Good Shepherd Primary & Nursery School Relationships & Sexuality Policy



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

• Every child has the right to reliable information from the media that they can understand. Adults must protect children from materials that could harm them. (Article 17)

"So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Corinthians 13:13,

Signed by the Chair of the Board of Governors:	
Date:	

Introduction

RSE is life long learning about physical, moral and emotional development. RSE should provide young people with the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not simply intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend

This policy was developed following consultations with parents/guardians and staff. It was developed in order to ensure the fulfilment of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in the delivery of RSE through the vision and ethos of our school.

At Good Shepherd Primary & Nursery School we aim to provide for our pupils in a happy, stimulating and secure environment, a programme of learning and teaching embracing the Northern Ireland Revised Curriculum that will enable each pupil in GSP&NS to attain his or her potential: intellectually, spiritually, morally, socially and physically.

Our mission statement is Learn, Believe, Respect, Achieve.

We believe that each pupil is entitled to experience a school climate in which the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, is marked by honesty, personal identifications, warmth, trust and security. We recognise that Education in Personal Relationships and Sex Education is a shared responsibility between home and school and is based on a scheme that all are comfortable to use:

- The parent in the home environment
- The teacher in the classroom
- And the child in both

"The vision, the values, the human and Christian virtues, the revealed truths and the lived tradition which go to make up the Christian understanding of life cannot be taught without reference to sexuality and procreation and the responsible, respectful and loving use of these gifts of God."

(Episcopal Commission for Catechetics)

Ethos

At Good Shepherd Primary & Nursery School, Christ is at the foundation of our whole educational enterprise. We develop attitudes and values based firmly on the Gospel. We seek to develop each child spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically in order that they may realize their full potential and have an appreciation of their self — worth.

We at Good Shepherd primary & Nursery School view the development and implementation of a policy in Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) as an important step towards achieving our aim to develop all aspects of a young person's personality and growth.

The morals and values of our Catholic ethos are the core principles that underpin the teaching of RSE. Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male and female and develops throughout life. It is a complex dimension of human life and relationships. As parents/carers are the primary educators of their children, we will endeavour to engage in full consultation with them regarding aims, objectives and the teaching programme of this policy and their views will be considered when implementing and reviewing this policy.

In line with our school's ethos, RSE should provide opportunities that enable pupils to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework consistent with our Catholic ethos
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect
- build the foundations for developing more positive personal relationships in later life
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives

Rationale

The school is involved in relationships and sexuality education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God

underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals. At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation.

As a consequence of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share in the divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

RSE will be firmly embedded in the PDMU and the RE Curriculum as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSE will be delivered in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from.

Children will be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- A respect for God and creation.
- To be able to distinguish between what is right and wrong.
- A respect for self.
- A respect for others.
- · Self-discipline.
- A responsibility for one's own actions and an understanding of the long term and short-term consequences of their actions.
- Non-exploitation in relationships.
- Commitment, trust and bonding within relationships.
- A development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others.
- Compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life.

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves: In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a positive and prudent sexual education which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Aims of RSE

In line with the school's ethos and CCEA guidelines the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy of a Catholic school aims to:

- promote a Catholic vision of sexuality that reflects selfless love, respect and commitment within a moral, social, spiritual framework
- help all pupils to appreciate their worth, dignity and uniqueness as children of God
- enable young people to appreciate sexuality as a gift from God and that love is the central basis of all relationships
- enable children to form healthy and respectful friendships and relationships.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
- To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- · To foster and develop mutual respect and understanding.
- To develop a respect for difference, gender and race within the school and community.
- To enable the children to identify and manage a range of feelings.
- To help all children to value family life in its diversity and the gift of marriage.
- To help young people recognise, understand and prepare for the body changes that they (and their friends) will undergo in the years ahead (puberty).
- promote respect for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender or creed

Objectives of RSE

In line with the school's ethos and CCEA guidelines, the Relationships and Sexuality Curriculum attempts to enable pupils to:

Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.

- Develop a positive sense of self awareness, self-esteem and self-worth.
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts.
- Develop an awareness of the diversity of family life and family patterns.
- Use decision making and problem-solving strategies.
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.
- Discuss their feelings, growth and development using an appropriate vocabulary.
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse (inappropriate behaviours, sexual abuse and exploitation).

Skills Promoted (including personal and social)

Pupils will develop:

- Communication skills Listening to other's points of view, putting one's own view forward, dealing with conflict peacefully and being assertive.
- Decision making skills Making good choices with the relevant information at hand, making moral judgments wisely in contexts and then putting them into practice, acting responsibly as an individual or as a member of a group.
- Interpersonal skills Managing healthy relationships with confidence and with effectiveness.

Programme for RSE

In Good Shepherd Primary and Nursery school we have decided, through consultation and agreement with our parents, Board of Governors, principal and teachers that RSE will be delivered through our RE Programme, 'Grow in Love' and CCEA PDMU resource 'Living, Learning. Together'. As deemed appropriate, sensitive issues may be addressed by experts from approved outside agencies. Planning and materials to be used will be discussed in advance with the class teacher/RE/PDMU coordinators and will in keeping with the Catholic ethos of our school. Parental consent will be sought beforehand.

Inclusion and Special Educational Needs:

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

The RSE Curriculum at Good Shepherd Primary & Nursery School

RSE lessons will be delivered in the third term. The child's class teacher will deliver lessons. In the exception of Primary 7, the class may be separated into gender groups for specific lessons.

Staff have reviewed, selected and developed teaching resources following an audit in 2023. Resources selected ensure learning objectives can be fulfilled and compliment the schools aims and ethos. Teaching resources selected are age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to the pupils' needs and experiences; and are factually accurate, up-to-date and make clear distinctions between fact and opinion.

In the light of the RSE Policy, and in the context of the ethos of the Catholic school, the statutory requirements for RSE are taught through the religious education programme Grow in Love, while linking with the significant and relevant areas of the curriculum such as PDMU and Safeguarding. Teachers will cover themes in Circle Time, RE and PDMU. We encourage active learning strategies e.g. mind mapping, discussion techniques, reporting back, listening exercises, circle time, role-play, questionnaires and quizzes."

A copy of the RSE policy is available on the school website. A copy is also included in the Primary 1 induction pack.

Withdrawal from class and supervision:

The DENI Circular 2001 clearly stipulates the right to withdraw from RE and children can be withdrawn from class by parents over the area of RSE,

particularly if taught through RE. This may mean the child going to another class for the duration of the lesson or in a shared learning area.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction, organisational nature and ethos of their respective schools. The Bishop is responsible for all Catholic schools in his Diocese as evidenced by Canon Law 8069 which states that, "The diocesan bishop has the right of supervision, visitation and inspection of Catholic schools in his diocese, even those established or directed by members of religious orders. He also has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools."

Board of Governors

Every School a Good School - The Governors' Role: A Guide for Governors outlines the role and responsibilities of Governors. Section 13.40 states, "Boards of Governors should ensure that their schools have a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy and curriculum linked to their pastoral care/child protection policy. This policy and the associated teaching should be the subject of consultation with staff and parents and endorsed by the Governors."

The Board of Governors should foster and support the development of an RSE policy and programme by collaborating with teachers and parents. It should also facilitate the consultative process whereby the school community can respond and contribute. The governors should examine and approve the completed policy and programme prior to their implementation in the school and review the policy at regular intervals. At all times the governors of the school should seek to accommodate and be sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs of both teachers and parents while fulfilling their responsibility to ensure the availability of adequate RSE for all young people.

Principal and Senior Management Team

As with all subject areas, it is the role of the Principal to make possible a coherent and co-ordinated approach to RSE in keeping with the ethos of the school. It is the role of the Vice Principal to support the work of the Principal. The Principal and Senior Management Team co-ordinate the school's approach to RSE and consults the Board of Governors, staff, parent(s)/carer(s) and health professionals, as appropriate.

RE Co-ordinator

The RE co-ordinator is a member of staff appointed to be responsible for co-ordinating all issues related to the RSE policy, the Department of Education specifications and the programme designed for the pupils. It is essential that the co-ordinator is respectful and committed to the school's ethos and the aims and direction of RSE within the school.

The RE Co-ordinator's role includes:

- upholding and ensuring that the programme is taught in accordance with the school's Catholic ethos;
- ensuring that the programme is taught effectively and is appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils;
- liaising with the Board of Governors, the Principal, the Vice Principal (Pastoral), all staff, parents and health and educational visitors on RSE matters;
- attending in-service training and disseminating appropriate information to other staff members;
- organising training for staff as and when appropriate;
- liaising with outside agencies where appropriate. Designated Teacher/Special Needs Co-ordinator

The Designated Teacher and Special Needs Co-ordinator will provide relevant information which will ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.

Chaplain

The role of the chaplain is to:

- support the teaching of RSE where possible;
- meet with the RE co-ordinator to discuss the RSE programme and its delivery in school;
- · witness to Gospel values. Diocesan Advisor/Diocesan Advisor Support Service

The Diocesan Advisor supports schools in the development and delivery of an RSE policy and programme which reflects the Catholic ethos and respects the wishes of parents

Relationship to other Policies and other Curriculum Subjects

To ensure consistency all school policies should strive to be consistent and coherent within the framework of the overall school development plan. The RSE policy is developed in this context and shares links with, the following policies:

- · Religious Education
- · Child Protection/Safeguarding Children
- Addressing Bullying Policy
- · Positive Behaviour Policy
- · Drugs Education Policy
- Internet Safety Policy/E-safety Policy
- · World Around Us
- PDMU
- · Homework Policy

Responding to Pupil's Questions and Sensitive Areas

While it is important to create an environment in which pupils can discuss issues openly, teachers may not always be able to answer all questions about issues and should set appropriate boundaries. Teachers should use their professional judgement, guided by the age of the pupils, the RSE curriculum and the RSE policy for the school. Any advice provided and the way teachers respond should support the role of the pupils' parents or carers and reflect the ethos of the school.

If a child asks a question which is not related to the learning objectives or which staff may feel is not appropriate, they will be directed to explore this question at home with parents/quardians.

All staff teaching RSE related issues should use the proper biological names for body parts and sexual acts, where appropriate and relevant to the RSE programme. The use of common slang should be avoided. Teachers should remember that, as they are not medical professionals, they must not give personal medical advice to any pupil. Teachers must advise pupils to seek advice from parents or carers and health professionals. If any question asked raises child protection issues, this should be referred to the designated teacher for child protection.

Specific Issues

The Status of the Family

In keeping with the right of Catholic schools to present RSE within its own ethos, the school supports the Sacramental vision of marriage and family, while being sensitive to other family situations.

The Sanctity of Life

In keeping with the right of Catholic schools to present RSE within its own ethos, the value and sacredness of life will be actively promoted. From the moment of conception, the embryo is a human being and must be recognised as having the rights of a person. The most fundamental right for every human being is the right to life. This belief is one of the foundation stones on which the RSE programme is built. Life is sacred from conception to the moment of natural death.

Confidentiality

The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. A key rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that "no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions".

Teachers must not promise confidentiality. A child does not have the right to expect that incidents in the classroom or in the wider context of the school will not be reported.

The principal or designated teacher must be informed of any disclosures, which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected.

Sexual Orientation

All pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably or isolated in any way. Respect for all people will be promoted in line with the school ethos — no pupils should be isolated. Pupils have the right to hold different views/lifestyles in a peaceful manner. Within the primary school context and given media influence, children are much more aware of the language in this area: 'gay', 'lesbian'. Rather than going into what is really a post-primary issue, it may be important to look at issues related in the context of bullying and the use of names.

The Catholic ethos of the school ensures that gospel values, inclusivity, equality and respect for all and the right of everyone to learn in a safe and secure environment where all are treated with respect and dignity. The ethos of a Catholic school supports the guidance produced by the Equality Commission on eliminating sexual orientation discrimination. This guidance relates to the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 and the guidance from the Equality Commission in March 2009.

All issues relating to bullying will be dealt with appropriately in line with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Pastoral Care of Young People with Gender Dysphoria

The disclosure of gender dysphoria by a child or young person is first and foremost a pastoral and welfare issue. As such, the priority of the school is to create a safe environment in which the vulnerable child can receive the support that they require.

Digital Safety

The RSE Programme will teach pupils how to safely navigate the digital world. Technology plays an integral role in the lives of pupils which poses both opportunities and risks. The RSE Programme will raise awareness of potential threats or dangers posed by the Internet such as sexting, cyber-bullying, pornography, abuse and exploitation. Pupils will explore the implications of the law, the strategies they can use to protect themselves and where they can access advice and support if they are at risk.

Child Protection

Children will need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is

and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may, at times, lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse, they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

While pupils should not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in RSE classes, there may be times when they do talk about their own lives. Confidentiality should be respected unless a teacher becomes aware that a young person is at risk, in which case the appropriate action should be taken e.g. follow the procedures set down in Child Protection Procedures and Guidelines, and notify parents/carers.

Where disclosure to parents/carers may place a young person in a potentially harmful situation, the school must follow the Child Protection procedures as laid out in the Department of Education Circular 2017/04 Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools.

The pupil's right to privacy should always be respected by both the teacher and the other pupils in the class but staff cannot give a guarantee of confidentiality to pupils on issues relating to Child Protection. e.g.

- We understand that the child's right to privacy must always be respected by the teacher and other pupils. Children will not be expected to answer any personal questions.
- Teachers will not promise confidentiality. A child does not have the right to expect incidents in the classroom or school to go unreported.
- The Principal or designated teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest a child is at risk from physical or sexual abuse.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The RSE Co-ordinator should monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals. The programme should be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets / needs assessment given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such

evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Staff Training

Staff training has been delivered by the Diocesan Advisers.

Appendix 1 Statutory Curricular Requirements for PDMU - RSE

Foundation Stage

Theme 1: Self Awareness

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: themselves and their personal attributes.

Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their own and others' feelings and emotions.

Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: The importance of keeping healthy.

Theme 4a: Safety

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: How to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments.

Theme 5: Relationships

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their relationships with family and friends.

Theme 8: Similarities and Differences

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: Similarities and differences.

Key Stage 1

Theme 1: Self Awareness

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others.

Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: strategies and skills for keeping healthy.

Theme 4a: Safety

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: strategies and skills for keeping safe.

Theme 5: Relationships

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: and initiating mutually satisfying relationships.

Theme 8: Similarities and Differences

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: Similarities and differences between people.

Key Stage 2

Theme 1: Self Awareness

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their self-esteem, self-confidence and how they develop as individuals.

Theme 2: Feelings and Emotions

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others.

Theme 4: Health, Growth and Change

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in developing: how to sustain their health, growth and well-being.

LIVING-LEARNING-TOGETHER Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 (P1-P4)

Myself:

- How I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example: hygiene, sleep, exercise.
- Their own and others' feelings/emotions and how their actions affect others.
- Naming parts of the body (basic) developing an agreed language for our bodies.
- Being myself I am unique, my self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, respect and caring for myself.
- Similarities and differences between myself and others, for example: uniqueness, fingerprints, gender issues, different rates of growth.
- An introduction to the stages of human development changes as we grow, for example: baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents.
- Recognising moods, feelings and concerns and developing a language and an appropriate manner of expressing them, for example: what do I do if I feel sad or angry?
- Personal likes and dislikes.
- The importance of keeping healthy and safe.
- The importance of keeping healthy and strategies and skills for keeping healthy.

My Relationships:

- My family, special people in my life what they do for me and what I do for them.
- Friendships, getting on with each other for example: communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating and sharing.
- Ageing how do we know that things are alive, dead, young and old.
- Loss and mourning death of a person or a pet (Note: situations of the pupils should be considered prior to introducing this topic).
- Respect and caring for family members and friends for example: caring for a new baby.
- Bullies and what to do about them.
- Personal safety simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety.
- The difference between good and bad touches.
- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends; the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances.
- Strategies which pupils might use to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.

My Community/Environment:

- Awareness of different types of families and the roles of individuals within families.
- Keeping safe for example: dangerous places, dangerous situations, the adults who will help, how to get help from others.
- Rules at home, at school and in the community.

Respect and caring for people in the community, e.g. elderly people.

Key Stage 2 (P5-P7)

Myself:

- The importance of keeping healthy and safe.
- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy.
- The physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty (girls and boys).
- Myself and my peers different rates of growth and physical development, maturity.
- Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Feelings for example: things that make me happy, sad, excited, embarrassed, angry, scared; expressing our feelings, showing love and affection.
- Gender roles.
- Making choices the influences on me and the consequences of actions for oneself and others
- Distinguishing between right and wrong.
- Secrets knowing the difference between good and bad secrets, what to do about bad secrets.

My Relationships:

- Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values.
- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's views, emotions and feelings.
- Families and how they behave what family members expect of each other.
- The meaning of friendship and loyalty; making and maintaining friendships and social relationships for example: identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people's point of view.
- · Handling difficult situations for example: teasing, bullying, death of a family member.
- The meaning of relationships within families, between friends and in the community.
- Behaviour what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate physical contact.
- Identifying dangers and risks within relationships.
- Being assertive in defending individual rights and beliefs.
- People who can help pupils when they have anxieties, concerns or questions.

My Community/Environment:

- Appreciation of the family in relation to the school and the wider community.
- Cultural differences in families and family relationships.
- Helping agencies who can support families and individuals in different circumstances.

Messages and images about health, gender roles and sexuality from the media, family and peers.

Appendix 2: permission letter to Parents/Guardians:



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42 Dungiven Road
Waterside
Derry
BT47 6BW
Tel: 028 71348446
Principal: Mrs S McCafferty B. Ed, M.Ed, POHNI
www.goodshepherdps.net
email: smccafferty143@c2kni.net

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

In the third term, our pupils will be looking at the *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)* curriculum.

Please see overleaf details of planned lessons for your child's class.

Please refer to the schools' RSE policy which can be accessed on the school website in the 'Our School' section.

All these topics will be delivered in a sensitive and age appropriate way. This programme is delivered firmly within the context of the Church's teaching on sexuality.

Please come and talk to us if you have any concerns. We will be happy to discuss any part of the program. If you would like further information about the materials that we will be using, please get in touch with your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Name of adult: _

Mrs S. McCafferty

I allow/do not allow my child to participate School.	in RSE at Good Shepherd Primary & Nursery
Name of Child:	Class:











Date





