

# **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

## **Introductory Statement**

The school has a responsibility to put in place an R.S.E. policy as part of the wider, Social, Personal and Health Education strand of the curriculum.

## **Rationale**

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**

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

\* Parents have the right to withhold their children from participating in R.S.E classes.

## **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).

Teachers do not cover topics such as contraception and same sex relationships. Children who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum are advised that the teacher can not give this information. Children are encouraged to talk to their parents about this material / questions.

## **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.

### **The Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes.**

The Stay Safe programme is taught in accordance with our SPHE Plan. Aspects of the programme such as bullying are revised in all classes.

A guest speakers speaks to Senior 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes include:-**
    - Bodily changes.
    - Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise.
    - Keeping safe.
    - Expressing feelings.
    - Family relationships.
    - Making healthy and responsible decisions.
    - Forming friendships.
    - Reproduction, conception (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes)

### **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 only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. 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. Teachers are present at all times when guest speakers are visiting a class.

### **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 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.

Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning comprising of a yearly and fortnightly scheme of work. A Cuntas Miosuil is retained in the Principals Class room.

## **School/Community Links**

**The school is involved in:-**

- Cumann na mBunscoil – football, hurling and camogie.
- Choir for First Communion and choir for Confirmation every year.
- Credit Union Quiz.

## **Evaluation**

- Teacher observation.
- Inventory of what needs to be changed.
- Ensuring all strands are covered.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation.
- Community feedback.

## **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.

## **Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M.

Signed: Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Implementation**

Implementation is on a phased basis from September 2014

## **Review**

**This policy will be reviewed as necessary.**

**Ratified by the Board of Management**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson BOM)**