R.S.E. POLICY

Derrycreha N.S., Glengarriff, Co. Cork
14430E

Our School Philosophy

Recognising that each child is a unique individual with physical emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual needs, we in Derrycreha N.S. strive to meet those needs in a wide and varied curriculum, so that each child may develop to his/her full potential.

S.P.H.E.

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. Social Personal and Health Education provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self confidence and self esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

R.S.E.
(Relationships and Sexuality Education)

R.S.E. is an integral part of SPHE and deals with aspects such as human growth and development, human sexuality, parenting, personal and social skills and relationships. It provides children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of these areas through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

The aims of R.S.E.

At Primary level, R.S.E. aims to help children learn at home and at school, about their own development and to focus on their relationships and friendships 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.

We aim to compliment and support parents in providing guidance, information and skills in the area of relationships and Sexuality Education, stressing social, personal and health education as the building blocks to enable our children to:

- Think, act, make decisions and resolve conflicts in a moral, caring responsible and assertive way.
- Develop self-esteem and the communication skills necessary to function with success and confidence in today's society, while learning the importance of committed family values.
- Respect the Christian ethos while recognising different cultural and religious backgrounds and striving to be at all times sensitive to others.
- Develop a natural awareness of and pride in their growing and changing bodies and the emotional changes that accompany this, along with an understanding and respect for the physical differences that exist normally between children of the opposite and the same sex.

Current provision for R.S.E. in our school

Up to recently Relationships and Sexuality Education has been taught in the context of Religious Education, in Social and Environmental studies, in health education etc…. and through a positive school climate and atmosphere. We have used lessons and activities from the Religious Education programme (Alive-O etc.), and Relationships and Sexuality (R.S.E.) programmes to do this.

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.

Management and Organisation of R.S.E.

Teaching about relationships and sexuality will be delivered in the context of S.P.H.E. All content objectives will be taught developmentally by the time the children leave 6th class. All issues will be discussed with sensitivity, professionalism and awareness of the varying levels of development within a class.

Possible sensitive issues such as naming the body parts and sexual intercourse will be covered within the strand units 'Taking care of my body,' 'Growing and changing' and 'Safety and Protection.' (Below is a list of possible sensitive issues with sexual connotations.)
Terminology: We will give children the correct and appropriate terminology as laid down in the RSE materials.

- Senior Infants: Penis, vagina
- 1st Class: Womb
- 2nd Class: Birth canal
- 3/4th Class: Developing foetus
- 5/6th Class: Sexual intercourse

In our school, which is a **multi-class situation,** there are children of different class levels and abilities. Should information be inappropriate for the younger age group, we will withdraw them to another teacher's class.
Our school is a co-educational school and we will teach the boys and girls together, except for the lessons on menstruation.

Answering Questions

Should a pupil require information that is not in line with the curriculum content, and not considered to be age-appropriate for the general body of pupils, the teachers will refer him/her to the parents.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- In SPHE and RSE parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school will work in a supportive role.
- On enrolment parents will be provided with a booklet on the RSE programme.
- A parent's right to **withdraw** a pupil from the process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school in writing of this decision.
- If a parent has any concern about any aspect of the programme they are welcome to discuss it with the class teacher.

Confidentiality: If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell inform him/her about what has happened.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers
RSE will be taught: in Junior Infants – 4th class by the class teacher and a suitable guest speaker (nurse, doctor, etc) will be invited to deliver the sensitive contents of the programme to 5th class and 6th class. Teachers will be present when this takes place during school hours.

Sources and Resources

- We will use the RSE and Stay Safe programmes and other resources that are deemed suitable by the Department of Education.
- We will continue our cluster arrangement with Glengarriff N.S. when the Southern Health Board personnel deliver a workshop on puberty, reproduction and other sensitive issues.
- We may also invite parent/parents and new baby to the class when teaching lessons on new life and parenthood.
- Videos, booklets etc. are available for parents to borrow or view in the school.

The draft policy is being circulated to parents, teachers and B.O.M. during the month of February. Parents will be invited to a meeting in March to review, discuss and amend this policy where necessary.

The final agreed policy will be presented to B.O.M. and when ratified by them will be circulated to all parties involved. It will be implemented fully and will be reviewed and updated when necessary.

This Policy was reviewed by staff in November 2011 and ratified by the Board of Management on Wednesday 6th June 2012.