At Anahilt Primary School we respect the child's right to privacy and no one should feel obliged to ask or answer any personal questions. However, the classroom is an open environment and staff cannot give a guarantee of confidentiality to pupils around issues relating to child protection. If details are revealed which may indicate any form of abuse has occurred, the teacher **must** follow the child protection procedures outlined in the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

Use of Visitors/Resources:

Anahilt Primary School may use the expertise and skills of education and health professionals from outside agencies or from individuals in the wider community to assist us with the delivery of RSE. Outside agencies can bring specialist knowledge, expertise and experience into the classroom. All participating adults in school activities will be subject to the usual vetting process. Only appropriate resources, which have been recommended by CCEA or that are in line with the ethos of the school will be used in the delivery of this programme.

Monitoring and Evaluation of RSE:

Monitoring and Evaluating will involve the whole staff at least every 2 years. During staff meetings we:

- will assess the extent to which the aims have been met
- will obtain feedback from staff at staff meetings
- will obtain feedback from P6/7 pupils using individual questionnaires and/or pupil focus groups
- will assess evidence of pupils' learning – staff to provide samples of pupils' work as appropriate
- Co-ordinator to monitor teachers' planning for evidence of learning/teaching and progression.

Staff Development and Training:

- The Principal (Designated Teacher for Child Protection) and the Vice Principal (Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection) and the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator received RSE training on 23 January 2017 by a representative from The Belfast Trust.
- Staff received training in a variety of ways:
 - Staff Development Day/INSET
 - the co-ordinating teacher disseminated information to the rest of the staff.

Links Across the Curriculum:

- The learning and teaching in RSE links across the curriculum to many other areas of learning but PDMU in particular.
- The elements of our Safeguarding and Pastoral Care Policy supports and complements RSE.
- Other school initiatives complement RSE e.g. Unicef, NSPCC work, Cancer Focus NI Workshops.

Links to other School Policies:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Internet Safety/E Safety Policy
- PDMU Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- SEN Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Review Date – March 2027 (Co-ordinator – Mrs Alison McCune)

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Outline of Programme across the Key Stages.
- Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities
- Appendix 3 – Brief details of outside agencies/individuals the school uses to support the delivery of RSE and an outline of the sessions.
- Appendix 4 – Websites/resources related to RSE.
- Appendix 5 – Relevant DE Circulars

Outline of the RSE Programme

The following are the elements from the **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding** area of the N.I Curriculum (**Strand 1- Personal Understanding and Health and Strand 2- Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community**) which are used to support the delivery of RSE in Anahilt Primary School. The **statutory** requirements are set out in bold.

Foundation Stage

Self-Awareness

- **Understand themselves and their personal attributes**
- explore who they are, what they can do, identifying favourite things, what makes them special

Feelings and Emotions

- **develop an understanding of their own and others' feelings and emotions**
- begin to recognise and express how they feel
- know what to do if they feel sad, lonely, afraid or angry
- tell others about their feelings
- realise what makes their friends feel happy or sad
- recognise how other people feel when they are happy, sad, angry or lonely

Health and Safety

- **understand the importance of keeping healthy**
- be aware of how to care for their own body
- recognise good hygiene practices
- realise that growth and change are part of life
- **understand how to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments**
- explore appropriate personal safety strategies (eg knowing own name and address)
- identify situations that are safe and those that are not
- begin to realise the importance of road safety
- understand that many substances can be dangerous
- know the safety rules that apply when taking medicine eg only take medicine a parent or responsible adult gives them, never take medicine that a doctor has given to someone else.

Relationships

- **develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing their relationships with family and friends**
- find out about their own family
- begin to recognise how they relate to adults and other children
- identify who their friends are and explore what they do together
- know how to treat others

Similarities and Differences

- **begin to understand similarities and differences**
- *begin* to recognise the similarities and differences in families and the community
- understand that everyone is equal and that it is acceptable to be different
- celebrate special occasions eg. birthdays

Key Stage 1

Self-Awareness

- **develop their self-confidence and self-esteem**
- feel positive about themselves (eg Star of the Week, WOW wall, etc)
- become aware of their own strengths, abilities, qualities, achievements, personal preferences and goals.

Feelings and Emotions

- **recognising their own and others' feelings and emotions**
- **recognising how their actions affect others**
- *begin* to recognise, name and manage their feelings and emotions
- *begin* to recognise and manage the effects of strong feelings – anger, sadness, loss

Health, Growth and Change

- **develop strategies and skills for keeping healthy**
- recognise and value the options for a healthy lifestyle (healthy eating, hygiene, rest and exercise)
- have respect for their bodies and those of others
- be aware of the stages of human growth and development

Keeping Safe

- **develop strategies and skills for keeping safe**
- know what to do or whom to seek help from when feeling unsafe
- be aware of the different forms of bullying and develop personal strategies to resist unwanted behaviour
- know about the potential dangers in the home and environment
- explore the rules and ways of keeping safe on roads and explore how to travel safely in cars and buses
- develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety – at home, on the road, near water and on the Internet
- identify ways of protecting against extremes of weather e.g. being safe in the sun

Relationships

- **develop skills in initiating mutually satisfying relationships**
- be aware of their contribution to home and school life and their responsibilities
- know how to be a good friend
- understand that they can take on some responsibility in their family and friendship groups

Similarities and Differences

- **develop an understanding of similarities and differences between people**
- appreciate ways we are similar and different eg age, gender, hobbies
- be aware of their own cultural heritage, its traditions and celebrations
- recognise and value the culture and traditions of others in the community eg. Christmas in Spain/Mexico
- discuss the causes of conflict in their community and how they feel about it
- be aware of the diversity of people around the world.

Key Stage 2

Self-Awareness

- **develop their self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals**
- develop self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- confidently express their own views and opinions
- identify current strengths and weaknesses
- face problems and try to resolve and learn from them
- recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent
- explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour
- develop strategies to resist unwanted peer/sibling pressure and behaviour

Feelings and Emotions

- **develop their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others**
- examine and explore their own and others' feelings and emotions
- know how to recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way
- recognise that feelings may change at times of change and loss

Health, Growth and Change

- **know how to sustain their health, growth and well-being**
- understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle
- know about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, solvents and other illegal substances
- understand that bacteria and viruses affect health and know that basic routines e.g. personal hygiene, can be followed to minimise risks
- know how the body grows and develops
- be aware of physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty (**P7only**)

Keeping Safe

- **Develop knowledge, understanding and skills in coping safely and efficiently with their environment**
- develop strategies to resist unwanted peer/sibling pressure and behaviour through Anti-Bullying Week and P7 'Moving On' initiative
- recognise and understand the nature of bullying and the harm which can result
- become aware of the potential danger from strangers
- know how to travel safely on the road- on foot, in cars, buses and on bicycles
- develop a pro-active and responsible approach to safety – at home, near water, on the farm, on the internet
- know where, when and how to seek help

Relationships

- **develop knowledge and skills in initiating and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships**
- examine and explore the different types of families that exist
- recognise the benefits of friends and families
- find out about sources of help and support for individuals, families and groups
- explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour

- consider the challenges that can arise at home, at school and between friends and how they can be avoided, lessened or resolved.

Similarities and Differences

- **value and celebrate cultural differences and diversity**
- examine and explore the roles and responsibilities that exist within different types of families
- know about aspects of their cultural heritage
- understand that people differ in what they believe is right or wrong
- recognise that people have different beliefs that shape the way they live
- develop an awareness of the experiences, lives and cultures of people in the wider world
- recognise how injustice, conflict and inequality affects people's lives.

Sharing Responsibility for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships between Home, School and Community

The effectiveness of this RSE Policy and its implementation is dependent upon a collaborative process involving staff members, parents/carers and governors. We further recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers in this area of personal development and acknowledge the contribution that can be made by outside agencies with skill and expertise in particular areas of the curriculum.

The Role of Senior Management

A planned, structured and coherent approach to RSE will be sought throughout the school. Implementing this will be managed by the RSE Co-ordinator and overseen by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. Consultation will need to be initiated with governors, staff, parents, health professionals and other relevant community representatives as necessary.

The Role of Governors

The governors will try to foster and support the development of our RSE policy by collaborating with teachers and parents. The governors of the school will seek to accommodate and be sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs of both teachers and parents while fulfilling their responsibility to ensure the availability of adequate RSE for all children.

The Role of Teachers

The classroom teacher has a significant role to play in the planning and implementation of RSE. At all times this role must be complementary to that of parents, taking account of the individual needs, age, maturity, stage of development and family background of the child. The class teacher will strive to promote the aims of this policy and other related policies and deliver the requirements of RSE at the level appropriate to their particular class.

The Rights and Responsibilities of the Parents

Parents of pupils in grant-aided schools have a right to have their children educated in accordance with their (the parents') wishes, in so far as this is compatible with the delivery of the N. I. Curriculum. Parents also have a duty to ensure their child receives efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

We will endeavour to take account of the wishes of any parent who wishes their child to be excused from specific classes eg P7 Puberty.

(Appendix 3) **Outside Agencies Used to Support the Delivery of RSE**

- **NSPCC**

The NSPCC helps schools safeguard children and gives them the chance to speak out and stay safe. Delivered by specially trained staff and volunteers the NSPCCs 'Speak Out and Stay Safe' assemblies and workshops provide our children with the knowledge and understanding they need to stay safe from abuse. They signpost children to services that might be able to help them if they are worried, such as Childline.

- **Barnardos**

Representatives from Barnardo's lead assemblies on the following:

1. Internet Safety Assembly P4-7
2. Anti- Bullying Assembly P4-7
3. Friendship Assembly P1-4 and P5-7 (*telling of inspirational stories of children who have been sad, lonely and isolated and how they have turned their lives around with help from the charity. This teaches children to extend the hand of friendship to others*)

- **The PATHS® Programme** which promotes positive mental health and emotional well-being in schools.

- **Cancer Focus Northern Ireland**

Cancer Focus NI offers fun, healthy activities for school children in Northern Ireland designed to improve knowledge of health and to encourage pupils to make positive lifestyle choices. The programme is as follows...

P5 Sun Scientist (taking care in the sun)- online learning/resources sent out
P6/7 Smokebusters (online learning/resources sent out.

- **The Local Clergy**

Our local clergy lead whole school assemblies based on a variety of topics such as:

Rules (Why we need them)

Harvest, Christmas and Easter (celebrating special occasions)

New Year (Resolutions/Targets – How to Improve/change for the better)

Being a Good Friend (Sharing and Caring)

Saying Sorry

Anti- Bullying

God's World in Spring (links to New Life – Health, Growth and Change)

Sharing with Others

Time for Change – Moving On (Making good choices)

**Some of these topics may change from year to year*

- ***NI Fire & Rescue Service***

'Safety Team' Programme for P5 children designed to teach them the dangers of fire and how to make their homes safer.

- ***The Dairy Council***

KS2 Food and Fitness Programme P5/P6 – the programme has been designed to help pupils explore the concept of balance – balance within their diet, based on eating a variety of foods from the five food groups and balance within their lifestyle, focussing on the importance of at least one hour's activity each day.

- ***NI Chest, Heart and Stroke***

School's Health Programme – 'Chester's Challenge' Learning about Healthy Lifestyles in P5-P7. Three workshops...

- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity and Hydration
- Screen time/Fast Food/Relaxation and sleep
- P7 only 'Dangers of Smoking'

- ***Moving on Programme (P7 only)***

'Bring 8 On' (delivered by Richard Reid Coaching)
'It's Your Move' workshops (delivered by Rebekah Ravey)

(Appendix 4)

Resources to Support Delivery of RSE

(A Resource Directory – CCEA RSE Guidance Document)

Keeping children safer in the digital world

www.saferinternet.org.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre have produced a range of resources to help schools teach pupils about staying safe online. These resources include a range of games, films, quizzes and advice and are pitched at children between 3–11 years old.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) ‘thinkuknow’ website contains advice and resources for teachers exploring the risks which children and young people are exposed to when online. CEOP have produced targeted advice and guidance for parents or carers and teachers, and for children aged 5–7 and 8–10 years old.

www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals

Childnet International provides in-depth advice for teachers in their ‘hot topics’ section, covering issues such as sexting, online grooming, cyberbullying and online gaming safety. There is also an online resource bank which contains lesson plans and activity ideas suitable for children of primary school age – this is available at www.childnet.com/resources.

www.kidsmart.org.uk

This website contains useful support for teachers, including resources for teaching children about staying safe online.

Recognising and challenging inappropriate behaviour and touch

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.safertoknow.info

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland’s (SBNI) website contains useful information and resources to raise awareness on child sexual exploitation.

Guidance Documents

The following guidance documents by CCEA may also be of use to teachers in planning their Relationships and Sexuality Education provision:

- Living.Learning.Together
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Guidance Booklet
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Progression Grids
- Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stages 1 & 2
- Assessment for Learning: A Practical Guide
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities at Key Stages 1 & 2

All documents are available at www.ccea.org.uk

NB – It is a matter for individual schools to decide on the teaching and learning they wish to use. CCEA does not endorse any of the websites but strongly recommends that schools review and quality-assure all resources before using them with pupils.

Policy Formation

Relationships and Sexuality Education in the N.I. Context

RSE is not a new area of the curriculum. The framework for sex education was initially established by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) in a Guidance Circular 1987/45. The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 further sets out the legislative basis, requiring all grant aided schools to offer a curriculum which: ***'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society ...and... prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.'***

Following on from this, DE Circular 2013/16 states: ***'The Department requires each school to have in place its own written policy on how it will address the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education.'*** The circular also states that Relationships and Sexuality Education ***'should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities.'***

The RSE policy was written in accordance with the guidance provided in the following circulars:

- **DE circular 2001/15:** Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- **DE Circular 2001/15-2:** Guidance for Primary Schools - Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- **DE circular 2010/01:** Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education
- **DE circular 2013/16:** Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education in Schools
- **DE circular 2015/22:** Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance

These circulars are available on the Department's website www.deni.gov.uk
Guidance and resources on RSE are also provided on the NI Curriculum website at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

- CCEA's Relationship and Sexuality Guidance: An Update for Primary Schools (2015)
- CCEA's Guidance on Personal Development (2007)

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