

CRAIGAVON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY



Contents

Introduction and Rationale	Pg 2
Legislative Framework	Pg 2
Moral and Ethical Framework	Pg 2
School Ethos	Pg 3
Related School Policies	Pg 3
The Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum Provision	Pg 4
Sharing Responsibility	Pg 5
The Role of the Teacher and Confidentiality	Pg 6
The Role of the RSE Co-ordinator	Pg 6
Responding to Sensitive Issues	Pg 7
Recording and Referral	Pg 7
Parental Partnership	Pg 9
External Agencies	Pg 9
Monitoring and Evaluating	Pg 9
Dissemination of the Policy	Pg 10

Introduction and Rationale

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process, which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues. The learning process begins formally with parents/carers and continues throughout school and adult life.

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. It especially concerns the ability to form relationships with others generally, the capacity to be affectionate, give and receive love and reproduce.

Legislative Framework

In 2001, CCEA gave post-primary schools specific guidance on the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education. This material was accompanied by the Department of Education Circular 2001/15. At this time, Relationships and Sexuality Education was a statutory component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum through the Key Stage 3 Science Programme of study and the Cross-Curricular theme of Health Education.

Then, the introduction of the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum meant that from September 2007, Relationships and Sexuality Education became a statutory component of both the Personal Development and Home Economics statements of requirement for Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 Relationships and Sexuality Education is a statutory component of the Personal Development strand of Learning for Life and Work.

The flexibility, which the Northern Ireland Curriculum offers, also allows schools to teach Relationships and Sexuality Education through other areas of learning such as Religious Education, Biology and Child Development.

Moral and Ethical Framework

Relationships and Sexuality Education is taught in a sensitive manner, predominantly through the Personal Development programme of study and 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. There should be an appreciation that friendships and relationships should be based on self and mutual respect, non-exploitation, honesty, trust and commitment. Within relationships there should be recognition that rights, duties and responsibilities are involved.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is not intended to be value free. It should be tailored to the age, maturity and understanding of pupils. The programme therefore aims to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, set within a clear framework of values and an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate the value of family, marriage and permanent loving relationships and the responsibilities of parenthood. They should be helped to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity. They should be enabled to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour and to accept that both sexes must have responsibility in sexual matters.

Teachers should however acknowledge that many children come from backgrounds that do not reflect such values and experiences. Sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing hurt and offence to them and their families and to encourage the development of their sense of worth. (Adapted from DfEE Circular No 5/1994 Education Act 1993: Sex Education in School Paragraph 8).

School Ethos

Mindful of the Christian principles on which Craigavon Senior High School was founded and the diverse religious and cultural groups within the school, pupils are taught Relationships and Sexuality Education within a framework, which encourages the following:

- a respect for self;
- a respect for others;
- non-exploitation of 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;
- an acknowledgement and understanding of diversity regarding religion, culture and sexual orientation.

Related School Policies

This policy is set within the broader school contexts of Personal Development and Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Drugs and Substance Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Internet/E-Safety Policy

The Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum

Aims of Relationships and Sexuality Education:

1. To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the young person.
2. To develop self-respect and self-confidence.
3. To help young people learn how to develop and enjoy healthy and respectful friendships and relationships, which are based on responsibility and mutual respect.
4. To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework.
5. To promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions.
6. To help the young person value family life and marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood.
7. To promote an appreciation of the value and uniqueness of human life and the wonder of birth.

Objectives of Relationships and Sexuality Education

Teachers should ensure that pupils are given worthwhile experiences, which enable them to explore:

- self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals;
- their own and others feelings and emotions;
- strategies to promote personal safety and health and resist various forms of abuse;
- relationships with friends and families, valuing them as a source of love and mutual support;
- similarities and differences between people;
- dignity, uniqueness, well-being and sense of responsibility for themselves and others;
- differing family structures and patterns;
- strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions;
- growth and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity;
- the development of personal and inter-personal skills including communication and social interaction, in order to help establish and sustain healthy relationships;

- the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development;
- the impact of internal influences and external influences such as peer pressure and conflict on lifestyle and decision making;
- sexual development and identity including aspects of sexuality such as gender roles, stereotyping and cultural influences;
- the physical, social and emotional changes which occur during puberty;
- how babies are conceived, grow and are born.

Provision

All pupils have a right to an education, which adequately prepares them for adult life, regardless of their age, gender, culture, disability status, religion or social class.

“Children/young people with special educational needs have the same rights and needs as all pupils but the content and delivery of the RSE programme will be different....tailored to pupils’ needs in terms of context, methodology and the resources used.” (Guidance for Primary/Post-Primary Schools, CFCEA page 16/19)

The environment in which RSE will be taught:

“All pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and must not be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.” (Circular Amendment No 2010/01)

Relationships and Sexuality Education in Craigavon Senior High School will:

- be relevant, accessible and appropriate to all young people;
- be set in a moral framework which is inclusive with respect to culture, religion, sexual orientation and social background;
- seek to develop and clarify values and attitudes towards sex, sexuality and relationships and to encourage respect for empathy within the values and attitudes of others;
- respect the diversity of cultural identity and encourage pupils to be aware of the traditions and beliefs of others, promoting respect, mutual understanding and tolerance;
- include activities to allow both genders to talk about their interests, attitudes, emotions, concerns and feelings;
- explore sexual orientation and stereotyping from a range of perspectives.

There is no statutory parental right to withdraw a child from Relationships and Sexuality Education. However, Craigavon Senior High School will endeavour to take account of any parental concerns. It will, as far as possible, make alternative arrangements for any pupil whose parent/carer requests exemption from specific RSE activities.

Sharing Responsibility for RSE

Our school believes that the responsibility for relationships and sexuality education should be appropriately shared between teachers, parents and the school community as a whole. Its effectiveness depends on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each has distinctive contributions to make and the school will endeavour to fulfil its responsibility. Opportunities will be provided for teachers, parents and governors to raise any issues and concerns they may have regarding the RSE policy and programme. Consultation with these stakeholders will be facilitated using the school website.

The Role of the Teacher and Confidentiality

- All teachers are responsible for teaching aspects of RSE, appropriate to the age, maturity, stage of development and family background of their pupils.
- The classroom is an open environment and confidentiality cannot be maintained. Therefore, staff and pupils are not encouraged to talk about their personal relationships or experiences during class discussions.
- There will be occasions when teachers will be required to exercise discretion in dealing with particular explicit issues raised by individual pupils. It is not normally appropriate to deal with such issues with the whole class.
- Teachers and pupils are not allowed to ask or be expected to answer any personal questions.
- No one is forced to take part in discussion.
- The use of proper terms for parts of the body and body functions is encouraged so that these terms are given a status and respectability.
- Teachers do not promise confidentiality.
- Teachers can provide all pupils with information about where and from whom, they can receive confidential advice and support.
- Teachers encourage young people, where possible, to discuss their concerns with parents/carers.
- In line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, teachers inform the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs Megaw on the Lurgan Campus or Mrs Caldwell on the Portadown Campus) of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk.

Role of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Co-ordinator

Under the direction and supervision of Dr Kirkwood, the Designated Teachers Mrs Megaw and Mrs Caldwell are the members of staff responsible for co-ordinating all issues related to the RSE Policy and programme development.

Their role includes:

- ✓ Ensuring that the programme is taught effectively and is appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils.
- ✓ Liaising with the Board of Governors, Principal, Vice-Principal, all staff, parents, health and educational visitors on RSE matters.
- ✓ Attending in-service training and disseminating appropriate information to other members of staff.
- ✓ Organising training for staff as and when appropriate.
- ✓ Liaising with outside agencies for curriculum purposes.

Responding to Sensitive Issues

At Craigavon Senior High School, we recognise that, on occasion, certain sensitive issues may require consideration. When attempting to deal with these issues the following procedures will be adopted:

Pregnancy

We will support any pupil who may become pregnant whilst enrolled in our school. Following consultation with the pupil concerned a referral will be made to the Education Authority's School Age Mothers Project (SAM).

In the event of a pupil informing the school that she is pregnant, this will initially be considered a child protection issue and the school will follow the appropriate Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidelines.

School Absences for Family Planning Issues

Our policy for permitting pupils to leave school during the day will be applied to all requests. This includes requests for absence in relation to family planning issues. Parental permission will be sought as pupils are younger than the legal age of consent.

"Risky" Children

This term has been applied to children who display behaviours which may be harmful to other children. Whilst these children have a right to education the school also has an obligation to ensure the well-being of the entire population. In order to do so risk assessments will be carried out and school will work closely with parents and relevant agencies.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We are very much aware that as young people are growing up they can experience sexual identity and orientation confusion. This may be temporary for some, while for

others; it may become clear with time that their orientation is homosexual. It is important that all curricular delivery advocates abstinence as the acceptable option for all young people.

Bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation is as unacceptable as it is in any other situation where someone is mistreated because of their differences from those who are perceived to be the majority. All issues relating to bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation will be dealt with appropriately, in line with the procedures outlined in the school's anti-bullying policy.

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It refers to a number of different possible scenarios in which children or young people are exploited, coerced and/or manipulated into engaging in some form of sexual activity, in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person.

The staff at Craigavon Senior High School is committed to supporting any pupil who is a child in need by working closely with a range of agencies and the child's family. The school will adhere to guidelines in this policy and its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to ensure the child is protected and their needs are met.

Other Sensitive Issues

On occasions other sensitive issues may arise and these will be dealt with appropriately on a case-by-case basis. Advice will be sought from external agencies and other relevant authorities as deemed necessary. The school will at all times adhere to this policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to ensure pupils are protected and their needs are met.

Child Protection

As mentioned previously, if a young person is deemed to be at risk he/she will be reassured that he/she will be supported through the process. The school will adhere to its guidelines in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Recording and Referral

Clear and concise records will be kept pertaining to all issues previously outlined.

Parental Partnership

Parents and carers are keen that their children are well prepared to handle situations around relationships and sexuality. Whilst the classroom teacher has a significant role

to play in the implementation of RSE in school, this role cannot be considered in isolation to the role of parents and carers. Both should be complementary. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a young person's life and especially so in the domain of relationships and sexuality.

Teachers at Craigavon Senior High School will never attempt to assume the role of parental responsibilities. Rather, we view parents and carers as having the prime responsibility for bringing up their children. It is paramount that we work in partnership with parents and carers, particularly in relation to sensitive issues.

We will therefore seek to ensure that our RSE programme complements and is supportive of the role of parents/carers and that they are made aware of the topics covered in lessons and workshops that contribute to the teaching of RSE.

External Agencies

When visiting speakers and external agencies from statutory and voluntary organisations are invited into school, the activities that the individual or agencies undertake will complement the on-going programmes within school. Visitors are given a copy of this policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and asked to adhere to them. The school ensures that visitors are clear about the limits of confidentiality and that the Designated Teacher must be informed of any disclosures, which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that abuse is suspected. Parents/carers are informed when an outside agency is being used and a teacher will always be present when an individual or representatives from an agency are taking a class.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As is the practice with other school policies, this policy will be reviewed and updated annually. The on-going process of monitoring and evaluation will be linked to assessment for learning within the revised curriculum and developed as an integral part of the programme. Pupils and teachers will be asked to complete evaluation questionnaires relating to the school's RSE programme. Departmental audits in relation to the delivery of the RSE programme will also be carried out. Information gained will then be correlated by the co-ordinators and used to adapt the programme for the future.

Dissemination of the Policy

The contents of this policy will be made available to all members of The Board of Governors, the Senior Leadership Team, all teaching and non-teaching staff as well as those providing substitute cover. It will also be available to all parents on request and can be found on the school website.

All health or educational visitors discussing issues related to RSE will be provided with a copy of the school policy and will be encouraged to adhere to and follow its aims and objectives.

Tabled to BOG – September 2017

Parent Consultation – September 2017

Consultation with SAIL NI August 2017

Staff Consultation – September 2017