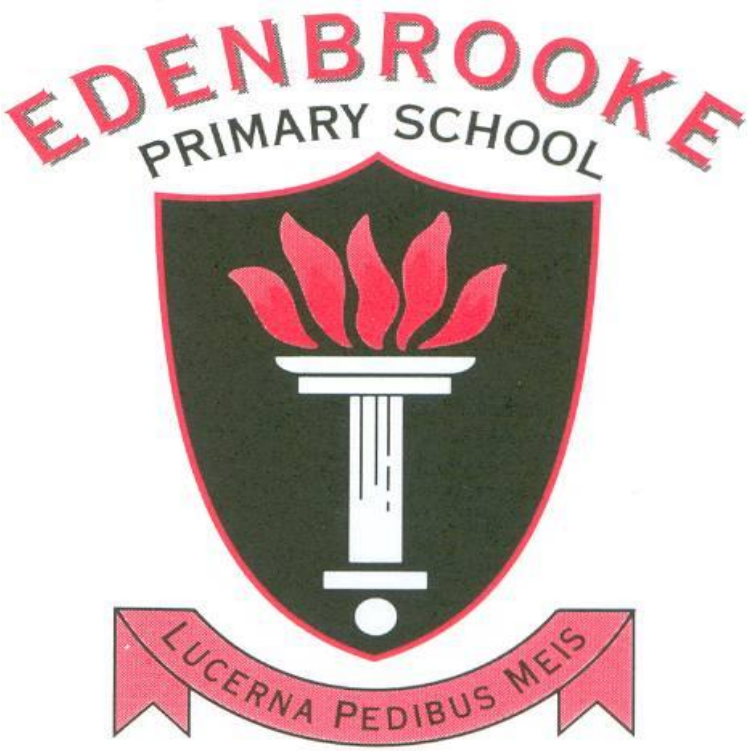

RSE Policy

September 2026

Edenbrooke Primary School is a school where all pupils are supported and encouraged to reach their potential. Our school vision is, 'Achieving, believing, succeeding together.' We aim to provide a safe, stable and caring environment which will support every child to feel valued, respected and welcomed in our school community and actively involved in their learning journey. This RSE policy reflects the vision and values of Edenbrooke Primary School.

INTRODUCTION

It is a statutory requirement that all schools in Northern Ireland have a 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' (RSE) Policy.
This policy has been written in line with Department of Education N.I. requirements and through consultation with parents/carers, staff, and governors and has been ratified by the Board of Governors. It will be updated annually.

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is clearly a part of this general aim. (RSE Guidance for Primary Schools)

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and must be delivered in a sensitive manner, which is appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and the ethos of the school.
The provision of RSE is an equal opportunities issue. All pupils have a right to an education, which adequately prepares them for adult life, and good RSE plays an integral part. It can have a positive effect on self-esteem. Schools can help to develop their pupils' self- esteem by creating a climate of trust and acceptance in which each person is valued and respected and encouraged to feel good about themselves. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their individual needs, to respect the needs and wants of others, and to develop the skills and self-esteem to become confident adolescents. RSE in schools can increase informed choice by providing opportunities for pupils to examine their own values and beliefs in the light of those held by others. Deeper understanding of the values and beliefs that they hold can help pupils to clarify why they think and behave as they do, to separate fact from fiction, to recognise prejudice and to respect the views, emotions and feelings of others.

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.'
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.

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;
- examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives;
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- build the foundations for developing personal relationships in later life;
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives.

AIMS

The aims of RSE are to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child;
- help the child develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships;
- foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework;
- promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions;
- help the child come to value family life;
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- promote an appreciation of the value of human life and birth.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self;
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth;
- develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others; understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts;
- develop an awareness of differing family patterns;
- 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 personal relationships;
- develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse;
- acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction;
- acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development;
- develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision-making.

SKILLS

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to develop the skills necessary to form and maintain relationships and to make informed choices and decisions regarding health and well-being. Pupils should also be helped to develop skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values. They need opportunities to develop:

- practical skills for everyday living; for supporting others; for future parenting;
- communication skills - learning to listen, listening to other points of view; putting one's own view forward clearly and appropriately; giving and receiving feedback; handling and resolving conflict peacefully; being assertive;
- decision-making and problem-solving skills for sensible choices made in the light of relevant information; making moral judgements about what to do in actual situations and putting
  these judgements into practice; acting responsibly and with initiative as an individual or as a member of a variety of groups;
- inter-personal skills for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader.

MORALS AND VALUES

RSE 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 will be provided with opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how they affect them, and others.
Children should be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following:

- a respect for self;
- a respect for others;
- non-exploitation in relationships;
- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships;
- equal opportunities for all;

- 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;
- a sensitive and caring attitude towards the needs of others;
- the difference between right and wrong;
- responsibility for one's own actions;
- development of the personal skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy relationships.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HOME, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

The effectiveness of this RSE Policy and its implementation is dependent upon a collaborative process involving staff members, parents/carers, Governors, volunteers and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has a distinctive contribution to make.

Keeping parents/carers informed about the school's provision for health education is a vital element of RSE. Parents/carers are invited to consider issues such as the readiness of children for aspects of the RSE programme, the appropriateness of resources, the content and methodologies proposed, and the handling of sensitive topics.

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. The Department of Education's Circulars have been used to devise this RSE policy.

These include:

Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education;

- Circulars 2001/15a and 2001/15b);
- Circular 2013/16; and
- Circular 2015/22 Relationships and Sexuality Education.

These circulars are available on the Department's website: www.deni.gov.uk. Guidance and resources on RSE are also provided on the NI Curriculum website at www.nicurriculum.org.uk **LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS**

This RSE Policy relates to the following policies & documents:

- Safeguarding /Child Protection Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Addressing Bullying Policy;
- Online Safety Policy
- PDMU Policy;
- UICT Policy;
- E-Safety Policy.

In primary schools, RSE builds, in a developmentally appropriate way, on children's existing knowledge and experience of their bodies, relationships and the world around them. RSE and Health Education are complementary since both emphasise the development of a positive self-image, and a respect for self and for others, as well as the provision of appropriate and accurate information.

An RSE programme for primary schools should provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- themselves as unique human beings;
- their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth;
- their friendships and relationships with others; and the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur at puberty.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF PUPILS

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the RSE programme should be accessible and be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. It should meet the needs of both genders and be a positive experience for all participants.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy.
- The Principal and Senior Leadership Team co-ordinates the school's approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, and health professionals.
- The PDMU coordinator is responsible for coordinating and reviewing the RSE policy and programme.
- The staff provide a link and have a complementary role with parents/carers and deliver the school's RSE programme within the context of the school curriculum.

CONTENT OF RSE

RSE will be delivered in a holistic, cross curricular way, ensuring that teaching is always appropriate to the maturity and understanding of the pupils. Teachers will be ever alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the range of topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in Edenbrooke Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of a variety of learning areas such as Health Education, PDMU, RE, World Around Us, PE and Drama. All teachers will deliver the RSE programme. Topics and themes are often repeated at regular intervals. The sequence in which ideas are presented below is not intended to imply a teaching order. Outside agencies and visitors will also be involved in delivering some aspects of RSE.

LINKS TO PDMU IN EDENBROOKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Strand 1: Personal Understanding and Health

- Self-awareness
- Feelings and Emotions
- Learning to Learn
- Health, Growth and Change
- Safety

Strand 2: Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

- Relationships
- Rules, Rights and Responsibilities
- Managing and Difference
- Similarities and Differences
- Learning to Live as a Member of a Community

PDMU Themes with RSE links are outlined below:

P1 There's No-one Quite Like Me! Sometimes I Feel, Taking Care of Me, Belonging and Cooperating, Caring and Sharing

P2 Wonderful Me! How Do I Feel? Keeping Heathy! Staying Safe, Getting Along with Others, I am Learning to…

P3 Getting to Know Me! Families, Why Should I? Living with Different?

P4 Difficult Feelings, Growing means Changing, Friendships, Who Influences Me? I am, we are, You can

P5 Valuing Self and Others, Ups and Downs, Learning More, Stay Safe and Healthy, Myself and My Attributes, I have Feelings

P6 Speaking Up for Me, check it out First, Healthy Habits, who am I? Working at Harmony, Dealing with Feelings, Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

P7 Who Says So? Who Cares? Moving On. Or Future, New Horizons, what makes Me, Me? Thinking and Feeling

SELECTION OF TEACHING RESOURCES

The selection of teaching resources
should be:

- consistent with the school's RSE policy and the aims and objectives of the RSE programme;
- consistent with the school's morals and values framework;
- appropriate to pupils' age, level of understanding and maturity;
- factually correct and respectful of its audience;
- likely to appeal to pupils in terms of appropriate language level, images, attitudes and values, maturity, contexts and situations, and the knowledge required;
- complementary to the existing programmes which the school offers;
- encouraging consideration of a range of issues, attitudes and beliefs pertinent to the topics covered.

TEACHING RSE IN THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

In Edenbrooke Primary School, we believe it is essential that teachers create a classroom environment which is supportive, where self-esteem is fostered and where the pupils feel valued and affirmed. The climate of the classroom needs to promote mutual respect and the dignity of everyone. It is important to create an atmosphere in the classroom which allows all pupils to feel comfortable to express opinions and feelings in a secure and safe manner and to explore issues which may be sensitive and personal. Every effort should be made to ensure that the whole group is at ease, with pupils showing respect for each other and realising their responsibilities to each other.

Ground rules should be agreed to help to minimise embarrassment and encourage the respect of each other's opinion. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos and stories can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

Important considerations are the:

- degree of trust, respect and positive regard for pupils;
- relationships between the teacher and pupils, and between the pupils themselves;
- need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives;

- use of teaching and learning methods which involve pupils actively in their own learning and encourage the consideration of attitudes and values and the ability to make informed and healthy decisions.

TERMINOLOGY

In teaching issues related to RSE, teachers will use the correct biological terms for parts of the body in an age-appropriate way.

SENSITIVE ISSUES

RSE in Edenbrooke Primary School focuses on personal development, relationships, emotional wellbeing, safety, self-esteem and the physical and emotional changes associated with growing up and puberty. Sex education is not delivered within the primary curriculum.

FAMILY STATUS

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of family life. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in school and will endeavour to treat all situations sensitively.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, Child Protection/Safeguarding Children procedures will be implemented.

WITHDRAWAL FROM RSE

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal. However, if parents/carers feel strongly about removing their child from RSE lessons, arrangements will be made to facilitate this.

USE OF VISITORS

Where appropriate, we may use the skills and expertise of outside agencies and professionals. Where this occurs, the school will be satisfied that contributions from informed outsiders are an integral part of the whole programme and in harmony with the

aims and ethos of the school. Where outside agencies are used, e.g. Love for Life, NSPCC, CRIS, TAMHI etc we will inform parents of the contents of talks or workshops and seek consent for children to take part.

STAFF TRAINING

Training needs will be considered and will be accessed using the EA, Public Health Agency and/or other appropriate health agencies. Where outside Agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of the school.

Parental Consultation

As part of the development of this RSE Policy, the school undertook a parental consultation through a questionnaire, which received responses from 84 parents. The feedback demonstrated strong parental support for RSE. 80% of parents indicated that RSE is very important for children in primary school, while 84% agreed that schools have an important role in teaching children about healthy relationships and respect for others. Furthermore, 92% of parents agreed that RSE should be taught in an age-appropriate manner throughout a child's time in school. As RSE forms part of the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum, this feedback has helped to inform the development of our policy and ensure that it reflects the views and priorities of our school community.

REVIEW OF THE RSE POLICY

The RSE policy will be reviewed by the Board of Governors.