

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introductory Statement

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) encompasses the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy. In Castletown Girls' School, we seek to promote the overall development of the child which involves the integration of Relationships and Sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development within the context of our Catholic ethos.

RSE is a partnership involving parents, teachers and management. The school has a responsibility to put in place an RSE policy as part of the wider, Social, Personal and Health Education strand of the curriculum.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

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 and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Rationale

The need for this policy arises from our schools obligation to provide for all the needs of the student body and respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues relating to emerging sexuality.

Aims

1. To enhance the personal development, well being and self-esteem of each child.
2. To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive and measured way.
3. To enable the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.
4. To develop and promote a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.

Relationships to School Ethos

The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home.

Outline of Content - Strand Units

- Myself
- Self identity, taking care of my body, growing and changing, safety and protection.
- Myself and Others
- Myself and family, friends and relating to other people.
- Taking Care of My Body

- Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate terminology (Lower and Middle classes).
- Identifying physical changes. Understanding puberty and the Reproductive System (Senior Classes) Growing and Changing
- The stages of development of a baby from conception to birth (Middle Classes).
- Understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed loving relationship (Senior Classes).

Additional Resources

Walk Tall

The Stay Safe programme is taught in each class every second year.

Content

The content as outlined in the RSE programme will be covered as it is provided by the Department of Education, with one exception; In the section The beginning of Puberty, Menstruation will not to be included in the 3rd and 4th class content. It will instead be taught in 5th and 6th class. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents.

Topics covered in Junior Infants and Senior Infants:

- This is me
- Who are you
- We are friends
- People who teach us about keeping safe.
- We have feelings
- New life
- I grow
- Making choices
- Look what I can do
- These are my friends
- This is my family
- I can be safe
- Other people have feelings too
- Caring for new life
- My body
- I grow and change

- Making decisions
- Caring for new life
- My body
- I grow and change
- Making decisions

Topics covered in 1st and 2nd class:

- Making and keeping friends
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life and developing an understanding that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of the circle of life
- Recognizing and expressing feelings
- Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep (link with PE, Healthy Eating Policy and SPHE)
- Expressing opinions and listening to others
- Keeping safe
- Naming bodily parts using correct terminology
- Bodily changes during growth and development.

Topics covered in 3rd and 4th Classes include:

- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping safe
- Expressing feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- Bodily changes
- The beginning of Puberty (Menstruation not to be included)
- The stages and sequence of development of a baby from conception to birth

Topics covered in 5th and 6th Classes include:

- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping safe
- Expressing and coping with changes in feelings
- Family relationships including the responsibilities of being a parent
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Different types of love
- Bodily changes
- Puberty and Menstruation
- Reproduction, sexual intercourse and conception.

Guidelines for Management and Organisation of the RSE Programme

- The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils within a moral and spiritual framework.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education is an on-going process throughout life. A child's first experience of love, of intimacy and of relationships takes place in the family. Parents and the family are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children. We work in a supportive role with the parents of our school, by complementing their role with a school based programme in RSE.
- All the content objectives of the RSE Programme will be covered by the time children leave sixth class.
- Parents will be informed by letter two weeks prior to the teaching of sensitive issues. This will allow time for parents to discuss topics with the child, meet the teacher if required and/or follow the appropriate procedure for opting out of the RSE programme.
- If a visitor or guest speaker is invited to a class to enhance the delivery of the RSE programme, the class teacher will remain present in the class. Parents will be informed of such a visit and the content being addressed in advance of the visit. Parents are encouraged to use this opportunity to discuss these topics with their children beforehand. Parents are advised to inform childminders etc. that the sensitive topics are going to be discussed.
- A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the sensitive issues process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves.
- Parents are obliged to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw the child from the sensitive issues classes. Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child are asked to discuss with the principal how this may be facilitated.
- Teachers do not cover topics such as contraception and same sex relationships. Children who ask questions in class on content outside the designated curriculum are encouraged to discuss the issue with their parents. Parents are informed and asked to talk to their child. Support is offered to the parent in the form of information, support agencies to assist a parent to inform their child in an accurate and suitable way.
- Curriculum books and resource materials are available in the school and parents are welcome to borrow them if desired.
- The school has no responsibility for any information which the pupil may receive outside the direct teaching of the RSE lessons
- Questions arising from curriculum content will be addressed by the teacher or by the visitor in a sensible, sensitive and age-appropriate manner. Questions arising outside of the curriculum will be referred back to the parent(s).

Child Safeguarding The school follows the DES child safeguarding guidelines and has a Child safeguarding policy with Marion McNally as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure; the Deputy DLP, Ms. Murphy will follow the procedures as set out in the Castletown Girls' School Child Protection Policy and in Children First.

Staff Development

The staff will be encouraged to engage in training in:

- The Child House Prevention Programme (Stay Safe)
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (RSE)
- Walk Tall Programme (SMPP).

This will be funded by the Board of management.

Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning comprising of a yearly and weekly/fortnightly scheme of work. A Monthly Report is retained in the Principal's Office. The resource book 'Making the Links' will be used to integrate the three programmes relevant to RSE – Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE.

Evaluation: Positive feedback from all stakeholders Yearly reviews

Timeframe for Review: Next review: October 2023

Enrolment Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____ (Date)

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)