

RSE POLICY

■ Introductory Statement

A committee was formed to review both the teaching of RSE in the school and the existing policy. Our original policy was formulated after the following initiatives were undertaken

- *Teacher In-service:* 3 days during 1998/99
- *Chairpersons seminar:* Attended during 1998/99
- *Parents seminar/parent information evening:* December 1999
- *Policy committee formed:*
 - 6 members consisting of
 - 2 members of the Board of Management
 - 2 parents
 - 2 teachers
- *Policy seminar attended by Committee in May 1999*
- *Policy development undertaken*
 - The RSE committee studied relevant documents
 - Draft school policy statement was compiled
 - Draft policy was circulated to all parents
 - Cognisance was taken of all responses received from parents
 - The draft policy was approved by the Board of Management and circulated to parents and teachers
 - The committee decided to present an overview of content of the RSE programme to all parents (*See Appendix 1*)
 - All RSE materials were made available for viewing by parents in the GP room

■ Rationale

It was decided to focus on this area to review educational provision in the sexuality area. Since the original policy was formulated, an Education Act has been passed and the Revised Curriculum has been introduced. Both of these developments have made the teaching of RSE mandatory in all schools. Since the original policy was formulated a number of new families have joined the school.

■ Definition of RSE

Relationships and sexuality education is a life long process of acquiring knowledge and understanding, of developing attitudes, beliefs and values, about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media.

■ Relationship of RSE to SPHE

The new curriculum for Primary schools requires each school to offer a programme of Social, Personal & Health Education. It is within this context that RSE should be taught. It forms one of the four strands within the SPHE programme

Current provision of RSE

RSE is currently provided in the school both (a) formally and (b) informally.

- (a) Relationships education is emphasised in the Alive O series which forms the basis of the Religion programme in the school (eg):
- Alive O 1 – T. 1 L 9 Belonging
 - Alive O 2 – T. 1 L 10 They care for me
 - Alive O 3 – T. 1 L 1 We Begin Together
 - Alive O 4 – T. 1 L 3 School Spirit
 - Alive O 5 – T.3 L 7 The Early Christian Community
 - Alive O 6 - T. 1 L 11 Loving My Neighbour
 - Alive O 7 – T. 2 L 5 Christian Love
 - Alive O 8 – T. 3 L 3 Kingdom Bodies
- (b) Respect for others and their sexuality is emphasised in all relationships within the school.
- Ex. 1. Teachers towards children
 - Ex. 2. Teachers towards teachers
 - Ex. 3. Children towards teachers
 - Ex. 4. Children towards children

This is facilitated by the fact that Kilchreest School is a mixed school and has a mixed staff.

■ Relationship to School Vision / Mission Statement

Our school philosophy reflects the values of the school population of parents, pupils, teachers and management. The Catholic ethos of our school is in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic church, which is based on the gospel of Jesus. We have included in our policy a teaching sequence within the context of a moral and spiritual framework consistent with the values and ethos of the school. (*See Appendix 2*)

■ Aims

1. To enhance the personal development, self esteem and well being of the child.
2. To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
3. To foster an understanding of, and healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
4. To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

■ Guidelines (*content of policy*)

Review of existing policy:

- The relationships part of the programme was being taught in all classes but the sexuality area was just being covered by a speaker for fifth & sixth class every second year
- The objectives from the SPHE programme are being used.

Issues to consider when writing revised RSE policy:

Partnership:

- Two teachers, two members of the BOM and two representatives from the Parents Council will be elected onto a new committee.
- The committee will discuss the policy and a draft policy will be circulated to all parents and comments/ submissions invited.

Puberty and Sensitive areas

- See *Appendix 3* in relation to the content objectives as they apply to each class.
- Boys and girls will not be separated to teach specific issues re puberty.
- Both boys and girls will be made aware of each others gender issues.
- The staff have decided to block teach the sensitive areas from first to fourth in term two every second year. In fifth & sixth class the sensitive areas are instructed by an outside speaker using the busy bodies programme every 2nd year .

Home-school links:

- The home-school link page will be sent home to parents a day or two before the teaching of the sensitive areas, to inform parents about the aims and content of the upcoming lessons.

Dealing with questions:

- Cognisance will be taken by the class teacher of the varying maturity of children in each class.
- A question box will be used and only questions based on what teachers have taught and within the content objectives will be addressed.
- They may be encouraged to talk to their parents about various issues.

Confidentiality:

- Ground rules will be established prior to discussion.
- Disclosures will be dealt with in line with the Children First Guidelines.

Parents right to choose:

- Consent will be sought from parents at enrolment and reminder letters will be issued to all parents. The onus will be on the parents to inform the school if they do not wish their child to be taught the sensitive issues in the RSE programme.
- Parents will be given a RSE policy in the enrolment pack.
- Arrangements will be made for supervision/ collection of child from school with any parents who wish to withdraw their children from the sensitive lessons.

Teachers right to choose:

- Teachers will be given the right to choose and if a teacher is unwilling to teach RSE, provision will be made by another teacher.

Guest speakers:

- The speaker will receive a copy of the policy prior to visit and a teacher will be present during the lesson.
- The guest speaker will address the fifth & sixth class children in one afternoon

Assessment of materials/videos etc.

- Only recommended videos and books will be used. The RSE manuals and the Busy Bodies DVD will be used.
- It has been decided by the RSE committee that the Busy Bodies DVD will only be used in 6th class as a teaching aid. The Busy Body DVD was assessed by the committee and is highly recommended by them. **Parents can obtain a copy, free of charge, from the HSE at 021-4921641**

■ Success Criteria

It is hoped that the policy will have a positive effect on the teaching and learning of RSE in the school. It is also hoped that it will ensure an effective and coherent approach in the organisation of RSE. The success of the policy will be judged according to the following criteria.

- Feedback from parents and Parents Council.
- Feedback by pupils.
- Feedback from teachers.
- WSE reports.

■ Timeframe for Implementation

This policy will begin to be implemented in September 14.

The principal will co-ordinate the policy and take feedback from staff as the year progresses.

■ Timeframe for Review

This policy will be reviewed in June '08.

■ Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at meeting on the _____

Appendix 3

Kilchreest N. S.

Strand Units and Objectives covering RSE and Stay Safe Material.

Infants:

Strand Unit: Knowing about my body:

- Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms (e.g. penis, vagina), and identify some of their functions (e.g. going to the toilet).

Strand Unit: Personal Safety:

- Identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk.

1st and 2nd:

Strand Unit: Knowing about my body:

- Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms (e.g. Penis, vagina), and identify some of the functions (e.g. going to the toilet).

Strand Unit: Personal Safety:

- Recognise and explore situations where children feel safe and where personal safety might be at risk.

3rd & 4th :

Strand Unit: Knowing about my body:

- Realize the importance of caring for and treating his/her own body, and that of others, with dignity and respect.
- Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body during puberty (e.g. menstruation, increase in body hair, voice change, body shape, mood changes, skin changes)
- Realize that these changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural.

Strand Unit: As I grow, I change:

- Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty.

Strand Unit: Birth and New Life:

- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human body, from conception to birth.

Strand Unit: Personal Safety:

- Identify people, places and situations that may threaten personal safety.

5th & 6th:

Strand Unit: Knowing my own body:

- Recognise the importance of treating his/her body and that of others with dignity and respect
- Identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone
- Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults.

Strand Unit: As I grow, I change:

- Explore patterns of development and growth, comparing present development with that of earlier stages: Physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

Strand Unit: Birth and new life:

- Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within a context of a committed, loving relationship
- Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent.

Strand Unit: Personal Safety:

- Identify situations and places that may threaten personal safety.

Strand Unit: Personal Hygiene:

- Become aware of some communicable diseases and infections and their long-term consequences: *chickenpox, rubella, mumps, infection by HIV 9through blood) may lead to AIDS*
- Understand how diseases and infections are spread: *in air, in body fluids (blood) through direct contact.*

Appendix 1

Overview of Content for Infant, First & Second Classes

	Infant Classes	First & Second Classes
Strands	Strand Units	Strand Units
Myself	• I am unique Self –esteem Developing and expressing self-confidence • My Body • As I grow I change • New Life • Keeping Safe • Feelings and Emotions • Making decisions	• I am Unique Self –esteem Developing and expressing self-confidence • 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 <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving conflict</i>	• Myself and my family • Myself and my friends • Other people • Relating to others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving conflict</i>

Overview of Content for 3rd to 6th Classes

	Third & Fourth Classes	5 th and sixth Classes
Strands	Strand Units	Strand Units
Myself	• Accepting myself Self-esteem Developing & expressing self-confidence • Physical development • Growing and changing • Birth and new life • Feelings and emotions • Personal Hygiene • Personal safety Identifying and assessing risks Developing safety strategies • Making decisions	• Accepting myself Self-esteem Developing and expressing self-confidence • Physical development • Becoming an adult • Parenthood • Feelings and Emotions • Personal Hygiene • Personal Safety Identifying and assessing risks Developing safety strategies • Making Decisions
Myself and Others	• Roles and responsibilities • Friendship • Portrayal of sexuality and relationships • Roles of males and females in society • Relating to Others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving conflict</i>	• Changing relationships in families and friendships • Group affiliation and loyalty • Portrayal of sexuality and relationships • Roles of males and females in society • Relating to others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving conflict</i>

Appendix 2

A teaching sequence for Primary School Taught in the Context of a Moral and Spiritual Framework Consistent with the Value and Ethos of the School

Themes	Junior & Senior Infants	1 st & 2 nd Classes	3 rd & 4 th Classes	5 th & 6 th Classes
Human Growth & Development	-People who help me grow and care for myself -I'm Growing: physical and emotional growth -Things I can do: development of abilities and interests -Language of growth: naming the external parts of the body -The beginning of life – me, animals and plants	-Factors which help me grow and take care of myself -I'm growing: new skills and abilities -Size me up: physical growth and individual difference -My body parts: the function of different internal parts of my body -New life.	-Keeping Healthy: exercise, diet, immune system -Changes in my own body and in those of others -Naming, grouping and functions of body parts -Growing: new roles and responsibilities -How babies begin and are born	-What helps and harms my body -Body changes in me and in others and why they are happening -Conception to birth and beyond -Humans and how they reproduce -Differences and similarities: rates of growth and development
Human Sexuality	- I am unique: -Myself/my body -We are different -People in my life, what I do for them and what they do for me -The wonder of my world	- Self-image: How I see myself -Ideals and role models: people I look up to -What I like or don't like about other people -Appreciation of others and their gifts -the wonder of human life	- Accepting my Body -Differences between boys and girls -Varied lifestyles in the class and community and how we feel about the differences -Leisure time and how we spend it -Messages about sexuality from the world around us.	-Self-concept and self-esteem: Myself and others -Males and Females: differences in the sexes -Sexuality: what it is and what words describe it -Images of sexuality from the media -Differences in people and their lifestyles