

St. Mary's N. S.

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introduction

This policy was formulated by the teaching staff of St. Mary's National School. It will outline the RSE policy in the context of the Ethos of the school and the curriculum. It will specify the aims of RSE and clarify the management and organisation of RSE within the school.

Ethos

- 1.** The Church of Ireland school is a community where all pupils are equally valued and respected irrespective of gender, social background, family circumstance, educational achievements, physical characteristics or intellectual functioning. Pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging; they are treated fairly and their spiritual, moral and religious development is encouraged as is their intellectual, social and academic development.

- 2.** It is a community where moral values such as honesty, truthfulness, justice, fairness, sensitivity to others, and civic responsibility are nurtured and protected. The justification of these qualities is based on Biblical teaching interpreted by the Church.

- 3.** The Church of Ireland Primary School is a part of the local community and has strong links with the Parish. This, for example, is shown by the fact that pupils attend services in the local church and the Rector visits the school on a regular basis.

- 4.** The work of the school is conducted in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for religious differences. The admission policy of the school allows those of other faiths or none to become pupils.

- 5.** Religious Education occupies a central position in the school curriculum and is regarded as a core subject; generally speaking all pupils in the school attend classes in Religious Education. The teaching of religious doctrine is restricted to specific times in the school timetable.

- 6.** The Church of Ireland school is one where the traditions and teaching of that Church inform the position taken in regard to moral issues which arise in the teaching of secular subjects.

- 7.** The school nurtures freedom of thought and a personal relationship with God. This is most evident in the teaching of Religious Education, and in the prayer life of the school community.

- 8.** The R.S.E. programme will hold out the ideal of sexuality within a context of self value, self respect and respect for others. The programme will also contain a moral dimension and a practical dimension which emphasises sexual responsibility and the

needs of children for a stable and loving parental relationship such as marriage.

R.S.E as part of S.P.H.E.

Social, Personal and Health Education contributes to the work of the school in promoting the health and well being of children and young people in areas such as drugs education, environmental education, safety and social responsibility, healthy eating, alcohol education etc.

School already provides:-

Religion	Personal and Social
Health Education	Responsibility
Stay Safe	
Anti-Bullying	

The continuing implementation of this programme is recognition of the fact that society is demanding that our pupils are prepared to address the major social and personal issues of the day.

Aims of R.S.E.

- To enhance the personal development, self - esteem and well being of each child.
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationship in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding, appreciation and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

Management and Organisation of R.S.E. in our school.

This policy will be circulated to all parents as part of the school enrolment pack.

Parents are required to sign consent forms for the RSE Programme.

- Parents' Rights: (1) Opt-Out: The school will have a written opt-out clause and where necessary 'opt-out' pupils will be supervised in a different classroom.
- Parents' Role: Home / School links will be very important prior to and as a follow up to each lesson taught - (as with the Stay Safe programme) so that each module can be further discussed at home.
- Only the teachers may decide the resources and materials which will be used in the R.S.E. programme but we will at all times be careful to create an atmosphere in the classroom which respects the privacy of each individual pupil. Appropriate scientific anatomical terms are used from Infants to 6th class. Refer to SPHE Curriculum Document Pages 17 - 56
- NCCA Manuals for RSE are used.
- Answering questions. While it is important to create an environment in which a child feels free to ask questions, it is important that a safe

environment is created for all children in the class. Teachers are advised to set boundaries in the teaching of RSE as they would in any other subject. When deciding whether it is appropriate to answer a question or not the teacher will consider:

- the age and development of the children
- the ethos of the school
- the RSE policy
- the content objectives of the SPHE curriculum guidelines

Suggested ways of setting limits are to say:

I'll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them

Would you be able to talk to your Mum or Dad about that?

That's something you learn about as you get older

We agreed in our contract that we wouldn't ask anyone personal questions

* Because of the Multi-Class situation in the school, we have decided that the development of the human embryo in the womb will be covered in third and fourth class but the elements of the programme dealing with puberty will be covered in 5th and 6th class.

* Teachers may opt out of teaching the sensitive sections of RSE. It is then the responsibility of the BOM to ensure these sections are covered.

* A special guest speaker will speak with 5th and 6th class pupils every second year on Puberty - Growing / Changing and Sexual Intercourse, following the 5th & 6th class RSE programme.

This talk will be funded by our Parents Association / BOM

Consent forms will be distributed in advance of the talk, to be signed by Parents.

On-Going Support and Review - Evaluation

* Teachers will review and monitor the programme

* The Amended Policy will be given to the Parents Association for comment prior to ratification by BOM

* Board of Management will consider all suggestions from teachers and from Parents' Association.

Review: This policy will be implemented from January 2014 and reviewed in the school year 2017/18 or earlier if deemed necessary.

Ratification: This policy was ratified by the Chairperson of BOM

_____ on _____
Chairperson Date