



Castle Tower School

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Date Ratified by Board of Governors	February 2025
Review Date	February 2027

Castle Tower welcomes pupils aged 3-19 who face a wide range of barriers to learning. Educational opportunities are provided within our Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Post 16 departments.

Our Vision

Vision:

To be a leading light in special education through educating, nurturing and inspiring all our school community.

Mission:

Castle Tower School is committed to creating a community which:

- Ensures everyone is safe and included
- Always learns
- Promotes independence and resilience
- Celebrates achievements
- Looks forward with hope to the future

Everything we do is driven by our core values:

- Child-centred
- Nurturing
- Fun
- Team work
- Inclusive
- Independence

Our Ethos

Castle Tower strives to create a caring community in which every member feels valued, supported and happy. All staff work to maintain an ethos in which fairness, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness permeate all relationships within the school community. High standards of respect, self-discipline, commitment and sensitivity are sought and everyone is encouraged to set and achieve the highest personal, academic and social goals. The safety, welfare and development of everyone in our school community is of paramount importance to all staff and Governors.

At Castle Tower, there is continued development of the quality of the teaching and learning environment. Resources are used efficiently. Opportunities are created for learning in co-operative and interactive settings. Pupils are presented with challenging as well as stimulating teaching and learning opportunities. Staff at Castle Tower seek close working relationships with other providers and services throughout each stage of our pupil's education and through the transition stage to further education and life after school.

The Importance of RSE

Introduction

“Every school requires a policy that will address the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education. Relationships and Sexuality Education should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities”. *(DE Circular 2013/16)*

Sex and relationship education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of loving and caring relationships. It is about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.

Process for Policy development/Consultation

This policy has been developed by the Pastoral Team consisting of teaching staff and leadership. Nowadays young people have more freedom, increased responsibility, and exposure to variety of messages about sexuality and gender issues. RSE helps young people deal with these challenges. Statistics have clearly shown that in N. Ireland the occurrence of teenage births is rising dramatically. Many young people are also maturing earlier. It is therefore important that young people are provided with appropriate factual information and have opportunities to discuss their feelings and concerns.

RSE can help to promote a positive view of sexuality and sexual health by helping young people to feel good about themselves, to respect others and to be able to make safe, responsible and satisfying relationships.

RSE can have a positive effect on self-esteem. School can help to develop their pupil's self esteem by creating a climate of trust and acceptance in which each person is valued and respected and encouraged to feel good about themselves.

Pupils will be encouraged to recognise their individual needs, to respect the needs and wants of others, and to develop the skills and self esteem to become confident adolescents.

We aim to provide a RSE programme to increase informed choice by providing opportunities for pupils to examine their own values and beliefs in light of those held by others.

RSE will be taught in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school.

If pupils disclose anything during discussion through RSE issues, which makes a member of staff suspicious, the Child Protection procedures will be followed.

Sensitive questions and issues will be dealt with appropriately. Teachers will endeavour to answer questions as honestly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable with answering within the classroom, provision will be made to meet the individuals pupil's needs.

AIMS

The aims of RSE are to:

- emphasise the importance of respecting themselves and their own body
- raise the awareness of the importance of safety and sexual health
- promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions;
- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the young person;
- to make young people more aware of the stages of development from infancy through adolescence to adulthood.
- help them cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up.
- help a young person 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;
- help a young person 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.

Moral and Values Framework

RSE will be taught through a range of subjects within the Northern Ireland Curriculum at an appropriate level to meet the individual learning needs of the child. RSE will promote self esteem and emotional health and well being and help pupils form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community.

Where appropriate to the learning needs and level of understanding of the pupil 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 following key messages will be offered as a potential basis for a morals and values framework.

- The deferment of sexual activity until young people are physically and emotionally mature enough to understand the inherent responsibilities.
- An appreciation of the value of stable family life, marriage, permanent loving relationships and the responsibilities of parenthood.
- A recognition of the positive benefits of seeking sexual fulfilment within a permanent, committed relationship with one person.
- Abstinence as a positive option which is an achievable reality to which young people can aspire.

Child Protection / Confidentiality

Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

The staff member will inform the Principal/Designated Child Protection person in line with procedures for child protection.

A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

Use of Visitors/External Agencies

Visitors should complement but never substitute or replace planned provision. It is the teacher's responsibility to plan the curriculum and lessons.

When appropriate, outside agencies may be involved in the delivery of sex and relationship education. They support the delivery of the subject.

In preparing this policy reference has been made to The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Ni) 2006, DE Circulars, CCEA guidelines