



Relationships and Sexuality Policy

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Policy Rationale:

The United Kingdom Government, including Northern Ireland, is a signatory to the **1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** and has agreed to uphold the rights of children and young people as set out in the Convention.

This means that all children and young people in Northern Ireland have a right to a good quality education in accordance with the Convention and therefore, we acknowledge the importance of providing high-quality Relationships and Sexuality Education that is relevant to the lives of the young people today.

The Department of Education Circular 2013/16 requires every school to have an up-to-date written policy on how it will address the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education.

The Department of Education Circular 2010/01 advises schools to take account of guidance issued by the **Equality Commission in March 2009** on eliminating sexual orientation discrimination in schools in Northern Ireland. This guidance relates to the **Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006**.

Child sexual exploitation has been prioritised within the three-year strategic plan of the **Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI, 2013)**.

Relationships and Sexuality Education gives schools the opportunity to play a preventative role in child sexual exploitation by raising staff awareness of vulnerability factors and current indicators.

Effective RSE provision can help pupils to recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations and teach them how to take preventative action.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland (2013–2020) public consultation document recognises that 'schools are in a unique position to promote and safeguard the welfare of all children' (**DHSSPS, 2013, page 43**).

Through the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education, children can explore their understanding of 'keeping safe' in an age-appropriate way. It will also help them develop appropriate behaviour to protect themselves (**DHSSPS, 2013**).

Mission Statement:

***Lurgan Junior High School:* empowering you to reach your potential, to feel respected, cared for and equal.**

School Motto:

3'R's - **Respect** - for others and yourself
Responsibility - for all your own learning, organisation, and discipline
Resilience – facing disappointments with strength

Policy Aims

Schools are increasingly diverse spaces, reflecting wider societal change. This is acknowledged in the **Department of Education's *Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy C.R.E.D.(2011)***.

We believe our school should provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment: it should foster respect for difference, challenge prejudicial attitudes, and promote equality of opportunity for all pupils.

If we are to encourage children to be confident and respectful of themselves and others, and prepare them for life after school, the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education should be inclusive of all differences regardless of race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, and sexual orientation.

As a school with a strong Christian ethos, we believe in the value of family life and marriage. However, we also believe that it is important to recognise the diversity of family life today.

We believe all staff must be sensitive and respectful of difference, ensuring that no pupil ever feels, or is excluded, or experiences bullying due to their family or home circumstances.

As a school, we therefore aim to provide opportunities whereby our own young people can develop the skills, attitudes, and values necessary to deal with the challenges which they will meet as they enter personal relationships and friendships by:

- working closely with various agencies and groups throughout Northern Ireland to avail of the most pertinent and currently relevant information available;
- raising awareness, both with our school staff, pupils, and parents.
- ensuring that our provision addresses the pressures and dangers to which children may be exposed: in particular, technology, the integral role it plays, and how it impacts on their lives;
- ensuring that all staff are adequately trained;
- delivering programmes that promote diversity and challenge myths and stereotypes.

Policy Objectives:

Through the delivery of the Personal Development curriculum and, with the support of external agencies, 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 lives;
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- have a better understanding of diversity;
- lay the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life;
- know how to stay safe in the digital world;
- recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour;
- resist peer and media pressure;
- make informed decisions based on their own internal self-respect and self-esteem;

- make positive and responsible choices for themselves and the way they live their lives.

Management and Coordination of RSE in LJHS:

Pastoral Vice-Principal

Mrs R Kerr

Pastoral Senior Teacher

Mr K Lunn

Co-ordinator responsible for planning and delivery:

Miss J Hanna (Co-ordinator for Personal Development)

Personal Development Teaching Staff 2021-2022

Miss J Hanna

Mr A Barr

RSE Timetable Allocation

Specific **Personal Development** lessons are taught in **Year 8** – each class has a timetabled lesson of 40 minutes per week. These are generally mixed-gender classes unless single-gender issues arise.

The teaching of relationships and sexuality in Lurgan Junior High School is primarily addressed through **Year 8 Personal Development** lessons. However, in **Year 8** and **Year 10**, pupils will continue this process through engagement with outside agencies, specifically tasked with delivering our **Preventative Curriculum** in RSE.

During the three years in which pupils attend our school, they will be introduced to the values, skills and knowledge needed to equip them to build healthy interpersonal relationships.

Personal Development /RSE Programme – 2021-2022

PD lessons for Yr8 pupils – 1 x 40minute period each week. Pupils will use booklets and PowerPoints to explore the following **6 areas of interest**:

Year 8

- **Personal Development** – ‘Moving On Up – 1. All About Me’
- **Personal Development** – ‘Moving On Up – 2. All About LJHS’
- **Personal Development** – ‘Moving On Up – 3. All About Our Health’
- **Personal Development** – ‘Moving On Up – 4. All About Doing the Right Thing’
- **Personal Development** – ‘Moving On Up – 5. All About Respect’
- **Personal Development** – ‘Moving On Up – 6. All About Diversity’

Year 8

- **Love for Life** – ‘I-Zone’ Presentation
- **Reach Mentoring** – Self Esteem and Relationships – ‘Changes’ Sessions
- **LJHS Staff** - Positive Mental Health & Well-Being Days

Year 9

- **Reach Mentoring** – Self Esteem and Relationships – ‘Values’ Sessions
- **LJHS Staff** - Positive Mental Health & Well-Being Days

Year 10

- **Love for Life** – ‘Icebergs and Babies’ Presentation

- **Reach Mentoring** – Year 10 Week – ‘Influences and Choices’ Sessions
- **LJHS Staff** – Positive Mental Health & Well-Being Days
- **Reach Mentoring, Aspire and Study Seed** - Positive Mental Health & Well-Being Day which involves class workshops on three areas – anxiety and stress; building resilience; revision guidance and developing exam preparation skills.

S.E.N. provision

The PD Coordinator and PD teaching staff will work with the SENCO to monitor and appropriately support those pupils with Educational Plans and take these into account when planning the teaching of these pupils. PD Booklets & teaching resources will be specifically designed to enable SEN pupils to respond to the work in an appropriate way. Scaffolding, help sheets, video examples, class discussion may all be utilised by classroom teachers to assist SEN pupils in understanding the PD/RSE curriculum.

All PD teachers will be expected to support SEN pupils by:

- providing positive and challenging language learning experiences whatever the ability of the pupil;
- helping pupils with literacy problems;
- diagnosing/identifying pupils requiring additional help;
- planning educational programmes in conjunction with the SENCO;
- monitoring and reporting on pupil progress;
- keeping records to show/develop pupil progress.

Attention will be paid to teaching recommendations by the SENCO and, if necessary, an individual education plan will be drawn up in conjunction with the SENCO.

In accordance with guidance from CCEA, all pupils, regardless of SEN provision, will be assessed in PD and grades awarded for the standard of written communication, class participation, Talking and Listening, and engagement in the RSE programme through visiting agencies.

SENDO

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order makes discrimination against pupils on the grounds of their disability unlawful. This would apply to pupils who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Within our PD/RSE provision, we will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate disabilities when appropriate. The planning of lessons and visits from external agencies will consider pupils who may have disabilities and they will be included where possible in all activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Outside Agencies

At present, Lurgan Junior High School engages with outside agencies in the delivery of the RSE/PD Curriculums. All agencies are compliant with all school policies and have been vetted through Access NI.

Pupils and parents or carers may also be referred to these agencies for advice and support.

- **The REACH Team**, Lurgan
- **Love for Life** – Waringstown
- **CAMHS** – Portadown

Personal Development teachers will, at times, be assisted by the additional support and input of visiting outside staff in the delivery of RSE/PD projects. Classes may engage in short-term projects, which examine topics or issues of concern in a supervised but more informal setting (usually Lurgan Youth Annexe).

At present, we have whole school webinars/sessions supported by:

- **PSNI Neighbourhood Police Team & Mrs Theresa Burke**
- **ABC Community Policing Partnership**
- **REIM**

LJHS has been instrumental in piloting the following series of webinars in liaison with the above agencies during lockdown which were available to both parents and pupils over a three-week period:

- **Road Safety**
- **Online Safety**
- **Drugs and Substance Misuse/Peer Pressure/Anti-social behaviours**

These webinars were rolled out to the whole school during Form Periods in term three of last year and will continue to be part of our annual preventative curriculum sessions going forward.

Learning Together Programme – Youth Service

Mr A Barr, Lurgan Youth Annexe

This school year, 2021-22, Elements of the Youth Service “**Learning Together Programme**” have been combined with the **Personal Development Curriculum** to create a new approach to the teaching of PD/RSE within Lurgan JHS. The content of 2021-22 PD Booklets reflects these combined resources and encourages reflection upon issues faced by our Yr8 pupils:

- *transition from primary school;*
- *settling into secondary routines;*
- *building relationships;*
- *caring for self & others;*
- *becoming a valued member of society.*

Mr A Barr teaches Personal Development alongside Miss J Hanna (Coordinator) and reports on progress made in these PD Lessons.

Staff Training

Staff development and training are regularly reviewed and updated. Senior members of Lurgan Junior High School staff attended specialised RSE training with the Sexual Health Training Team, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The PD Co-ordinator is a member of the LJHS Pastoral Team. The team regularly participates in whole-school training inset days. Whole-school training in “**Routines and Relationships**” took place in August 2020, introducing new routines for our pupils moving about the school and in classrooms. The Pastoral Team reviews and up-dates these routines termly and are involved in ongoing staff training to reinforce these routines.

Engagement with parents or carers

At Lurgan Junior High School, we acknowledge the role of the parent in their child’s education. We aim to work in partnership with parents, keeping them informed of the role of any external agencies we bring into school and about the nature of the curriculum provided for pupils. We strive to ensure these are inclusive and consistent with the school’s Christian ethos.

ETI states that ‘there is a need for parents to be involved more in developing the Personal Development curriculum in school and for them to be supported so that they can help keep their children safe outside of school hours’ (ETI, cited in Marshall, R, 2014, page 105).

As a result, where appropriate we employ strategies such as:

- consultation via questionnaire/survey with parents and pupils regarding the content of the Personal Development programme and the issues addressed through our Preventative Curriculum. Recent PD Surveys were carried out in 2018-19, 2019- 20 and 2021-22. The responses to these surveys can be found in appendices.
- providing up-to-date parent or carer-friendly information leaflets/online articles/flyers, which encourage parents or carers to discuss any issues which may arise in the classroom with their children;
- holding awareness-raising workshops with parents and pupils; where appropriate share resources through our school Facebook page & Website to educate parents or carers on, for example, how to ensure that their children are using social media safely and responsibly;
- the use of Google Classroom, Sims Parent App & Parental Permission letters to alert parents when important RSE issues are being addressed in school sessions, allowing parents to prepare for each session and then support their children following these events.

Parents and Carers are assured that the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Lurgan JHS is complementary and supportive of their role as lead educators in this sensitive area and will be delivered in the context of our school’s Christian ethos in an age-appropriate manner.

Parents or carers have the right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes. Therefore, whilst ‘there is no legislative provision permitting parental withdrawal from sex education’, schools can grant these requests on an individual basis (**Lundy, Emerson, Lloyd, Byrne and Yohanis, 2013, page 25**).

If a parent or carer chooses to withdraw a child from all or part of *Relationships and Sexuality Education*, they must discuss the potentially detrimental effect that this can have on the child with the PD Coordinator or the Pastoral Vice-Principal (**Lundy et al, 2013, page 25**).

Parents should consider the social and emotional effects of the child being excluded, as well as the likelihood that the child will hear their peers' version of what happened or what was said in the classes, rather than the safe and reliable source of the teachers.

Dealing with specific sensitive issues

On occasion, certain sensitive issues may require consideration.

When attempting to deal with these issues, the following procedures will be adopted:

'Risky' Young People

These are young people who display behaviours which may be harmful to others in the school environment.

Whilst these young people have a right to an education, the school also has an obligation to ensure the well-being of its entire population. A risk assessment will be carried out and appropriate measures taken.

Pregnancy

Curricular delivery will always advocate abstinence as the acceptable option for all young people.

However, we aim to support any young woman who may become pregnant whilst enrolled at Lurgan Junior High School.

Following consultation and agreement with the young mother-to-be, referral may be made to the Education Authority's SAM (School Age Mothers) Project.

In the event of the school receiving information from a pupil re pregnancy, child protection guidelines will be followed.

Child Protection

If, for any reason, a young person is deemed to be at risk, they will be informed that confidentiality must be breached and the reasons for the breach. At all times, the young person will be supported throughout the process.

All external agencies utilised by Lurgan Junior High School must complete a Service Level Agreement contract.

Sexual Identity / Orientation Issues

We are aware that as young people grow up, they can experience sexual identity and orientation confusion. This may be a temporary issue for some children, but staff will always deal with all such issues sensitively.

If a pupil presents with sexual identity issues, the main concern of the school is to support both the child and their parents. Contact with parents will be through the Vice-Principal's office.

A referral may be made to an appropriate outside agency, which can offer advice and support to the pupil and their family.

In specific cases, with the agreement of the Board of Governors and in liaison with external agencies involved, adjustments may be made to ensure pupils feel included and equal.

Bullying on the grounds of sexual identity or orientation will be dealt with in line with the school anti-bullying policy. Curricular delivery will advocate respect for diversity and inclusion.

Recording and Referral

Clear, concise, and factual records should be made pertaining to the issues outlined above. These should be dated and initialled.

The RSE policy is reviewed annually by the PD Co-ordinator, considering updated guidance or training in consultation with the School Leadership Team, and with reference to updated CCEA guidance materials.

The policy is available for staff and will be shared with parents and carers through the LJHS website.

Comments or feedback should be addressed to Miss J Hanna.

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care.
Linked policies include:

Behaviour Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Personal Development Curriculum Policy
Child Protection Policy
Misuse of Substances Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy