

KILTIERNAN NATIONAL SCHOOL

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement

The school has a responsibility to put in place an R.S.E. policy as part of the wider, Social, Personal + Health Education strand of the curriculum. The process was initiated in 1999 when policy committee (steering committee of 6 people) was charged with setting parameters for the organization and management of R.S.E. in the school.

Rationale

The need for this policy arises from our schools obligation to provide for all the needs of the student body and respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues relating to emerging sexuality.

Aims

- a) To enhance the personal development, well being and self-esteem of each child.
- b) To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive, moral, Christian and social framework
- c) To enable the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- d) To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships
- e) To enable the child be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing
- f) To develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse.
- g) To acquire and use appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.
- h) To develop a critical understanding of external influences in lifestyles and decision making.

Definition of RSE

RSE aims to help children learn, at home and at school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work will be based on

- ❖ Developing a good self-image.
- ❖ Promoting respect for themselves and others.
- ❖ Providing them with appropriate information.

RSE aims to provide opportunities for the children in our school to learn about relationships and sexuality in a way that helps them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

Relationship of RSE to the Social, Personal, Health Education Programme

RSE will be taught within the wider context of Social Personal and Health Education and religious and moral education. It has been agreed that content objectives dealing with RSE and Child protection are addressed through discrete time-see list below.

This time will be arranged on a termly basis at staff meetings to ensure the delivery of the correct content/material to each class level.

Relationships to School Ethos

- The aims and values of Kiltiernan N.S are to provide a happy, secure, appealing and effective learning environment in which each child will become numerate, literate, curious, caring unafraid to make mistakes, to ask questions, to express opinions and to grow.
- Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals with our caring school community
- We would aim that Christ would always be at the centre of our lives and this would be reflected in our school relationships, school environment and its atmosphere
- The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. To this end parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the R.S.E. policy formation, through a series of meetings, full representation on the Steering Committee and the ratification of the

finished product. Parents also have the right to withhold their children from participating in R.S.E classes.

School Provision

- ❖ Language and RSE – Providing children with the correct vocabulary for different situations is one of the main objectives of the RSE programme.
- ❖ Social, environmental and scientific education and RSE – This area includes history, geography, science and health education. It also includes the **Stay Safe / Walk Tall Programmes already** being taught in our school.
- ❖ Religious Education and RSE – **The Alive-O** programme currently used in our school provides many opportunities for addressing the topics of friendships and relationships.
- ❖ Physical Education and RSE – The emphasis on enjoyment and positive attitude towards physical activity is important in fostering self-esteem and enhancing the personal growth and development of the individual.
- ❖ Arts Education and RSE – RSE focuses primarily on the development of the individual. Opportunities for individual expression are found in music, dance and drama.
- ❖ School Policy on bullying.
- ❖ Promotion of healthy eating in school.
- ❖ Discussion of drug awareness for senior pupils/parents.
- ❖ Recycling.

Objectives covered in RSE/Stay Safe Programme.

The following objectives cover the ‘sensitive’ areas in the RSE and Stay Safe programmes. Safety & Protection will be addressed in Year 1, while Taking Care of My Body & Growing and Changing will be addressed in year 2.-See appendix in Whole school plan for SPHE.

Infants :

Safety & Protection

Personal Safety

- Identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk

Taking care of my body

Knowing about my body

- Name the parts of the male & female body, using appropriate anatomical terms.

1st & 2nd

Safety & Protection

Personal Safety

- Recognise & Explore situations where children feel safe and those where safety might be at risk

Taking Care of my body.

Knowing about my body

- Name the parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions.

3rd & 4th

Safety & Protection

Personal Safety

- Identify people, places and situations that may threaten personal safety.

Taking Care of my Body

Knowing about my Body

- Realise the importance of caring for and treating their bodies, and that of others with dignity and respect
- Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body
- Realise that these changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal

Growing and Changing

As I grow I change

- Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty

Birth & New life

- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth

5th & 6th

Safety & Protection

Personal Safety

- Identify situations and places that may threaten personal safety

Taking Care of my body

Knowing about my body

- Recognise the importance of treating their bodies and others with dignity and respect.
- Identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone.
- Become aware of some communicable diseases and explore how diseases and infections are spread

Growing & Changing

As I grow I change

- Explore patterns of development and growth, comparing present development with that of earlier stages-physical, social emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

Birth & New Life

- Understand sexual intercourse, conception & birth with a context of a committed loving relationship
- Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent.

Teachers do not cover topics such as contraception and same sex friendships. Children who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum are talked to individually and discreetly. Parents are usually informed and asked to talk to their child.

Methodology

The RSE content and methodology to be used will be based on the Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education as provided by the *Department of Education & Science* based on the Interim Guidelines for Primary Schools drawn up by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). These are listed in the Resources section of our SPHE school plan.

Circle time is used extensively to build confidence and address fears. Boys and girls are taught together in all classes. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are

encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents. The Alive O resource materials are used extensively in Senior Classes.

The Stay Safe and RSE programmes.

Both are addressed in the context of SPHE on a two yearly basis. These will be addressed in discrete time for the sensitive areas. All the issues will be dealt with in the context of the development of attitudes and values consistent with the ethos of Kiltiernan school.

We have decided the **timetabling for RSE/Stay safe lessons**. Parents will be given the option to withdraw their child. Where a child is being withdrawn from a specific objective the teacher needs to make arrangements with the principal for them to be supervised elsewhere. Every effort will be made to minimise attention being brought to these children.

Dealing with questions-Ground rules will limit the discussion to material covered in present or previous classes. Children will be asked to refer questions outside the class objectives to their parents at home.

Confidentiality-It is agreed within the class that all discussions will remain within the parameters of the class material,

Guidelines for Management

- Parents receive the sensitive topics to be covered each year in both RSE/Stay safe. They are asked to sign a consent form at the start of the school year, and have the right to withdraw their children for some or all objectives in RSE/Stay Safe. This intention is expected to be given in writing each year to the class teacher.
- Any parent can view in greater detail the content of these areas and are encouraged to discuss them in greater detail with their class teacher.
- Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school R.S.E. programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes.
- The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils within a moral and spiritual framework. Teachers are present at all times if guest speakers are visiting a class.

Child Protection

- The school follows the D.E.S. child protection guidelines and has a Child Protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. If a matter is divulged to a teacher where either an accusation or suggestion of a criminal act is made it will be brought to the attention of our DPL.
- The D.L.P. will then follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

Teacher Choice/Staff Development

Teachers have a right to choose whether or not to give instruction in the areas covered by the RSE objectives. Where a teacher decided not to give instruction the following guidelines will apply;

- Another staff member may deal with this material
- A guest speaker may be invited to deal with this issue-the teacher would make the guest speaker aware of the objectives to be covered and the policy and ethos within which they will be discussed. The class teacher will remain with the class group while the guest speaker is present.
- Teachers who choose not to deal with aspects of the SPHE programme must bring this to the attention of the principal at the earliest possible opportunity to enable alternative arrangements to be put in place.

The staff have availed of training in:-

- The Child Abuse Prevention Programme (Stay Safe)
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (R.S.E.)
- Walk Tall Programme (S.M.P.P.)

The SPHE Whole School Plan is available in the Principal's Office. Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning comprising of a yearly and fortnightly scheme of work. A Cuntas Miosuil is retained in the Principals Office.

Evaluation

- Teacher observation.
- Inventory of what needs to be changed.

- Ensuring all strands are covered.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation.
- Community feedback.

Roles and Responsibilities

The whole school community of B.O.M., staff, pupils and parents play a key role in the formulation and implementation of the plan.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the board in 1999.

Implementation

Implementation is on a phased basis from 1999.

Review

This policy was reviewed at a staff meeting in March 2008 and will be next reviewed in 2010.

Appendix 1-Objectives covered in RSE/Stay Safe Programme.

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Appendix 2-Overview of content for Infants to Sixth Class

Infant Classes		First and Second Classes
Strands	Strand Units	Strand Units
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am unique <i>Self-esteem</i> <i>Developing and expressing self-confidence</i> My body As I grow I change New Life Keeping safe Feelings and emotions Making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am unique <i>Self-esteem</i> <i>Developing and expressing self-confidence</i> My body As I grow I change New Life Keeping safe Feelings and emotions Making decisions
Myself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myself and my family Myself and my friends Special people in my life Relating to others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving conflict</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myself and my family Myself and my friends Other people Relating to others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving conflict</i>

Third and Fourth Classes		Fifth and Sixth Classes
Strands	Strand Units	Strand Units
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting myself <i>Self-esteem</i> <i>Developing and expressing self-confidence</i> Physical development Growing and changing Birth and new life Feelings and emotions Personal hygiene Personal safety <i>Identifying and assessing risks</i> <i>Developing safety strategies</i> Making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting myself <i>Self-esteem</i> <i>Developing and expressing self-confidence</i> Physical development Becoming an adult Parenthood Feelings and emotions Personal hygiene Personal safety <i>Identifying and assessing risks</i> <i>Developing safety strategies</i> Making decisions
Myself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roles and responsibilities in families Friendship Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Roles of males and females in society Relating to others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving Conflict</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing relationships in families and friendships Group affiliation and loyalty Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Roles of males and females in society Relating to others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving Conflict</i>

Re: RSE Policy Statement

Dear Parents,

A programme of Relationships and Sexuality Education is part of the curriculum in Kiltiernan National School for some years now. This policy was prepared by representatives from the parents, teachers and board members and ratified by The Board of Management.

We enclose a recently reviewed copy of the policy. An overview of the subject matter, which will be covered throughout your child's primary education in our school, is contained in **Appendix 2**. These areas may be taught in a cross curricular manner – in other words these topics may be taught as a part of the Religion, English, History or Geography programme as they arise and not necessarily as isolated lessons.

Appendix 1 denotes the sensitive issues, which will be taught as specific lessons in discrete SPHE allocated time. While the sensitive issues outlined in the programme cannot be altered, we can facilitate you by allowing your child to be withdrawn from class for this particular area of the programme. The lessons concerned are taught on a formal basis as follows-

- Safety & Protection Year 1(2008 & 2010)
- Taking Care of my Body/Growing and Changing Year 2.(2007 & 2009)

You have the right to withdraw your child from some/all the objectives in RSE/Stay Safe programme.

We wish to point out that if you choose to withdraw your child from RSE classes that you are taking full responsibility for this aspect of his/hers education.

Please indicate on the registration form your consent for your child to be present for the duration of these lessons.

If you wish to view the programme in greater detail a copy is available in the school.

Yours sincerely

Edel Leech
(on behalf of the Board of Management)

