



Scoil Náisiúnta Baile Chaisleáin an Róistigh

RSE Policy

Reviewed in May 2021 by staff members

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated by staff members in consultation with parents and other relevant groups, and is informed by present departmental guidelines. As a Catholic school we provide a climate in which we strive to help all our children to achieve their full potential in a happy and caring environment. In doing so we are sensitive to the reality of our children's lives in a changing world. It is our ultimate aim and hope that the children who have experienced our care will leave with a pride in themselves and in everything they do and go on to live happy and fulfilled lives. This document outlines general issues rather than specific topics dealt with at any particular level. More detailed information can be obtained by referring to the NCCA guidelines for the teaching of R.S.E. in Primary Schools, or by direct contact with the school.

Rationale

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. Social, Personal and Health Education 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.

Our School's Philosophy

Castletownroche N.S is a Catholic school and our philosophy/ethos is based on Christian values.

- The school endeavours to create a warm and caring environment where all children, regardless of gender, religion, disability, race or family circumstances are valued equally and treated with kindness and respect at all times.
- R.S.E. will be taught within the context of the Christian vision of human life and relationships, being sensitive to and recognising the cultural, religious and ethnic differences of children and the changing nature of the family structure.

- All children, regardless of gender, religion, disability, race or family circumstances are valued equally.
- R.S.E. will be taught in a way which is appropriate to the age, maturity and knowledge of the children. It is envisaged that all the 'sensitive issues' will be taught by the end of the child's primary education but flexibility will be employed and the best interests of the child will always influence content to be taught.
- The school sees the parent/guardian as the primary educator and the teacher as a support. Provision will be made for the parent/guardian who holds a conscientious/moral objection to the inclusion of S.P.H.E. in the curriculum.

R.S.E Programme

R.S.E stands for Relationships and Sexuality Education. At Primary level R.S.E aims to help children learn at home and at school about themselves as individuals and about themselves in relationships with others. This programme helps develop a good self-image in children, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information.

In this school the RSE programme is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education programme (S.P.H.E.). The wider programme contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of the children. The content of the programme includes a range of topics such as healthy eating, alcohol, drugs, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as R.S.E.

Aims of the R.S.E. Programme

- To help young people to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and relationships.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
- To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable the 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 awe and wonder at the process of birth and new life.
- To enable the child to be comfortable with his/her own sexuality and that of others while growing and developing.

Management and Organisation of R.S.E.

Alternative arrangements will be made where necessary when dealing with topics of a sensitive nature. The Principal, in consultation with the staff will make provision for the delivery of the S.P.H.E. programme according to the following criteria;

- School ethos
- Age, maturity and readiness of the children
- Parents' viewpoints

Curricular Matters

The content of the NCCA will be followed as published and will be taught by all Class Teachers from Infants to Sixth class. A trained facilitator approved by the D.E.S. may address the sexually sensitive issues. When this happens the Class Teacher will be responsible for making them aware of the school policy and he /she will be present during the lesson.

All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the policy. In a multi-class situation the younger class will be withdrawn when the topics being taught are not age appropriate.

Lessons

Topics in Junior / Senior Infants 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

Topics in 1st/2nd Classes:

- 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 and identify some of their functions

Topics in 3rd/4th Classes:

- 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 class)
- Changes that occur in girls with the onset of puberty (4th Class girls - talk on menstruation)

Topics in 5th/6th Classes:

- Bodily changes • Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing Feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- 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. (6th Class only)

Organisational Matters

- If a parent does not wish their child to participate in some or part of the R.S.E. programme they will be required to inform the Principal in writing with regard to their decision. The right of the parent to withdraw their children from the class will be acknowledged.
- If children are withdrawn, they will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom.
- With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school will not take any responsibility for what may be discussed in the yard or classroom.
- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak with the class teacher if they have any questions or concerns.
- We use the following programmes: Stay Safe, the R.S.E Programme and the Walk Tall programme. We select appropriate lessons from these programmes to teach the objectives from the SPHE curriculum.
- Teachers will emphasise that questions dealt with in the classroom setting will be confined to material covered in that or previous years. Teachers will show sensitivity and discretion when dealing with pupil's questions. The child's and teacher's right to privacy will be respected at all times. If children ask questions which are outside the boundaries of the R.S.E programme, teachers will advise them to seek this information from their parents/guardians.
- Factual questions within curricular boundaries for the age will be answered. If the question is a moral one, Catholic teachings will be adhered to. However sensitivity to differing religious, cultural, ethnic and social circumstances will be shown in the implementation of the R.S.E programme.
- Teachers will not answer personal questions.
- The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question or discloses information, which has implications under the Child Protection Act.
- A question box will be used for questions asked in class so that anonymity will be preserved.
- The teacher or invited facilitator will use their discretion based on the content of the R.S.E programme and the spirit of the school policy to decide whether the question should be discussed in the classroom context, answered privately for the

individual, or whether the individual should seek an answer from their parents/guardians.

Facilitator / Guest Speaker

Where the subject matter relates to the area of RSE, and where the facilitator is invited to address the children, the following guidelines will apply:

- The teacher(s) concerned will discuss the planned subject matter with the facilitator.
- Contact will be made with parents prior to the presentation and the parents will be given the option of viewing the content of the material to be taught.
- The policy of the school will be outlined and care taken to ensure that the facilitator is aware of the content which would be covered by the class teacher in the areas of growth, development and reproduction. The facilitator would be required only to cover matters which are currently in our agreed policy.
- The class teacher will remain with the class group while the facilitator is present.
- The guidelines for responding to pupil's questions are as already outlined.

Relevant Resource Material

- Relationships and Sexuality Education (D.E.S)
- Walk Tall programme
- Stay Safe
- Grow in Love
- Busy Bodies
- Be Safe
- Mindful Matters
- Suggested lesson plans for the teaching of some of the sensitive issues- taken from the PDST website, resource pack for R.S.E for Primary Teachers.

Resource materials will be added to depending on the needs and requirements of parents, teachers and children as perceived by those involved in the educational process.

Dealing with Questions:

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE. While it is important to create an environment in which a child feels free to ask questions, it is also important that a safe environment is created for all the children in the class. Teachers are advised to set boundaries in the teaching of RSE as they would in any other subject and discuss the importance of respect for everyone before the beginning of RSE lessons. All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum.

Certain topics are not in the primary RSE/SPHE programme and will not be discussed i.e.: abortion, masturbation, contraception. Questions to the teacher may be oral or written within the group setting and answered within boundaries of the curriculum and school policy.

If any questions asked by children are deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents/guardians, or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum, or in postprimary school. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom outside of the RSE lesson. The following considerations will be made when responding to children's questions:

- Awareness of circumstances in which the question has arisen
- Clarification of what information is required
- Determination of whether the question is appropriate or relevant/who it is relevant to
- Provision of an age appropriate answer
- The school RSE policy
- The ethos of the school
- The content objectives of the SPHE curriculum guidelines
- Deferral of the question to be answered at home or in the future RSE for Children with Special Educational Needs.

Many students with special educational needs may lack confidence and need opportunities to develop the following skills through a structured SPHE/RSE programme: - Development of positive self esteem

- Social and communication skills
- Appropriate expression of feelings
- Safety and protection skills
- An understanding of their body and the changes that take place at puberty. When teaching RSE to children with special educational needs it is important that:
 - The education of the child should be needs led, meaning that the teacher should try to establish what the needs of the student are and also what the child's emotional readiness and base level of understanding are. This can be done through consultation with the parents and with the student him/herself.
 - Close and ongoing co-operation with the parents is advisable.
 - A lesson plan differentiated lesson / education plan for the student may need to be developed in consultation with parents and other staff involved in teaching that student e. g Learning Support Teacher.

Programmes which support R.S.E.

- A. **Code of Behaviour;** The school's Code of Behaviour has been drawn up with the co-operation of teachers, parents and Board of Management. Respect for self and others are the core elements of this policy and this underpins many aspects of the R.S.E. programme.
- B. **Grow in Love;** The religious programme *Grow in Love* is used in all classes and the content is linked to many different themes of the S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. programme.
- C. **Stay Safe;** The *Stay Safe* programme is used as a resource to teach children about personal safety as laid down by the S.P.H.E. school plan. Newly enrolled families are informed about the *Stay Safe* programme and given the option of participating in

this programme. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from this programme but must inform the Principal in writing.

Roles, Responsibilities and Provision for ongoing support

- Staff will be responsible for the selection of the guest speaker subject to approval by the Principal.
- Staff will also be responsible for the evaluation and selection of resources for the teaching of the RSE programme ensuring that all resources are consistent with the school ethos.
- Staff will also be responsible for staff development in the area of R.S.E. CPD will be offered to staff and staff are encouraged to avail of training or professional reading.
- The Principal will organise educational opportunities for parents which support the teaching of the R.S.E. programme in school.
- Each teacher will have responsibility to teach the content of the programme where appropriate or attend while it is being taught. Each teacher is obliged to be mindful of the school ethos as it pertains to the RSE programme.
- Parents are welcome to view the Curriculum and policy documents if they wish. A copy to be kept on file in the office.

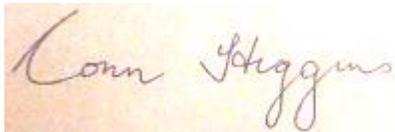
Ratification of Policy:

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14th April 2021

Policy review:

In accordance with the systematic review of policies in Castletownroche N.S., this policy will be reviewed every 3 years or immediately following any serious incidences or if a need arises.

Staff will be informed that the review has been completed. The updated policy will be readily accessible to all members of the school community; a policy folder will be available in all classrooms, it will be published on the school website & will also be provided to the Parent's Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.



Signed:
(Chairperson of Board of Management)
Date: 17th April 2021



Signed:
(Principal)

Date of next review: September 2024