



ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

Relationship and Sexuality Policy

Revised May 2022

This policy has been revised to reflect:

- DENI Circular 2015/22 (*Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance*)
- *Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance Document for Post Primary Schools: Northern Ireland (NI) 2021*
- CCEA, (2019) *Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance 'An Update for Post-Primary Schools'*

Definition

As a Rights Respecting School, St. Mary's is committed to nurturing the personal growth and development of its pupils within a child centred, inclusive and secure learning environment where all pupils are cherished and valued. Relationship 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, gender issues and sexual identity. This policy is intended to provide a framework through which young people can develop the necessary skills, attitudes and values to deal with the challenges they may meet and to make informed decisions based on self-respect and self-esteem. The RSE programme acknowledges the importance and foundation established by informal learning from parents (or those holding parental responsibility) before any formal education takes place at school.

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 affectivity, the capacity to give and receive love; procreation and, in a more general way, the aptitude for forming relationships with others. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships.

Relationships and Sexuality Education provides an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of a good self-image and that individuals are in charge of and responsible for their own bodies. It provides knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships. It encourages the acquisition of skills and attitudes which allow pupils to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

'A commitment exists, through being a healthy school, to support healthy children, who are better able to learn and develop'

(Every School a Good School - 2009)

'The school has a caring ethos and shows a strong commitment to the welfare of the pupils and the staff'

(Together Towards Improvement- 2003)

'The delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education contributes to 'promoting pupils' personal growth and development and in supporting their academic achievement – that is, developing each child as a whole'

(ETI, 2011, page 22)

‘Ensure that learners, at each stage of their development, have an understanding of and respect for the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination’

(Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy 2011)

Pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

(The Equality Act -Sexual Orientation Regulations (NI) 2006)

Rationale

The RSE programme in St. Mary’s provides opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human relationships, growth, development and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework. Pupils are encouraged to explore the various friendships in their lives and to learn how to develop and enjoy friendships that are based on responsibility and mutual respect. Such knowledge and skills enables them to build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life.

Pupils learn about themselves as unique human beings, about their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth and about the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood. The RSE programme provides pupils with the information and skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today. Pupils are encouraged to make responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives. Teenagers today are exposed to a profusion of information through magazines, newspapers, music, television, videos the internet and social media. The RSE programme aims to give pupils the best information available, provided in a caring and balanced way, in a safe environment. The RSE programme helps pupils to recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations and to equip them with the skills and knowledge to take preventative action.

The school’s Missions Statement articulates:

“We will work in collaboration with other educational institutions and in partnership with parents and pupils to maximize academic and creative potential of pupils, enabling them to achieve the highest educational standards, thereby enriching their lives, the community and the economy”.

As a Rights Respecting School, the RSE programme and the principles that underpin it act in accordance with the UNCRC and in particular with articles:

Article 12 - ‘provide all children with the right to express their views’

Article 13 - ‘right to freedom of expression’

Article 17 - ‘right to access of information’

Aims of Relationships and Sexuality Education

The aims of Relationships and Sexuality Education are to:

- promote a Catholic vision of sexuality that reflects selfless love, respect and commitment within a moral, social and spiritual framework;
- help young people to appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness;
- promote pupils’ personal growth and development and in supporting them to achieve their full academic and creative potential;

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the pupils, enabling them to make informed decisions;
- promote positive attitudes towards respect for self and others with an understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender or creed;
- help pupils to develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships;
- foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships;
- help pupils to keep themselves safe from exploitation, abuse or violence of any kind;
- recognise common mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, disordered eating, self-harm and compulsive behaviour;
- promote responsible healthy behaviour and recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour;
- help pupils to value healthy relationships, family life, marriage and parenthood;
- encourage pupils to make responsible decisions about their relationships and sexual health;
- promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the sacredness of life.

Objectives of Relationships and Sexuality Education

In line with the school's ethos, CCEA and CCMS guidelines, the RSE programme enables pupils to:

- acquire knowledge and understanding of themselves and develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth;
- develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of self and others;
- acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development;
- provide reliable, accurate and age appropriate information about human physiology with particular reference to sex, human fertility, reproduction, sexually transmitted infections and diseases and other sexual health matters;
- develop coping strategies to deal with mental health issues;
- understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts;
- develop awareness and value of the diversity of family life, different family structures and the responsibilities of parenthood;
- know the features of positive and stable relationships (trust, respect, honesty and equality) and those of unhealthy relationships (imbalance of power, coercion, control, exploitation and abuse of any kind);
- help pupils cope with the breakdown of a relationship and the effect of change, including loss, separation, divorce and bereavement;
- 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 respectful relationships, stay safe and develop their own moral thinking and value system;
- develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse and violence;
- develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback;
- explore the moral and ethical issues surrounding sexuality;

- develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making;
- understand sexual development and identify and explore aspects of sexuality including sex roles, stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality;
- develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety including online, drugs, alcohol and risky sexual behaviour;
- value the concept and qualities of consent in relationships and understand the law in relation to consent;
- be able to access support for self or others at risk;
- be aware that the media portrayal of relationships may not reflect real life and understand the impact of this and of pornography on the expectations of relationships which can degrade human sexuality and relationships;
- strengthen partnerships between school and home and the wider community to promote the well-being of pupils
- support all staff when dealing with sensitive issues surrounding sexual orientation, gender identity and homophobic bullying.

Morals and Values

As a Rights Respecting School, the RSE programme in St. Mary's will enable pupils to:

- respect themselves and others;
- distinguish between right and wrong;
- take responsibility for their own actions;
- value abstinence until physical and emotional maturity;
- understand the long and short term consequences of their actions for themselves and others;
- appreciate the value of stable family life, marriage, permanent loving relationships and the responsibilities of parenthood;
- understand Catholic Church teaching on morality and personal relationships;
- value the sacredness of life;

Catholic Education

As a Catholic School, we share our vision of the human person in relationship with others by living out the Catholic values of inclusion, respect and care. The specific purpose of RSE in a Catholic School is to teach, nurture, advise, guide and enable young people in the school's care to recognise their own sacredness and the sacredness of others within the context of Catholic faith and teaching. The school is a place where everyone is valued and their innate dignity is respected, all students who have relationship and sexuality issues should be cared for and supported.

‘The Second Vatican Council spoke of the need for a positive and prudent sex education ... It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving’.

(Amoris Laetitia Of The Holy Father Francis, 2016 p280)

‘The Catholic school dedicates itself to the education of the whole human person, leading to a mature integration of the moral, physical, spiritual, religious and emotional dimensions of the individual’.

(Pope Saint John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 1981, P. 37)

Vulnerable Groups

It is widely recognised that some pupils are more vulnerable to all forms of abuse and exploitation eg Looked After Children. The RSE programme ensures that all pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to:

- identify inappropriate and exploitative behaviour;
- help develop their own prevention strategies to stay safe;
- recognise and build healthy relationships;
- know who they can talk to.

The RSE programme is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is delivered in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination.

Supporting Students at Risk

St. Mary's High School follows the Child Protection procedures as laid out in the Department of Education Circular 2017/04 Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools. The student's right to privacy should always be respected by both the teacher and the other pupils in the class but staff cannot give a guarantee of confidentiality to pupils on issues relating to Child Protection.

- The child's right to privacy must always be respected by the teacher and other pupils
- Children will not be expected to answer any personal questions.
- Teachers will not promise confidentiality.
- The Vice Principal/Designated Teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest a child is at risk from harm or abuse.

Skills

The RSE programme in St. Mary's will enable pupils to develop the necessary skills to form and maintain positive relationships and to make informed choices and decisions regarding their health and well-being. Pupils will also be supported to develop skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values they are exposed to. Pupils develop the following skills:

- ✚ Practical Skills – for everyday living, supporting others, for future parenting, for assessing health and advisory services;
- ✚ Communication Skills – learning to listen to others points of view, putting their own views forward clearly and appropriately, giving and receiving feedback, handling and resolving conflict appropriately and being assertive;
- ✚ Decision making and problem solving – the steps in making personal decisions and sensible choices in the light of relevant information, making informed judgments about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgments into practice. Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of independence into thought and action and forming and defending their own moral and value framework;
- ✚ Interpersonal and Leadership skills – for managing relationships confidently and effectively, for developing as an effective group member or leader, for taking initiative and managing others responsibly;
- ✚ Self Reflection – being able to positively assess previous actions, evaluate them and to draw conclusions which will guide further actions;

RSE Topics

- Healthy relationships
- Physical wellbeing
- Emotional wellbeing
- Consent
- Online and internet safety
- Abortion
- Teenage pregnancy and parenting
- Risky behaviours
- Contraception
- Sexual health
- Puberty
- Menstrual wellbeing
- Gender identity
- Sexual identity
- LGBTQ+
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse/violence
- Sexual abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation

Organisation and Structure – Delivery of RSE

Key Stage 3

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral component of the Personal Development programme, delivered by Form Teachers during one weekly time-tabled Personal Development lesson. The Personal Development Programme gives pupils the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge and understanding of the various types of relationships, growth, development sexuality and identity which enables them to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework. Pupils are encouraged to explore the various friendships in their lives and to learn how to develop and enjoy friendships that are based on responsibility and mutual respect. Such knowledge and skills enables pupils to build the foundations for developing more personal relationships later in life.

The key concepts involved in the delivery of RSE include:

1. Self Awareness
2. Personal Health
3. Relationships

RSE is also a statutory component of Home Economics: Key Concept - Home and Family Life;

1. Explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals within a variety of home and family structures
2. Develop awareness of parenting skills
3. Changing needs of family members at different stages of the life cycle
4. Explore strategies to manage family scenarios.

Key Stage 4

RSE is a central theme of GCSE Learning for Life (Key Concept – Personal Development). It is also included in the Key Stage 4 Personal Development Programme:

- develop an understanding of how to maximise and sustain their own health and well-being;
- reflect on, and respond to, their developing concept of self, including managing emotions and reactions to on-going life experiences;
- recognise, assess and manage risk in a range of real-life contexts;
- develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships;
- develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of parenting

Post 16

The Post 16 Enrichment programme allows student to explore further in an age appropriate way human relationships and development. The programme is supported by a range of external agencies including PSNI, PIPS Care and Support, Start 360 and Women's Aid.

Cross-curricular

Many subjects contribute to the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education. RSE shares content with the Programme of Study of a range of subjects and this is mapped across curriculum areas and year groups. This broad base for the delivery of RSE allows the transfer and reinforcement of learning to occur in a range of learning contexts.

External Agencies

The expertise and skills of educational and health professionals supports the RSE programme. All agencies are asked to adhere to the ethos and values of the school and its RSE Policy.

As St. Mary's is a Catholic School, all teachers involved in RSE within their subject area are very aware of Catholic Church teaching on morality and personal relationships and their approach will be very much in keeping within the parameters of this teaching. All RSE lessons will be delivered within a context which reflects the Catholic ethos of our school and recognises the uniqueness and importance of every pupil in our care.

Many aspects of the RSE programme are also explored or reinforced by the general climate and everyday interactions within the classroom and the wider school.

Equality of Provision

The RSE programme in St. Mary's is relevant and accessible to all pupils in the school regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, perceived or actual sexual orientation, disability and religion. The school ensures pupils with SEN and Newcomer pupils have appropriate, accessible and relevant Relationships and Sexuality Education within a differentiated learning environment.

Responsibilities within RSE Policy

Parents/Carers:

The school will never assume the role of parental/carer 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.

Board of Governors

The Boards of Governors should;

- ensure the school has a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy and curriculum linked to their pastoral care/child protection policy.
- examine and approve the completed policy and programme prior to their implementation in the school and review the policy at regular intervals.
- 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 young people.

Pastoral Leader/Designated Teacher: - Vice Principal:

- Ensure the RSE programme supports the Pastoral Care Programme and child protection procedures;
- Lead the strategic development of RSE across all key stages including the revision of the RSE Policy at regular intervals;
- Facilitate the training of relevant staff to aid the effective delivery of the RSE;
- Map the delivery of RSE across curriculum areas;
- Monitor and evaluate the RSE programme;
- Report to the Principal and SLT in relation to all aspects of RSE.

Pastoral Support Senior Teacher

The Pastoral Support Senior Leader – Mrs Joanne Hughes is responsible for the whole school Personal Development and Support Programmes.

- Plan and Monitor the delivery of RSE themes within the Personal Development Programme
- Support Form Teachers in the delivery of the RSE themes

Health Education Co-ordinator:

The Co-ordinator for Health Education – Mrs Joanne McGinn is responsible for ensuring that the Relationships and Sexuality Policy within the school is consistent with the development of Health Promotion and Education and when necessary makes recommendations as to changes that need to take place including the resources to promote healthy lifestyles.

The co-ordinator will regularly:

- Review the RSE Policy to ensure it promotes health lifestyles;
- Co-ordinate, monitor and review Health Education activities;
- Enhance the RSE Policy by collaborating with a broad range of potential community based health agencies to enhance resources and organise activities.

Year Heads:

- Monitor the delivery of RSE themes within Personal Development lessons through Form Teacher meetings
- Support Form Teachers in the delivery of the RSE themes within Personal Development Lessons;
- Give feedback to the Pastoral Support Senior Teacher regarding the inclusion of RSE within the overall Personal Development programme;
- Deal appropriately with any concerns raised by Form Teachers regarding the Personal Development of pupils e.g. depression, negative attitudes, disturbing behaviour and when necessary use the referral system for Child Protection and Behaviour Management, including referrals to the school's counsellor.

Form Teachers:

- Ensure the effective delivery of RSE themes within Personal Development lessons is the responsibility of individual Form Teachers;
- Ensure all pupils in their form class have equal access to the programme;
- Create a child centered supportive learning environment where pupils feel comfortable to discuss their feelings and emotions;
- Any concerns regarding the Personal Development of individual pupils are reported to the Year Tutor including when necessary the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and the Behaviour Management Co-ordinator

Heads of Department:

- Facilitate whole school mapping of RSE themes within their curriculum area;
- Support department members in the delivery of RSE themes including the provision of adequate resources;
- Promote RSE themes within their department teaching.

Learning Support Co-ordinator and Newcomer Co-ordinator

- Liaise with Form Teachers, subject teachers and Heads of Department to ensure equal access to the RSE programme.

Confidentiality

Relationships and Sexuality Education is delivered in a secure, trusting, respectful environment where pupils feel reassured that their well-being is being promoted and cared for. The right to privacy must be respected at all times, no one should be expected to ask or answer personal questions. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role play, drama, videos and stories will be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure. Pupils are also encouraged to discuss any concerns with their parents or carers.

Teachers should not promise confidentiality. Both parents and pupils should be informed that confidentiality cannot be maintained. The school also provides information on sources of support outside the school and how they can be accessed. Teachers play a significant role in identifying potentially 'at risk' pupils and are vigilant to pupils who are experiencing distress and/or changes in their behavior.

The Vice Principal/Designated Teacher or Principal must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that abuse is suspected. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Teachers can provide general educational advice to pupils as part of the curriculum. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of parents/carers and reflects the ethos of the school. Teachers recognise it is the role of Health Professionals to offer medical advice to pupils.

Right of Withdrawal of Students from RSE

Parents will be consulted on the implementation of our RSE policy and are encouraged to share in the responsibility of this element of their child's education. Parents/Carers may wish to independently educate their child on certain aspects of RSE and have the right to withdraw their children from sex and relationship education lessons that are beyond those included in the statutory national curriculum. Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns and are welcome to review any RSE resources the school uses. If deemed necessary by parental request alternative arrangements can be made to withdraw pupils from RSE lessons and work from other areas of the curriculum will be provided.

Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Good relationships are essential when teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education. Learning takes place in a safe, secure, respectful and inclusive environment where pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and opinions and participate confidently and freely without embarrassment or judgement. The adherence to the Rights Respecting School Charter (RESPECT) helps pupils to feel more at ease explore and discuss sensitive issues.

Preventative Curriculum - 'Keeping Safe Messages'

The Personal Development Programme together with the wider RSE curriculum links offers a safe and supportive environment for pupils to explore sensitive issues in an age-appropriate way to help them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional and health issues, developing pupils' confidence, resilience and coping skills. The school also offers early intervention support when pupils are experiencing difficulties.

Appendix 1 – Keeping Safe Messages

Responding to Sensitive Issues

On occasions, certain sensitive issues may require consideration. Such issues need to be presented in a non-judgemental way, free from sensationalism and bias. The messages received by the pupils should be compatible with the morals and values framework of the school.

Teachers are particularly sensitive to the personal circumstances and cultural backgrounds of their pupils when dealing with sensitive issues eg same-sex parents/carers. Pupils' views and values are influenced by their informal learning experiences and by the views of family peers, community and the media.

There may be sensitive issues which different individuals hold strong opinions on, based on their values and beliefs. Pupils have opportunities to explore such issues in an age-appropriate way, enabling them to deal with the diverse and complex range of challenges facing them in society today. In dealing with such issues teachers will follow the Personal Development curriculum framework to help pupils develop an understanding of their feelings, thinking and behaviour and to

develop strategies to manage these feelings. It may be more appropriate to deal with certain issues or questions on an individual basis or to arrange time for group discussions outside class time. Through staff development, teachers are supported to deal with sensitive issues contained within the Personal Development Programme.

- **Age of Consent**

The age of consent in N Ireland is 16 years of age

- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

- **Contraceptive Advice to pupils**

Within the programme of study for Personal Development and Science, pupils receive information in relation to contraception and healthy sexual relationships. If requested, teachers advise pupils to seek advice from parents or medical practitioners.

- **HIV/AIDS and STI's**

Pupils should be provided with information about the most common STI's, the difference between HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission, practical hygiene and risky behaviours. They need to know that only those who are sexually active are potentially at risk from getting HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

- **Teenage Pregnancy**

In the event of a student informing a teacher that she is or may be pregnant the teacher must refer the pupil to the Designated Teacher who will follow Child Protection guidelines. Any school age mothers will be referred to and supported by SAM (School Age Mums) and an education plan of support will be agreed between the school, agency and home. Pupils will be encouraged to continue to attend school, before and after the birth of their baby.

- **Abuse**

Members of staff may be able to play a significant part in the early detection of abuse. Correct procedures as outlined in DENI's Circular (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools – 2017/04) should be followed as outlined in the school's Child Protection Policy:

- the member of staff should immediately inform the Designated Teacher
- the Designated Teacher must inform / consult with Social Services and / or the PSNI
- no teacher should take on the role of investigator. This is the responsibility of Social Services and the PSNI
- teachers should give the pupil time to talk without probing, record exactly what the pupil says and not promise to keep secrets.

Confidentiality cannot be promised to any student when abuse is suspected. The pupils will also be reassured that she will be supported.

- **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

The school is aware that as young people are growing up they can experience sexual identity and orientation confusion. In keeping with Catholic teaching it is important that abstinence is promoted for all pupils regardless of their sexual orientation. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favorably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Relationships and Sexuality Education will help to promote positive views regarding sexual orientation and gender identity which in turn will help to

raise the self-esteem of young people who may feel different. The school will handle all issues of sexual orientation and gender identity in a sensitive and reassuring way. As a Rights Respecting School, all negative and prejudice attitudes and behaviours will be challenged to create an inclusive learning environment.

Bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation, is unacceptable. All issues relating to homophobic language and bullying will be dealt with appropriately in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy. Use of unkind language will be challenged and deemed as unacceptable.

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

FGM is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. If any member of staff has a concern that a pupil young may be at immediate risk of FGM they should report this immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and an immediate referral will be made to the HSCT Gateway Team.

- Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. If a member of staff has knowledge or is suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a pupil they must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and an immediate referral will be made to the HSCT Gateway Team.

- Domestic Violence

Through the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education pupils can explore the sensitive issue of domestic violence in an age-appropriate way. Domestic violence can affect not only the pupil's sense of security and wellbeing, but also how they learn at school. Pupils are taught about personal safety and developing safe and respecting relationships. Any concerns regarding the safety of pupils is covered by the procedures outlined within the Child Protection Policy. The school will provide parents with information by sign-posting them towards specialist agencies that can provide support and emergency care. The school also provides parents/guardians with support information through the school website.

Use of External/Support Agencies

We acknowledge the importance of ensuring that any external agencies used to support the delivery of Personal Development and RSE must adhere to the values and ethos particular to our school. All external and support agencies will receive a copy of the RSE policy before commencement of their work in the school. Current external/support agencies include:

- Love For Life
- School Doctor/Nurse
- School Counsellor
- School Age Mums (SAM)
- xL Princes Trust
- Children's & Adolescent Mental Health
- NSPCC/Child Line
- Women's Aid
- Religious Retreat Team

- Relate NI
- START 360
- Cara Friend

Related School Policies

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

- + Pastoral Care Policy
- + Child Protection Policy
- + Drugs Education Policy
- + Anti-Bullying Policy
- + Behaviour Policy
- + Internet Policy
- + E-Safety Policy
- + Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- + Personal Development Policy
- + Code of Conduct for Staff
- + CRED Policy
- + Health Education Policy
- + Inclusion Policy
- + Parental Engagement Policy
- + SEN Policy

Dissemination of the Policy

All policies are available from the school website www.stmarysnewry.com.
 An overview of policies are sent to all parents at the start of each academic year.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Mr Fitzpatrick, Vice Principal/Pastoral Leader/Designated Teacher is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the RSE policy:

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Principal: _____

Date: _____

Date of Review: __May 2025_____

Appendix 1- Keeping Safe Messages

Term 1

Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Post 16 Enrichment
<p><u>Health and Whole Person</u> 5 aspects of health</p> <p><u>Bullying</u> Types of bullying and the effects Positive friendships</p> <p><u>Cyber bullying</u> Strategies to deal with cyber bullying</p> <p><u>Science</u> Lab safety</p> <p><u>Technology and Design</u> Safety in School Workshop Basic First Aid</p> <p><u>Home Economics</u> Kitchen safety. Home safety. Safe handling of Knives</p> <p><u>RE</u> Choices and Morality</p>	<p><u>Road Safety</u> Dangers for Pedestrians</p> <p><u>Healthy Bodies</u> Drugs Smoking Alcohol (effects on human body)</p> <p><u>Bullying</u> Strategies to deal with bullying</p> <p><u>Online Safety</u> Dangers with sharing information</p> <p><u>Science</u> Electrical safety in Home and Outside</p> <p><u>Technology and Design</u> Safety in School Workshop Basic First Aid</p> <p><u>RE</u> Nature of Sin and Role of Conscience in Moral Decision Making</p>	<p><u>Health and whole person</u> Concept of healthy person</p> <p><u>Self-Concept</u> Coping under pressure</p> <p><u>Drugs Awareness</u> Drug additions Consequences</p> <p><u>Managing Change</u> Dealing with adolescent feelings</p> <p><u>Managing Risk</u> Staying safe online</p> <p><u>Technology and Design</u> Safety in School Workshop Basic First Aid</p> <p><u>Home Economics</u> Health protection and disease prevention.</p>	<p><u>Managing Risk</u> My online reputation</p> <p><u>Health Education</u> Lifestyle choices Obesity Smoking Mental health</p> <p><u>Road Safety</u> Using mobile and speeding</p> <p><u>Healthy Relationships</u> Qualities in friendship Sexual behaviour Peer pressure Teenage pregnancy STI's</p> <p><u>English</u> Persuasive Essay/Speech – Social Networking Sites</p> <p><u>Home Economics</u> Nutrition and healthy eating</p>	<p><u>Managing Risk</u> Road safety – consequences of drink driving</p> <p><u>Independent Living</u> Debt management Saving</p> <p><u>Mental health</u> Coping strategies</p> <p><u>English</u> Persuasive Essay/Speech – Social Networking Sites</p> <p><u>Home Economics</u> Consumerism and money management.</p>	<p><u>Throughout Year</u></p> <p><u>Healthy Relationships</u> Women's Aid</p> <p><u>Mental Health</u> <u>MensSana</u></p> <p><u>Drugs Education</u> Start 360</p> <p><u>Safe Driving PSNI</u></p> <p><u>Health Education</u> Action Cancer</p> <p><u>Self Promotion</u> Barclay's Life Skills</p> <p><u>Stress Management</u> ICSS Hot Yoga</p> <p><u>Personal Safety – Moving on PSNI</u></p>

Term 2

<p><u>Road Safety</u> Mistakes made on the road</p> <p><u>Healthy Bodies</u> Types of Drugs Effects of drugs Consequences of actions</p> <p><u>Relationship and Sexuality</u> Different Expectations and misconceptions Qualities of good friendship Recognising our feelings</p> <p><u>Home Economics</u> Healthy lifestyle plans Avoiding harmful substances</p>	<p><u>Relationship and Sexuality</u> Problems that can exist in relationships</p> <p><u>Home Economics</u> A closer look at nutrition.</p>	<p><u>Relationship and Sexuality</u> Relationship boundaries Implications of early sexual relationships STI's Teenage Pregnancy Safety and managing risk Different forms of abuse Sources of help Child Sexual Exploitation</p> <p><u>Emotional and Mental Health</u> Positive thinking and dealing with stress (Samaritans)</p> <p><u>RE</u> Valuing Oneself – Self Esteem and respectful Healthy Life Choices</p>	<p><u>Mental Health</u> Positive thinking and dealing with stress</p>	<p><u>Independent Living</u> Budgeting</p> <p><u>Parenting</u> Impact of being a parent Child Sexual Exploitation</p> <p><u>RE</u> Relationship Choices – Teenage Pregnancy, Abortion, Contraception</p>	<p><u>Childcare</u> Safe proofing the home for a baby Child Protection Legislation and procedures in event of disclosure</p> <p><u>Health and Social Care</u> Health and Safety legislation</p> <p><u>RE</u> Year 13: Sexual Ethics – Relationships, Abortion, Contraception</p> <p>Year 13: Suicide – Reasons, Christian and Secular Perspectives, Consequences</p> <p>Year 14: Role of Conscience in Decision Making</p>
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Term 3/External Agencies

	<u>Health and Whole Person</u> 5 aspects of health <u>First Aid</u> Basic first aid procedures	<u>Home Economics</u> Teenage pregnancy Nutrition in pregnancy.		
<u>PSNI Talk</u> Role of police Internet safety		<u>Mensana</u> Promoting positive mental health <u>PSNI Talk</u> Alcohol Education <u>PSNI Talk</u> Sexting <u>Start 360</u> Drugs and Alcohol	<u>PSNI Talk</u> Drugs education	Women's Aid <u>Mensana</u> PSNI ICSS PSNI Start 360

Internet Safety –

Year	Theme	Video
1 st	Cyberbullying Sharing information online PSNI Talk – Online safety	Joe's Story CEOP Video
2 nd	Staying safe online	CEOP - Think You Know video
3 rd	Meeting strangers online PSNI Talk – Online Safety (2)	CEOP- They thought they knew
4 th	My online reputation	Orange Digital Dirt video
5 th	Sending images online	Mirror video
6 th	PSNI talk Personal Safety inc. online Safety	

Appendix 2 - Resource Directory/Support Organisations

- LGBTQI+

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex

- Sexuality

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person and relates to being male or female: it changes and develops throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions.

- Transgender

A person whose sense of personal identify does not correspond with the gender assigned to them at birth – (Oxford English Dictionary)

- Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation is ‘a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse’. Young people above the age of 16 can also be the victims of sexual exploitation, even though they are legally eligible to consent to sexual activity. - (SBNI, 2014, page 7)

- Homophobic bullying

‘Any language, conduct, or behavior used to exclude, demean or threaten a person based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation’ – (The Rainbow Project, 2010)

- Domestic Violence and Abuse

‘Threatening, controlling, coercive behavior, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member’

- (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools – 2017)

- Domestic Violence and Abuse

‘Threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation’

– (DHSSPS/ Tackling Violence at Home)

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as ‘cutting’, ‘female circumcision’ and ‘initiation’. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. It is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland.

- Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland.

Internet Safety

www.saferinternet.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals

Recognising and challenging inappropriate behaviour

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.safertoknow.info

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.start360.org

www.relateni.org

Sexual health issues

www.thinkitthrough.org.uk

www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.loveforlife.org.uk

Sex and the Law

www.fpa.org.uk

www.crisispregnancy.ie

Sexual orientation, gender identity and homophobic bullying

www.stonewall.org.uk

www.school-out.org.uk

www.exceedingexpectations.org.uk

www.endbullying.org.uk

www.rainbow-project.org

www.cara-friend.org.uk

