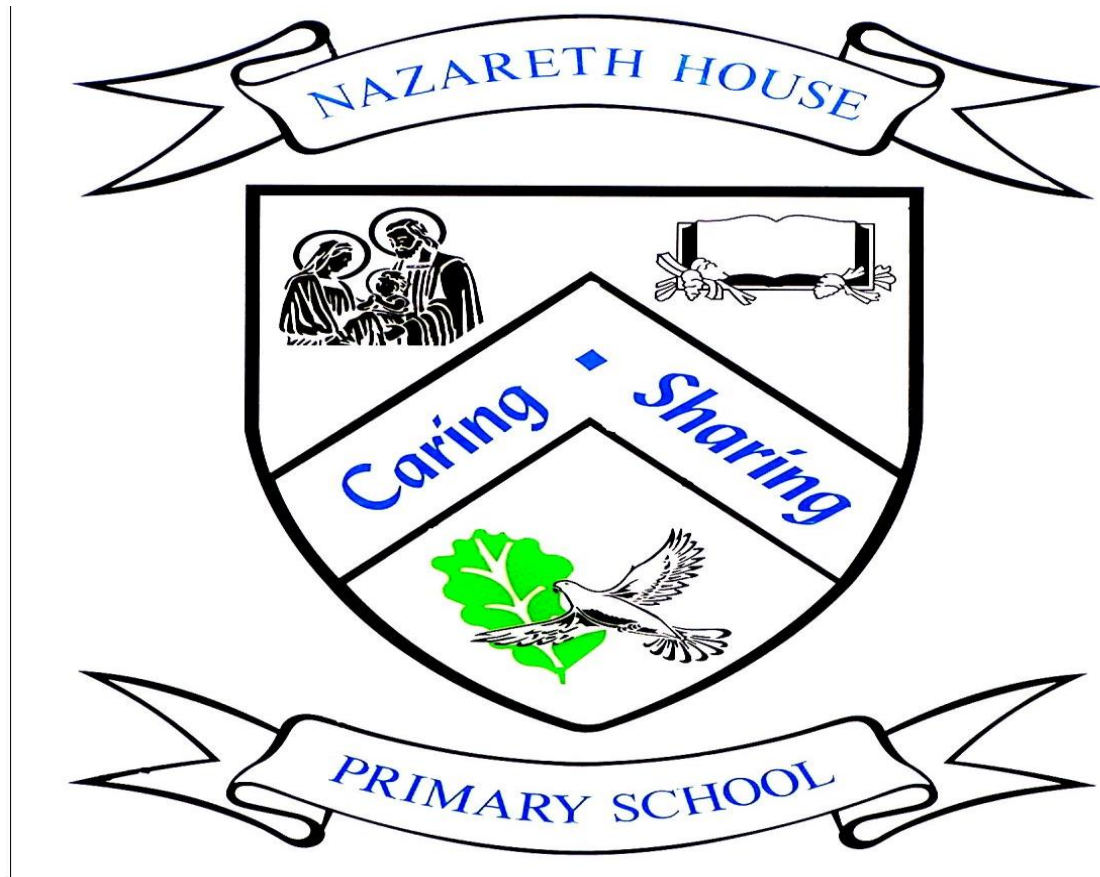


Nazareth House Primary School



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Signed: _____ (Board of Governors)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Introduction

As a Catholic school, we at Nazareth House Primary School, 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 develop socially, spiritually, morally, intellectually, emotionally, etc. for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure.

Purpose

All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) plays an integral part. The provision of RSE is an equal opportunities issue.

We can help develop the self-esteem of pupils by creating a climate of trust and acceptance in which each person is valued and respected and encouraged to feel good about themselves. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their individual needs, to respect the needs and wants of others, and to develop the skills and self-esteem to become confident adolescents. RSE plays a part in increasing informed choice by providing opportunities for pupils to examine their own values and beliefs in the light of those held by others.

Deeper understanding of the values and beliefs that they hold can help pupils to clarify why they think and behave as they do, to separate fact from fiction, to recognise prejudice and to respect the views, emotions and feelings of others. Many pupils cannot or are unwilling to talk to their parents about growing up and about sexual matters. We can offer information and provide opportunities to consider feelings and concerns within a secure environment.

Context

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Elements of RSE are embedded in many areas of the curriculum, such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, the World Around Us and Religious Education.

Aims

The aims of RSE are to:

- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- Promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions
- Foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework
- Help the child come to value family life
- Appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- Promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth
- 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
- Make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives

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' point 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
- **Inter-personal skills** for managing relationships confidently and effectively and for developing as an effective group member or leader

Relationships Between Home, School And Community

The effectiveness of this RSE policy and programme is dependent on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has distinctive contributions to make. Teachers, governors and parents can raise any concerns they might have about RSE issues and the Senior Management Team will address these or refer to the Board of Governors, if necessary.

The Role of Senior Management

A planned, structured and coherent approach to RSE will be sought throughout the school, in conjunction with CCMS. Implementing this and other related policies will be managed by the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection. 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 and similar related policies by collaborating with teachers and parents. They shall facilitate the consultative process whereby the school community can respond and contribute on relevant issues. 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 and diverse role to play in the planning and implementation of RSE in the school. At all times, the role must be considered to be complementary to that of parents, taking cognisance 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.

Curriculum Organisation

The Northern Ireland Curriculum offers opportunities to develop an RSE programme in a holistic and cross-curricular way. The Relationships and Sexuality Programme, “The Wonder of My Being” has been drawn up in response from requests from primary schools to meet some of the requirements of the Revised NI Primary Curriculum Key Stages 1 and 2, in particular in the area of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding. The materials are intended as guidance for teachers in Catholic schools, and each school should interpret them in accordance with its ethos.

They should be presented as part of the Religious Education programme. The lessons for each year group have direct links with the corresponding Alive-O Programme and with the PDMU materials “Living, Learning Together”. Year 7 is also linked to the “Love for Life” resources. It is not necessary that the programme be delivered as a block of lessons. Teachers may deliver it at any time they consider appropriate, as they progress through the year.

Prayer is included in each lesson. This will be a reminder to the children of the love of God for each of them as they journey through life. The programme is cumulative and will help to provide a firm foundation for children to build and sustain relationships.

Involving Parents

No school programme can be a substitute for the role of parents in educating their children in relationships and sexuality. “The Wonder of My Being” programme aims to build on the foundations laid by the parents and offers links with parents in many of the lessons.

Our aim is to introduce a programme which enables both parents and teachers to work together. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a child’s life, and especially so in the domain of relationships and sexuality. Parents are often concerned about the information their children are receiving from their peers and from television, internet, newspapers and magazines. We will attempt to provide opportunities for pupils to consider this information and ensure they receive accurate information. Parents will be made aware of the content of the programme prior to the delivery of the lessons.

The Rights And Responsibilities Of Parents

We will strive to facilitate the following rights 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 provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. Parents also have a duty to cause their child to receive 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 chooses to excuse their child from particular, or all, RSE lessons.

An Overview of "The Wonder of My Being" Programme

Foundation Stage

- To appreciate that I am a boy/girl
- To appreciate that I am part of a family
- To understand that I grew in my mother's womb
- To learn that Jesus was part of a family
- To appreciate that I am special
- To understand that I needed help with everything when I was a baby
- To understand that I have grown and changed since I was a baby
- To understand some developmental stages of babies, e.g. crawling, walking, talking
- To appreciate that my family loves and cares for me
- To appreciate that God chose Mary to be the mother of His Son Jesus
- To appreciate that Mary and Joseph loved and cared for Jesus

Key Stage One

- To appreciate that people celebrate weddings
- To appreciate the qualities that are required for friendship
- To appreciate the qualities necessary for family
- To appreciate how a mother cares for her new baby
- To appreciate that Jesus helped Mary and Joseph at home
- To appreciate how we can help at home
- To appreciate that Mary was told by an angel that she was to be the mother of Jesus

- To appreciate that an angel appeared to Joseph to tell him he would be the one to care for Mary and Jesus
- To appreciate the role of Mary as the mother of God
- To appreciate the qualities and values that were part of the Holy Family of Nazareth
- To learn the vocabulary associated with pregnancy and birth
- To appreciate the preparations that were needed for your birth
- To appreciate that family is a gift from God

Key Stage Two

- To appreciate the uniqueness of each person
- To appreciate that we are all created in the image and likeness of God
- To appreciate the importance of preparing responsibly for new life
- To appreciate the stages of development between birth and two years
- To appreciate we change as we grow (2 years-9/10 years)
- To be aware of people who help us grow and develop: family, church, society
- To revisit the Sacrament of Baptism so that the children can become aware of their place in God's family
- To appreciate the stages of growth before birth
- To recognise significant moments in our lives to date
- To recognise that we are created by God and that our bodies are sacred
- To recognise that our bodies change as we grow
- To appreciate that everyone is part of the Body of Christ
- To appreciate the values of friendship in our lives
- To identify negative behaviour and how it can affect other people
- To appreciate that we are called by God
- To appreciate the presence of God in our lives as we grow and change
- To appreciate the talents that each of us has and consider how we will use these as we grow and change
- To appreciate the qualities and characteristics of friendship
- To understand the importance of accepting and respecting each other just as we are
- To make pupils aware that they are influenced by many different people and things
- To appreciate that I can be a good or bad influence on others
- To help make informed decisions about their lives
- To enable the children to face future changes with optimism

Confidentiality in the Classroom

At Nazareth House Primary School, we respect the child's right to privacy. 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, as teachers, we should not 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/her parents and/or the Principal. Both pupils and parents should be informed that confidentiality cannot be maintained if:

- Physical or sexual abuse is suspected
- 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. The Principal/Designated Teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk and the appropriate measures must be taken.

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. 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 to see how they would like the matter to be handled. Teacher colleagues or the school nurse may be approached for advice. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils, or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents, if this is appropriate.

The first concern of parents is likely to be for the safety and well-being of their children. It is important that if pupils feel they cannot talk to their parents, they have access to support from teachers at school.

Answering Pupils' Questions

As a school, we may need to consider our responses to specific issues. Topics such as conception, birth, fertility, family planning, sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS are often part of the storyline of television programmes and it is therefore possible that older pupils will raise questions about these issues. Recommended practice is to encourage the use of a "Worry Box", where pupils can place their questions anonymously at any time. This strategy gives teachers time to consider an appropriate depth of response and, if necessary, to consult with parents.

Monitoring of the Policy

The policy will be reviewed every two years and any changes will be presented to the Principal, Governors and staff. The policy will be available for parents to view.