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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Subject:

RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) GUIDANCE

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Target Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of all grant-aided schools;
- Education Authority;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment;
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta; and
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.

Governor Awareness:
Essential

Status of Contents:
Advice

Related Documents:
DE Letter of 14 January 2014
DE Circular 2013/16
DE Circular 2010/01
CCEA Guidance Material

Summary of Contents:

This Circular advises school authorities about revised Relationship and Sexuality Education guidance produced by CCEA on behalf of the Department of Education.

Superseded Documents:
DE Circular 2001/15

Expiry Date:
Not applicable

Enquiries:

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Introduction

1. An Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) report into the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in post-primary schools which was published in 2011 highlighted the need for revised RSE guidance and in particular the need for further guidance for teachers with regard to teaching sensitive subjects such as sexual orientation and domestic abuse. The report also identified best practice characteristics for RSE provision and these, along with recommendations for schools to take forward, were outlined in the Department's letter of 14 January 2014 – see Annex A.

2. In follow-up to ETI's report, the Department commissioned the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) to take forward this work and the purpose of this circular is to advise schools about the revised guidance which is now available on the CCEA website, www.ccea.org.uk and the Department of Education website, www.education-ni.gov.uk. The guidance documents are also available via C2k.

3. Two separate guidance documents have been developed – one for primary level and one for post-primary level.

Revised RSE Guidance

4. The guidance prepared by CCEA does not stray into the actual content of teaching and learning as this is a matter for each school across all Areas of Learning within the statutory curriculum. It does however provide a resource directory signposting schools to useful resources which teachers/schools may find helpful.

5. The Department requires all grant-aided schools to develop their own RSE policy based on the ethos of their school which is subject to consultation with parents and pupils. This revised guidance therefore focuses on providing advice and a template for the development of a school's RSE policy which is relevant to the lives of pupils today; providing an overall framework for a school's RSE policy; and, for instance, looking at how schools interact with pupils, focussing on the need to make pupils feel safe and confident that they should not be bullied, for example, due to their sexual orientation.

6. The guidance documents also outline the importance of RSE, the partnership approach needed for effective delivery of RSE (including the need for engagement with parents), the inclusive approach that is required (covering sexual orientation/gender identity) and the importance of the classroom environment.

7. With regard to dealing with sensitive issues, which ETI specifically highlighted in their 2011 report, CCEA has already produced separate specific guidance to support schools to plan and develop approaches to teaching controversial/sensitive issues at whole-school and classroom levels and this has been referenced in the revised RSE guidance. This additional guidance entitled "Teaching Controversial Issues at Key Stage 3" is available on the CCEA website.

8. The RSE guidance also references the recent inquiries into child sexual exploitation and the fact that RSE provides the opportunity for schools to play a preventative role by improving awareness amongst staff of the vulnerability factors and current indicators of child sexual exploitation. It also identifies how effective RSE provision can help pupils recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations and how to take preventative action.

Future Steps

9. The new guidance will assist schools with the development and review of their RSE policy, all schools should have a RSE policy in place. It is intended that ETI will carry out an evaluation of the delivery of RSE in primary schools during the 2015/16 school year. Any recommendations specific to the primary sector will be considered by Department officials on receipt of ETI's report and schools will be notified if there is further action they need to take forward.

SHARON LAWLOR
Head of Curriculum Support Team

Annex A

Chuig: Príomhoidí agus Boird Ghobharnóirí Scoileanna Deontaschúnta

14 Eanáir 2014

Ba chóir go mbeadh iar-bhunscoileanna ar an eolas faoin obair a rinne an Chigireacht Oideachais agus Oiliúna (ETI) le linn 2009 agus 2010 le soláthar Oideachais Chaidrimh agus Ghnéasachta (OCG/RSE) a mheas. Bhí dhá chéim i gceist leis an obair sin. Eisíodh suirbhé leictreonach chuig gach iar-bhunscoil le linn na chéad chéime sa bhliain 2009. Baineadh úsáid as torthaí an tsuirbhé leictreonaigh le cuairteanna leantacha ETI chuig 25 Iar-Bhunscoil a threorú. Foilsíodh tuarascáil deiridh na Cigireachta, "*Tuarascáil ar Mheasúnú ar Oideachas Caidrimh agus Gnéasachta in Iar-bhunscoileanna*" in Eanáir 2011 agus tá sí ar fáil ar láithreán Gréasáin ETI.

Ós rud é gur foilsíodh an tuarascáil ar OCG tamall ó shin, shocraigh an Roinn gur tráthúil anois na tréithe dea-chleachtais a chur i gcuimhne do scoileanna .i. na tréithe a shainaithin ETI maidir le soláthar OCG – tá siad mionsonraithe in Aguisín A den litir seo.

Mhol tuarascáil ETI roinnt beart do scoileanna fosta le cuidiú le soláthar éifeachtach a chinntiú:

i. athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar a gcuid beartas, ar a gcuid modhanna agus cleachtas le measúnú ETI a chur san áireamh. Ba chóir don athbhreithniú sin aghaidh a thabhairt ar: bearnaí i gcleachtas ar nós beartas OCG a fhorbairt agus iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar an áit a bhfuil OCG sa churaclam; treoir maidir le saincheisteanna íogaire a láimhseáil; agus athbhreithniú a

To: Principals and Board of Governors of Grant-aided Schools

14 January 2014

Post-primary schools will be aware of the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) work during 2009 and 2010 to evaluate the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). This work was completed in two stages, the first of which was the issue of an electronic survey to all post-primary schools in 2009. The results of the electronic survey were then used to inform follow-up visits by the ETI to 25 Post-Primary schools. The Inspectorate's final report, "*Report of an Evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Post-Primary Schools*", was published in January 2011 and is accessible on the ETI website.

As it is some time since the RSE report was published, the Department has decided that now would be a good time to remind schools about the best practice characteristics identified by ETI in relation to the provision of RSE – these are detailed at Appendix A to this letter.

The ETI report also recommended a number of actions for schools to help ensure effective provision:

iv. review their policies, procedures and practices to take account of ETI's evaluation. This review should address: gaps in practice such as development of RSE policy and auditing where RSE sits within the curriculum; guidance for handling sensitive issues; and reviewing the school's model of delivery;

v. implement procedures to support robust self-evaluation of RSE; and

dhéanamh ar shamhail seachadta na scoile;

ii. modhanna a chur i bhfeidhm le tacú le féinmheasúnú cuimsitheach ar OCG; agus

iii. príomhthosaíocht a dhéanamh d'fhorbairt foirne sa scoil uile i dtaca le OCG de ina bPlean Forbartha Scoile.

Iarrtar ar scoileanna athbhreithniú a dhéanamh agus na bearta cuí a dhéanamh le haghaidh a thabhairt ar na moltaí thuasluaite agus, lena chois sin, iarrtar orthu breithniú a dhéanamh ar na tréithe dea-chleachtais atá mionsonraithe in Aguisín A le cuidiú leis an soláthar OCG is éifeachtaí a chinntiú i do scoil. Áirítear i dtuarascáil ETI roinnt cás-staidéar dea-chleachtais fosta a d'fhéadfadh bheith ina gcuidiú do scoileanna agus iad ag tabhairt na hoibre seo ar aghaidh.

Bunscoileanna

Bhí sé ar intinn ag an Roinn go ndéanfaí suirbhé comhchosúil i mbunscoileanna ach chuir tosaíochtaí oibre eile moill ar an obair sin. Dar leis an Roinn gur chóir go mbeadh na bearta a sainaithníodh d'iar-bhunscoileanna agus na tréithe dea-chleachtais i bhfeidhm sa dá earnáil agus iarraimid mar sin ar gach bunscoil beart a dhéanamh de réir mar atá mionsonraithe thuas.

Mar fhocal scoir, áirítear i dtuarascáil ETI roinnt moltaí don Roinn, ina measc athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar threoir reatha agus forbairt acmhainní breise teagaisc, go háirithe do EC4. Choimisiúnaigh an Roinn an Chomhairle Curaclaim, Scrúdúcháin agus Measúnaithe (CCEA) le hathbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar threoir reatha agus acmhainní breise a fhorbairt do EC4 agus tá sé beartaithe go gcríochnófar an obair sin le linn na bliana airgeadais 2014/15. Cuirfear scoileanna ar an eolas faoin treoir agus faoi na

vi. make whole-school staff development in RSE a key priority in their School Development Plan.

Schools are asked to review and take the necessary action to address the above recommendations and to also consider the best practice characteristics detailed at Appendix A to help ensure the most effective provision of RSE in your school. The ETI report also includes a number of best practice case studies which schools might find helpful in taking this work forward.

Primary Schools

The Department had intended that a similar survey would be taken forward in primary schools however other work priorities have delayed this work. The Department considers that the actions identified for post-primary schools and the best practice characteristics would apply across both sectors and we would therefore ask all primary schools to consider taking action as detailed above.

Finally, the ETI report also includes a number of recommendations for the Department to progress which includes reviewing existing guidance and the development of further teaching resources, particularly for KS4. The Department has commissioned the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) to take forward a review of current guidance and develop further resources for KS4 and it is intended that this work will be completed during the 2014/15 financial year. Schools will be informed about new guidance and resources as soon as they become available.

Yours sincerely

SHARON LAWLOR
Head of Curriculum Support Team

hacmhainní nua a luaithe agus a bheidh siad ar fáil.

Is mise, le meas,

SHARON LAWLOR
Ceann na Foirne Tacaíochta Curaclaim

Aguisín 1

Oideachas Caidrimh agus Gnéasachta (OCG) – Dea-chleachtas de réir mar atá sainaitheanta ag an Chigireacht Oideachais agus Oiliúna (ETI)

Seo a leanas na tréithe foriomlána a bhaineann le dea-chleachtas maidir le OCG:

- Ceannaireacht shoiléir eolasach, a bhfuil cuspóir léi, ón Phríomhoide agus ón fhoireann ardcheannasaíochta, ag cinntiú go bhfuil ról suntasach ag OCG sa soláthar curaclaim.
- Próiseas pleanála sa scoil uile a bhfuil comhairliúchán fadréimseach le gach ceann de na páirtithe leasmhara i gceist leis, lena n-áirítear na tuismitheoirí, daltaí agus gobharnóirí.
- Beartais chuimsitheacha (lena n-áirítear beartas OCG) agus pleanáil a chuireann taca faoin chlár agus a chuireann treoir agus tacaíocht den scoth ar fáil do chách, lena n-áirítear leaganacha den réimse iomlán beartas tréadach atá furasta do thuismitheoirí a thuiscint (tréadchúram, cumhdach agus cosaint leanaí).
- Naisc shoiléire agus ceangail fhollasacha atá déanta le haidhmeanna, luachanna, éiteas, creat morálta agus eiticiúil na scoile san áireamh.
- Pleanáil chomhleanúnach a dhéanann naisc an-soiléire leis na haidhmeanna agus na cuspóirí níos leithne den churaclam mar aon leis an mhéid inmheánach ó ranna ar leith ábhair.
- Úsáid acmhainní reatha agus aoisoiriúnacha.
- Fócas, laistigh den churaclam, ar úsáid réimse leathan straitéisí teagaisc, le béim láidir ar mhodhanna gníomhacha foghlama le forbairt straitéisí chun plé le deacrachtaí agus scileanna

Appendix A

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) – Best Practice as identified by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)

Overall best practice in RSE is characterised by:

- Clear, informed and purposeful leadership from the Principal and the senior leadership team, ensuring that RSE has a significant role in the curriculum provision.
- A whole school planning process that involves wide ranging consultation with all of the stakeholders, including the parents, pupils and governors.
- Comprehensive policies (including a RSE policy) and planning which underpin the programme and provide excellent guidance and support for all, including parent-friendly versions of the full range of pastoral policies (pastoral care, safeguarding and child protection).
- Clear linkages and explicit connections made with the aims, values, ethos, moral and ethical framework of the school.
- Coherent planning that makes very clear links with the broader aims and objectives of the curriculum as well as the internal contributions from discrete subject departments.
- The use of current and age-appropriate resources.
- A focus, within the curriculum, on the use of a broad range of teaching strategies, with a strong emphasis on active learning approaches to promote the development of pupils' coping strategies and decision-making skills.
- Judicious and appropriate use of internal personnel, external agencies and guest speakers, to handle topics which may include sexual orientation, aspects of sexual

cinnteoireachta a chur chun cinn i measc na ndaltaí.

- Pearsanra inmheánach, gníomhaireachtaí seachtracha agus aoichainteoirí a úsáid go ciallmhar le topaicí ar leith a láimhseáil mar seo a leanas: gnéaschlaonadh, sláinte ghnéis, féinmharú agus féindochar.
- Ábhair threoracha bhreise le tacú le múinteoirí agus iad ag cur an chláir i bhfeidhm.
- Modhanna láidre le monatóireacht agus measúnú a dhéanamh ar an soláthar laistigh den scoil.
- Athruithe a dhéanamh ar an soláthar mar gheall ar aiseolas.

health, and suicide and self-harm.

- Supplementary guidance materials to support teachers in the implementation of the programme.
- Robust procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the provision within the school.
- Making changes to the provision as a result of feedback.