# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

## 1. Introduction

At Portavogie Primary School, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) forms part of the care and education we provide for every child. It helps children understand themselves, develop positive relationships, learn about growing up and know how to keep themselves safe. Our approach reflects our school motto, "Nurturing Each Child's Unique Potential", and our CREED values, particularly Community, Respect and Resilience.

We recognise that children come from different families and bring different experiences, beliefs and levels of understanding. These matters are approached sensitively and with respect for parents and carers, taking account of each child's age and stage of development. This policy covers P1 to P7. In Nursery, staff also help children learn about friendship, feelings, personal care and safety through play and everyday routines.

## 2. Aims

Through RSE, we aim to help children:

- develop self-respect, confidence and a positive understanding of themselves;
- form friendships and relationships built on kindness, trust and mutual respect;
- recognise and talk about their feelings, and seek help when they need it;
- appreciate family life and respect the different family circumstances of others;
- understand personal boundaries, privacy, consent in everyday situations and their right to feel safe;
- learn about health, their bodies and the changes that take place as they grow;
- make sensible decisions and recognise unsafe situations, including online.

## 3. RSE within the curriculum

At Portavogie Primary School, teachers do not timetable separate lessons labelled RSE. Learning relevant to relationships, growing up and personal safety is included in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), the World Around Us, online safety, assemblies and everyday school life. This approach still covers the statutory content of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

### Foundation Stage: P1–P2

In P1 and P2, children learn about themselves, their families and the people who care for them. Through play, stories and PDMU, they explore feelings, friendship, sharing, hygiene, personal space and privacy. They begin to learn who they can speak to if they feel worried or unsafe.

### Key Stage 1: P3–P4

In P3 and P4, children build on this learning by considering friendship, differences, inclusion, managing disagreements and respecting the feelings of others. They develop an understanding of caring for their bodies, boundaries, personal safety and how to ask for help, including when using technology.

### Key Stage 2: P5–P7

In P5 to P7, PDMU and wider school activities provide opportunities to discuss respectful relationships, peer pressure, self-image, personal safety and becoming more independent. Learning about physical and

emotional change must be suitable for pupils' age and understanding. The annual Love for Life session provides P7 pupils with focused input on puberty and growing up.

Class teachers address relevant questions as they arise and follow up learning where needed. The school will check that the overall provision, including the P7 visit, meets the statutory primary curriculum requirements.

## 4. Love for Life in P7

P7 pupils take part in a Love for Life programme once each year. This is a visiting session for P7 only. It helps pupils understand growing up, puberty, relationships and the move to post-primary school. The visit complements the learning that takes place through PDMU and school life; it does not replace the school's responsibility to cover the statutory curriculum.

The Principal and P7 teacher will review the proposed content and resources before the annual visit. Parents and carers will be informed in advance and may speak to the P7 teacher or Principal if they have questions. A member of school staff will be present, and the school remains responsible for safeguarding and the suitability of the session.

## 5. Teaching approach and questions

Teachers support this learning through PDMU, stories, discussion, assemblies and situations that arise naturally during the school day. There is no separate weekly RSE lesson. Staff use straightforward, factual and age-appropriate language and avoid making children feel embarrassed. Where needed for health and safety, children are helped to use correct words for parts of the body.

When a sensitive issue is discussed, staff set clear expectations about respect and privacy. Pupils are not asked to share personal information about themselves or their families. Questions are answered sensitively and at a level appropriate to the child. If a question is beyond what is suitable for a whole-class discussion, it may be followed up individually and, where appropriate, with parents or the Principal.

Staff are mindful that pupils may have experienced bereavement, family separation, trauma or other difficult circumstances. They will take care not to make assumptions about a child's family or experiences.

## 6. Inclusion and respect for family life

We recognise the importance of caring, supportive family relationships and respect the different circumstances in which children live. No pupil should feel excluded or uncomfortable because of their home circumstances, beliefs, identity or additional needs.

Learning and resources will be adapted for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, taking account of communication needs, maturity and understanding. The SENCO will advise where needed. Every child should receive appropriate learning about personal safety and respectful relationships.

## 7. Personal safety and safeguarding

This aspect of the curriculum supports our safeguarding work by helping children understand boundaries, safe and unsafe situations, trusted adults and where to get help. It includes age-appropriate online safety. Children are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if anything worries them.

If a child shares a safeguarding concern during a discussion or activity, staff will listen calmly, will not promise secrecy and will follow the school's Child Protection Policy and reporting procedures without delay.

## 8. Partnership with parents and carers

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first educators. This policy will be available to families. Parents will be told in advance about the annual P7 Love for Life session and any other planned sensitive content. They may ask to see resources or speak to the class teacher or Principal.

If a parent has a concern, the Principal will listen, explain the school's approach and consider the child's needs alongside the Northern Ireland Curriculum requirements. Any request for alternative arrangements will be considered in line with current Department of Education guidance. Parents and pupils will be consulted, in an age-appropriate way, when this policy is reviewed.

## 9. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Governors approves the policy and ensures that the school meets its statutory RSE responsibilities. The Principal oversees the approach, reviews coverage in PDMU planning and supports staff. Class teachers address relevant learning through the curriculum, use suitable resources and follow safeguarding procedures. The SENCO supports access for pupils with additional needs.

The annual P7 Love for Life programme is arranged and reviewed by the school. Visiting speakers support, but do not replace, the school's responsibility for the curriculum. Content will be agreed in advance and safeguarding arrangements checked.

## 10. Monitoring and review

The Principal will review relevant year-group planning with staff to check that the statutory content is covered across P1 to P7, including matters addressed in the annual Love for Life visit. Feedback from pupils and parents will inform the review. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if Department of Education or CCEA guidance changes, and submitted to the Board of Governors following consultation.