

Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

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This policy statement is the approved approach to teaching of RSE in Scoil Eoin. The revised policy further informs teachers and parents of (i) the RSE content that will be taught at each class level and (ii) outlines the organisation and management of the RSE programme across all class levels.

School Philosophy

Scoil Eoin aims to promote the fullest possible development of each child-socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually so that he/she may lead a full, enjoyable life as a child and go on to contribute to society as an adult.

1. The school will seek to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships.
2. The school recognises that, in the area of R.S.E, its role is subsidiary to that of parents.
3. It will reflect the school's spirit of respect and tolerance of all families and children in an inclusive and Christian manner.
4. The dignity, privacy and modesty of each individual child and family will always be respected.

Definition

R.S.E provides a cross-curricular structured programme, which addresses the needs of the whole child. It provides children with structured opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs and practical skills needed to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships as children and, subsequently as adults. It specifically addresses growth, development, relationships with others, development of self-esteem, the meaning of human sexuality, relevant personal and social skills.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE and Religion

Social, Personal & Health Education contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and wellbeing 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 key characteristics of this programme are that SPHE is a lifelong process and is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. The main strands of the SPHE programme are:

- Myself.
- Myself and Others.
- Myself and the Wider World.

It is clear that the Relationships and Sexuality Programme is correctly defined as being an integral part of the programme outlined above. Sexually sensitive issues will be covered within the strand units:

- Taking care of my body.
- Growing and changing.
- Safety and protection.

Aims of our RSE Programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To help children develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable the older child to acquire an understanding of, 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.

The organisation and Management of RSE in Scoil Eoin

We recognise that the parents are the primary educators of their children and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school, therefore, is seen as one of support of the work of the home in this area. The content objectives covered will be taught as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills in the SPHE Curriculum, 1999.

- On enrolment, parents will be made aware of the R.S.E policy. They will also be sent a reminder before the sensitive topics are taught.
- The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account.
- Appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. The use of slang words will be discouraged.

- RSE will be taught to all classes.
- The SPHE/RSE Curriculum will be of a spiral nature and all content objectives will be covered by the time children leave 6th class.
- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner.
- All resources used in the teaching of the programme will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and in the spirit of this policy.
- The RSE ‘sensitive’ lessons will be taught across all class levels during a nominated week usually early in the last term of school.
- Pupils with additional needs –parents will be consulted prior to dealing with sensitive issues.

RSE Topics/ Lessons - from Infants – 2nd Class

- Keeping Safe
- Bodily changes during growth and birth (birth to 9)
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life
- Recognising and expressing feelings
- Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep
- Expressing opinions and listening to others
- *Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Jun/Sen Infants)*
- *Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd)*

RSE Topics/Lessons - 3rd – 6th Class:

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing Feelings
- Family Relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- *Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (4th)*
- *Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th/6th)*
- *Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th/6th)*
- *Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship.(5th/6th)*

The following resources will be used when teaching RSE lessons

- Anatomical Boy & Girl Dolls, Bathtub & Accessories - (Infants)
- Boy/Girl Seaside Picture -(1st/2nd)
- RSE Manuals - (Infants, 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th. 5th/6th)
- Male & Female Reproductive System Diagrams - (5th /6th)
- Stages of Development of Baby in Womb – Worksheet (5th/6th)
- Busy Bodies DVD - 20 minutes duration (5th/6th)

Busy Bodies – DVD and booklet

*Adolescent development video, explains puberty and sexual intercourse.
Developed by Health Promotion Department,
Southern Health Service Executive.*

Available from www.healthpromotion.ie

Withdrawal of a child from the lessons with sensitive topics

Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the school will take account of parental concerns and parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. The onus will be on the parent to inform the school in writing of this decision. If the child is withdrawn from the lesson, the school cannot guarantee that other children will not inform the child in question of the content of the lessons or that the children in the class may not refer incidentally in class to aspects of the lesson during subsequent days/weeks.

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. 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.

Confidentiality

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow our Child Protection Policy. The Principal is our Designated Liaison Person.

Resources

Lesson plans from the DES have been assessed and amended where necessary in line with this school policy. All resources are available for parents/guardians to view if the request prior to delivery of the lesson.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

This policy was drafted by management, staff and parents of the school.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on.....

Signed:.....Date:.....