

St. Oliver Plunkett National School

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Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Rationale

The purpose of this document is to provide a policy for implementing the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme in our school. The original policy was drawn up in 2005 by a committee representing the Parent Association, Board of Management and Staff in accordance with the directives issued by the Department of Education and Skills. It was reviewed in 2007, 2013 and 2018.

School Philosophy

Scoil Naisiúnta Oilibhéar Pluingcéad, Killina, which is under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, is a Catholic School. The purpose of the school, as a centre of Catholic Education is to help the students to take their place in society as educated, responsible and committed Christians, with a philosophy of life which is spiritually enriching and which will enable them to contribute positively to the society in which they live.

The educational program of the school is directed to the growth of the whole person, and has its source in a Christian vision.

Our school endeavours to be flexible in facilitating alternative arrangements for those who do not wish to avail of the Catholic Religious education we offer. It is important that the beliefs and sensibilities of every child are respected.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes, which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

RSE is the formal approach to educating children in:

- Relationships with others – parents, siblings, friends and the community in general
- Respect for themselves and others
- Physical development – bodily functions and changes, and personal hygiene
- Emotional development – maturing in society
- Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships
- Sexuality in context – part of a loving relationship.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. The content of our school's S.P.H.E. programme includes a wide range of topics such as healthy eating, alcohol, drugs, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility, as well as R.S.E. The approach to teaching any of the topics in S.P.H.E. will involve giving students clear information, building up their self-esteem, and helping them to learn to communicate, to make decisions, and to express feelings in an appropriate way. Currently elements of the S.P.H.E. programme are covered in areas such as Social and Environmental Studies, Religious Education and the Stay Safe programme, the Walk Tall programme and Be Safe programme.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement (Policy)
- Enrolment Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Internet Safety Policy/Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies, we informally support many of the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the well being of all of the members of the school community.

Aims of our RSE programme

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum should enable the child to:

- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of the child
- Help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- Foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- Enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
- Develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- Enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of self and others while growing and developing
- Help children learn how to communicate, make decisions, and express feelings
- Gain an understanding of the influences of peer groups and culture upon his/her behaviour

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our School

The content of the RSE Programme will be taught in both a structured and integrated manner. Since this will be done in partnership with parents/guardians, who are the primary educators in all matters, they are strongly encouraged to consult with the class teacher at the beginning of each year regarding areas of concern. If desired, withdrawal from specific parts of the programme can be arranged in a confidential and sensitive way.

The school reserves the right to invite qualified visiting speakers to work with senior pupils. These speakers will work within the confines of the school policy and parents/guardians will be notified in advance of their attendance. The division of the class into smaller groups and/or single sex groups will be at the discretion of the staff.

Since the school is a Catholic school the teaching will be in accordance with the moral teaching of the Catholic Church. Teachers will strive to do this in an appropriate and non-judgmental manner.

Dealing with Questions

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE. However, this area is treated somewhat differently from other subjects due to its sensitive nature.

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics will not be discussed. Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. If any questions asked by the children are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents, or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum.

Parental Involvement

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children and as such the school supports them in this role. As stated parents/guardians will be given the option of withdrawing their child from a particular lesson if they so wish. The Parents' Association may on occasion arrange for speakers/meetings to help them in the task of communicating with their children on aspects of their development. Parents/Guardians may access copies of the policy from the school office or programme details at www.ecdrumcondra.ie

Resources

Lesson plans from the DES have been assessed and amended where necessary in line with this school policy. These lessons plans are available in the SPHE press for each class grouping. The Alive O Programme, the Stay Safe programme and a selection of other appropriate resources will also be used.

Provision for ongoing support and development

It is the aim of the school to:

- Ensure that teachers will have access to CPD opportunities
- Support parents/guardians in providing educational opportunities for other parents/guardians
- Provide RSE School resources as recommended by the Department of Education and Skills.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2021.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of Killina National School ratified this amended plan on 20th June 2018.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson)

(Date)

RSE - Sensitive Areas

Junior and Senior Infants

New Life – mention of baby in the womb.

My Body – specific names for male and female sex organs

First Class and Second

New Life – New baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord – mention breast feeding

Birth of baby through vagina. Mention umbilical cord and breast feeding.

Third Class and Fourth Class

As for second class, but in more detail.

Language around baby's development in womb, i.e., fertilised egg, cord. Pictures of foetuses (in RSE manual) to be used.

Fourth Class Girls

Menstruation in the context of hygiene and growth from a girl to a woman.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

Menstruation in the context of hygiene and growth from a girl to a woman.

Boys and girls development – puberty.

How does new life begin?

Biological facts as follows:

- What journey does the egg make?
- What journey does the sperm make?
- Where do they meet?
- What happens when they meet?
- Optional video: – Busy Bodies.