



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Background

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 1999-2000 when a policy committee (made up of the Principal, BOM members and Parents) was charged with setting parameters for the organization and management of R.S.E. in the school. The policy was reviewed in 2007 as the Principal, Staff members and parents had changed during the previous 7 years. The policy was again reviewed in January 2011 as the staff numbers had increased. Staff RSE training was also undertaken by staff in January 2011 and again in March 2013.

Feedback from WSE questionnaires to parents in 2014 indicated that parents were unsure of the content of RSE lessons or when lessons were taking place.

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 of this Policy

- To enhance the personal development, well being and self-esteem of each child.
- To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive and measured way.
- To enable the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.

Relationships to School Ethos

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 and communication at home with children. Parents also have the right to withhold their children from participating in R.S.E classes.

The Objectives relating to RSE will be taught throughout the school at each class level. However the units in 5th and 6th class dealing with birth and new life, sexual intercourse and body development and growth will be covered in 6th class only. These objectives will be taught in one time block – a personal development day. This day will be facilitated by two members of the Accord team. In January the parents of 6th class will be asked to sign a consent form saying whether or not they would like their child to attend this day. In multi class situations only 6th class pupils will be involved in the personal development day.

School Provision

Strand Units

Myself - Self identity, taking care of my body, growing and changing, safety and protection.

Myself and Others – Myself and family, friends and relating to other people.

Taking Care of My Body – Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate terminology (junior and lower middle classes). Identifying physical changes, understanding puberty and the reproductive system (senior classes)

Growing and Changing – The stages of development of a baby from conception to birth (middle classes).

Understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed loving relationship (senior classes).

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.



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Methodology

Circle time is used extensively in junior classes 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 8 resource materials are used extensively in senior classes.

Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes.

The Stay Safe programme is taught from Senior Infants to Sixth class. Aspects of the programme such as bullying are revised in all classes.

Guest speakers from Accord deliver a full day programme to Sixth Classes every year where issues such as physical and emotional development, bodily changes and sexual awakening are explored. The cost of the lectures is borne by the B.O.M.

Topics covered up to 2nd class include:-

- Keeping safe.
- Naming bodily parts using correct terminology.
- Bodily changes during growth and development.
- Making and keeping friends.
- Making age appropriate choices.
- Appreciating family life.
- Recognizing and expressing feelings.
- Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep (link with P.E. Healthy Eating Policy and S.P.H.E.)
- Expressing opinions and listening to others.

Topics covered from 3rd to 6th Classes include:-

- Bodily changes.
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise.
- Keeping safe.
- Expressing feelings.
- Family relationships.
- Making healthy and responsible decisions.
- Forming friendships.
- Reproduction, conception (6th class)

Special Needs Pupils

Special needs pupils will receive RSE after consultation and negotiation with their parents. These pupils will be taught on a need to know basis and the depth of knowledge given will be dependent on their level of disability.

Guidelines for Management

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school R.S.E. programme acts as a support to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. However parents who opt to withdraw their child from discrete RSE lessons should be aware that the teacher or other pupils may use language from the RSE lessons in other areas of the curriculum, in keeping with the overall climate and atmosphere of the school. 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. All content objectives will be covered by the time children leave 6th class.



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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. In cases of disclosure; the D.L.P. will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

Teacher Choice/Staff Development

The teacher's right to choose is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the RSE programme or require additional resources, 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.

The staff has availed of training in:-

- The Stay Safe Programme January 2011
- Child Protection Jan 2011 and January 2013
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (R.S.E.) March 2013
- Walk Tall Programme S.M.P.P. March 2013

The Whole School Plan is available on a shared ICT file. Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning comprising of a yearly (or termly) and fortnightly scheme of work. A Cuntas Míosuil is retained in the Principals Office.

Confidentiality: Records made are of a factual and objective nature and are retained in the school and belong to the school and not to the individual teacher. All records are dated and signed.

School/Community Links

The school is involved in:-

- Athletics, soccer, GAA and handball inter-school competitions.
- Green Schools – An Taisce
- Choir for First Communion and choir for Confirmation
- Christmas concert and carol service.
- Credit Union quiz.
- Swimming modules in Navan Leisure Link

Parents & Assisting

The BOM has a duty to satisfy itself that no person assisting in the school in any capacity poses a threat to pupils or staff. To this end all parents assisting with activities, and in particular, swimming, are requested to fill in a garda vetting form to confirm their eligibility to undertake such activities.

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.

Signed on Behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____



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