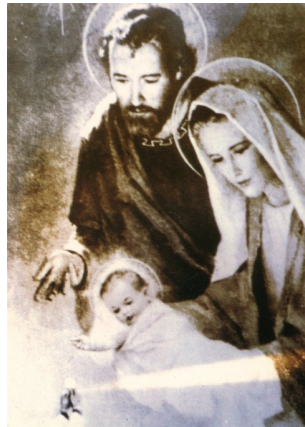




Our Lady Queen of Peace P.S

RSE Policy 2017



Our School is a Rights Respecting school and Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) underlines our RSE Policy:

“Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity.” A28

“Governments must protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation”. A34

Ratified at Board of Governors on 27th September 2017

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« Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues »

- Guidance for Primary Schools CCEA

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Catholic, co-educational school seeking to promote, throughout the school community, a caring ethos.

Through the development of positive and secure relationships, within and outside the classroom, we create the opportunity for our children to thrive in a rich and varied environment.

In achieving this we recognise that each child is a valued and unique member of God's community.

SCHOOL AIMS

In our loving Catholic ethos we aim,

- To promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of our pupils.
- To give each pupil an awareness of his/her talents, skills and abilities.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to achieve success in a variety of contexts, promoting positive self-esteem and self-image.
- To create a love of learning, a knowledge of how to learn, and the motivation to produce his/her best work.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the needs of each pupil at his/her stage of development.
- To develop an attitude which leads to self-discipline, independence, courtesy, good manners and respect for everyone.
- To develop a wider understanding of the wider world in which we live, of the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations, and a tolerance of other religions and ways of life.
- To foster and develop close relationships between home, school and community.

Rationale

1. Given the current media climate and culture where children have the opportunity to be misinformed about sexuality RSE has been introduced. Through RSE & other relevant curriculum areas, we endeavor to equip, inform and prepare children for life in a moral and spiritual context thus enabling them to make positive responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives.
2. RSE is a statutory element of the Revised Curriculum relating directly to PD&MU which builds, in a developmentally appropriate way, on children's existing knowledge and experience of their bodies, relationships and the world around them.
3. Ethos refers to the fundamental purpose and reason for being of school. The ethos is essentially rooted in Christ and the Gospel. The Catholic ethos of our Catholic school is child-centred and aims at the growth of the full potential of the human person, satisfies what is being requested by the RSE guidelines, and not only satisfies but is the means by which the guidelines are interpreted.
4. Having sought guidance from CCEA and Diocesan Advisers the RE co-ordinators wrote a draft policy. Following consultation with staff, the Board of Governors and parents, this policy was ratified & now stands as a legally binding document. A number of agreements were made
 - Parents will be informed of the content of the programme/lessons prior to learning each school year.
 - Puberty lessons will be confined to Primary 7 classes
 - Any outside agencies employed to assist in the delivery of the RSE programme must have the approval of the School Chaplain/ Board of Governors.

Definitions

1. As the title suggests there is an intricate entwining between relationships and sexuality which is a lifelong process. This process involves the whole person in terms of belief, corresponding values and relationships in the personal and social domain. Skills, attitudes, and parental influence are crucial. Sexuality impacts on the spiritual, social, psychological and cultural aspects of the human person. The gift of sexuality shapes and crafts relationships through qualities of love, respect and future new life.
2. Morals are essentially linked with behavior and what we actually do. It also directly connected with experience and faith.
3. Values are the characteristics of good moral behavior eg. respect for self, honesty

Aims

1. To help young people recognize their worth & dignity as children of God
2. To help young people appreciate their uniqueness & full potential as human beings A31
3. To enable young people to appreciate sexuality as a gift from God
4. To foster the growth of values which impact on moral behavior A30
5. To develop a respect for difference, gender and race A14

6. To encourage and promote a deep respect for woman and man within the context of school among staff, pupils and parents
7. To understand the stage of development from infancy to puberty

Specific Issues

a) The Status of Family Life, Marriage and Cohabiting

The status of family life and marriage remain at the centre of the RSE policy, particularly as it taught through RE. There is also inherent sensitivity to the social changes and family make-up of today.

b) The Sacredness of Life

Life from the moment of conception is sacred and this tenant of belief is reflected in RSE and based upon moral and spiritual principles, in no way can life be compromised.

c) Confidentiality

Children cannot be guaranteed confidentiality as disclosures would have to be reported in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy. Each teacher should be aware of the steps to follow in the case of such an event. However children do have a right to privacy in that any questions/comments not of a Child Protection nature are kept confidential.

Teachers also have a right to privacy and are under no obligation to answer specific questions about their own personal lives.

d) Homosexuality

Within the primary school context children are aware of the language in this area. Rather than delving into what is essentially a post-primary issue it may be necessary to look at issues related in the context of name-calling and bullying.

There should be prevention of labelling or cataloguing pupils.

e) Withdrawal from Class

All parents have the right to withdraw their child from RE and RSE lessons. It is our policy that parents are given an overview of The Wonder of My Being programme prior to beginning any work in class, and it is then the parent's responsibility to inform the class teacher that they want their child withdrawn from lessons. The RE co-ordinator should be given the names of any such pupils. This may cause logistical problems as the child/children may have to go to another class for the duration of the lesson.

f) How Much Detail Do You Teach?

Emotional and pubertal changes are caused by hormonal activity. Children can begin to view themselves in an adult world but are still very much children. As a school we need to address these issues in a comfortable manner with effective resources and information. As a Catholic school we shall do this by following The Wonder of My Being programme.

g) Quantity of the Programme

The Wonder of My Being programme is set within and can only be taught as a part of RE. It is intrinsically linked with the liturgical year and issues are dealt with in a moral and spiritual framework. Time factor is limited given other areas of the curriculum cover much of the work required. In Primary 6 & 7 there is a more concentrated time factor of approximately 3-4 weeks in the context of RE.

h) Awkward Questions

- Requires the professionalism of the teacher, you know your class best
- Reference to parents
- Use of a question box

i) Language & Terminology

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate appropriately and confidently about themselves, their sexuality and relationships. In acquiring appropriate vocabulary children obtain a means by which to discuss these issues. The use of proper terms for parts of the body and bodily functions should be used at the earliest age so these terms are given acceptability. Embarrassment is reduced and children become more comfortable with these words and their meaning. Having language which is socially acceptable and unambiguous in RSE is especially important because it is an area which has long been fraught with misunderstanding, unease and anxiety.

j) Use of the expertise of Agencies and Individuals

We may wish to make use of their expertise and skills of education & healthcare professionals. These activities which the agency or individual undertake should complement the on-going RSE curriculum. Pupils should be prepared for the visit, a suitable room allocated, the session should be uninterrupted and follow-up activities undertaken by the class teacher.

Questions should be asked

- Does the agency/individual have a specified Child Protection policy?
- Are all persons cleared?
- Are resources to be used appropriate?
- Has the school's RSE policy been read & will it be adhered to?
- Has clearance been sought from BOG?

