

OMAGH HIGH SCHOOL



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy (RSE)

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Introduction:

This policy aims to show how the school will address Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) with the curriculum and the moral and values framework which it will be set.

Definition:

“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.”
(CCEA guidance for Post primary schools: Relationships and Sexuality Education)

Relationships and Sexuality Education in the N.I. context

The framework for sex education was initially established by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) in a *Guidance Circular 1987/45*. The main recommendation of this Circular was that each school should have a written policy on sex education which is endorsed by staff and governors and communicated to parents. It also stated “*sex education should be taught in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school and in conformity with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities*”

The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 further set out the legislative basis, requiring all grant aided schools to offer a curriculum which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society and...
- prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life

The 2023 Regulations make provision, by Regulations, about the circumstances in which, at the request of a parent, a pupil may be excused from Article 5(1A) education or specified elements of that education.

Under the Curriculum (Circumstances in which a Pupil may be Excused from Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Education) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023, a pupil may be excused from either all of Article 5(1A) education or specified elements of that education. A pupil may be excused if a parent makes a written request to a school where the parent considers the education is against their wishes.

The general principles which underpin our work are those set out in Departmental guidance and the following Circulars:

Circular 2001/15: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2001/15-2: Guidance for Primary Schools - Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2010/01: Guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Circular 2013/16: Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools

Circular 2015/22: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Guidance

Circular 2024/1: Guidance on Amendments to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Curriculum Content.

INTRODUCTION

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues. The learning process begins informally with our parents (or those holding parental responsibility) long before any formal education takes place at school.

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 and marriage;
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of 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 others' 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.

Organisation and Content of Relationship and Sexuality Education

Omagh High specifically delivers Relationships and Sex Education through its Personal Development Programme, Religious Education, Home Economics and Science lessons at KS3 and KS4 and other subject areas. Audit has been completed at KS3/4.

Much of the Relationship and Sex Education at Omagh High takes place within PD lessons.

RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the PD curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included.

Outside agencies are used such as PSNI, 'Love for Life', School Nurse and Women's Aid, Men's Health, Action Cancer, School Nurse.

RSE Programme of study within Personal Development

Statutory Requirements: Key Concept - Relationships

Exploring Relationships provides opportunities to understand the importance of forming and maintaining relationships to physical and emotional/mental health throughout life.

Young people should have opportunities to:

- Explore the qualities of relationships including friendship, for example, conditions for healthy relationships, types of relationships, healthy boundaries, gender issues in relationships, etc. Explore the qualities of a loving, respectful relationship, for example, how choices within a relationship affect both physical and emotional development, friendships etc.
- Develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios, for example, sibling rivalry, caring for relatives, domestic violence, teenage rebellion, child abuse, sexism, change in family circumstances, coping with rejection, loneliness and loss, etc.
- Develop strategies to avoid and resolve conflict, for example, active listening, assertiveness, negotiation, mediation etc.

- Explore the implications of sexual maturation, for example, sexual health, fertility, contraception, conception, teenage pregnancy, childbirth etc.
- Explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual activity, for example, personal values, attitudes and perceptions, the Law, STIs, the impact of underage parenting etc.

YEAR 8

Aim: To explore and understand the process of developing and maintaining appropriate, healthy relationships.

Learning Intentions:

- To develop an understanding of the range of relationships I experience;
- To identify my own web of relationships;
- To identify the difference between boys' and girls' self-images;
- To understand the main physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty;
- To be aware of the importance of personal hygiene.

YEAR 9

Aim: To explore and understand the process of developing and maintaining appropriate, healthy relationships.

Learning Intentions:

- To identify two broad types of relationships;
- To identify the qualities and values necessary to sustain a good friendship;
- To understand the concept of love and romantic relationships;
- To understand that conflict can arise within relationships, including friendships, when certain qualities are not present;
- To develop strategies to avoid and resolve conflict.

YEAR 10

Aim: To explore and understand the process of developing and maintaining appropriate, healthy relationships.

Learning Intentions:

- To understand the concept of physical and emotional boundaries;
- To identify and set appropriate boundaries for different relationships;
- To explore their attitudes and beliefs regarding dating;
- To reflect on risks and dangers linked with dating;
- To develop coping strategies for challenging relationships;
- To practice assertiveness skills to reinforce boundaries.
- To explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual intercourse/relationships within both committed and casual relationships;
- To be aware of the incidence, types, transmission and consequences of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs);

- To consider the issues regarding early sexual intercourse/relationships;
- To understand that pregnancy is a real consequence of sexual activity;
- To be aware of the consequences of teenage pregnancy;
- To recognise, and manage, their emotions around rejection;
- To understand ways of ending relationships in a sensitive way and coping with broken relationships.

YEAR 11

Statutory Statement Title(s): Pupils should be enabled to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships.

Aims: To understand what the point of relationships is and to identify ingredients that make up a healthy relationship.

Learning Intentions

- To define the characteristics of a supportive and respectful relationship;
- To demonstrate understanding of the purpose of relationships;
- To be aware of the incidence, types, transmission and consequences of sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
- To consider the issues regarding early sexual intercourse/relationships;
- Factual information about abortion;
- To explore their attitudes concerning abortion.

YEAR 12

Statutory Statement Title(s): Develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of parenting

Aims:

To explore the roles played by parents and the challenges that parents may face.

To explore the role played by teenage parents

Learning Intentions:

- To explore the challenges which young parents may have to face;
- To explore the emotional issues involved in coping with parenthood;
- To be aware of the financial considerations associated with parenting;
- To think about the roles that parents perform;
- To learn about the skills required for good parenting;
- To discuss the personal qualities that parents need to deal effectively with problems involving their children;
- To explore the education and career prospects for young parents.

Science Contribution

In Year 8 pupils study sexual reproduction, puberty and menstruation.

At GCSE Double Award and Single Award Level pupils study Human Reproductive systems, Menstrual Cycle (DA only), Infertility, Contraception, STIs, Genetic Screening and the ethical issues related to testing and termination of pregnancy.

A2 Life and Health Sciences and A level Biology pupils study meiosis, stem cell research and the ethics of genetic engineering.

RE Contribution

During RE lessons pupils study relationships in the context of religion and morality. An important aspect of pupil development is looking at religious traditions and thinking specifically about the values of family life, marriage and sexual relationships.

Year 8

Unit of Work: Relationships –The Story of Ruth

Learning intentions:

- To explore the story of Ruth;
- To discover how Ruth chose to be faithful to Naomi and what it means to be faithful;
- To analyse the concept of obedience as an important part of having relationships with others;
- To investigate how Ruth trusted Naomi and have considered the importance of trust in everyday life;
- To discuss how the characters in the story chose to love people who were different to them;
- To identify the emotions a person may experience when they feel like an outsider.

Year 10

Unit of work: Right and Wrong

Learning Intentions

- To explore where people learn their own moral values;
- To explore and discuss different views people have about what is right and wrong;
- To consider religious views on right and wrong;
- To identify issues in our society and consider differing opinions on these issues.

Year 11 & 12 OCN NI Level 2 Award

Marriage and divorce:

- Be aware of biblical teachings that give guidance on issues relating to marriage and divorce.
- Be aware of a range of views on marriage/partnerships and divorce.
- Be aware of support available to people facing marital difficulties.

Life and Death issues:

- Debate about abortion, taking account of social, political, biblical, church and other ethical viewpoints;
- Views of pro-life and pro-choice groups, the status of the embryo, sanctity of life and alternatives to abortion.

Prejudice and Reconciliation

- Understanding the meaning of the term prejudice
- Be aware of the biblical teachings that may give guidance on issues relating to prejudice.
- Be aware of a range of methods used to address reconciliation within faith traditions.

Home Economics Contribution

Within the Home Economics pupils address issues around family planning, puberty and reproduction in the context of the GCSE Child Development Syllabus.

In RSE all pupils will be taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The value of a stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood will be presented. As they mature, pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the importance of self-discipline, dignity, respect for themselves and others.

1. Dealing with Sensitive Information

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

All groups have agreed a class charter which can be adapted to help all teachers deal with sensitive information.

When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

Assessment is carried out at the end of every module and involves teacher, pupil and peer assessment of knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.

Teaching at all times will be appropriate to the maturity and level of understanding of the pupils concerned. Teachers will be aware of, and take into account, the variety of existing pupil knowledge, the different attitudes and beliefs and the pupil's capacity to understand the 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;
- to examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives;
- to learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- to build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life;
- to make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives.

2. 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 need opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how they, and others, are affected by them.

The importance of a moral framework is emphasised in the DfEE Circular No 5/2016 *Equality Act 2016: Sex Education in Schools*: “*Sex education . . . must not be value-free; it should also be tailored not only to the age but also to the understanding of pupils. School’s programmes of sex education should therefore aim to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, set within a clear framework of values and an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. Pupils should accordingly be encouraged to appreciate the value of stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood. They should be helped to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity. And they should be enabled to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, and risks, of certain types of behaviour, and to accept that both sexes must behave responsibly in sexual matters*”. Teachers are reminded: “*to acknowledge that many children come from backgrounds that do not reflect such values and experiences. Sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing hurt and offence to them and their families, and to allow such children a sense of worth*”.

(Paragraph 8)

3. Special Needs

It is particularly important for teaching staff to be aware of the fact that physical development may outstrip emotional maturity in the case of pupils with Special Needs and to accommodate this disparity in class lessons and experiences.

Inclusion

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive relationship and sex education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.

4. Right of Withdrawal of Students from Relationships and Sexuality Education

Some parents prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. They have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex and relationship education except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons). We would make alternative arrangements in such cases. Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity. Parents are welcome to review any RSE resources the school uses.

For pupils in years 8, 9, 10 and 11 the circumstances are, where a parent makes a request for a pupil to be excused from Article 5(1A) education or specified elements of it by confirming which elements of the education, the pupil should be excused.

For pupils in year 12 the circumstances are, where a parent makes a request for a pupil to be excused from Article 5(1A) education or specified elements of it by confirming which elements of the education the pupil should be excused from and confirms that the pupil does not object to being excused.

The request should be made in writing and addressed to the principal and identify the pupil to whom the request relates.

The request should specify whether the request relates to all of Article 5(1A) education or specified elements of that education and confirm which element or elements are contrary to their wishes. They are not required to provide a reason to the school. Where the circumstances prescribed in the Regulations are met, the pupil will be excused from Article 5(1A) education. However, the exception would be a pupil in year 12 where they object to being excused. See appendix 2.

Where a pupil has been excused from Article 5(1A) education, the excusal remains 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.

Other Relevant Policies

This policy complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Period Dignity Policy
- Positive Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- ICT and access to the internet

5. Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

A teacher approached by a pupil for counselling on sexual matters should, where appropriate, encourage the pupil to seek advice from his or her parents and / or from qualified professionals. Where the circumstances lead the teacher to believe that the pupil has embarked on, or is contemplating, conduct which is likely to place him or her in moral or physical danger, or in breach of the law, the teacher has a duty to inform the pupil of the risks involved. The pupil should be made aware that the teacher can offer no guarantee of confidentiality. Whether the teacher should take the matter further, by informing the designated teacher for child protection and where the Principal should consider involving the pupil's parents, the specialist support services, or the designated child protection officer of the Education and Library Board or CCMS, will depend on the particular circumstances involved and on the professional judgement of the staff concerned.

It should be stressed that if, at any time, a teacher becomes aware that a child may have been the victim of sexual abuse, the teacher should follow the detailed guidance on child protection, "Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection", which was issued under cover of Circular 2007. No undertakings of confidentiality should be given to the child in these circumstances.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy.

8. Check List for Visiting Speakers

Questions to Consider	To Do	Check List
Does the agency / individual have a specified Child Protection Policy?	Ask to see a copy - check if any points unclear with designated teacher for Child Protection.	
How will the issue of confidentiality be dealt with?	Make the representative clear that confidentiality cannot be maintained. The designated teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected.	
Are resources such as videos / tapes / role plays appropriate?	A member of the school staff should look at the resources which are to be used and judge the appropriateness of such materials for the age range and maturity of the pupils.	
Has the agency / individual worked with any other schools?	A check on the ability of any agencies or individuals is to contact schools that have used them in the past.	
Does the agency / individual have a clear set of aims and objectives as well as lesson plans?	Before coming in, teacher in charge should ask to see these and question any items they may think are inappropriate or at odds with the school's ethos and policies. They should also enquire about the overall mission statement of the agency.	
Has the agency / individual read any relevant school policies and are they prepared to adhere to them	Offer Child Protection Policy.	
Do parents know that an agency / individual is being used by the school?	Teachers should send out permission letter to parents explaining the type of activities which are taking place will ensure that parents have the opportunity to raise any objections prior to the event. It has the added effect of letting parents know what is going on.	
Will teachers be present?	Teachers should always be present when a representative from an agency or other individual is taking a session with a class.	

Will the input by the agency or individual be monitored?	After the session, the teacher should discuss the positive aspects and any difficulties which arose with the agency representative or individual. Any issues or concerns about the session should also be raised.	
Will the pupils be asked how the session / class with the agency / individual went?	Teachers should check that pupils are not uncomfortable or unhappy with the topics being dealt with, and the methodologies used. Evaluation of event should take place.	
Can the school terminate the work of the agency or individual if the classes or sessions are deemed inappropriate:	It should be made clear to agencies or individuals that the school may end any input if the teacher organising the event thinks it appropriate to do so. This should be a reciprocal agreement.	
Are evaluations carried out by the agency / individual and if so will the school have access to them:	The school may wish to see what impact the agency or individual has had, especially if there is a financial arrangement. The school may wish to measure the effectiveness of any such programme along with its own evaluations. Teachers should ask for a copy of any evaluation that may be completed by the agency. Teachers may wish to complete their own evaluation of the agency / individual.	

All outside agencies / individuals must sign in at reception and follow the visitor policy of the school.

Name and address should be recorded in office records (7 years)

9. Notes for Teachers

Providing Advice to Young People Under 17 Years

As part of the curriculum, teachers can provide general information to all pupils about a range of issues including; the types of contraception and the risks to health, advice on smoking, gambling, alcohol etc. They can provide all pupils with information about where, and from whom, they can receive confidential advice, treatment and support. Personal medical advice must not be given to individual pupils. Teachers must advise pupils to seek advice from parents, the school health team or medical practitioners. Pupils should be reminded that the legal age of consent for girls and boys in Northern Ireland is 16 years.

HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

The publicity in public health campaigns and media attention has ensured that most post-primary pupils have some knowledge about HIV/AIDS. However, pupils need to know that HIV/AIDS could affect them and not just drug users or gay men.

They should be provided with information about the most common STIs, the difference between HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission, practical hygiene and risky behaviours. Only those who are sexually active are potentially at risk from getting HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

The issue of sexual orientation should be handled by schools in a sensitive, non-confrontational and reassuring way.

In the transition from childhood to adulthood, some adolescents experience strong emotional attachments and feelings towards people of their own sex. Many move on to form heterosexual relationships; some remain permanently homosexual or bisexual. Pupils should be reminded that a male under 17 years cannot legally consent to any homosexual act. (Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2000 reduced the age from 18)

Teachers, whatever their own views, should counteract prejudice and support the development of self-esteem and a sense of responsibility in every pupil.

Sexual Abuse

Increasing public concern about the widespread occurrence and long-term damaging effects of sexual abuse has been expressed in recent years. For teachers there are two dimensions namely:

- teaching for protection, through the promotion of self-esteem, the skills of assertiveness, lack of guilt or embarrassment about sexual matters and the skills of self-expression including appropriate language and understanding;
- recognising signs of abuse, physical, emotional and social.

The house teacher and pastoral Leader has a significant part in the early detection of abuse. It is essential that correct procedures are followed as outlined in DENI's Circular 2017 /10 *Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection*. In summary these are:

- school-based staff should immediately inform the designated teacher;

- the designated staff must inform/consult with social services and/or the police;
- no teachers should take on the role of investigator, this is the responsibility of social services and the police;
- teachers should give the pupil time to talk without probing, record exactly what the pupil says and not promise to keep secrets.

Teachers who can deliver RSE with ease and comfort may demonstrate to young people that they are adults who can be confided in. However, they must make explicit statutory provision regarding disclosure of abuse.

Confidentiality in the classroom

The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. A key rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions. It is equally important that the teacher shares this right and never feels obliged to impart information about his/her own personal life. However:

- teachers should not promise confidentiality. A child does not have the right to expect that incidents in the classroom or in the wider context of the school will not be reported, as appropriate, to his or her parents and/or the principal. Both pupils and parents should be informed that confidentiality cannot be maintained;
- the principal or designated teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, the child must be told, sensitively, that the matter must be reported to the appropriate agencies. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Department's booklet *Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection* (Circular 2017/10).
- teachers can provide general educational advice to all pupils as part of the curriculum. This general advice can be given to pupils individually or within group situations. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of the parents;
- there will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or by a group of pupils. An initial judgement will need to be made about whether or not it is appropriate to deal with the issues with the whole class. The teacher may wish to discuss the issues with the parents to see how they would like the matter to be handled. Teacher colleagues or a member of the Personal Development team might also provide useful guidance. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents;
- teachers should remember that since they are not medical professionals they should not give detailed personal medical advice to any pupil. Only doctors and health professionals should give medical advice to pupils.

It is important that all teachers, not only those directly involved in the provision of RSE, are aware of their responsibilities regarding confidentiality. Parents should also be made aware of the confidentiality issues. The first concern of parents is likely to be for the safety and well-being of their children. It is important, if pupils cannot talk or do not wish to talk to their parents, that they have access to support from sympathetic teachers at school.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education

The RSE Co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing all subject areas. It is the responsibility of the PD Co-ordinator to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PD, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The PD programme will be treated as a subject department in this exercise, under which all departments undertake yearly self-evaluation.

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically important to the RSE Programme are:

- pupil feedback
- staff review and feedback
- parental feedback
- further Departmental guidance and legislative changes

Appendix 1 - Support for Schools – A Resource Directory

Information for parents and frequently asked questions regarding RSE is also available on the DE website page. Curriculum RSE will remain under review with further DE Guidance and CCEA RSE resources being developed in 2024.

(Source CCEA guidance)

Keeping young people safer in the digital world

www.saferinternet.org.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre have produced a range of resources to help schools teach pupils about staying safe online. These include resources on teaching about the consequences of ‘sexting’ and how to prevent the sharing of images. There are also links to other valuable websites which offer similar resources.

www.childline.org.uk

The NSPCC has produced resources to make it easier for children and young people to get help about ‘sexting’.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) ‘thinkuknow’ website contains advice and resources for teachers exploring the risks which children and young people are exposed to when online. CEOP have produced targeted advice and guidance for 11–13 year olds, 14+ years, parents or carers, and teachers.

www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals

Childnet International provides in-depth advice for teachers in their ‘hot topics’ section, covering issues such as ‘sexting’, online grooming, cyber bullying and online gaming safety. There is also an online resource bank which contains lesson plans and activity ideas suitable for young people up to nineteen years old – this is available at www.childnet.com/resources.

www.ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/externaldocs/ACPO_Lead_position_on_Self_Taken_Images.pdf

Information on policy and procedures relating to sexting in Northern Ireland is available from the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Recognising and challenging inappropriate behaviour

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

CEOP have created a short film entitled Exploited to help young people stay safe from sexual exploitation by being able to recognise the signs. It compares an exploitative friendship or relationship with a healthy relationship, and gives young people clear information about reporting abuse and accessing support.

www.safertoknow.info

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's (SBNI) website contains useful information and resources to raise awareness on child sexual exploitation.

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97773/teen-abusetoolkit.pdf

Expect Respect: A Toolkit for addressing Teenage Relationship Abuse is a teaching resource that challenges the attitudes of teenagers to violence and abuse in relationships.

www.nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC have produced a number of resources to support teachers in responding to relationship abuse.

Sexual Health Issues

www.thinkitthrough.org.uk

This website provides advice for young people about healthy relationships and also has links to other organisations in Northern Ireland.

www.nidirect.gov.uk

This provides useful advice for young people about sexual health and pregnancy.

www.fpa.org.uk

This factsheet summarises some of the key points of UK law relating to sexual behaviour.

www.qub.ac.uk

Queen's University Belfast have produced a resource entitled If I were Jack about teenage men and unintended pregnancy. It encourages pupils to consider and reflect on all of the options and consequences associated with unintended pregnancy.

www.crisispregnancy.ie

As part of their Crisis Pregnancy Programme the Health Service Executive in Dublin have produced B4UDecide, a free, downloadable teaching resource for Relationships and Sexuality Education.

www.brook.org.uk

As well as classroom activities and lessons, posters and leaflets, Brook also offers training for teachers to develop their knowledge and confidence of teaching issues such as safeguarding, contraception choices, relationships and sex advice, sexuality, sexual health and pregnancy advice.

Sexual orientation, gender identity and homophobic bullying

www.schools-out.org.uk

Schools Out is a UK charity committed to helping make schools safe and inclusive for everyone.

www.the-classroom.org.uk This website provides detailed advice on many aspects of teaching and learning to make LGBT people visible in education. It includes presentations, detailed lesson plans and a range of inclusive teaching resources celebrating diversity.

www.exceedingexpectations.org.uk

The 'exceeding expectation initiative' is designed to tackle homophobia and address sexuality with young people. This website is divided into three main sections and provides useful background information on what homophobia is, responding to homophobic bullying and the homophobic bullying experiences of young people.

www.endbullying.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum includes resources on cyber bullying and homophobic bullying.

www.rainbow-project.org and www.cara-friend.org.uk

The Rainbow Project in partnership with Cara-Friend offers free training to schools on homophobic bullying. They also develop educational resources and offer awareness-raising workshops for pupils.

www.nidirect.gov.uk

This website provides information for young people on sexual identity.

www.transgenderni.com

This website provides advice for schools who want to explore issues around gender and identity, and advises on dealing with transgender issues for children at school.

Appendix 2

TEMPLATE FOR USE BY A PARENT REQUESTING THAT A PUPIL BE EXCUSED FROM ARTICLE 5(1A) EDUCATION OR A SPECIFIED ELEMENT OF IT.

To the Principal of Omagh High School

For pupils in Year 8, 9, 10 and 11

I am writing to request that my son/daughter [Name] who is a pupil in Year x at your school be excused from age-appropriate, comprehensive or scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion or the specified element or elements of it as set out below. I can confirm that this education is contrary to my wishes.

Please tick as appropriate

**Prevention of early pregnancy*

**Access to abortion*

[Name of parent]

[Date]

For pupils in Year 12

I am writing to request that my son/daughter [Name] who is a pupil in Year 12 at your school be excused from age-appropriate, comprehensive or scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion or the specified element or elements of it as set out below. I can confirm that this education is contrary to my wishes. I can confirm that [Name of pupil] has not objected to being excused.

Please tick as appropriate

**Prevention of early pregnancy*

**Access to abortion*

[Name of parent]

[Date]