



Scoil Mocheallóg

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement:

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. The process was initiated in when the policy committee (steering committee of 6 people was charged with setting parameters for the organisation and management of RSE in the school.

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:

- To enhance the personal development, well being and self-esteem of each child
- To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive and measured way
- To enable the child develop healthy friendships and relationships

Relationships to School Ethos:

The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. To this end parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the RSE policy formation, through a series of meetings, full representation on the steering committee and the ratification of the finished product. Parents also have the right to withhold their children from participating in RSE classes.

Curriculum Implementation

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 (Junior and Lower 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).

Teachers do not cover topics such as contraception and same sex friendships. Children who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum are talked to individually and discreetly. Parents are usually informed and asked to talk to their child.

Methodology

Circle time is used extensively in Junior Classes to build confidence and address fears. Boys and girls are taught together in all classes. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents. The Alive O 8 resource materials are used extensively in senior classes.

The Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes:

The Stay Safe programme is taught in 2nd and in 5th class. Aspects of the programme such as bullying are revised in all classes. Guest speakers from Accord deliver a full day programme to senior classes every year, where issues such as physical and emotional development, bodily changes and sexual awakening are explored. The cost of the lectures is borne by the BoM.

Topics covered up to 2nd class include;

- Keeping safe
- Naming bodily parts using correct terminology
- Bodily changes during growth and development
- Making and keeping friends
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life
- Recognizing and expressing feelings
- Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep (link with P.E. Healthy Eating Policy and S.P.H.E.)
- Expressing opinions and listening to others

Topics covered from 3rd to 6th Classes include;

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping safe
- Expressing feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- Reproduction, conception (5th and 6th Classes)

Guidelines for Management:

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school R.S.E. programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. 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. Teachers are present at all times when guest speakers are visiting a class.

Child Protection:

The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a Child Protection Policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure; the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

Teacher Choice/Staff Development:

The teacher's right to choose is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the programme or require additional resources, a suitable speaker will be employed by the BoM. The teacher may need to plan the specific material to be covered and should be present during the talk.

The staff has availed of training in;

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

The PCSP whole school plan is available on a shared resource file in both the Secretaries Office and the Principals Office. Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning, comprising of a yearly and fortnightly scheme of work. A Cúntas Miosúil is retained in the Principal's Office.

School/Community Links:

The school is involved in;

- Athletics and Basketball inter - school competitions
- Cumann na mBunscoil – football, hurling and camogie
- Choir for First Communion and choir for Confirmation every second year
- Pioneer Singing and Quiz Competition
- Credit Union colouring competition
- Carol Service
- Mini concerts for parents/guardians

Evaluation:

- Teacher observation
- Inventory of what needs to be changed
- Ensuring all strands are covered
- Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation
- Community feedback

Roles and Responsibilities:

The school community of BoM, staff, pupils and parents play a key role in the formulation and implementation of the plan.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the BoM in 2003, reviewed in 2009 and 2011

Implementation:

Implementation by the teaching staff and Principal.

Review:

This policy was reviewed in 2005 and will be when necessary but in 2013

Signature _____ **Date** _____