

CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
**RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION**



<b>Carrickfergus Grammar School policy on:</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION</b>
<b>Date implemented:</b>	September 2022
<b>Review date / led by:</b>	September 2026/Principal
<b>Consulted:</b>	Board of Governors, Pastoral Team
<b>Allied School Policies:</b> Safeguarding and Child Protection, Anti-bullying, Personal Development	

### **Introduction**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a statutory element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. DENI circulars 2001/15, 2001/15a, 2001/15b, 2010/01 and circular 2013/16 and 2015/22 with the Guidelines produced by CCEA, including ‘Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance- An Update for Post-Primary Schools’(CCEA, 2015), were used as a basis for this policy

Relationships & 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 ethos of Carrickfergus Grammar School is that of a family in which the foundations of security are built up in the fostering of self-discipline and self-esteem which must be the bases on which to develop this policy.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Carrickfergus Grammar is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, and RSE plays an integral part. Sexuality is an inherent part of being human. Carrickfergus Grammar School believes that the development of healthy sexuality is a right for all young people. We believe that all young people who attend our school have a right to education that will help them develop the knowledge and skills to enable them to make informed decisions about their sexual expression in a way that:

- Keeps them safe
- Respects their individual beliefs
- Shows respect for others
- Helps them develop and manage personal and sexual relationships

## **THE MORAL AND VALUES FRAMEWORK OF THE POLICY**

We recognise that young people live in a diverse range of cultures, religions and family types. We recognise them as individuals with the right to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their class, sexuality, culture, religion and gender identity. We are committed to an RSE programme which at all times will reflect the diversity and complexity of the lives and experiences of young people in our school.

We also recognise that at times there may be conflict between the different value systems and at times, whilst respecting difference, we will uphold the ethos of the school and include it in all aspects of RSE teaching.

In Carrickfergus Grammar School we will seek to uphold and endorse the following values:

- An appreciation of the value of stable family life and permanent loving relationships based on trust and commitment.
- An acknowledgment of singleness and celibacy as equally valuable and fulfilling options.
- The deferment of sexual activity until young people are physically and emotionally mature enough to understand the inherent responsibilities.
- Recognition that sexual abstinence and fidelity within the context of a loving partnership is a positive and desirable option.
- An appreciation that friendships and relationships should be based on mutual respect, non-exploitation, honesty, trust and commitment.
- An appreciation that with any relationships rights, duties and responsibilities are involved.
- An appreciation of the value of human life.
- Respect of all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity will be promoted, whilst members of the school community being allowed to have different views from others without aggression or antagonism.

## **AIMS**

The aims of RSE are to:

- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the young people in Carrickfergus Grammar School
- Provide an environment in which young people can discuss relationships in a secure and controlled environment.
- Help our young people develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships.
- Foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral and social framework.
- Promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions.

- To alert pupils to the physical, emotional and moral risks of casual and promiscuous sexual behaviour.
- Encourage an appreciation of the value of family life, including marriage, and other long-term relationships, and the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Promote and appreciate the value of human life and the wonder of birth.
- Help pupils cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up and to help them prepare for adult life and responsibilities.
- Facilitate communication of personal, social and sexual matters between pupils, parents, guardians and other carers, within the perimeters of the Children (NI) Order, 1995.
- Develop among skills of ‘empowerment’, decision-making and assertiveness which may be needed to process society’s pressures.
- Develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse.
- Develop emotional intelligence whereby anxiety, fear and emotions can be learnt to be managed.
- Develop skills in forming and maintaining healthy relationships.
- Provide accurate information and if necessary to correct misunderstandings pupils may have gained from their peers.
- Educate young people on how to keep themselves safe in the digital world.
- To promote better understanding of diversity and inclusion, encouraging values of respect for difference, while encouraging pupils to challenge prejudicial attitudes.
- Value and support teachers who are involved in the planning and delivery of RSE and in particular sensitive issues.
- Ensure that the planning and delivery of RSE reflects the ethos and values framework in our school.

### **STRUCTURES, RESPONSIBILITIES & PROCEDURES**

- (a) It is the duty of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection in the school to ensure that all policy, practice and training requirements are met in accordance with DENI circulars 2001/15, 2001/15a, 2001/15b, 2010/01 and circular 2013/16 and subsequent advice and directives from EA and the Department of Education.
- (b) If a pupil approaches a member of staff about sensitive issues which indicate potential abuse or risk of abuse, this information will be shared with the designated member of staff for Child Protection. The School Policy on Child Protection outlines procedures to be followed.

- (c) To ensure that the learning experiences are effective and relevant the program will be accessible and appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils and those with special education needs will be catered for.
- (d) The use of proper terms for parts of the body and functions will be encouraged so that these terms are given a status and an acceptability, and the tone of discussions will be respectful and genuine.
- (e) The issue of sexual orientation and gender identity will be addressed with the aim of eliminating sexual orientation discrimination. Staff (regardless of their own beliefs) will be expected to treat prejudice of any kind seriously.
- (f) The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school's RSE policy and there is consultation on the approach to RSE with staff, parents/carers and pupils.

### **Expectations from Parents**

Parents will be made aware of the School's responsibilities, structures, personnel and planned programme with regards to RSE. Pupils will automatically be involved in RSE. However, the school is willing to discuss with concerned parents if they express a desire for their son/daughter to be excluded from aspects or the entire RSE programme.

### **Sensitive Issues**

Sensitive issues will be presented in a way that is free from sensationalism and bias, and sensitively pitched to the needs of the pupils and situations. Pupils will be provided with a balanced and non-judgemental view that respects a range of religious beliefs and the possible experiences of the pupils. Guidance will be taken from the CCEA publication 'Teaching controversial Issues at KS3.' (April 2015).

### **Inclusion**

Through RSE we aim to deliver an inclusive Relationships and Sexuality Education, which is relevant, accessible and age appropriate to all young people. To do this it will be set within a framework which is inclusive with respect to culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and social background; seek to develop and clarify values and attitudes towards sex, sexuality and relationships and to encourage respect for and empathy with the values and attitudes of others; respect the diversity of cultural identity and encourage pupils to be aware of the traditions and beliefs of others' and include activities to allow different genders to talk about their interests, attitudes, emotions, concerns and feelings.

### **SEN**

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with additional needs, have appropriate, accessible and relevant Relationships and Sexuality Education. The Head of Personal Development will liaise with the LSC and HOY in the careful planning and adaptation of resources where necessary to ensure there are no barriers to participation or learning for pupils with SEN compared to their peers.

## **EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS**

Carrickfergus Grammar School recognises the expertise provided by professionals from statutory and voluntary organisations or individuals.

Before agreeing to use an external agency, teachers will:

- Review resources which are to be used or seek recommendations from other schools where possible.
- Decide if parents should be consulted.
- Ensure the input complements the school's RSE programme and will incorporate preparation and follow up activities.
- Inform pupils of the purpose of the visit.
- Ensure that pupils and teachers evaluate the work.

A teacher will be present during all presentations.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- The Head of Personal Development will be responsible for reviewing the RSE policy and its implementation. The Head of Pastoral Care will also have input into the policy.
- A small core of specialist teachers will be designated and trained in the teaching of RSE.
- All staff who are involved in the teaching of RSE will be involved in the monitoring & evaluation of the course of study. The aims of the policy will guide evaluation. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in the evaluation process.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

It is the intent of the policy that it will reflect the morals and values held by most pupils, parents, staff and the local community. The demands and pressures upon young people today have been recognised and therefore it is our goal to offer appropriate and accurate information to our young people on a wide range of sensitive areas. Above all the policy and programme seeks to develop pupils' self-esteem, self-image and to nurture respect for others.