

SAINT PATRICK'S ACADEMY



(DRAFT) POLICY GUIDELINES ON RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY EDUCATION

JUNE 2008

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Rationale

Saint Patrick's Academy firmly advocates the Personal Development approach where young people are given the skills to help them resist peer and media pressure, and make informed decisions based on their own internal self respect and self esteem.

Aim

Relationships and sexuality is a major issue for our young people. There has been a disturbing rise in young people's sexual activity and the numbers of underage pregnancies as well as STIs, partly as a result of glamorous and contradictory messages from the media. Men and women are promoted as sexual objects and engaging in sexual activity appears to carry no responsibility or consequence. No consideration is given to the complex set of emotions and interactions required to sustain a healthy loving relationship.

This policy is intended to provide a framework through which our young people can develop the skills, attitudes and values necessary to deal with the challenges which they will meet in this very sensitive area.

Objectives

Through the delivery of RSE our young people should be able 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
- lay foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves, others and the way they live their lives

Outcomes

Desired outcomes are:

- enhanced self-awareness and self-esteem
- healthy and respectful friendships and relationships

- an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework
- responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions
- a sense of value for family life and marriage
- an appreciation of the responsibilities of parenthood
- appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth

Responding to sensitive issues

We recognise that, on occasion, certain sensitive issues may require consideration. When attempting to deal with these issues the following procedures will be adopted:

- **Pregnancy**
We aim to support any young women who may become pregnant whilst enrolled at our school. Following consultation and agreement with the young mother to be, referral may be made to the SELB's SAM (School Age Mothers) Project.

In the event of a young woman informing the school that she is pregnant we will consider if child protection is an issue. Advice will initially be sought from the school's designated teacher for child protection, and if it is deemed necessary, the school will follow its child protection guidelines.
- **'Risky' Children**
This term has been applied to children who display behaviours that may be harmful to other children. Whilst these children have a right to education the school has an obligation to ensure the well being of the entire school population. In order to do so we will carry out a risk assessment.
- **Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation**
We are aware that as young people are growing up they can experience sexual identity and orientation confusion. It is vitally important that all curricular delivery advocates abstinence as the acceptable option for all young people. Bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation is as unacceptable as it is in any other situation where someone is mistreated or bullied because of their differences from those who are perceived to be the majority. All issues relating to bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation will be dealt with appropriately in line with the general school anti - bullying policy.
- **Child Protection**
If, for any reason, a young person is deemed to be at risk, then he/she will be informed that confidentiality must be breached, and the reasons for the breach. The young person will also be reassured that he/she will be supported throughout the process.

- **Role of Parents** – The school will never attempt to assume the cloak of parental responsibility. Rather, we view parents as having prime decision making responsibilities. It is paramount that we work in partnership with parents, particularly in relation to these sensitive issues.
- **Recording and Referral** – Clear and concise records will be kept pertaining to all issues outlined above.

Parental Partnership

We recognise that parents have the prime responsibility for bringing up their children and we will therefore seek to ensure that our RSE programme complements and is supportive of the parents' role.

Related school policies

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Personal Development Curriculum Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Misuse of Substances/Drugs Education Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Storage and Administration of Medication policy

Managing External Agencies (Appendices A and B)

We acknowledge the importance of ensuring that any external agencies used to support our delivery of Personal Development must adhere to the values and ethos particular to our school. We ensure contracts are drawn up to inform all contributory parties.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This school recognises and accepts the importance of on-going monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the RSE programme.

To this end we follow the procedures for self evaluation as outlined in the DE document 'Together Towards improvement'

Appendix A

Service Level Agreement for Use with External Agencies Working in Schools

I/We have read the school ethos and policies of Saint Patrick's Academy and agree to formally adhere to their ethos and policies:

- in working with young people and
- in the delivery of the programmes outlined below:

I/We am/are, willing to provide *full* details of material content to:

Senior Management, Teachers, Parents, Governors and other Appropriate Bodies and agree to fully implement any changes deemed necessary by the above representatives.

I/We accept the right of the school to withdraw the invitation issued to support the school in the education of our Young people.

I/We formally accept the above terms of reference and in so doing I/We will acknowledge the agreement made.

Signed _____ **(External Agency)**

Dated _____

Countersigned: _____ **(Principal/Board of Governors)**

Dated _____

Appendix B

Checklist for use of Schools Designated Child Protection Officer to vet External Agencies working in schools

- Accredited Body
- Copy of Mission Statement
- Personnel to be used: Police Check
Official Qualification
Key Person
- All statutory requirements fulfilled: i.e. Health and Safety Policy, etc.
- Sufficient Insurance
- Principal informed and approval granted
- School Ethos read and understood
- Service Agreement completed and signed
- Evidence of current legislation
- Established format for feedback
- Evaluation process in place