Dear Parent/Guardian

Our school, as part of a Northern Ireland wide drive by the Department of Education is starting a key focus on helping our pupils deal with relationships and the changes they face as they grow up. The government have asked that all schools put in place a Relationship and Sexuality Policy (RSE).

While this policy is new, much of the content is already in place via our work in PDMU, World Around Us and P.E.

Parents, Governors, Pupils and Teachers have already been involved in the consultation process and we would welcome parental feedback on the policy. Any comments should be addressed to Mrs McKinstry or Mrs Armour via the school email address – info@loanends.crumlin.ni.sch.uk

Thanking you in anticipation

Mrs McKinstry

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) - Abridged Version

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) forms a strand of the ‘Personal Development’ area of learning through the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PD&MU) area of learning at primary level.

New guidance was published in August 2015 by CCEA - Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance - An Update for Primary Schools. Loanends Primary School will follow the updated guidance.

Relationships and Sexuality Education in the N.I. context

RSE is not a new area of the curriculum. 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”

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. Through PDMU and the World Around Us children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older. In Y7, will be given the opportunity for a talk with a GP in order to prepare them fully for post-primary schools and the emotional and physical changes they may expect to experience over the next few years. Only children with written parental/carer consent receive this Puberty Talk.

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.

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.

THE SCHOOL ETHOS

The aims of the RSE Policy support the values, ethos, and moral and ethical framework of Loanends Primary School. It is our intention that everyone feels valued and in doing so is encouraged to become a responsible member of the community showing self-discipline, caring for others, respect for life, property, opinions and beliefs.

In fulfilling our school aims, as set out in the Convention of the Rights of the Child, our school will deliver:

• Article 19: The right to a childhood protected from harm;

• Article 28: The right to be educated;

• Article 24: The right to be healthy;

• Article 2 : The right to be treated fairly and

• Article 12: The right to be heard.

CONTENT AND DETAIL

DELIVERING THE RSE PROGRAMME

The following includes extracts from the N.I. Primary Curriculum

Strand - Personal Understanding and Health

Foundation Stage

Self-Awareness

• exploring who they are;

• what they can do;

• identifying favourite things, and

• what makes them special

Feelings and Emotions

• beginning to recognise how they feel;

• knowing what to do if sad or lonely, afraid or angry;

• telling others about feelings, and

• realising what makes people sad or unhappy, recognising how people feel.

Health and Safety

• Being aware of caring for his/her own body;

• recognising good hygiene practices;

• understanding growth and change;

• exploring appropriate personal safety strategies, road safety and

• medicines and drugs including safety rules.

Key Stage 1

Self-Awareness

• Feeling positive about oneself;

• Awareness of own strengths, abilities, qualities, personal preferences;

• Recognising own feelings and emotions;

• recognising and managing the effects of strong feelings – anger, sadness, loss;

• acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes and

• recognising how they can develop and improve learning.

Health, Growth and Change

• recognising and valuing the options for a healthy lifestyle;

• having respect for their bodies and those of others;

• being aware of the stages of human growth and development;

• recognising how responsibilities and relationships change as you grow older;

• understanding medicines and drugs (Year 4);

• understanding that, if not used properly, all products can be dangerous and

• being aware that some diseases are infectious and some can be controlled.

Key Stage 2

Self-Awareness

• developing self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem;

• confidently express own views and opinions;

• identify current strengths and weaknesses;

• face problems and try to resolve them;

• examine and explore own and others’ feelings and emotions;

• recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way;

• develop insight into potential and capabilities;

• reflect on progress and set goals;

• identify and practise effective learning strategies and

• be aware of different learning styles.

Health, Growth and Change

• understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle;

• recognise what shapes positive mental health;

• know about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and other illicit and illegal substances;

• understand that bacteria and viruses affect health and know that basis routines can be followed to minimise risks;

• know how the body grows and develops;

• be aware of physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty (Yr 7 only);

• be aware of the skills and importance of good parenting and

• recognise how responsibilities change as they become older and more independent.

Keeping Safe

• develop strategies to resist peer pressure;

• recognise the nature of bullying and the harm which can result;

• become aware of the potential danger from strangers and how their attention can make you uncomfortable;

• recognise appropriate road use;

• develop a pro-active approach to safety at home, near water, on the internet, TV etc;

• know where, when and how to seek help and

• being aware of basic emergency procedures and first aid (CPR/Heart Start proposed by School Council as an after school activity).

Withdrawal from RSE

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. As a school we promote the implementation of RSE and discourage withdrawal. The school will, however take account of the parent/care concerns.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE Policy:

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

• pupil feedback – when pupils have the opportunity to provide feedback about the content of the programme of RSE delivered by the school so that it can be responsive to their needs. Loanends Primary School is a Rights Respecting School and consultation and discussion is undertaken with the School Council;

• staff review and feedback;

• parental feedback and

• further Departmental guidance and legislative changes.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier in light of any new Departmental guidance and legislative changes.