


Ovens National School

*Relationships and
Sexuality
Education*



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introductory Statement & Rationale

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Ovens N.S. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE.

School Philosophy/Ethos

Ovens N.S. is a mixed school serving a rural area under the trusteeship of the Bishop of Cork & Ross. The ethos of Ovens N.S. can be seen in the everyday dealings that all those who work in the school have with each other. It is manifested in the respect and consideration shown by teachers to pupils and vice versa. We are proud of the children who are part of our school and hope they go on to become fulfilled adults. Our school motto is "Treat others as you would like them to treat you".

Definition of RSE

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. It is an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education and is taught in this context. RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development, about their friendships and relationships with others. This work is based on developing a good self-image and self-esteem and providing them with appropriate information.

RSE in the context of our SPHE programme

SPHE is a subject on the school curriculum that 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. It is taught from Junior Infants up to 6th class. RSE forms part of this programme. It is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner through the child's primary school years. SPHE aims to develop the child's emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. The content of the school's SPHE programme covers a wide range of topics such as healthy eating, alcohol and drug awareness, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as RSE.

Including RSE in the Curriculum

RSE is facilitated in the following ways

- in the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere

- in the context of an effective code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy
- as part of religious education
- as part of timetabled SPHE
- on an integrated cross curricular basis

Aims of our RSE programme

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- 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 enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our school:

Content

We recognise that the 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 of the work of the home in this area. The content objectives covered will be taught as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills in the SPHE Curriculum 1999.

- RSE will be taught in all classes
- The SPHE/RSE curriculum will be of a spiral nature and all content objectives will be covered by the time children leave 6th class
- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner.
- All resources used in the teaching of the programme will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and in the spirit of this policy
- RSE will be delivered to the 5th and 6th class boys and girls (separately) by two teachers on staff. Parents of these pupils will be invited to view the content of these lessons prior to them being taught

- For an outline of the RSE programme - see Appendix
- **School Policies and Curricular Plans which support our RSE**

Traditionally, we are a child-centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our curricular planning and policy making processes.

- Grow in Love
- SPHE Curriculum
- Stay Safe Programme
- School's Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Anti –Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- AUP Policy
- Administration of Medicine Policy

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.

Timetabling

One half hour period per week is timetabled for each class for SPHE. RSE will be included in the programme taught during this time. It is envisaged that some aspects of RSE (including the sensitive issues, will be taught through a number of core periods while some material may be taught in a cross curricular manner). The “sensitive issues” of RSE will be taught in each classroom during the Second Term or Third Term.

Parental Involvement

RSE is an ongoing process throughout life. Parents are acknowledged primary educators of their children and the school works in partnership with them in a supportive role. Each year prior to implementation of the RSE programme parents will be informed when the teacher will begin to teach the programme. The curriculum books and resource materials are available online on www.pdst.ie and parents are welcome to view these if desired.

Withdrawal from RSE

Since RSE is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education and Skills it should be inclusive. However, a parent's right to withdraw a pupil from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be respected on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education. Parents are obliged to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw the child from the classes based on sensitive issues. The school cannot be responsible for any information which a child may receive outside the direct teaching of RSE lessons.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Consultation with parents of pupils with SEN may be required. If requested by parents of pupils with SEN, the school will facilitate the teaching of the lessons on 'sensitive issues' on another occasion individually or in a small group setting. A variety of teaching methodologies may be required for some children.

Confidentiality and Child Protection

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, the school will follow the Department of Education and Skills child protection guidelines and guidelines as set out in "Children First".

Resources

Stay Safe Programme

RSE Manuals

Busy Bodies

Making the Links

Other resource material as deemed appropriate by class teachers in consultation with the Principal

Provision for Ongoing Support

For parents

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum if they wish
- There will be contact with parents prior to and during the teaching of lessons involving "sensitive issues". Copies of the 'Busy Bodies' booklets will be available to parents on request.

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For teachers

- The Board of Management will support in-career development in the area of SPHE/RSE as opportunities arise

Implementation

This policy was first implemented during school year 2011/2012.

Review

This policy was reviewed in February 2021.

Signed:  _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Appendix

Content of the R.S.E. Programme

Infants, First & Second Class

Myself

I am unique

My Body

As I grow I change

New Life

Keeping Safe

Feelings and Emotions

Making Decisions

Myself and others:

Myself and My family

Myself and My friends

Special people in my life

Relating to others

Myself

Third & Fourth Class

Accepting myself

Physical Development

Growing and Changing

Birth and New Life

Feelings and Emotions

Personal Hygiene

Personal Safety

Making Decisions

Myself and others:

Roles and responsibilities in families

Friendship

Portrayal of sexuality and relationships

Roles of males and females in society

Relating to others

Fifth and Sixth Class

Myself

Accepting myself

Physical Development

Becoming an Adult

Parenthood

Feelings and Emotions

Personal Hygiene

Personal Safety

Making Decisions

Myself and others

Changing relationships in families and friendships

Group affiliation and loyalty

Portrayal of males and females in society

Relating to others

R.S.E.

Junior Infants

The programme is very much integrated with other areas of the curriculum – SESE, Walk Tall, Alive O.

- 1 Themes of me, my friends & my family are explored.
- 2 Personal Safety – people who teach us about keeping safe. Safety at home, in school, on the road...
- 3 Feelings – happy, sad, excited, lonely...

Explore & discuss feelings

- 4 New life – growing & changing – Discuss new life – in spring, new animals, new plants, arrival of a new baby.
Discussion on new babies – where the baby is before it's born – womb. Wonder of new life.

5 Discussion on growing – Who is tallest at home etc. As you grow you change. You began life as a seed in your mother's womb pg 82 (RSE Book). Discuss.

R.S.E.

Senior Infants

R.S.E. integrates with topics found in Alive O (Religion), SESE (Environmental studies).

1. Feeding the baby – milk – where it comes from (Baby Jesus, babies at home, animals in spring etc.)
2. My Body – doll, story, picture of boy/girl used (partially clothed)

Introduction (a) discussion on spring seed plant new life, eggs hatching tadpoles from spawn (b) pictorial representation.

Terms: Teach words : womb, penis, vagina and **exclude** terms urethra, vulva

Reinforcement (Bathtime, pool time)

- (a) Bathing doll discuss difference between baby boy/girl
- (b) At beach which parts cant you see?

R.S.E.

First and Second Class

A. Knowing about my body

The words penis and vagina to be taught.

The words vulva and urethra **not taught**.

B. Growing means change

First class – as in the book. Deals with responsibilities to oneself and others.

Second class – as in book. Deals with physical growth and growth in relationships.

C. The wonder of new life

First class – deals with the wonder of new life in the world of nature.

Second class – deals with the wonder of new babies, their needs and growth.

D. Personal Safety

First Class & Second Class – to develop in the children the strategies for keeping safe and to identify possible danger.

R.S.E.

3rd & 4th Classes

Sensitive areas:

Puberty(physical) – not mentioned in 3rd
– 4th girls only

"conception to birth"

- taken as not inc. sexual intercourse.
- birth – how specific – from where?

4th class

– boys growth :– genital – irrelevant (could cause more problems).

Menstruation – girls only

Hair growth – general

[Recommended letter to parents – very well done but must be changed in some areas re above – pg 204, 205 R.S.E.]

*"Catch-up" effort – 3rd body parts - whole class
– 4th separate

"birth-canal" preferred to "vagina"

R.S.E.

5th Class

Before classes begin photocopy letter pg 94 and send to all parents.

Lesson 1

(1) Divide into groups (4 children approx per group)

Brainstorm

What is puberty?

Name body parts (boys and girls)

Are the changes the same for boys and girls? *Discuss*

(photocopy pg 85 & 88, which details body changes.

Emphasise that each child "develops" at a different age (10 – 15 yrs)

Lesson 2

Use video (Bounty) to revise lesson 1. (linkage with good nutrition)

Questions from the children. Details on "period" for girls' class.

Lesson 3

Wonder of New Life

Use primed worksheet pg 85, 87 on one sheet

Teach vocabulary

Read worksheet

Question and Discussion

Lesson 4

- (a) Revision
- (b) Video (cartoon if suitable)
- (c) Discussion

R.S.E. 6th class

Lesson 1

Introduction:

- a) Importance of being mature about lessons and not telling younger classes what content of lessons is. Also telling the children not to show literature to any other class.

- b) You are 12/13 years old and have gone through many changes so far since you were born – elicit examples such as grown hair, teeth, talking, walking, running etc.... Not all people are as fortunate as ourselves (discuss).
- c) Introduce R.S.E. – language that will be used e.g. penis, vagina and not to be embarrassed as these are just words.

Lesson:

- 1) Physical changes in boys (see handout)
- 2) Physical changes in girls (see handout)
- 3) Puberty (see “Hormones” sheet)
- 4) “Growing Up” D.V.D. to show as far as conception.
- 5) “Michael’s Birth day” handout to either read in class or give to them going home.
- 6) Questions box – drop any questions in to box and they’ll be answered the next day (if on our R.S.E. programme).

Lesson 2

- 1) Answer questions from “question box”.
- 2) Revision through handouts for “Female Development” and “Male Development”.
- 3) Conception
 - a) Use sheets “from conception to birth”.
 - b) Show rest of D.V.D.
- 4) Questions in question box.
- 5) Extra work (if time)
 - a) Naming body Parts handout
 - b) Conception handout
- 6) Answer any questions included in question box or other.