

RSE Policy
St. Peter's N.S.
2018
Roll 11072M



Mission Statement

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St. Peter's N.S. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum. Our mission statement states that we seek to provide a climate in which students finds encouragement to develop spiritual and moral values, personal and social skills and the highest standards of excellence of which they are capable in all aspects of school activities. We wish to give our children value and respect for each member of the school community with skills for life. RSE as a component of SPHE furthers this mission.

School Philosophy

St. Peter's N.S. is a Church of Ireland school under the patronage of the Archbishop Primate of All Ireland, the Most Rev'd Dr. Richard Clarke. It is managed by a Board of Management, elected according to the procedures agreed by the Partners in Education. The school has a protestant ethos and this ethos is a guiding principle in the formulation and implementation of this RSE Policy. This ethos recognises the value and dignity of each pupil and all those working in the school community, and aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person.

This ethos also acknowledges the cultural and religious values of all the pupils attending the school. The school recognises that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we support them in that role.

In the area of RSE, above all, the schools' role is subsidiary to that of the parents. We support and compliment their work.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes, which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. (p. 5 NCCA curriculum and guidelines for RSE). RSE is the formal approach to educating children in:

- Relationships with others – parents, siblings, friends and the community in general
- Respect for themselves and others
- Physical development – bodily functions and changes, and personal hygiene
- Emotional development – maturing in society
- Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships
- Sexuality in context – part of a loving relationship.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE and Religion

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. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. (p.5 Going Forward Together Parents Information Booklet).

The key characteristics of this programme are that SPHE is a lifelong process and is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. The main strands of the SPHE programme are:

- Myself
- Myself and Others
- Myself and the Wider World

It is clear that the Relationships and Sexuality Programme is correctly defined as being an integral part of the programme outlined above. Sexually sensitive issues will be covered within the strand units:

- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection.

Current Provision

Traditionally we have been a child-centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our planning and policy making processes. We have always, and will always continue to put the welfare of the children first.

Included in the school curriculum in

- Religious Education Follow Me Programme
- SPHE
- Stay Safe Programme (every 2 years)
- Active Flag
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Anti-Bullying lessons and events

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Code of behaviour and discipline policy
- Substance Use policy
- Anti-Bullying policy and Adult Anti Bullying POLICY
- Child protection policy to be replaced by Child Safeguarding Statement
- Enrolment policy
- Use of Technology policy
- Healthy Eating policy
- School Tour policy
- School Visitors policy
- Administration of Medicines policy
- Garda Vetting Policy

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies, we informally support many of the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the well being of all of the members of the school community.

Aims of our RSE programme

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum should enable the child to:

- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts
- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow, change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- Develop personal skills, which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop some coping strategies to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Curriculum Matters

The curriculum as published by the Dept of Education will be followed. All content objectives will be covered by the time each pupil leaves 6th class.

The curriculum will be taught from Infants to 6th class. It will be ideally be taught by the teaching staff. Occasionally it may be deemed necessary for an outside speaker to address the “sexually sensitive issues” i.e. puberty, reproductive system, conception, birth and sexual intercourse on the 6th Class curriculum but another teacher may be asked to teach these lessons if the class teacher does not wish to do so. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and this policy.

- Sensitive issues classes are generally taught in term 3 and in the context of the entire RSE programme being covered in a 2 year rotation due to having composite classes e.g. Junior Infant lessons in year 1 and then Senior Infant lessons in year 2
- In a multi class situation, the younger class will be withdrawn when topics being taught are not age-appropriate e.g. 3rd withdrawn when 4th learn about menstruation
- 4th class and 6th class boys and girls will have opportunities for lessons separately and together
- When an outside speaker is used, the SPHE coordinator/principal will make them fully aware of

school policy. Parents/guardians will be notified of the name of this speaker in advance of the lesson. The class teacher will remain with the class during the lesson.

Organisational Matters

- Prior to the teaching of lessons involving “sensitive issues”, parents will be informed by letter with an accompanying outline of the lesson (including vocabulary to be used)
- It is a parents/guardians right to withdraw a pupil from these lessons. This request for withdrawal must be made in writing.
- If parents/guardians request the withdrawal of a child from RSE lessons, provision will be made for them to leave the classroom at that time. Supervision will be provided in another classroom. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom. Should a child who is withdrawn from the sexually sensitive classes receive inappropriate information from others outside of these classes, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to address the issues. Where parents wish to take their child out of the lessons on the sensitive issues a school can ask them to put this in writing. The teacher and/or principal will consult with parents on how to manage the opting out process in the best interests of the child.
- Any teacher has the right to opt-out from teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is responsibility of Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be delivered to the children, by another teacher preferably, or an outside speaker.
- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.

Dealing with Questions

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area or RSE. However, this area is treated somewhat differently from other subjects due to its sensitive nature.

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics will not be discussed i.e. abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception. With respect to children who may be LGBT questions about sexual orientation will be answered simply and without detail e.g. during puberty teenagers are beginning to discover what it means to be attracted romantically and physically to others and recognising one's sexual orientation is part of that process. The term sexual orientation refers to the gender (that is, male or female) to which a person is attracted. There are several types of sexual orientation that are commonly described:

Heterosexual. People who are heterosexual are romantically and physically attracted to members of the opposite sex: males are attracted to females, and females are attracted to males. Heterosexuals are sometimes called "straight."

Homosexual (gay or lesbian). People who are homosexual are romantically and physically attracted to people of the same sex: females are attracted to other females; males are attracted to other males.

Homosexuals (whether male or female) are often called "gay." Gay females are also called lesbian.

Bisexual. People who are bisexual are romantically and physically attracted to members of both sexes.

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. When deciding whether it is appropriate to answer a question or not the teacher should consider:

- The age and stage of development of the children
- The ethos the school
- The RSE policy
- The content objectives of the SPHE curriculum guidelines

Suggested ways of setting limits are to say:

- I'll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them
- Would you be able to talk to your mum or dad about that?
- That's something you'll learn about as you get older.
- We agreed in our contract that we wouldn't ask anyone personal questions.

Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information.

At all times the child's and teacher's right to privacy will be maintained

Parental Involvement

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children and as such the school supports them in this role. As stated parents/guardians will be given the option of withdrawing their child from a particular lesson if they so wish. The PTA may on occasion arrange for speakers/meetings to help them in the task of communicating with their children on aspects of their development. Parents/Guardians may access copies of the policy from the school office, or school website.

Resources-

Lesson plans are contained in 4 manuals, hard copies are given to class teachers and the lessons are now available on <http://www.pdst.ie/primary/RSE> The revised Stay Safe programme is in use from 2016/17 and now contains online resources, and a selection of other appropriate resources will also be used. All resources are available for parents/guardians to view online and if they so request prior to the delivery of the lesson. The Busy Bodies CD is stored in the principal's office.

Provision for Ongoing Support

- Parents are welcome to view curriculum if they so wish.
- Funding will be sought for the provision of suitable materials when deemed necessary.
- Opportunities provided by our Education centre will be brought to the attention of staff members. Career development will be sought for staff when required, or as requested

Review

The staff, under the guidance of the Principal will review this policy regularly. This policy will also be reviewed should the need arise or if a new circular issues. The next review is due in 2021.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of St. Peter's School reviewed this amended plan in February 2018

Signed :

Rev'd Iain Jamieson, Chairperson, BoM

Appendix A

RSE - Sensitive Areas

Junior and Senior Infants

New Life – mention of baby in the womb.

My Body – specific names for male and female sex organs – vagina, penis, womb, breastfeeding

First and Second

New Life – New baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord

Birth of baby through vagina. Mention umbilical cord and breast feeding.

Urine passes through the penis in boys and urethra in girls

Third Class

Revision

Fourth Class

Language around baby's development in womb i.e. fertilised egg, cord, foetus.

Pictures of foetuses (in RSE manual) to be used.

Changes in puberty, body shape, menstruation, voice, changes, mood changes, skin and body changes

Fifth Class

Puberty revise, physical changes in boys and girls

Sixth Classes

Menstruation in the context of hygiene and growth from a girl to a woman.

Boys and girls development – puberty

How does new life begin? (6th class only)

Biological facts as follows:

- What journey does the egg make?
- What journey does the sperm make?
- Where do they meet?
- What happens when they meet?
- Busy Bodies DVD

Sexual intercourse in the context of a loving committed relationship