**Relationships and Sexuality in Education (RSE) Policy.**

**A** SCHOOL

Name: St Fiacc’s NS.

Address: Graiguecullen, Carlow.

Phone number: 059 9132444

Category: Primary, Vertical, Co Ed.

Enrolment: 571.

**B** OUR SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

In line with the Catholic ethos of our school the staff will endeavour to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships. Our policy will reflect Catholic moral teaching and will respect the dignity, privacy and modesty of each individual child. Parents, teachers and Board of Management will work as a team to further the educational, physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual wellbeing of the children. We will aim to make the programme relevant & accessible to all pupils regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or social class.

**C** DEFINITION OF RSE

RSE is part of the SPHE programme. 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.

The Policy provides a safety net for the teaching of RSE in that it ensures RSE will be taught in a consistent and agreed way. Individual teachers should not express their own personal beliefs and values when teaching RSE but should articulate the ethos and value system expressed in the RSE policy. The staff of the school were involved in deciding the process by which we drew up an RSE policy. We agreed on the following process:

# 2. Formulation of the policy.

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St. Fiacc’s NS. It was developed in 2008 by the RSE Policy Committee, which included two teachers, two representatives of the Board of Management and two parent representatives, and was reviewed and amended in 2014. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum.

**D** RELATIONSHIP OF RSE TO SPHE

SPHE promotes the health and well-being of children in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth.

Social, Personal and Health Education looks at issues such as relationships at home and in school, building self-esteem, and learning skills of communication, decision-making and expressing feelings in an appropriate way. It also includes giving clear information on a range of topics, including healthy eating, alcohol, drugs, human growth and development, safety and social responsibility, and environmental issues.

It is in that context that RSE will be taught and integrated into SPHE classes. Discrete RSE lessons on, for example, puberty or new life will be taught in the wider context of the SPHE Programme.

**E** WHAT THE SCHOOL CURRENTLY PROVIDES

**1. Content**

The SPHE programme is implemented using the Walk Tall Programme; RSE Manual, the Stay Safe Programme & Webwise/My Selfie. The topics in the table below will be taught simultaneously to all classes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strands** | **Strand Units** |
| Myself | Safety and Protection (Jan/Feb) |
|  | Growing and Changing /Taking Care of My Body (March/April) |
|  |  |
| Myself and Others | Anti-Bullying/Internet Safety (March) |

The programme will be taught in a variety of ways through a positive school climate, discrete time and integration with other subjects.

**F** THE AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME

This policy aims to:

* To enhance the personal development and wellbeing of the child.
* To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.
* To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality 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 wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
* To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

The success of this policy will be assessed against the above aims.

**G** GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF RSE IN OUR SCHOOL

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our school

* Guidelines as laid down by the Department of Education and Science and as discussed in this document will be followed. It is recognised that during any year a special teacher/pupil relationship develops within a class. A trust and understanding of each other is acquired and having regard to this special relationship we recognised the need to allow the teacher flexibility/discretion as the need may arise when dealing with certain areas of the curriculum.
* It is envisaged that the programme will be taught in an integrated manner where possible.
* Parents are to be informed in advance of the programme content.
* Parents are also to be informed in advance, regarding when the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme e.g. puberty, will be covered in school.
* If a DVD is to be used to complement the teaching of RSE parents are to be offered an opportunity to view same.
* Having already received in-service training for the RSE programme the teaching staff will deliver the programme bearing in mind that a teacher may choose to withdraw from the teaching of the sensitive areas in the future. In this event an alternative arrangement will be made to ensure programme implementation in all classes. All material being taught will be monitored to ensure that it is age & stage appropriate.
* Parents have the responsibilities 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 wishes their child to be withdrawn from a formal RSE class they must first discuss this with the teacher involved and the principal and then inform the principal in writing. Every effort will be made to withdraw the child with the minimum of fuss. Recognising that the Department of Education and Science do not allow a child to stay away from school while RSE is being taught the child will be sent to another classroom to work.
* Children will be encouraged to discuss the material being covered in class with their parents, guardians or older siblings. Where possible handouts, worksheets etc.... will be provided to facilitate this.
* It is the policy of this school to seek consent for pupils’ participation in the RSE programme when enrolling children.
* 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, etc... It will be explained that other children will be given this information by their own parents and teachers when they reach the appropriate age.
* Children will also be taught to recognise that certain personal disclosures are inappropriate. Teachers will neither give nor request personal information. A respect for personal information, a respect for personal privacy will be emphasised.
* Parents will be informed if the teacher feels a particular child would benefit from more in-depth discussion, at home, of a topic covered.
* If a parent has a particular concern/issue which has arisen as a result of an RSE discussion in school they would be 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.
* 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 it is relevant to*
* *by giving an 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*
* There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils.
* After two years there will be a review of the policy. The partners will be given an opportunity to make comments and suggest amendments as appropriate.

**H** PROVIDE FOR ONGOING SUPPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

St Fiacc’s, in order to support teachers, pupils, parents and board members involved in RSE at policy and programme level is committed to:

* ensure access to in-career development opportunities for teachers and the policy committee.
* support efforts of parents to provide educational opportunities for other parents.
* provide relevant RSE school resources.

The manuals on Relationships & Sexuality Education and the “Busy Bodies” DVD from the Dept of Education and Science will be our main resource materials.

Other SPHE resources and our Religion programme Grow in Love will also be used to cover aspects of the programme.

An outline of the policy will be disseminated to all parents and the complete policy will be available on request from the school.

The Principal and Staff Teachers, following consultation with the parents, RSE Steering Committee, and the BOM, will be responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

It will be the responsibility of the Principal Teacher to co-ordinate a review of this Policy

Appendix A

RSE - Sensitive Areas

**Junior Infants**

Themes: New Life – mention of baby in the womb.

RSE Teaching Materials: p. 68 – 76

Vocabulary: born , womb

**Senior Infants**

As SPHE is spiral in nature, the work in Jnr. Inf. Is revised re: ‘New Life’ and expanded see: RSE Teaching Materials p. 158 - 167

*Themes: My Body – specific names for male and female sex organs –*

*RSE Teaching Materials: p. 148 – 156*

*Vocabulary: vagina, penis, breasts, breastfed, 9 months in womb*

***INFANTS:*** *Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum:*

*The child should be enabled to:*

*Develope an awareness of human birth*

That a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother’s womb until ready to be born

*(SPHE Curriculum – Infants Pg 18)*

*Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms*

*(SPHE Curriculum – Infants Pg 17)*

**First Class**

Themes: New Life and ‘How my Body Works’ –: RSE Teaching Materials p. 68 -75

New baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord – mention breast feeding.

Vocabulary: urine

**Second Class**

Themes: ‘The Wonder of New Life’, ‘When My Body Needs Special Care’ .:

RSE Teaching Materials p. 162 – 169

Vocabulary: vagina, anus

**FIRST & SECOND CLASS**: Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum:

*The child should be enabled to:*

To name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions

(SPHE Curriculum – 1st & 2nd Class Pg 27)

Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world

(SPHE Curriculum – 1st & 2nd Class Pg 28)

**Third Class**

Themes: Preparing for New Life : RSE Teaching Materials p. 70 – 79

Vocabulary: pregnancy, umbilical cord, navel, belly button

**Fourth Class**

Themes: ‘The Wonder of New Life’ and ‘Growing and Changing’ Language around baby’s development in womb, i.e., fertilised egg, cord.:

RSE Teaching Materials p. 170 – 181 & 196 – 205

Vocabulary: egg, scan, hormones, cells, menustration, periods, pubic hair, pubic areas, perspiration

**THIRD & FOURTH CLASS:** Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum:

*The child should be enabled to:*

*Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth*

*(SPHE Curriculum – 3rd & 4th Class Pg 41)*

*Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body*

*Growing height and weight, increasing strength growing from boy to man, growing from girl to woman*

*(SPHE Curriculum – 3rd & 4th Class Pg 39)*

**Fifth Class**

Themes: ‘My Body Grows and Changes’ , ‘The Wonder of New Life’ and ‘Caring for New Life’ . RSE Teaching Materials p. 82 – 92 & p. 94 -101

Boys and Girls are separated for the first ‘Busy Bodies’ lesson.

Vocabulary: Ovaries, Fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, testicles, scrotum, erection, sperm production, wet dreams, conception, adolescence, responsibilities

**Sixth Class**

Themes: ‘Growing and Changing’, ‘Relationships and New Life’, and ‘A Baby is a Miracle’. RSE Teaching Materials p. 184 – 197 & 200 – 208 & 210 – 219

Vocabulary: All as above

**FIFTH & SIXTH CLASS:** Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum:

*The child should be enabled to:*

Identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that theses take place at different rates for everyone

*FEMALE*

*Hormonal changes, changing body shape, development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, onset of menstruation (periods)*

*MALE*

*Hormonal changes, physical growth, enlargement of testicles and penis, appearance of pubic, underarm and facial hair, breaking of the voice, beginning of sperm production, onset of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)*

Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults

(SPHE Curriculum – 5th & 6th Class Pg 56)

Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship

Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent

Preparing for the birth of the baby taking care of offspring from birth onwards emotional, psychological and practical provisions

(SPHE Curriculum – 5th & 6th Class Pg 58)