Enniskillen Royal Grammar School

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

1. Definition, Rationale and Ethos

RSE is a lifelong process which helps children and young people acquire age-appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and develop attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.

Sexuality includes all aspects of human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions and should be taught in the context of healthy relationships based on self-respect and respect for others.

Effective RSE which is taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner, encourages children and young people to value themselves as individuals and to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives.

Since the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum was introduced, RSE has been a statutory component of the following Areas of Learning in post-primary education:

- Personal Development and Home Economics statements of requirement for Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 3; and
- Personal Development strand of Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 4.

The above is the minimum entitlement that all young people must legally receive; however, the curriculum affords a large degree of flexibility to schools in how they develop and deliver their RSE taught programme. Beyond the minimum entitlement, teachers are expected to 'provide a balance of experiences' drawn from the RSE Progression Framework prepared by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) which provides a non-statutory progression pathway in RSE across all Key Stages.

In 2023, the Relationships and Sexuality Education (Northern Ireland) (Amendment Regulations) amended the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 in respect of Learning for Life and Work (LLW) to ensure that pupils at Key Stages 3 & 4 'receive age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion.'

Enniskillen Royal Grammar School's RSE Policy is drawn up within the context of our values and vision where pupils are known and valued as individuals in a caring, supportive environment and where we aim to develop our young people in mind, heart and body and to enable them to hold a positive view of themselves and others. We aim to encourage each pupil to develop breadth and depth of character, to develop moral and ethical values and a sense of social responsibility which has at its core respect and tolerance towards each other. It is our vision to have a school community underpinned by strong, healthy relationships in an environment where pupils and staff feel safe, valued and respected, and where open and productive lines of communication are built with parents/guardians.

The RSE Policy should be read in association with the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Addressing Bullying Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Mobile Phone & Handheld Devices Policy and ICT Contract.

2. Statutory Context

In June 2013, the Department of Education issued Circular 2013/16 'Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in School'. The circular states that 'the delivery of RSE must prepare pupils to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner and should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities.' The Department requires each school to have in place a written policy on how it will address the delivery of RSE. The policy should be subject to parental consultation and endorsed by the School's Board of Governors. All staff should be familiar with the contents of the policy.
In 2015, CCEA disseminated teacher guidance on RSE (DE Circular 2015/22). In 2017, the Department of Education issued updated guidance on 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools' (updated August 2020) in which Section 8 highlighted the importance of the preventative curriculum through the delivery of RSE in schools. In 2019 CCEA issued the document - 'Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance, An Update for Post-Primary Schools' which states that 'effective RSE is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It should provide them 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.' The document outlines the key aspects of RSE, namely that 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 age-appropriate information; and
- Increases young people's awareness of sexual health.

This policy supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which guarantees, in Articles 2, 6, 12, 13, 16, 19 and 23:

- Non-discrimination;
- Right to life, survival and development;
- Right to express views freely in all matters affecting the child;

• Right to access information;
• Right to privacy; and
• Protection from harm.

Our School's RSE Policy is intended to provide a framework through which young people can develop the skills, attitudes and values necessary to deal with the challenges they will meet as they progress through life. We recognise the significant role that we play in helping and encouraging our young people to make informed, responsible decisions about their relationships and sexual health.

3. The Moral Framework of the Policy

Enniskillen Royal Grammar School is a non-denominational school with a Christian ethos which recognises that young people live in a diverse range of cultures, religions and family types. We welcome warmly pupils and staff of all faiths and those with no religious convictions and we aim to establish an inclusive community where all pupils and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual or gender orientation, appearance and personal capability.

The School is committed to an RSE programme where pupils are taught and encouraged to respect a range of different views and to understand that others may hold different ideas to their own. The RSE programme aims to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, set within a clear framework of values and an awareness of the Northern Ireland legislation in the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2006 and the subsequent guidance issues by the Equality Commission in 2009 which requires that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not to be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

RSE will be taught in a sensitive manner with a focus on:-

• A respect for self and others.

• The development of a healthy critical self-awareness.

• The importance of a permanent, committed and loving relationship with one person.

• The responsibility of parenthood and the value of a stable family life;

• The deferment of sexual activity until young people are physically and emotionally mature enough to understand the inherent responsibilities.

• Abstinence as an achievable option.

We ensure that RSE is inclusive of all differences including special educational needs, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation by fostering an environment of tolerance and respect as well as tailoring content, delivery and resources, where necessary, to meet individual needs.

4. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of our RSE Policy sit firmly with our overall aims and vision for our school as we seek to engage our young people in a curriculum which promotes the value of lifelong learning, and which enables them to develop questioning and independent minds together with breadth and depth of character underpinned by moral and ethical values, based on self-respect and respect for others. In doing so we will seek: -

- To enable the pupils to acquire age-appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and develop their attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.
- To support pupils in the development of healthy, and respectful relationships with themselves and others.
- To develop a critical understanding of the negative influences with regard to gender.
- To help them understand the consequences of their choices in relationships and sexuality and to make informed choices about their own well-being.
- To develop decision making skills by making considered and informed decisions, developing independence of thought and considering the consequences of choices.
- To enable the pupils to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values in respect of sexual matters.
- To provide a safe environment in which sensitive discussions can take place and to promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence in formulating and articulating their views and values, in giving and receiving feedback, in being assertive and in handling and resolving conflict.
- To develop a critical understanding of external influences such as peer pressure on lifestyle and decision making.
- To acquire knowledge and understanding of the law as it relates to sexual behaviour.
- To educate pupils in how to recognise and report abuse and how to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse.

5. Responding to Sensitive Issues

Handling sensitive issues with care and respect is a critical component of the RSE Policy. The foundation for the effective delivery of RSE is the building of secure, trusting, respectful relationships between teacher and pupil. Pupils should feel reassured that their teacher cares about their wellbeing and that there are adults whom they can talk to and confide in.

Sensitive issues can include those about which different individuals/groups disagree and hold strong opinions on. Such issues can often divide society and arouse strong feelings as they often deal with fundamental questions of values and beliefs. Issues such as abortion, same sex marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual abuse and family lifestyle all have the potential to be sensitive, depending on the personal experiences, opinions and values of everyone within the classroom.

Sensitive issues are 'part and parcel' of life. Young people are aware of them, and want to talk about and understand them, particularly those sensitive issues which are also topical.

When teaching sensitive issues, teachers will seek to do so in a balanced and objective manner, acknowledging that there are different viewpoints and that these issues can evoke strong emotional responses. Teachers will endeavour to help pupils develop an understanding of their feelings, thinking and behaviour, and to develop strategies to manage and cope with these feelings. Where necessary, pupils may be referred to appropriate agencies for further support and guidance. Sensitive consideration to the needs of staff and appropriate professional training and support will be provided for teachers as they in turn support our young people in the delivery of the RSE curriculum.

Confidentiality

Enniskillen Royal Grammar School recognises that pupils need and expect a certain level of confidentiality, and every effort is made to ensure that this is provided as and when appropriate. However, it is essential that pupils are always fully aware that confidentiality operates within the boundaries of the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. The School has a responsibility for the welfare and safety of all pupils within the School environment and thus it is not always possible to offer confidentiality and members of staff are obliged to notify the Designated Teacher, Miss McCabe, or Deputy Designated Teacher, Mr Gaston, if they are concerned that a pupil may be 'at risk.'

All teaching staff must follow these procedures:

- The parameters of confidentiality must be discussed, and pupils should be informed that there are instances when confidentiality cannot be held, for example, in a situation where there are concerns that a pupil may be 'at risk.' Pupils should be fully informed of action that will be taken within the School's Child Protection Policy.
- Ground rules should be agreed with pupils.

Responding to questions in RSE

When teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education, the natural inquisitiveness of young people often results in teachers being asked questions which they had not planned for, and which will require them to exercise professional judgement. In such a situation, it may be more appropriate to respond on an individual basis or to arrange time for discussion outside class time. The teacher may also wish to seek the advice and support of a senior member of staff. The teacher may approach the relevant Head of Year, Senior Teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal should they need advice or help with any matter.

Support Systems

The School will provide access to counselling and support services for pupils who need additional help. This includes signposting to external agencies and professionals who can offer specialised support. In so doing, we are always cognisant of the need to work in partnership with parents/carers and of the need for sensitive communication with them and the young person.

6. Management and Co-ordination of RSE

The successful implementation of the RSE Policy requires the involvement and commitment of the entire school community. Each of the partners has a distinctive contribution to make and the effectiveness of the RSE programme depends on regular communication and collaboration.

The Board of Governors, Principal & SLT (Pastoral) are responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the RSE Policy and a planned, coherent and progressive age-appropriate programme that meets the needs of all pupils. This includes ensuring the policy is regularly reviewed and updated, and that staff receive the necessary training and support.

The Senior and Deputy Senior Teachers (Pastoral) will work with the LLW Coordinator and Heads of Year to ensure that the programme of study is coordinated and taught effectively in an age-appropriate way as part of the LLW Programme (Personal Development and Home Economics at Key Stage 3 and, Personal Development at Key Stage 4) and as part of the Preventative Curriculum.

Heads of Year have oversight of the RSE Element of the Personal Development Curriculum. Their role includes:

- Devising the programme of study in consultation with Senior and Deputy Senior Teachers (Pastoral);
- Review of the programme of study to ensure it is relevant, meaningful and current;
- Development of resources; and
- Support of staff delivering the programme of study.

Tutors/Teachers are responsible for delivering the RSE curriculum in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner. They will create a safe, supportive environment for pupils and ensure all pupils are treated with respect.

Parents and Carers are encouraged to engage with School and support the delivery of the RSE curriculum by discussing RSE topics at home with their children and by providing feedback on the RSE programme.

Pupils are expected to participate in RSE lessons and engage with the content in a respectful and thoughtful manner. They are encouraged to ask questions and seek help if they have any concerns or need additional support. Pupils have opportunities to provide feedback about the content of the programme

7. Implementation of the RSE Programme

The RSE programme is delivered as part of the LLW Programme (Personal Development and Home Economics at Key Stage 3 and, Personal Development at Key Stage 4) and as part of the

Preventative Curriculum. Key Stage 3 Tutors deliver RSE during Personal Development class and Tutor Time. At Key Stage 4, the Head of Year delivers RSE during non-exam LLW/RE class. In the Sixth Form, delivery of RSE is coordinated and taught by the Heads of Year during allocated sessions throughout the school year when the timetable is collapsed.

Enniskillen Royal Grammar School aims to provide a learning environment that provides opportunity for reflection, participation and engagement to allow the pupils to gain deeper knowledge, understanding and personal skills. In implementing the RSE Policy into classroom practice the school is mindful of the need to ensure that teaching is, always, appropriate to the maturity and level of understanding of the pupils concerned. Teachers are also alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of individual pupils, including those with additional pastoral or learning needs. Relational Learning is a key aspect of Learning and Teaching in all our classrooms and is particularly important when dealing with RSE topics. In RSE, learning is most effective when it takes place in a safe, respectful and inclusive space where pupils can express their views and participate openly without fear of judgement or ridicule by their fellow pupils.

Teaching methods include:

- Skill-based activities through participation and communication including, for example, scenarios, role-play, video and auditory recordings and any other method that brings real life situations into the classroom.
- Development of reflection, listening, talking and problem-solving skills including, for example, discussions.
- Whole group sessions including assemblies with relevant organisations.

8. RSE Across the Curriculum

The RSE curriculum is comprehensive and age-appropriate, covering a wide range of topics which, are delivered predominantly through the School's Preventative Curriculum; but also, through LLW, Science, Religious Studies, Physical Education, Home Economics, ICT and Technology & Design.

The following priority areas of RSE are covered in the RSE curriculum in Enniskillen Royal Grammar School at an age -appropriate stage

- ✓ Respect and tolerance including awareness of the impact of gender stereotyping;
- ✓ Consent;
- ✓ Developments in Contraception;
- ✓ Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse;
- ✓ Healthy, Positive Sexual Expression and Relationships;
- ✓ Internet Safety;
- ✓ LGBTQ+ Matters;
- ✓ Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights;
- ✓ Social Media and its effects on relationships and Self-esteem;
- ✓ Menstrual wellbeing.

The content is divided into Key Stages, with content tailored to the developmental needs of the pupils at each stage.

Key Stage 3: It is intended that during Key Stage 3 pupils will achieve a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and begin to explore the issues pertaining to RSE. The issues discussed at Key Stage 3 include:

Self-Awareness

- Understanding identity, emotions, self-esteem and personal values.
- Exploring influences such as peers, media, culture and social pressures including negative gender stereotypes.
- Developing coping strategies, resilience and personal responsibility.

Personal Health

- Understanding puberty, body image and emotional changes.
- Strategies for managing physical and mental health.
- Developing personal safety skills, including managing risk, bullying and abuse and, know where to seek help.

Relationships

- Identifying qualities of healthy friendships and relationships including the negative impact of gender stereotypes.
- Understanding consent, sexual maturation, fertility and contraception.
- Exploring emotional and social implications of early sexual activity.
- Recognising and responding to domestic/sexual violence and abuse.

Internet Safety

- Understanding digital footprints, online consent, sexting and exploitation.
- Identifying harmful online behaviour and how to report it.
- Recognising manipulation, stereotypes and body image pressures online.

Gender, Sexual Identity & Sexual Orientation

- Learning LGBTQ+ terminology, identities and concepts.
- Challenging prejudice, gender stereotypes, and homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying.

Menstrual Wellbeing

- Understanding the menstrual cycle, products, hygiene and wellbeing.
- Reducing stigma around menstruation.

Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights

- Facts on pregnancy and prevention of early pregnancy with a focus on abstinence.

- Facts on contraception and STIs.
- Information on abortion law and access in Northern Ireland.

The programme is supported by external agencies, including Love for Life, WHSCT, RISE Programme and the PSNI who deliver talks on personal health issues and safety.

Key Stage 4: Pupils will build on their knowledge from Key Stage 3, learning about more complex topics including:

Self-Awareness & Self-Esteem

- Reflecting on values, beliefs, identity and personal challenges.
- Understanding discrimination and negative gender stereotypes and, how to challenge it.
- Examining body image pressures, including media influence and cosmetic risks.

Internet Safety

- Laws on sexual content and image-sharing.
- Managing online sexual attention, pornography and harmful content.
- Recognising coercion and unsafe online behaviours.

Relationships

- Understanding responsible, healthy relationships and long-term commitments.
- Managing emotions, decision-making, conflict and relationship breakdown.
- Considering cultural and faith influences.
- Considering the negative impact of gender stereotyping.

Consent

- Deepening understanding of legal consent, boundaries and communication.
- Recognising factors that impair ability to consent (substances, power imbalance).
- Skills for giving, refusing and withdrawing consent.

Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse

- Identifying forms of abuse, coercion, grooming, exploitation and harassment.
- Knowing how to access support and legal protection.

Gender, Sexual Identity & Sexual Orientation

- Understanding gender roles, equality including the negative impact of gender stereotyping and their impact on decision-making.
- Challenging discrimination and supporting LGBTQ+ peers.

Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights

- Facts on pregnancy and prevention of early pregnancy with a focus on abstinence.
- Comprehensive teaching on contraception, safer sex, STIs/HIV and fertility.
- Understanding pregnancy options and accessing sexual health services.
- Accurate education on abortion methods, law and emotional considerations.

Menstrual Wellbeing & Menopause

- Understanding menstrual health conditions (PMS, PMDD, PCOS, endometriosis).
- Understanding perimenopause, menopause and treatment options.

Parenting & Teen Parenting

- Roles and responsibilities of parenting, including emotional and financial considerations.
- Choices around unintended pregnancy and available support.

The programme at Key Stage 4 may be supported by presentations from external agencies, such as Love for Life and PSNI.

Key Stage 5: At this stage, external agencies including, but not limited to, Love for Life, Nexus NI, PSNI, Cancer Charities, Shane Martin and Wayne Denner deliver RSE components tailored to the needs of post-16 pupils in preparation for leaving school and moving into a more adult environment. Topics addressed include Consent, Healthy Relationships, Sexual Health and Internet Safety.

9. Resources

The resources used are consistent with the aims and objectives of the RSE policy, and the School's ethos. CCEA and other sources provide support materials to assist in the development of resources (see Appendix 1). Teachers, including Heads of Year, must exercise care and judgement in respect of the resources they use to deliver RSE. They must satisfy themselves that the resources they plan to use:

• Reflect the ethos of the School;
• Are age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to the pupils' needs and experiences; and
• Are factually accurate, up-to-date and make clear distinctions between fact and opinion.

As part of the curriculum, teachers provide general information about sexual health issues but will also encourage pupils to develop strong communication channels with parents.
Pupils will also receive information about where, and from whom, they can receive confidential advice, treatment and support. Personal advice (including medical) is not to be given to individual pupils.

10. External Agencies and Support

At Enniskillen Royal Grammar School, we recognise that the expertise of education and health professionals, from statutory or voluntary bodies or individuals from the community, can bring a valuable contribution to the RSE programme. The RSE programme is supported by external agencies such as Love for Life, WHSCT, RISE Programme, Nexus, PSNI, SUNI, Shane Martin, Wayne Denner, Cancer Charities and WHSCT.

Prior to using an external agency or individual, the member of staff organising such contributions must:

- Ensure that the agency or individual receives a copy of the School's RSE and Child Protection Policies.
- Ensure that issues around confidentiality and the School's ethos are highlighted;
- Ensure parental consent through agreement in writing for participation in any programme;
- Ensure an appropriate member of staff is present and that there is support available for pupils after the session
- Ensure that the content to be delivered complements the School's RSE programme.
- Inform pupils of the purpose of the visit.
- Ensure that the pupils, and attending staff, evaluate the session.

11. Parental Partnerships

It is recognised that parents have the prime responsibility for bringing up their children and Enniskillen Royal Grammar School therefore seeks to ensure that the RSE programme complements and is supportive of the parents' role. It is paramount that partnership with parents exists, particularly in relation to the sensitive issues raised in RSE. Parents are encouraged to contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team if they have any queries or observations in respect of any aspect of school life including the RSE provision.

Parents/guardians can access a copy of the RSE Policy on our School's website or a hard copy can be obtained from the School Office on either site.

A Parental Consultation was completed in January 2026.

12. Withdrawal from RSE

There is no statutory right to withdraw a pupil from general RSE classes. However, the School will take account of any parental concerns expressed to it and will try, as far as possible, to make alternative provision for any pupil whose parent wishes him/her to be excused from some, or all, RSE classes. Where issues of a sensitive nature arise with individual pupils, teachers will encourage the pupils to discuss these with their parents.

In line with the December 2023 regulations, at the request of a parent, a pupil at Key Stages 3 and 4 may be excused from Article 5(1A) education*, or specified elements of it. Following DENI Circular 2024/01 a pupil may be excused if a parent makes a written request to school, where the parent considers the education is against their wishes. For pupils in Years 8-11, when a parent makes such a request by confirming which elements from Article 5(1A) education or specified elements of it, the pupil will then be excused. For pupils in Year 12,

where a parent makes such a request, the school will also confirm that the pupil does not object to being excused.

All requests should be made in writing and addressed to the Principal. The request should specify whether it relates to all Article 5(1A) education or specified elements of that education and confirm which elements or elements are contrary to their wishes. Parents are not required to provide a reason to the school.
The school will contact the parent, and as appropriate, the pupil to discuss the request. This would ensure that the wishes of both the parent, and their child are understood. A record will be kept of the request. All excusals will remain in force until the end of the school year in which the request was made or in the case of a specified element, until that education has been completed.

*Article 5(1A): The Relationships and Sexuality education (NI) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 in respect of Learning for Life and Work (LLW) ensure that pupils at Key Stages 3 an 4 have the opportunity to *'receive age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy an dearly access to abortion.'*

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE Policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team, with input from teachers, parents and pupils. The aim of the review process will ensure that:

- The RSE policy continues to comply with guidelines and legislation.
- Classroom practice continues to reflect the policy and the needs of the pupils.
- Teaching resources are reviewed and updated.
- The views, thoughts and feelings are respected and will be used to influence the understanding of the real needs of pupils rather than their perceived needs.

Based on feedback and new developments in education and health, the RSE curriculum will be updated to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

Staff training and support will be provided by the school to ensure those delivering the RSE curriculum are confident and competent in its delivery.

April 2025

Updated: January 2026

March 2026

Appendix 1

Support Resources

CCEA Resources: Available at www.ccea.org.uk

RSE Hub

The RSE Hub provides a range of up-to-date, relevant resources and sources of support for priority areas in RSE. These resources and guidance documents can be used to help address sensitive issues with pupils. However, the resources should be reviewed prior to use to ensure they are appropriate for pupils and in line with the ethos and RSE policy of the School.

Wellbeing Hub

The Wellbeing Hub identifies how the Northern Ireland curriculum promotes the learning and development of skills that support pupils' wellbeing and mental health.

UNCRC Resource Hub

CCEA and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People have partnered to create resources for teachers and pupils with a focus on the rights of children and young people, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Teaching Controversial Issues

A training programme which supports a whole-school approach to teaching controversial issues. Training materials can be adapted for use within the School.

Controversial Issues Guidance

Guidance to support Principals, senior leaders and teachers plan and develop approaches to teaching controversial issues at whole-school and classroom levels.

CCEA guidance documents

The following guidance documents, produced by CCEA, may be of use to teachers in planning RSE provision:

- InSync - teaching resource for Key Stage 3 Personal Development issues

- Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 4

- Active Learning and Teaching Methods at Key Stage 3

- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities at Key Stage 3

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment at Key Stage 4

Department of Education Resources

Available at www.education-ni.gov.uk