

**St. Louis National School
Rathkenny
Roll Number: 15483H**

**Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy Statement
October 2018
Updated April 2021**

Enacted after consultation between Staff, Parent Representatives, Principal and Board of Management.

In this policy document all references to gender are taken to be inclusive and the term "parent" is taken to include "guardian".

School

St. Louis National School is a Roman Catholic school. It is a two teacher, mixed gender school. The children are taught in multi-grade classes with four classes in each room. The ethos of our school is Roman Catholic and the values we cherish are in line with our ethos. Our key values are Kindness, Happiness, Love of Learning, Creativity, Respect and Inclusivity.

Philosophy

1. We aim to foster relationships, the love of God and the love of every human being. The school seeks to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships.
2. In catholic education we value tolerance and inclusion. The school welcomes pupils of other traditions, faiths and none seeing diversity as offering opportunities for deeper understanding among people holding diverse convictions.
3. A spirit of mutual respect is fostered within the school community. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to respect themselves and to respect others.
4. Parents have the primary role in the social personal health education of their children so their support and involvement will be encouraged as much as possible.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

R.S.E. provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes, which

will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. (p. 5 NCCA curriculum and guidelines for RSE). RSE is the formal approach to educating children in:

Relationships with others – parents, siblings, friends and the community in general

Respect for themselves and others

Physical development – bodily functions and changes, and personal hygiene

Emotional development – maturing in society

Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships

Sexuality in context – part of a loving relationship.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. SPHE and RSE will be taught throughout the school from infants to sixth class in a spiral curriculum, and will be formally timetabled. RSE is also offered informally to pupils through a caring and supportive school atmosphere. It is fostered in positive relationships between home, school and community.

Guidelines for the Management and Organization of RSE in our School

The Curriculum by the 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 and the school RSE policy.

SPHE is planned on a two year cycle and this is outlined in appendix 1 and 2. The sensitive lessons are taught in line with this two year plan. The sensitive lessons are outlined in appendix three.

Due to the multi-grade nature of our school some special arrangements need to be put in place to ensure children are only being taught the lessons which are appropriate to their class level. This will be ensured through the following arrangements:

- All of the junior classes can be taught the sensitive lessons for junior and senior infants together. First and second can remain in the classroom and partake in the lessons as a revision topic.
- The sensitive lessons for first and second class will only be taught separately when junior and senior infants are not in the room. This could take place after 2pm when the infants have gone home.
- All of the senior room can remain in the classroom for the sensitive lessons for third class, they may partake in the lesson as a revision of this topic if deemed appropriate by the class teacher or they may be set alternative tasks to complete independently.

- The children from 4th, 5th and 6th class can remain in the classroom for the sensitive lessons for 4th class, they may partake in the lesson as a revision of this topic if deemed appropriate by the class teacher or they may be set alternative tasks to complete independently. These lessons can take place after 2 pm and the third class can join the 1st and 2nd classes in their room for the duration of these lessons.
- The deployment of the SE teacher (when available) can also be used to facilitate 4th receiving the lessons independently, if deemed more appropriate by Principal.
- In order to ensure that the children in 5th and 6th class receive adequate time to explore the content of their sensitive lessons which have the most content of all of the class levels, these lessons will be delivered to 5th and 6th class only. This will be facilitated through the deployment of the SET teacher (when available) or through using a principal release day to engage a substitute teacher.
- If a SET teacher is not available to assist with the management of RSE lessons, the lessons will be taught after 2pm and the senior class teacher will teach the sensitive lesson to the class in question and the remaining classes will be supervised in the junior room.
- Parents will be notified in advance and an outline of the material to be covered will be provided to parents.
- Special consideration will be taken to ensure the needs of children with Special Education Needs are met. Taking into account the pupil's social, emotional development instruction will be based on individual needs where possible and working in consultation with the student's parents.

Parental Involvement

- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE curriculum including all sensitive aspects. Parents will be informed in advance of the sensitive lessons with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level. This letter will be similar to the Stay Safe letter sent out, see appendix four.
- The letter will be issued in advance giving the parents an opportunity to meet with the relevant class teachers if they so wish to discuss or clarify what is covered and also providing parents with an opportunity to prepare their children .
- The letter will explain where the parents can access the curriculum online https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/462570f8-27cc-4f5b-a13e-d1e2de8c18d2/PSEC06_SPHE_curriculum.pdf and the RSE material online

<https://www.pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/RSE> so they can become informed of the programme content.

- The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Following discussion with the principal and class teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing, the school will keep this on the child's file.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive lessons the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear from other children following the teaching of the lessons and in the school yard.

Language and Terminology

We will give the children the correct and appropriate terminology as laid down in the RSE programme. Specific terminology is laid out in appendix three and as laid out in The Stay Safe programme for the relevant class level.

Answering Questions

From the outset we will ask the children to be responsible about the information they are being given and we thus hope to discourage playground gossip.

Questions arising from the curriculum will be addressed by the teacher in a sensible, sensitive and age appropriate manner. If the question is factual and within the programme as laid out in the RSE programme for each class then the teacher will answer it.

If the question cannot be answered, the teacher will explain that more information will be given as part of the following year's programme or the teacher will recommend to the child to ask their parents at home.

A question box into which pupils can put their questions can be used especially in the older classes to help filter questions that are presented to the class.

If issues arise which indicate that any child may be at risk of harm the teacher will notify the Designated Liason person (Laura Marry – Principal) in line with the school Child Protection Statement.

Policies and Programmes that support RSE:

Policies/Programmes:

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|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ✚ Code of Behaviour | ✚ Anti-bullying Policy |
| ✚ Admissions Statement | ✚ Healthy Eating Policy |
| ✚ Health and Safety Policy | ✚ SPHE |
| | ✚ Stay Safe Policy Statement |

Homework:

RSE homework, if prescribed will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class.

Resources

- RSE Manuals
- Walk Tall Books
- Stay Safe Programme
- Busy Bodies DVD, Booklet and website
- Anatomical Dolls

Continuous Professional Development

All teachers are encouraged to engage in any relevant training courses that become available and the PDST provide up to date refresher courses if needed.

Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board of Management. Parents and Staff will be informed of any amendments made and this policy will be placed on our school website.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2018 and updated by the Board of Management in 2021.

Signed:

Gerry Boyle
Chairperson

Date: 13.4.21