

Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction:

This policy, in accordance with the provisions of the Child Care Act (1991), Education Act (1998), Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the revised 'Primary School Curriculum Guidelines' (1999), details the aims and the content of the agreed programme for the provision and the delivery of '*Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)*' in Rosenallis N.S. We trust that by detailing these procedures, it will assist all parties in relation to the content of this important subject area. The Chairperson / Principal will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this policy, should it be required.

Relationship to School Ethos:

- Rosenallis N.S. as an inclusive primary school, under Patronage of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, is committed to the education and development of each pupil.
- We welcome pupils of all denominations and from every culture and social background.
- We strive to foster each child's physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual development. We recognise that every child has a right to equal opportunity in education and have special concern for children in difficult circumstances and with special needs. We promote self-worth, love of learning, personal responsibility and the belief that we can make our world a better place.
- As a staff, we relate in a Christian caring way to each other, thus providing an example to our pupils. In valuing the importance of partnership between staff, parents, management and community, we strive to be open welcoming and accepting to all. Our school plays an active part in developing a sense of community in Rosenallis.
- Rosenallis N.S. prides itself on being an environment that is warm, friendly, safe, supportive, inclusive and inviting. We strive to maintain this positive climate for the entire school community. In this space the child is encouraged to reach his/her full potential on a holistic level.

Definition of RSE:

RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in 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 and providing them with appropriate information. RSE also aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

Current Provision

- SPHE curriculum followed as per DES recommendations.
- Use of RSE Manuals, Busy Bodies DVD and Busy Bodies booklets.
- Religious Education taught through the Alive O programme/ Grow in Love.
- Currently, the teachers cover all aspects of RSE with their classes on an annual basis.

Aims of our RSE programme

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To foster an understanding of and healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To promote knowledge of and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty
- To promote a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- To enable the child to feel comfortable with his/her sexuality and that of others

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

[1] Organisational Matters

- Guidelines as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills and as discussed in this document will be followed.
- It is envisaged that the programme will be taught in an integrated manner where possible.

Parents

- Parents are to be informed in advance of the programme content. (*See Appendix 2 for sample letter*) They will also be informed in advance of the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme eg. Puberty, sexual intercourse.
- Parents will be offered a chance to view any DVDs being used in the teaching of RSE eg. Busy Bodies
- Parents have the responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content, to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and to discuss areas covered in school in RSE/ SPHE with their children.
- If a parent has a particular concern/ issue in relation to the teachings of the RSE programme, they are encouraged to discuss same with the teacher or the principal.
- As always, parents are requested to inform teachers of special family situations. These will be dealt with in confidence. It is the experience of the teachers that it is to everyone's benefit if they are kept informed.

[2] Curriculum Matters

- The Curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published and will be taught in Infants to 6th class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level.
- Children will be encouraged to discuss material being covered in class with their parents or guardians. Where possible handouts, worksheets etc. will be provided to facilitate this; eg. Home-School Links pages of the RSE manuals.
- In a class situation, children will be encouraged to recognise that certain information is for them only i.e. that it is inappropriate for them to discuss information received about puberty, intercourse and birth with younger siblings, friends from outside school et. It will be explained that other children will be given this information by their own parents and teachers when it is

developmentally appropriate for them to receive it. However, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed outside of the school or on the yard.

- A respect for personal privacy and information will be emphasised. Teachers will neither give nor request personal information. Children will also be taught to recognise that certain personal disclosures are inappropriate within a group setting.

Topics covered up to 2nd class include:

- Keeping Safe
- Bodily changes during growth and birth
- 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 (Junior/ Senior Infants) *See Appendix 1 for details*
- *Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/ 2nd) *See Appendix 1 for details*

Topics covered up to sixth class include:

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing feelings
- Family relationships- Same Love/ Different Families (INTO Resource)
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- *Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (Fourth class)*
- *Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (Fourth class)*
- *Reproductive system of male/female adults (Fifth & Sixth Class) *See Appendix 1 for details*
- *Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving, committed relationship. (Sixth Class) *See Appendix 1 for details*
- Sensitive issues (in italic above) may be dealt with in the following class groupings;

Puberty:

Boys and girls mixed together in Third and Fourth Class class for main lessons.

Mini separate lessons for girls and the boys in the following days to allow them additional time to answer more specific questions / concerns

Puberty, Intercourse & Birth:

Boys and girls mixed in Fifth and Sixth Class.

[3] Dealing with Questions

- A question box may be used throughout lessons where appropriate
- Teachers will previously decide upon specific language and concepts for each class level in line with the SPHE curriculum and school ethos. **See Appendix 1 for details*
- Children's questions will be dealt with, taking into account the following criteria when relevant
 - -By being aware of circumstances in which the question has arisen
 - -By clarifying what information is required
 - -By deciding, if the issue is relevant, who is it relevant to
 - -By giving a developmentally or age- appropriate answer
 - -By deferring the question as one which will be answered in the next lesson, one which should be answered at home or one which will be answered more fully in the future

[4] Students with SEN

- Taking into account student's cognitive, social and emotional development and their class level (3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th Class), instruction on the sensitive aspects of RSE, will be based on individual needs and decided together by parents, mainstream teachers and support teachers during the child's IEP meeting.
- The support and resource teachers will aid the mainstream teacher with the facilitation of appropriate and agreed RSE provision for the child with SEN. Careful consideration will be given to the NCCA Guidelines for Moderate and Severe and Profound General Learning Disabilities for RSE provision.
- There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils.

Provision of Ongoing Support

- Parents welcome to view the curriculum and resource materials if they so wish.
- Regular contact with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving "sensitive issues" in the form of the home/school link page accompanying such lessons in the RSE Resource Books. Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. Should a parent decide to withdraw their child from RSE lessons in school, they will be asked to put this in writing with reasons for doing so. They will also be asked to include a sentence stipulating that they will take full responsibility to teach RSE to their child instead.

Links to other Policy Areas

- Child Protection Policy
- SPHE Policy

Child Protection: The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a child protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure, the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

Review

- This policy will be reviewed every two years. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made to the RSE Policy.

Thomas Hoble (Chairperson)
Jaquie Hyland (Principal)

25/6/2018