

## **St Patrick's National School**

### **R.S.E. Policy**

#### **▪ Introductory Statement & Rationale**

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St. Patrick's NS. It was initially developed by St Patrick's NS R.S.E. Policy Committee which included Principal, Mary Farrell and Marion Grimes, RSE coordinator, and Fiona Holloway from the Parents Association. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE. This policy is been reviewed in early 2019 and amended as appropriate.

Sept 2022: Policy has been reviewed by RSE Committee (Ms Farrell, Ms Duffy, PA Chairperson)

#### **▪ School Philosophy**

St Patrick's NS is a Catholic school and therefore all policies developed are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the ethos of the school. The ethos of the school is characterised by the following:

- *Sensitive to reality of our children's lives in a changing world*
- *Mutual respect between all partners in education*
- *Child-centred*
- *Aims to ensure each child reaches full potential in the holistic sense*
- *Hopes that children are equipped with high self-esteem to enable them to go to live happy and fulfilled lives*

#### **▪ Definition of RSE**

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way (p.4 Going Forward Together Parents Information Booklet)

#### **▪ Relationship of RSE to SPHE**

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) 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. (p. 5 NCCA interim curriculum and guidelines for RSE)

- **Current Provision for SPHE/RSE:** Included in the school curriculum in St Patrick's N.S. is:
  - Religious Education: Grow in Love
  - Walk Tall
  - Stay Safe
  - Fun Friends
  - Friends for Life
  - Use of the RSE Manual
  - Possibility of In-school talk for 5<sup>th</sup> class girls.
  - Outside speaker addresses: Firemen, Community Guard, Cyber-bullying expert, Substance Abuse speaker

- **Aims of our RSE programme**
  - *To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships*
  - *To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to 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**
  - Curriculum Matters:
  - Curriculum Content –The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught in Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. *It will be taught by the teaching staff for the most part. However, an outside speaker will address the “sexually sensitive issues” i.e. puberty, stages of baby in the womb, reproductive system, conception, birth and sexual intercourse, at 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class every second year. The talk will be scheduled for the last term of the year where possible. Where a child is unable to attend an appropriate book will be offered to the parents eg “Busy Bodies booklet from HSE”. Parents will be notified by email prior to this speaker coming to the school.*
  - A brief information talk may be given in 5<sup>th</sup> class (girls only) by a female teacher. This depends on the circumstances of the particular group. Parents will be advised in advance. This would usually happen during the first term of the school year every year.
  - All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the policy.
  - When an outside speaker is used, the class teacher is responsible for making them aware of school policy and there will be a staff representative present.

- Organisational Matters:
- If children are withdrawn from the RSE talk, they will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom.
- With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom.
- Any teacher has the right to opt-out from teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is responsibility of Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be taught to the children by another teacher or an outside speaker.
- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.
  
- Dealing with Questions:  
All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and policy. Any questions asked by the children that are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature to themselves or discloses personal information.

▪ **Provision for Ongoing Support**

- Parents welcome to view curriculum if they wish
- Contact will be made with parents prior to the address by the outside speaker.
- Teachers will contact parents via email should any sensitive issues be addressed as part of stay safe or any other programme.

▪ **Review**

- This policy will be reviewed after the initial 12<sup>th</sup> month period has passed by the RSE Policy Committee, and every two years thereafter. This policy will also be reviewed should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made by the RSE Policy Committee.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

7/9/22

  
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## Appendix 1

As part of the RSE curriculum, the following areas are considered to be part of the “sensitive topics”:

**First and Senior Infants:** Vagina/penis: Naming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms

**First and second class:** Introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra. Naming as above and identify some of the functions

**Third and fourth class:** Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby in the womb. Umbilical cord.

Any questions as to how the baby got there cannot be answered by the teacher

**Fifth and sixth class:** Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty. Reproductive system of male/female adults. Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a committed relationship.