

# St Patrick's Primary School



Draft R.S.E Policy  
September 2016

### Mission Statement:

As a Catholic School, we at St Patrick's, Legamaddy, seek to provide a caring, secure and happy environment in which all children are treated as unique individuals who are given the opportunity to grow in independence and develop self-confidence.

We believe this will enable our children to be better prepared personally, academically, spiritually and socially for the challenges of young adult life.

### We aim to:

- Develop the young person as an individual and help them become a positive contributor to society.
- Enable children to reach their full potential by providing a broad and balanced curriculum with a varied range of extra-curricular activities.
- Work closely with home, community & church to create an environment in which we promote learning.
- Develop spiritual awareness through a strong Catholic Ethos which encourages the values of trust, honesty, respect, tolerance and a sense of fair play.
- Utilize emerging technologies to develop the child's ability to become effective learners and provide them with the life skills for modern society.

## RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

### Rationale for RSE Policy

St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, and RSE plays an integral part in this education. 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 Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School advocates the promotion of a 'Personal Development' approach to RSE, whereby children in our care are equipped with the skills to help them resist peer and media pressure, and to help them make informed decisions based on their own intrinsic self-respect and self-esteem. RSE is a lifelong process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values.

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; and
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves and 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 behaviour 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; and
- develop the children's awareness, understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion.

## 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;
- 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 ; and
- 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 and 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 and 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; and

- inter-personal skills for managing relationships confidently and effectively and 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 for others; and
- self-discipline.

## THE SCHOOL ETHOS

The ethos of St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School is founded on principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. It is our intention that everyone will feel valued in our school and our pupils and staff members are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment.

This RSE Policy reflects the ethos of our school.

## 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, Governors, volunteers and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has a distinctive contribution to make.

Keeping parents/carers informed about the school's provision for health education is a vital element of RSE. Parents/carers are invited to consider issues such as the readiness of children for aspects of the RSE programme, the appropriateness of resources, the content and methodologies proposed, and the handling of sensitive topics.

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 school's moral and religious principles.

The Department of Education's Circulars have been used to devise this RSE Policy.

These include:

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

These circulars are available on the Department's website: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk).

Guidance and resources on RSE are also provided on the NI Curriculum website at [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

#### LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

This RSE Policy relates to the following policies & documents:

- Safeguarding /Child Protection Policy;
- RE Policy
- PDMU Policy

In St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School, 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 Principal and Leadership Team co-ordinate the school's approach to RSE and consult 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 of RSE

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.

The children attend a talk on puberty in the summer term of their P7 year. Only children with written parental/carer consent will receive this talk. A nurse delivers the talks with a member of the teaching staff present in each case.

Pupils will 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 the children's needs. In St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School this is done through consultation with St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School's Student Council.

### Curriculum organisation and delivery

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the range of topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of the Health Education, PDMU, RE, World Around Us, PE, Drama curriculum, The Wonder of My Being and the Global Learning Programme.

### Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

#### Myself

- Myself: how I grow, feed, move and use my senses, caring for myself, and the importance of hygiene, sleep and exercise.
- Naming parts of the body .
- 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 and 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 (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.
- Bullies and what to do if you are being bullied or someone you know is being bullied.
- 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 and raise awareness of 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.

### 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, physical development and maturity.



- Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Feelings, identifying things that make me happy, sad, excited, embarrassed, angry, scared and discussing how to express our feelings and to show 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.
- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's views, emotions and feeling.
- 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 points 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 – recognising what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate 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.

## 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;
- be consistent with St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School's ethos;
- be appropriate to pupils' age, level of understanding and maturity;
- be factually correct and respectful of its audience;
- be appropriate in terms of language level, images, attitudes, values, maturity, contexts and situations, and the knowledge required;
- be complementary to the existing programmes which the school offers; and
- encourage consideration of a range of issues, attitudes and beliefs pertinent to the topics covered.

In St Patrick's, Legamaddy 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 to respect 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 opinions. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos and stories can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

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, the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding procedures will be implemented.

The classroom is an open environment and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

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 to the Principal. (Refer to the school's Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy);
- the Principal or Designated Teacher for Safeguarding/ Child Protection 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 Safeguarding/Child Protection 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 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 a 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; and
- 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 the school's 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 EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Where appropriate, we may use the skills and expertise of external agencies and professionals. Where this occurs, the school will be satisfied that contributions from these external agencies are in harmony with the aims and ethos of St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School.

## STAFF TRAINING

Training needs will be considered and will be addressed using the appropriate agencies. Where outside agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of St Patrick's, Legamaddy Primary School.

Signed: (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Signed: (Principal) Date: