

# St. Mary's Parish Primary School

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## R.S.E. Policy

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St. Marys Parish Primary School. It was developed in 2016 by the RSE Policy Committee, which included two teachers, two representatives of the Board of Management and two parent representatives. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum.

### School Philosophy

St. Marys Parish Primary School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath. It is managed by a Board of Management, elected according to the procedures agreed by the Partners in Education. The school has a Catholic 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, including:

- Relationship with God
- Relationship with family
- Relationship with self
- Relationship with teachers
- Relationship with others
- Relationship with the environment.

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 school's 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 RSE Programme is correctly defined as being an integral part of the programme outlined above. Sexually sensitive issues will be covered with the strand units:

- Taking care of my body
- Growing and Changing
- Safety and protection

### **Current provision**

Included in the school curriculum:

Religious Education (Alive O)

SPHE

Stay Safe

Walk Tall

### **Policies which support SPHE/RSE**

Code of behaviour and discipline policy

Anti - bullying policy

Child Protection policy

Enrolment policy

Healthy eating policy

School Tour policy

Internet Safety Policy

Administration of Medicines policy

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies, 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.

### **Aims of our RSE programme**

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE 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
- 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.

### **Curriculum Matters**

- The curriculum as published by the NCCA will be followed. See Appendix A for more specific details. The curriculum will be taught from Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. It will ideally be taught by the teaching staff. In sixth class speakers from Accord will address the 'sexually sensitive issues' [see Accord Programme]. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and this policy. Parents will be invited to an information evening regarding this visit beforehand.
- Parents are encouraged to use this opportunity to discuss these topics with their children.
- Written parental consent will be sought for these lessons.
- The class teacher will remain with the class during the lesson

- 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 lesson, provision will be made for them to leave the classroom at that time. Supervision will be provided.
- Time will be spent explaining confidentiality i.e. not discussing lessons with a younger child but children are encouraged to discuss issues with their parents.
- Any teacher has the right to opt out from teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is the responsibility of Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be delivered to the children, by another teacher 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**

Only those topics laid down for the class will be taught and teachers will only answer those questions which are relevant to the programme for that year. Questions arising from curriculum content will be addressed in a sensible, sensitive and age -appropriate manner. Should a pupil require information that is not in line with curriculum content and not considered to be age-appropriate the school will not give such information and will refer the question back to the parents. Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature which he does not wish to share.

### **Resources**

Lesson plans from the DES have been assessed and amended where necessary in line with this school policy. All resources are available for parents/guardians to view if they so wish prior to the delivery of the lesson. Information on resources that may be of use to parents is included on Appendix C.

### **Provision for Ongoing Support**

Opportunities for training will be brought to the attention of the staff when required or requested.

### **Review**

The staff, under the guidance of the Principal and SPHE Coordinator will review this policy every two years. This policy will also be reviewed should the need arise.

## Appendix A

### RSE - Topics per class

#### Junior Infants

1. This is me - Grow in Love/ RSE handbook
2. Who are You - Grow in Love/SESE
3. We are friends - RSE handbook
4. This is my Family - RSE handbook
5. People who teach us About Keeping Safe - SESE
6. We have feelings -RSE handbook
7. New Life - SESE
8. I grow -SESE
9. Making Choices -SESE

#### Senior Infants

1. Look What I can Do - Science
2. These are my friends - Religion
3. This is my family - SESE
4. I can be safe - SESE / Stay Safe
5. Other people have feelings too - Religion
6. Caring for new life - SESE
7. My body - SESE
8. I grow and change - SESE
9. Making decisions - Religion

#### First Class

1. Things I like to do - Walk Tall
2. My Friends - Alive O, Walk Tall, SESE
3. My Family - Alive O, SESE
4. Keeping Safe - Road Safety (SESE), Fire Safety - Earthlinks
5. Showing our Feelings - Walk Tall
6. Wonder of new life - Baby animals - SESE
7. How my body works - My body, my teeth - SESE
8. Growing means changing - SESE
9. Decisions and their Consequences - Walk tall.

#### Second Class

1. Other people are special - Alive O
2. Being Friends - Alive O
3. My Family - Alive O
4. Keeping Safe - Stay Safe
5. Coping with our Feelings - Walk Tall
6. Wonder of new life - Alive O, RSE handbook **Leave this unit out. Content will be covered in 4<sup>th</sup> class**
7. Personal Decisions - Alive O

#### Third Class

1. Special Gifts - Walk Tall
2. Sometimes friends fight - RSE handbook
3. My Family - RSE handbook
4. Keeping Safe - SESE
5. Expressing Feelings - Walk Tall
6. Preparing for new life - RSE handbook
7. Our Senses - SESE
8. As I grow I change - RSE handbook
9. Making Decisions - Walk Tall

#### **Fourth Class**

1. Myself and others - Walk Tall / Stay Safe
2. Bullying Behaviour - Anti - bullying lessons
3. My Family - Walk Tall / Religion
4. Reasons for rules - Stay Safe
5. Feelings and Emotions - Walk Tall / Stay Safe
6. Wonder of New Life - RSE handbook
7. Being clean - keeping healthy - SESE
8. Problem solving - Stay Safe

#### **Fifth Class**

1. The person I Am - RSE handbook
2. Me and Others - Walk Tall
3. Feelings and Emotions - RSE handbook
4. Feelings - Walk Tall
5. My Family - RSE handbook
6. Different types of friends - RSE handbook
7. Caring for new life - RSE handbook
8. Decision making - Walk Tall
9. Making healthy decisions - RSE handbook
10. Influences - Walk Tall
11. Looking back/ forward - Walk Tall
12. Alcohol - Walk Tall

#### **Sixth Class**

1. Me and my aspirations - RSE handbook
2. Ways of seeing - Walk Tall
3. Growing and Changing - RSE handbook
4. Relationships and New life - Accord
5. A baby is a miracle - RSE handbook
6. Feelings - Walk Tall / RSE handbook
7. Different kinds of love - RSE
8. Decision making - Walk Tall / RSE handbook
9. Families - RSE handbook
10. Smoking / Drugs - Walk Tall
11. Keeping safe and healthy - RSE
12. Looking back, looking forward - RSE handbook

## Appendix B

### RSE - Sensitive Areas

#### **Junior Infants**

New life - mention of baby in the womb.

#### **Senior Infants**

My body - specific names for male and female sex organs - vulva, penis, womb.

#### **First Class**

New life - new baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord - mention breast feeding.

#### **Second Class**

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

Following consultation with Parents it was decided to leave this unit to 4<sup>th</sup> class.

#### **Third Class**

Similar to second class.

#### **Fourth Class**

Language around baby's development in womb.

#### **Sixth Class**

Lessons given by Accord - puberty, how life begins.

When the above are being taught, the information letter for parents from the RSE handbook will be sent home.

## Appendix C

### **Useful Resources for Parents**

Busy Bodies - book and DVD - HSE

Girl Talk by Lucienne Pickering

Boy Talk by Lucienne Pickering

Boy Facts by Peter Bird

Girl Facts by Peter Bird

How did I begin by Mick Manning

There's a house inside my mummy by Giles Andreae

Made with love by Kate Petty

Where Babies come from (Walker Books )