



Relationships and Sexuality Education – R.S.E. Policy

Introduction:

This policy was formulated by the Staff and Board of Management of St. Peter's N.S. Snugboro, Castlebar, Co Mayo, in consultation with parents of pupils enrolled in the school. The school recognises that the parent is the primary educator of the child. This R.S.E Policy, as in all other policy areas, acknowledges this and seeks to support parents in this role.

Our school fosters close links between the school and the home. Parents and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another as partners in leading the young pupils to the fullness of their potential as they grow and mature.

Our School Philosophy:

St. Peter's N.S. is a school of Roman Catholic Patronage. As such we aim to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, emotional, moral and spiritual, based on Christian values.

Within the school, a spirit of mutual respect is promoted amongst children, parents, teachers, staff and members of the Board of Management. The Relationships and Sexuality Programme will be taught within this ethos. Within our school, we promote the following ideals:

- People feel valued
- Self- esteem is fostered
- Respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
- High expectations and standards are promoted
- There is support for those with difficulties
- Open communication is the norm
- Effort is recognised and rewarded
- Uniqueness/difference is valued
- Conflict is handled constructively

- Initiative and creativity are encouraged
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted

The RSE Programme will reflect these ideals.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education/R.S.E:

Relationships and Sexuality Education is about gaining knowledge and understanding of physical, social, cultural, psychological and moral development. It includes attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy within a moral, spiritual and social framework. This understanding of RSE will, it is hoped, contribute to the development of personal well-being, will enhance personal relationships and will have positive implications for family and community life.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE:

RSE will be taught within the wider context of Social, Personal and Health Education and Religious and moral education (Grow in Love). The programme will be covered using a cross-curricular approach, but some lesson topics will be under specific curricular headings. For these sensitive lessons, the cross curricular approach will not apply. These lesson topics will be listed separately (See Appendix 1 + 2).

The Aims of our RSE Programme:

We aim to provide an education in which each child can develop a responsible awareness and caring attitude towards their own and others' sexuality and human worth, enabling them to form caring and appropriate relationships throughout their lives. This education is to be provided sensitively in a manner and content appropriate to pupil's needs.

Our RSE programme aims to:

- Help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- Promote an understanding of sexuality
- Promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and relationships
- Promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- Enable young people to develop healthy attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a spiritual, moral and social framework
- Respond to individual pupil needs as appropriate.

Guidelines for Management and Organisation of RSE in St. Peter's N.S.

The RSE content and methodology to be used will be based on the Guidelines for Primary Schools drawn up by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

This programme will be delivered after a process of consultation between parents, teachers and the Board of Management. In order to promote the joint involvement of parents and teachers in implementing the RSE programme the following is available for review by parents upon request:

- Policy Guidelines for RSE for primary schools.. Dep of Education
- Relationships & Sexuality Education Going Forward together (For Parents)..Dep. of Education
- Guidelines on R.S.E.Irish Catholic Bishops Conference
- SPHE Books
- The RSE programme details for each class ...lesson plans
- RSE resource materials e.g. anatomically correct dolls, Busybody booklet & online link (to be given to parents) etc. available at www.healthpromotion.ie and www.sexualwellbeing.ie
- Details on:

the teaching of sensitive areas ...classes/vocabulary/facts; (See Appendix 1 Parents Info & Appendix 2..Teacher's Resource).

talks by non-teaching trained personnel at parish level,

opting out for pupils etc.

Role, Rights 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.

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme will be delivered to support and complement the process already begun in the home.

The policy recognises the right of a parent to hold concerns about the RSE programme. Where this applies, the parent should discuss this with the Principal and class teacher. Where concerns persist, the school will facilitate a parent's decision to withdraw their child(ren), while taking regard of the need for sensitivity towards the child(ren).

In the event of a parent choosing for their child(ren) to opt out of the sensitive R.S.E. lessons, the school requires a written request from the parent(s) and the school is now emphasising that the responsibility to educate their child(ren) in these sensitive R.S.E. lessons rests solely on the parent(s). (Children who are not participating in the sensitive R.S.E lessons will be accommodated in another classroom or S.E.T. room. Due to current Covid 19 restrictions ,parents/legal guardians will have to collect their child(ren) from school at the time of the sensitive R.S.E. class.)

Teacher choice/Staff Development

- The teachers "right to choose" is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the programme a suitable speaker will be employed by the B.O.M. The teacher may need to plan the specific material to be covered and should be present during the talk(s).

****Outside speakers will adhere to the conditions of Circular 0042/2018 outlining Best Practice for Outside speakers (Well-Being)***

- **Staff has availed of training in:-**
 1. Stay Safe Programme
 2. Relationships and Sexuality Programme (R.S.E.)
 3. Walk Tall Programme

Classroom Teaching:

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal/Deputy Principal. With regard to sensitive issues, parents of pupils will be informed in advance of the commencement of these lessons. For the most part, boys and girls will be taught at the same time. The boys and girls in 4th, 5th and 6th may be taught some sensitive lessons separately.

Children may be invited to **write** any questions they have. Teachers /Outside speakers will use their professional judgement and discretion based on the content and spirit of the policy to decide whether to answer certain questions in the classroom context.

Children will be told "I may not be able to answer all of these questions because they aren't part of the curriculum for this class."

Children will not ask each other and/or the teacher personal questions.

Questions not relating to the curriculum and/or deemed unsuitable for the age-group in the classroom will be deferred to home.

The primary curriculum does not cover topics such as contraception, abortion, masturbation, sexually transmitted diseases.

Confidentiality:

Teachers will deliver lessons in a spirit of respect for the rights of children and their families concerning privacy and confidentiality.

Child Protection:

The school follows the D.E.S. Child Protection Guidelines and has a Child Protection Policy(Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment Protection Policy) with the principal as the Designated Liaison Person (D.L.P) and Mrs. Aisling McDonnell as the Deputy D.L.P. In the event of absence by either/both D.L.P. and D.D.L.P. Mrs Ann Murrihy, Deputy Principal is the Acting Deputy D.L.P. In cases of disclosure, the D.L.P. and D.D.L.P. will follow procedures as set out in Primary school guidelines. All teachers are mandated to follow Child Protection procedures.

Resources:

Appropriate resources will be provided to support the delivery of the programme.

- Stay Safe
- Relationships & Sexuality Education Guidelines
- Walk Tall
- Zippy's Friends
- Grow in Love
- Anatomically correct dolls
- Relationships & Sexuality Education Going Forward (For Parents)
- Busy Bodies online resources- these are a **PARENTS only** resource as from p39 the topics covered are outside the curriculum.
- P.D.S.T. website (Until summer 2025)
- P.D.S.T. Busy Bodies Workbook- available from the website. 100% Curriculum based.

- Oide.ie
- <http://ecdumcondra.com>
- www.sexualwellbeing.ie
- www.healthpromotion.ie
- Usborne Book: “What’s happening to me?”

Implementation:

This RSE policy will be implemented each school year. It is envisaged that the sensitive R.S.E. lessons will be taught in Term 2 (Spring/Easter Term). If this is not possible, the sensitive R.S.E. lessons will be taught in Term 3.

Two weeks prior to the sensitive R.S.E. lessons being taught, parents will receive a letter/email outlining the lesson content.

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

Ratification and Review:

It is envisaged that this policy will be ratified every four years and will be updated in the interim if deemed necessary. The school reserves the right to amend this policy from time to



time entirely at its discretion. Next review due in May 2025.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Peter’s N.S

Signed: Pranudas Wene. Chairperson Board of Management : 20/02/17

Signed: Pranudas Wene. Chairperson Board of Management 10/02/2021

Signed: _____ Chairperson Board of Management _____

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