

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Date policy September 2017/18

School Details

North Coast Integrated College is a Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI) co-educational school. North Coast Integrated College is co-educational and all-ability in nature; it is Christian in character but welcomes students from all backgrounds. We welcome all pupils regardless of tradition or ability. Respectfully, they will learn together and strive to excel in everything that they undertake. In partnership with parents, our goal is to see the individual succeed, to be fully valued and to fully value others. We seek for our students to flourish in their educational journey.

Being Christian in character, it is our aim to provide education that gives equal recognition and expression to the two main traditions in Northern Ireland whilst welcoming the contributions of other faiths, religions and nationalities to our evolving society. NCIC offers the opportunity for young people from differing religious and cultural backgrounds to be educated together in an atmosphere of respect, trust, tolerance and understanding.

Our Vision

"That all our young people will become empowered, confident and caring citizens; pursuing personal excellence through integration."

Our Aims

- to pursue the highest academic standards by offering a broad and innovative curriculum allowing students to experience success, with a balance between academic, creative, sporting and vocational development,
- to provide opportunities for children from different religious, cultural and social backgrounds to value their own traditions and to develop knowledge, respect, understanding and appreciation of their common culture,
- create a positive moral environment based on tolerance, openness and fairness, to enable students to develop a high standard of moral reasoning,
- adopt a 'child-centred' approach to learning and teaching, treating children as individuals and developing their self-esteem,
- ensure that all pupils are equally cherished, nurtured and respected,
- operate an effective pastoral policy based on clear procedures and open communication,
- foster positive relationships between staff and parents and the wider college community

Policy Rationale

Relationships and Sexuality Education is important in the Northern Ireland Curriculum because it:

- Respects the rights of children and young people,
- Promotes a better understanding of diversity and inclusion,
- Helps young people keep themselves safer in the digital world,

- Helps young people to recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour and touch,
- Provides reliable, accurate and timely age-appropriate information,
- Increases young people's awareness of sexual health.

At North Coast Integrated College we firmly advocate the Personal Development approach where young people 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.

Aim

The overall aims of this Relationships and Sexuality policy support the values and ethos of NCIC as an integrated College, broadly Christian in nature whilst respecting other cultures, religious views and diversity. The policy will be closely linked to the teaching of PD, LLW and the Preventative Curriculum across the school.

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 numbers of underage pregnancies as well as STIs, partly as a result of glamorous and 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. No 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.

It will also help to:

- promote a shared vision of Relationships and Sexuality Education across the school;
- show how Relationships and Sexuality Education complements and supports other aspects of school life;
- establish consistent standards and practices in the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- create a framework for wider curriculum development and review;
- provide a foundation for the monitoring and evaluating of Relationships and Sexuality Education provision; and
- prepare for inspection and help to promote LLW and Safeguarding self-evaluation and improvement.

Links to Other Policies

This RSE policy takes into account:

- The Department of Education Circular 2013/16 RSE Policy Guidance
- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (see Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation)
- The relevant sections of the UNCRC by including a summary of the UNCRC for all RSE teachers to be familiar with – (see appendix 2)

- Every School a Good School/Together Towards Improvement and Community Relations/The Equality and Diversity in Education Policy by enabling pupils to feel confident within the RSE environment and to feel that their individuality is acknowledged and embraced.

The policy is also reflected in the school's teaching and learning, and in the school's SDP, in care and welfare

'preventative education curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is flexible and responsive to the needs of the pupils.'

Policy Formation and Consultation Process

This policy has been drawn up in the first instance by the LLW Coordinator and the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. There will be a phased consultation process:

- Phase 1: SLT
- Phase 2: All staff
- Phase 3: BoG
- Phase 4: Parents and pupils

Following this consultation process, the policy will be available on the College website for all stakeholders to access. Any queries regarding the policy may be addressed to either Mrs F. Atherton, RSE and LLW Coordinator, or Mrs E. Casson, designated teacher for child protection.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with the Safeguarding review.

Objectives

Relationships and Sexuality Education in North Coast Integrated College should build on the learning experiences from the primary curriculum and, as well as enhanced self-awareness and self-esteem, provide young people with:

- the opportunity to develop the skills to build healthy and respectful relationships, stay safe, and develop their own moral thinking and value system; and
- up-to-date, accurate and accessible information about reproduction, sex and sexual health matters.
- enable pupils to make informed choices and decisions and become aware of strategies which they can use to protect themselves.
- guidance on how to safely navigate the digital landscape and be able to identify potential threats or dangers.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education will be taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner.
- an appreciation of the responsibilities of parenthood and the value of human life and the wonder of birth.

Coordination of RSE within the School

Mrs F. Atherton is the coordinator responsible for the planning of the RSE programme across the school. The programme is delivered in LLW/PD at KS3 by form teachers, and in LLW/PSHE by LLW teachers at KS4 who are willing to teach aspects of RSE (see LLW policy). At post-16 the RSE programme is delivered during collapsed classes by outside agencies.

The Relationships and Sexuality Programme is delivered primarily through LLW/PD classes. The timetable allocation for LLW is as follows:

KS3 – 2 classes per fortnight

KS4 - 6classes per fortnight

Additional to this is the use of collapsed timetable classes to facilitate outside speakers.

These classes are mixed-gender and mixed ability at KS3. At KS4 classes are set academically for LLW but are mixed-gender. There is always the provision for single-gender classes where required. Resources are appropriate to age and stage and provision is available for SEN where required. Contact with parents of SEN pupils will be sought to share the content of the programme and communicate the dates when certain themes are being taught.

All resources used are inclusive and consistent with our school's moral and value framework. At KS4 the AQA PSHE Sex and Relationships assessment booklet Level 2 is used. The PD schemes at KS3 and 4 are reviewed annually and updated where necessary to ensure the most current and relevant information is being used.

Responding to Sensitive Issues

We recognise that, on occasion, certain sensitive issues may require consideration. All issues of a safeguarding nature will be referred to the College's Safeguarding Team who will follow appropriate child protection procedures. When attempting to deal with the following specific issues the procedures below will be adopted:

- **Sensitive Family Issues**

Teachers delivering RSE schemes of work will be sensitive to the possibility of unique family circumstances that may exist within the College community such as: one parent families, loss or bereavement, foster or adoptive families, looked after children, kinship care, same-sex parents, transgender parents /family members, blended family situations or any other individual circumstance that we may become aware of.

- **Pregnancy**

We aim to support any young woman who may become pregnant whilst enrolled at our school. Following consultation and agreement with the young mother to be, referral may be made to the SAM (School Age Mothers) Project.

In the event of a young woman informing the school that she is pregnant advice will initially be sought from the school's designated teacher for child protection and if it is deemed necessary the school will follow its child protection guidelines.

- **Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation**

All pupils, regardless of their sexual orientation have a right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably on the grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. It is of paramount importance that teachers do not view teenage LGBT attraction and gender identity as a passing phase, as this would in effect trivialise an important part in the development of these young people's lives and potentially have an ongoing negative impact on them (Appleby and Anastas, 1998). Bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender bullying, sexual harassment and bullying for other reasons relating to sex, gender or relationships, is as unacceptable as it is in any other situation where someone is mistreated or bullied because of their differences from those who are perceived to be the majority. All issues relating to bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation and /or gender identity will be dealt with appropriately in line with the general school anti - bullying policy. (See Anti-Bullying Policy)

Monitoring and Evaluation

Procedures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' experiences include:

- Pupil self-evaluation
- Reflective learning logs
- Pupils classwork

Staff Development and Training

Appropriate staff development and training is accessed when available to keep up to date with the latest guidance in teaching RSE. This is disseminated to other staff who teach RSE during staff development days. At KS4 there are regular PD meetings which will include RSE.

Code of Conduct in the Classroom/ Workshops – Confidentiality and Disclosures

An acceptable code of conduct for working within the classroom and during workshops with outside agencies is drawn up among the pupils. One of the primary aspects of this will be confidentiality within the learning environment however, if a young person is deemed to be at risk of significant harm or if a disclosure is made then he/she will be informed that the College's safeguarding procedures must be followed. The young person will be reassured that he/she will be supported throughout the process but confidentiality will not be promised. As in all cases of safeguarding/child protection, the safety of the young person is paramount. (see Safeguarding Policy)

The aim of the Code of Conduct is that all pupils feel confident to speak freely and openly. Pupils will also have the opportunity to ask questions anonymously using a 'question box'

which allows pupils to drop in questions at any time - the understanding being that these questions will be addressed in PD lessons.

Procedures for Involvement of Outside Agencies/ individuals in Supporting the delivery of the RSE Programme

All members of outside agencies are provided with an outline of the College's ethos and vision regarding pastoral care and with a copy of the College's RSE Policy and Safeguarding Policy. Agencies will be asked to sign to agree to follow these procedures whilst supporting the delivery of RSE within the College. (see Appendix 1.) These policies will make outside agencies aware of issues around confidentiality. All visitors will be vetted appropriately and accompanied by a member of staff whilst engaging with pupils. Prior to the workshop/presentation an outline of the content to be delivered will be requested by the RSE co-ordinator.

Role of Parents

It is understandable that many parents or carers are anxious about when, what and how their children will be taught in Relationships and Sexuality Education. The RSE Policy is available on the College website for all parents to access. A paper copy is also provided as part of the induction pack for the College. The College has an open door policy which encourages parents/carers to speak to the RSE co-ordinator regarding any worries or concerns they may have about the delivery of the programme. The College will never attempt to assume the cloak of parental responsibility. Rather, we view parents/carers as having prime decision-making responsibilities. It is paramount that we work in partnership with parents/carers, particularly in relation to sensitive issues. Parents/carers will be provided with up-to-date information and encouraged to discuss any issues which may arise in the classroom with their children. For parents/carers with learning difficulties, additional advice can be provided if required.

Withdrawal from Relationships and Sexuality Education

Whilst Relationships and Sexuality Education is a statutory component of the Northern Ireland curriculum, parents or carers have a right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes. Therefore, whilst 'there is no legislative provision permitting parental withdrawal from sex education', the College can grant these requests on an individual basis. If a parent or carer chooses to withdraw their child from all or part of Relationships and Sexuality Education, the RSE co-ordinator will discuss the potentially detrimental effect that this could have on the pupil including the social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood that the pupil will hear their peers' version of what happened or what was said in the classes, rather than the safe and reliable source of the teacher's. Ultimately, however, the College will respect the wishes of the parent or carer.

Links Across the Curriculum and the Wider Life of the College

Teaching and learning across the College complements the RSE Programme with many aspects supporting the provision in various ways, for example, reproduction and puberty in

Science, marriage and abortion in Religious Education, and online safety in ICT. The College's pastoral system as well as all subjects, endeavour to provide the opportunity for pupils to develop the skills to build healthy and respectful relationships, stay safe, and develop their own moral thinking and value system. This is enhanced by the College's assembly programme as well as form time and registration.

Links to Other School Policies

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with other school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Policy on Using Outside Agencies
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Drugs Education Policy

