

Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy

This policy was drawn up for St. Eithne's Senior Girls School, St. Monica's Infant School and St. Malachy's B.N.S. by a committee representative of parents, staff and management of each school. It was ratified March 1998 and further amended May 2004.

This policy applies to the staff, parents and any visiting speakers of our schools.

School Ethos and Philosophy

The ethos of the schools informs the planning and teaching of the R.S.E. programme. St. Eithne's, St. Monica's and St. Malachy's are Catholic schools within St. Monica's Parish and promote the values and beliefs this implies.

We respect and value the views of parents, pupils and staff. A welcoming and friendly school environment encourages the expression of these views and provides a forum for open and active communication.

All pupils are valued and feel valued. Individual needs and differences are addressed so that each child can develop appropriately across a wide range of abilities and activities. Children are enabled to express their needs to listening, caring adults.

Every opportunity is taken to nurture self esteem and respect for self and others. In this we are preparing children, individually and socially for positive roles in family, community and society.

Definition of R.S.E.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the

development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy.

It deals with specific issues such as human growth and development, human sexuality, parenting, personal and social skills and relationships.

Aims

The aims of R.S.E. are situated within the broader aims of S.P.H.E.

We aim :

- To enhance the personal development, self esteem and well being of the child.
- To enable the child to develop healthy relationships and friendships.
- To foster an understanding of, and develop a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for human love 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 his/her own sexuality and that of others while growing and developing.

These are the overall aims of the programme to be met in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children.

Education Programme

All of the R.S.E. programme will be delivered within the context of S.P.H.E and will include elements of R.S.E., Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Alive-O programme.

Sexually Sensitive issues, those issues/areas of R.S.E. that deal with understanding sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction will be covered within the strand

units “ Taking care of my body” and “ Growing and changing”. These issues will furthermore be delivered within the context of a moral and spiritual framework consistent with the values and ethos of our schools .

Within this framework pupils begin to clarify their own value systems and develop their moral reasoning ability.

Continuity of language and content will be maintained throughout the school

Planning / Implementation

In planning and implementing the R.S.E. programme we will have regard to the following.

- The child’s entitlement to appropriate R.S.E.
- The right to confidentiality and privacy of children, parents and staff.
- The rights and responsibilities of parents.
(Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children . The schools work in a supportive role .)
- That materials, information and speakers used as part of the programme conform with policy and ethos.
- Promotion of gender equality.
- The professional judgement and expertise of teachers.

Management/ Organisation

- All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave 6th class.
- Time- tabling- one half hour period per week is time-tabled in each class for S.P.H.E. R.S.E. will be included in the programme taught during this time.
- Teachers will be encouraged and supported to teach the sensitive issues to their own class.

- Teachers' right to opt out from teaching the sensitive issues will be honoured.
- In such circumstances the Principal will make arrangements to have this section of the programme taught.
- A suitable speaker , e.g. from Accord may be invited to deliver the contents of the programme to 6th class. All material taught to be in accordance with prescribed S.P.H.E.programme.
- A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the process will be honoured subject to their making suitable supervision arrangements in consultation with Príomh Oide and on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of this decision.

- An outline of the content for each class will be available to parents on request.

Provision for support/ development and review

There is a need for ongoing support, development and review of R.S.E. policy and programme. This will include:

- Inservice training for staff. All offers of staff training will be posted on staff notice board and may be discussed at Staff Meetings. The Board of Management may agree to pay subvention towards cost of suitable courses from its training budget.
- Review at staff meetings and teacher/ parent meetings.
- This policy and programme will be reviewed May 2005 and every 2nd year thereafter All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review.

- The development of appropriate resources

Parents will be informed about the policy on enrolment , in the school's information booklet, application form and at parent/teacher meetings.

Policy Implementation

Adherence to the above policy is the responsibility of all school staff supported by the school community.

Resources

R.S.E. books 2-6

First Encyclopedia of the Human Body (Usborne internet-linked)

Made with love--- Kate Petty

Ready Steady Grow -- Angela Macnamara

So you want to know? Aidan Herron & Dominic McGinley

Girl Talk—Lucienne Pickering

Girl Facts/ Boy Facts -- Cathy Bee

Video Sex Education for girls presented by Angela Macnamara

Appendices

1. Content and Vocabulary
2. Review of Resources