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Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

SCHOOL DETAILS

Saint Michael's National School is a co-educational National School, under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of the United Dioceses of Limerick & Killaloe. The present Patron is the Right Reverend Doctor Kenneth Kearon. In line with DES advice in Rules for National Schools, that " ... a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school ..." the Board of Management (BOM) of Saint Michael's N.S. and the staff seek to promote the development of honesty, truthfulness, courtesy, punctuality and responsibility in each individual pupil attending the school. A proper regard for the rights and views of others is encouraged. A caring and tolerant attitude to other people and to the environment is nurtured.

It is expected that pupils extend these values and attitudes in their dealings with other children in the school, with members of school staff, with parents/guardians, friends and others who may have occasion to visit the school.

It is the formal policy of the school to foster these attitudes both by explicit teaching in the classroom and in the informal life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as members of a community, where all are entitled to live irrespective of age, sex, ability or family circumstances. It is advocated that senior pupils adopt a caring and responsible attitude to the junior pupils. The end of each term is marked by a service to which all parents/guardians and friends are invited.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

All schools are required to have a Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including sensitive aspects. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally. The first RSE policy was developed in 1999 in consultation with the teaching staff and has been updated frequently. The current policy was developed with professional support from the PDST.

DEFINITION OF RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and must be taught in this context. It aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a

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moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information for their age-group.

RSE IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR SPHE PROGRAMME

Throughout the school year SPHE is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to 6th class. A wide variety of topics are included on this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE forms a part of this programme. It is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years.

AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To help children 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 enable the older 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 oneself and others while growing and developing.

BROAD OBJECTIVES OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME

The RSE programme should enable the child:

- To acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.
- To develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth.
- To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.
- To understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts.
- To develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- To come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- To develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- To become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change, and to understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity.
- To develop personal skills which will help them to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- To develop some coping strategies to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse.
- To acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.
- To acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.
- To develop in the child a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

SCHOOL POLICIES WHICH SUPPORT RSE:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Administration of Medicine Policy (to be formulated in Autumn 2019)

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies we informally support many of the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for staff and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the well-being of all the members of the school community.

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF RSE IN OUR SCHOOL

- We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school, therefore, is seen as one of support for the work of the home in this area.
- RSE is taught as an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum.
- The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account.

It is important that children are taught the appropriate language in RSE to enable them to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Therefore, appropriate **vocabulary** relating to sexuality, growing up,

- physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. The use of slang words will be discouraged. (See Appendix I).
- **Questions** arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner. The teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class. Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme. They will be advised to talk with their parents.
- It is our policy not to answer **personal questions**.
- Teachers are encouraged to use a Question Box during the delivery of the programme to allow children to ask questions.
- Some aspects of RSE will be taught through **discrete lessons** with the remainder being taught in a cross-curricular manner. Teachers will have to identify the appropriate links with other subject areas to ensure that children receive a broad-based approach to RSE. (See Making the Links and Beyond, PDST)

- Discrete lessons with regard to sensitive areas of RSE (physical changes at puberty, menstruation, intercourse, conception for senior classes) will be timetabled for the end of 2nd term/beginning of 3rd term.(Cross Reference)
 - Every second year the Stay Safe programme (Year 1) and RSE programme (Year 2) will be undertaken in each class level at the same time each day in the second term of the school year.
 - Parents will be notified in advance of teaching RSE and invited to talk to the teachers if they have any concerns. They will be encouraged to view the contents of the programme. This provides the parents with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the content of the sensitive topics of the RSE programme.
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- Presently in Saint Michael's National School all teachers deliver this programme to their own class. However, provisions will be made for teachers who may have difficulty with teaching the sensitive areas of the programme. We invite a suitably qualified guest speaker to speak with our 6th class students. Class teacher remains in the room at all times.
 - Teachers will be aware of the learning needs of their pupils and will differentiate the RSE lessons as appropriate to ensure that pupils with special needs can learn at their level of understanding.

WITHDRAWAL OF A CHILD FROM THE LESSONS WITH SENSITIVE TOPICS

Parents will be notified regarding the implementation of the RSE programme (See sample letter Appendix 2). The Stay Safe and RSE programmes will be undertaken in each class at the same time once a week for the duration of the programme in the second term of the school year.

Our RSE programme is inclusive and we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the school will take account of parental concerns, and parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves.

ORGANISATION AND CURRICULUM PLANNING

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from Infants to 6th Class. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

Myself
Growing and changing
Taking care of my body

The RSE Curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from Infants to 6th Class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. Each teacher will teach the content for their class level each year as

laid out in the curriculum, and utilizing the RSE and Walk Tall manuals to complement their teaching.

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

1. The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strands units and compliment the aim and objectives of RSE

- Friendship
- Self-identity
- Family
- Self-esteem
- Growing up

2. The second section will deal with any sensitive/specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are in **bold**.

Topics covered up to 2 nd include	Topics covered from 3 rd to 6 th include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Safe • Bodily changes during growth and birth (birth to 9) • Making age appropriate choices • Appreciating family life • Recognising and expressing feelings • Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep • Expressing opinions and listening to others • Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Jun/Sen Infants) • Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily changes • Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise • Keeping Safe • Expressing Feelings • Family Relationships • Making healthy and responsible decisions • Forming Friendships • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb(3rd & 4th) • Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th/6th) • Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th/6th) • Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship(5th/6th)

SENSITIVE CONTENT 4TH – 6TH

TEACHING METHODOLOGIES/APPROACHES:

- Integration with other curricular areas, SPHE, SESE, Art, Religion and Drama.
- Direct Teaching for the discrete, sensitive areas of the programme.
- Discussion, group work, role play, circle time, video education.
- Stories, poems, games, art activities, reflection.
- Guest Speaker(s)
- The age and development of the pupils are considered and arrangements made as necessary.
- Most topics are addressed to the whole class but it may be deemed more suitable at times to teach certain topics separately-eg. Menstruation for girls

When implementing the RSE programme, staff at Saint Michael's National School will endeavor to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times. The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants to 6th Class. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals). The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.

RESOURCES

Careful attention needs to be brought to resources used to teach RSE education, due to the sensitive nature. The RSE manuals, Walk Tall Books, Stay Safe and Busy Bodies are the only resources sanctioned by the Department of Education.

- RSE Resource Materials (DES) – Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it in online/pdf format.
- Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:
 - Stay Safe Programme
 - Busy Bodies DVD
 - Busy Body Booklet for Parents
 - Walk Tall Programme
 - Anatomical Dolls and story books

CONFIDENTIALITY

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow our Child Safeguarding Statement. The Principal is our Designated Liaison Person.

The Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents of Saint Michael's National School support the implementation of the RSE programme. We recognise that our school has a supportive role to that of the home and we have a commitment to ensuring that our teachers have access to in-career development opportunities and access to relevant teaching materials.

EVALUATION

- Teacher observation and questions to assess the children's engagement and interest
- Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games
- Pupil behaviour
- Pupil/Parent feedback

Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The School's RSE programme only acts as a support to parents.

IMPLEMENTATION

This revised policy will be implemented from 2019 and will be reviewed again when the need arises.

RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

Signed: *Niall Sloane*
Chairperson, Board of Management
Signed: *Miriam Smyth*
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date 22nd October 2019
Date: 22nd October 2019

Appendix 1

Class	Language Taught
Junior Infants	<p>“Womb”</p> <p>“Penis”, “vagina” and “urethra”-taught as obvious physical differences between boy/girl</p> <p>“Breast-feeding” may be used in conversations as a means of feeding a baby.</p>
Senior Infants	As for Junior Infants
First Class	<p>“penis” and “urethra” taught in terms of passing urine</p> <p>(See DES Resource Materials p 70-71)</p>
Second Class	As for First class
Third Class	<p>Revision of terms listed above.</p> <p>“Developing foetus”</p>
Fourth Class	<p>“Developing foetus”</p> <p>“Umbilical cord”</p> <p>“Navel”</p>
Fifth Class	<p>“Growth spurt”</p> <p>“menstruation”</p> <p>“development of breasts”</p> <p>“ovaries” “fallopian tubes”</p> <p>“sperm production” “erection”</p> <p>“sexual intercourse” “conception”</p> <p>“puberty”, “human reproduction” and “sexual intercourse” in the context of a loving family. (See DES RSE resource materials for 5th and 6th)</p>
Sixth Class	<p>As in 5th class</p> <p>“pregnancy”</p> <p>Development of baby in womb</p> <p>Contractions</p> <p>Birth of baby</p>

Appendix 2

Dear parents/ guardians,

Relationships and Sexuality education is an integral part of the S.P.H.E programme. The sensitive elements of the Relationships and Sexuality education programme are covered under the Strand Units, 'Growing and Changing' and 'Taking Care of my Body'. We will be completing these Strand Units with all class levels in the forthcoming weeks.

Please find attached the home/school links pages of the Relationships and Sexuality manual which outline the material that will be covered in class and encourage further discussion on the topics at home.

If you have any concerns please make an appointment to see the class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Miriam Smyth

Principal

Appendix 3. The following appropriate language will be taught to the children as part of the specific RSE lessons at each class level

Class Level	Strand/Unit	Content objectives	RSE language to teach at class level	Resource	Teaching the lesson
Junior/Senior Infants	Strand Unit Taking Care of My body	Name parts of the male and female, using appropriate anatomical terms	Junior & Senior Infants Term “Chest” to identify upper body in boys and girls Term “penis” & “vagina” will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy and girl	RSE Teacher BK-SI Theme 7 - My Body Pg. 147-156 (*p150)	“Bathing the Baby Doll” Using anatomically correct male and female dolls with toy bath and bathing equipment i.e. water, soap, brush, cloth, suds etc.
	Strand Unit Growing & Changing	Develop an awareness of human birth that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother’s womb until ready to be born	Term “mammy’s tummy” will be taught as special place where baby grows until born Term “breastfeeding” may be used in as a means of feeding the baby	RSE teacher Bk -SI Theme 7 - Caring for New Life Pg. 137-145	Story: Conor’s New Baby Sister of Arrange visit of Mother & Baby to Class
1 st & 2 nd Class	Strand Unit Taking Care of My Body	Name parts of the male and female, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions* *Refer to function of organs i.e. lungs, stomach, kidneys etc. <u>Note: The function of the male and female reproductive system will not be referenced</u>	1st & 2nd Class: Revise: Term “Chest” to identify upper body in boys and girls Revise: terms “penis” & “vagina” will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy and girl 1 st Class: Introduce term “urine” to explain that which is released by the kidneys when going to the toilet (boys and girls) 2 nd Class: Introduce term: “urethra” in girls and “penis “ in boys for passing urine	RSE Teacher book - SI Theme 7- My Body pg 153 RSE Teacher book - 1 st Theme 7- How My Body Works pg. 70+71 RSE Teacher book -2 nd Theme 7 - When my body needs special care. Pg. 166-167	At the Seaside Picture, with questions from RSE book pg. 153 Game- I Spy to identify Senses + Lesson Food we eat Lesson: How Our Bodies Work
	Strand Unit Growing & Changing	...appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world	2nd Class: teach that the baby is in the womb for 9 months and may be breast fed or bottle fed when born	RSE teacher book-2 nd Theme 6-The Wonder of New Life pg. 153+154	2 nd Class: Minding Babies lesson

**RSE- Specific lesson to be timetables to ensure whole school approach to teaching content.
Parents will be informed in advance of the teaching of the ‘sensitive’ RSE lessons for each class level.**

Class Level	Strand Unit	Content objectives	RSE Language to be taught at class level	Resource	Methodology
3 rd & 4 th Class	Taking Care of My Body Strand Unit Growing and Changing	<p>...understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body</p> <p>...recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty</p> <p>...discuss the stages and sequences of development of the human baby, from conception to birth</p>	<p>3rd Class: introduce terms ‘hormones’ ‘chemicals which move around your body and cells pg. 98</p> <p>4th Class: Introduce term ‘Menstruation’ using amended text pg. 199</p> <p>Note: Menstruation will be explained in detail in 5th Class</p> <p>3rd Class: Revise term ‘Womb’ pg. 73</p> <p>Introduce terms umbilical cord and navel/belly button pg. 73</p> <p>4th Class: Revise term womb Introduce terms egg, lining (womb), ready to be born.</p>	<p>RSE Teacher book -3rd</p> <p>Theme 8- As I grow I change pg. 93-101</p> <p>RSE Teacher book-4th</p> <p>Theme 8- Growing and changing pg. 195-205</p> <p>RSE Teacher book - 3rd</p> <p>Theme 6- Preparing For New Life pg. 69-79</p> <p>RSE Teacher book-4th</p> <p>Theme 6 - The Wonder of New Life pg. 170-181</p> <p>Sequence Activity Cards</p>	<p>Information Lesson:</p> <p>Growing –Up pg. 97-98</p> <p>The Growing and Changes I Have Done. Worksheet pg. 95-96</p> <p>Class Round: Stages of Ages pg. 99</p> <p>RSE Teacher book</p> <p>Information Lesson: Growing up pg. 198-199</p> <p>RSE Teacher book 3rd</p> <p>Information Lesson; Caring for Baby pg. 73</p> <p>RSE Teacher book 4th Class Information lesson:</p> <p>Someone Special pg. 171</p> <p>A New Life Time-Line Pg. 172-178 (Sequencing Activity)</p>
5 th & 6 th Class	Strand Unit Taking Care of My Body	<p>Identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone</p> <p>Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults</p> <p>... understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship</p> <p>Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent</p> <p>Discuss the stages and sequence of the human baby in the womb</p>	<p>5th & 6th Class</p> <p>Language to be taught to boys and girls Puberty, Ovaries-Ovum, Fallopian tube, Womb/Uterus, Cervix, Menstruation Puberty, Penis, Testicle, Scrotum, Sperm, Erection, Wet dreams.</p> <p>5th & 6th Class</p> <p>Language to be taught to boys & girls Sexual Intercourse, Conception, Ovum, Fallopian Tubes</p> <p>NOTE: Discussed in the context of a committed and loving relationship</p> <p>5th Class content- Revise term umbilical pg. 107</p> <p>6th Class Content:</p>	<p>RSE Teacher book -5th</p> <p>Theme 6- My Body Grows and Changes pg. 84-89</p> <p>RSE Teacher book -5th</p> <p>Theme 7- The Wonder of New Life pg. 95-97</p> <p>RSE Teacher book -6th</p> <p>Theme 8- A Baby is a Miracle pg. 212</p> <p>RSE Teacher book - 5th</p> <p>Theme 8- Caring for New Life pg. 106-110</p> <p>RSE teacher book-6th</p> <p>Theme 8- A Baby is a Miracle pg. 213-215</p>	<p>RSE Teacher book-5th</p> <p>Information Lesson : p.84</p> <p>My Body Grows and Changes</p> <p>Busy Bodies DVD with questions From RSE book pg. 91</p> <p>Information Lesson :</p> <p>The Wonder of New Life</p> <p>RSE Teacher book -5th pg. 95-96</p> <p>Story: Michael’s Birth Day with questions RSE bk pg. 97</p> <p>RSE Bk -6th A Baby is a Miracle pg 212</p> <p>Seoil Thomáis RSE Folder</p> <p>RSE Teacher book -*5th</p> <p>*worksheet p. 106</p> <p>*Information lesson: p. 107</p> <p>Story: Michael’s First Year from RSE teacher book pg. 109</p> <p>RSE Teacher book-6th</p> <p>*Let’s Talk: Changes a Baby Brings to Parents p. 213-214</p> <p>*Let’s go shopping: Babies Expenses pg. 215</p>