

Relationship and Sexuality Education

Appendix 11

Introductory Statement & Rationale

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) at St. Kevin's N.S. It was last reviewed in 2002 by the R.S.E. Policy Committee, which included teachers, representatives of the Board of Management and parent representatives. It was developed to inform teachers and parents/guardians as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.

School Philosophy

St. Kevin's N.S. is a mixed primary school in the Roman Catholic tradition. Since RSE has a moral and spiritual dimension, the development and implementation of this policy is influenced significantly by the ethos of the school. Different types of family units and families with different religions and cultures form our school community. This has been taken in to account when drafting the RSE policy.

Definition of RSE

RSE is a unit of SPHE which provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which enable them to form values and establish appropriate behavior within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

RSE is an integral part of the SPHE curriculum and must be taught in this context. SPHE provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, self-esteem, health and well-being of the child, to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society.

Current Provision

St. Kevin's currently provides SPHE /RSE formally and informally through:

- The promotion of a caring atmosphere on a daily basis
- Religious Education (Alive-O)
- SPHE Curriculum
- PE Curriculum
- Stay Safe Programme
- SESE Curriculum
- Health Education Visitors
- ACCORD Schools Team

Aims of RSE Programme

The RSE programme will endeavour:

- To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To enhance the child's personal development, self-esteem and well-being
- 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 himself/herself and others while growing and developing

Objectives of RSE Programme

The child will be enabled to:

- Be self-confident and have a positive sense of self-esteem
- Develop a sense of personal responsibility and come to understand his/her sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction
- Understand that his/her developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts
- Value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood

- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- Develop a sense of safety and an ability to protect himself/herself from danger and abuse

Organisation of RSE Programme

The RSE programme will be organised as follows:

- The RSE programme will generally be taught in the normal classroom situation.
- The themes and language specifically relating to sexuality in 'Sensitive Lessons' are outlined in Appendix 9.
- The Stay Safe Programme and RSE Resource materials will be used as a basis for RSE lessons
- Issues discussed will be age appropriate, will reflect the parameters of the curriculum and will be dealt with in a manner that will show care and sensitivity to all pupils
- Contact will be made with parents prior to the teaching of 'Sensitive Lessons'
- The Catholic Marriage Care Service (ACCORD) provides a one-day programme on various aspects of relationships and sexuality, presented by trained facilitators to 5th & 6th class pupils. This programme will be delivered to the relevant classes at St. Kevin's NS on a yearly. The course outline can be viewed on the following website: www.accord.ie/schools_programmes/
- Regular talks by ACCORD facilitators will be organised for parents on a yearly/two yearly basis (as required).
- All outside speakers will be made aware of school policy by the class teacher who will remain in the classroom when talks are being given.

Differentiation

Where appropriate, children with Mild General Learning Disabilities (MGLD) will follow the mainstream class programme. However, as the need arises, or on an individual basis, pupils with MGLD will be provided with opportunities to develop further necessary skills in the area of SPHE, as outlined in the NCCA 'Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities' (www.ncca.ie)

Role of Parents

- Parents have been consulted in the development of this policy
- Parents will be invited to view the Resource Materials for RSE and may speak to the principal/class teacher if they have any concerns
- Parents will be notified in advance of 'Sensitive Lessons' and ACCORD talks in order to enable them to work in partnership with the school
- As parents/ guardians are the primary educators of their children, the school will respect parents' right to withdraw their child/children from certain aspects of the RSE programme. In such cases, parents should contact the principal in advance

Review

This policy was reviewed as part of the S.P.H.E. policy review, 2010/2011. Next review date - see Social, Personal & Health Education School Plan.