



“We espouse a child centred approach to education recognising the unconditional worth of each child. We aim to give a balanced education with a view to empowering the child to achieve his/her full potential.”

Polasaí Oideachais Caidrimh agus Gneasachta.

School Policy Statement on R.S.E.

15ú Eanáir 1999

Our School Philosophy.....	2
Definition of R.S.E.	2
Relationship of R.S.E. to SPHE.	2
What the school currently provides	3
The aims of our R.S.E Programme	3
Guidelines for the management and organisation of R.S.E.....	4
PROVISION FOR ONGOING SUP PORT DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW	5

Our School Philosophy

- Scoil Uí Riada is a Gaelscoil and is committed to fostering all aspects of Irish Culture, particularly our language, games and music. The governing ethos of the school is Roman Catholic although all reasonable effort is made to accommodate pupils of other beliefs and traditions.
- Reasonable accommodation will also be made to facilitate students with disabilities.
- We espouse a child centred approach to education recognising the unconditional worth of each child. We aim to give a balanced education with a view to empowering the child to achieve his/her full potential.
- The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, social and spiritual development (emotional, intellectual, moral, physical and political) for personal and family life for living in the community and for leisure. The school aims at being transparent and inclusive in all aspects of school life.

Definition of R.S.E.

Relationships and sexuality education seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values, to establish behaviours and to communicate effectively within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In particular it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant personal and social skills and aspects of parenting.

Central to R.S.E. is the fostering of self esteem, through which the pupil becomes more responsible in making choices and decisions in all aspects of life, and particularly in those relating to sexuality, relationships, communications and receptivity.

Relationship of R.S.E. to SPHE.

Social, personal and health education (SPHE) 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.

A commonly accepted curricular framework for SPHE is based on the following three dimensions

1. Myself
2. Myself and others.

3. Myself and My Community and Environment

A spiral curricular based on these three dimensions will include suitable modules on Relationships and Sexuality Education for each class/year group.

The total amount of time spent on RSE on one year will be nine hours.

What the school currently provides

Much of the proposed SPHE curriculum is and has been covered in the school both formally and informally. It has been delivered formally through Religious Education, Civics, P.E., Environmental studies and the Stay Safe Programme.

It has been delivered informally through the ethos of the school, the manner in which respect for others is practised and encouraged and in which conflicts are resolved and problems dealt with.

It is also touched on in discussions, in essay work and in issues which arise in Reading, History and Current Affairs.

The aims of our R.S.E Programme

- To enhance the personal development, self esteem and well being of the child.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual 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 help the child understand how human communication and receptivity work so they can develop appropriate friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of difference, religious, cultural, ethnic and gender, and to include awareness of disability issues.
- To enable the child to be comfortable with his/her own unique identity and to harmonise with others.
- To understand issues of privacy, confidentiality and boundaries.
- To understand and to learn to express in language human feelings and emotions.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of R.S.E.

The policy is both child and parent centred. It recognises the primacy of the parents, the ethos of the parental home and the rights of parents.

In accordance with the Department of Education's guidelines parents will be entitled to withdraw their children from R.S.E. and teachers will be entitled to decline teaching it.

We are aware of many peoples anxieties and would aim to allay these anxieties as far as is reasonably possible.

For this reason we aim to achieve a balance between the fears of those who are opposed to the programme and the wishes of those who support it.

To this end the policy of the school is to ensure that all documentation, material and teaching aids are readily available to parents for scrutiny and comment.

The policy also includes disability awareness and a comprehensive approach to disability issues.

The policy is based on the ethos of the R.S.E. programme and therefore explicitly endorses a policy of consultation with and participation of the parents in the management of the programme.

- This policy acknowledges that these sensitive issues are the primary responsibilities of the parents and the programme is designed to assist parents in these responsibilities and not to usurp their role.
- The policy embraces the ethos of transparency. All issues should be clearly stated and written down for all to see. The policy embraces the principals of accountability, audit and on-going evaluation.
- The staff will select appropriate materials (books, programmes, videos.) based mainly on the Department of Education programme. All materials will be available for parents to view prior to and at all times during the implementation of the programme.
- The teaching of RSE may be a combination of fixed timetables (regarding sensitive issues e.g. names of body parts, birth, new life etc.) with a cross curricular approach (e.g. if an RSE issue should arise during another lesson the teacher would be permitted the flexibility to seize the 'teachable moment' with discretion)
- Letters will be sent home giving notice of RSE lessons dealing with sensitive issues thus giving parents an opportunity to discuss these issues with their children, before they arise in class. Due to the particular content of RSE lessons for 5th and 6th class, information meetings will be held for parents.
- RSE classes will be co-educational usually, except for 5th and 6th classes. Here boys and girls will be taught separately initially, but will come together for further discussion. Teachers will avail of opportunities and resources to further their own expertise in the teaching of RSE.
- The RSE course will be taught bilingually, through Irish wherever possible, though English may be used at the discretion of the teacher.

- Usually the class teacher will conduct RSE lessons with their own classes. If not, provision will be made for another teacher to take the class. An outside speaker may visit the class.
- In the event of parents wishing to withdraw their children from the more sensitive lessons in the RSE programme, provision will be made for this to happen after consultation between the parents and teacher.
- The teacher should encourage the children to be sensitive to the issues being discussed and revealed.
- As teachers we are obliged to report any revelations of an illegal nature.
- At each stage of the programme children will be given opportunities to ask questions. If a teacher feels a question is inappropriate to a particular age they can judge whether or not to answer, possibly referring it back to the parents.

PROVISION FOR ONGOING SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

The policy may be reviewed at regular intervals. The first review will take place after two years of the implementation of the RSE programme in accordance with the principles of consultation laid down in the original policy guidelines.

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