

Scoil Bhríde, Cill Bhríde

Clonee, Co. Meath.

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Relationship & Sexuality Education Policy

A. Introductory Statement

1. Scoil Bhríde, Cill Bhríde is a Catholic School which operates under the auspices of the Department of Education and under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath. The school has an enrolment of over 282 pupils catering for boys and girls across the whole range of primary curriculum from junior infants to sixth class. The school community collaborated and agreed this policy.
2. The school has a responsibility to put in place an R.S.E. policy as part of the wider Social, Personal and Health strand of the curriculum.
3. R.S.E. provides children with structured opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs and practical skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships as children and subsequently as adults.

Rationale

The R.S.E. curriculum provided by the Department of Education and Science is spiral in content with central themes being revisited in a developmental manner from Junior Infants to 6th Class.

B. School Ethos

1. The school recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children and fully supports this role. In the area of R.S.E. the school's role is subsidiary to that of parents and supports and complements their work. The school ethos is one which values the contribution of the entire community, parents, teachers, children and management. Opportunities for open communication and collaboration are provided for in the school's open door policy, parent-teacher meetings, the Parents' Council, the Board of Management, and the Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) Policy Committee.

2. Our R.S.E. policy, which has been drawn up by representative of the parents, teachers and Board of Management, reflects the ethos of the school and ensures that the content and delivery is presented within a moral and spiritual framework.

C. Aims

- To enhance the personal development, well being and self-esteem of each child.
- To enable each child to gain and understanding of healthy friendships and relationships.
- To enable children to learn to communicate, make decisions and suppress feelings in an appropriate way.

D. Strategy

R.S.E. will be facilitated in our school

- Informally – in the context of a caring, positive school climate and atmosphere.
- As part of an integrated cross-curriculum basis.
- As an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme – as laid out in the curriculum and in “Making the Link” set down by N.C.C.A.
- As stand alone lessons in 5th class and 6th Class in order to teach sensitive areas of the programme it may be facilitated by Accord, or other external facilitators at the discretion of the teachers which will be considered on a yearly basis.
- Teaching approaches will include:

Stories, poems, DVD’s e.g. HSE Busy Bodies

Classroom discussion

Group work

Games

Art Activities

Circle time

Drama/Role play

Writing/Specifically designed worksheets.

E. Content (Junior Infants – 6th Class)

Topics covered include:

- Making and keeping friends
- Appreciating family life
- Recognising and expressing feelings
- Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise, sleep
- Expressing opinions and listening to others

- Keeping safe as part of the strand – Safety & Protection, using the Stay Safe Programme.
- Making age appropriate decisions and choices.
- Naming body parts using correct terminology – with facilitators 5th/6th Class if necessary. In Infants, 1 & 2nd terminology is kept simple and we avoid sexually sensitive words.
- Bodily changes during growth and development – with facilitators 5th/6th Class if necessary
Conception and nocturnal emissions (6th Class only)
See letter for 5th Class parents and 6th Class parents. Appendix 1 and 2.

F. Classroom Strategy

- Teachers will adhere to the content of the R.S.E. programme in accordance with the curriculum and guidelines provided by the N.C.C.A. – set out for each class level.
- Teachers will only answer questions within the programme for that particular age group
- If the question is a moral question, teachers will adhere to Catholic Church teaching and always reflect the ethos of our school
- If a question is asked beyond the parameters of the programme AND it is felt to be genuine, the teacher will...
 - a) Advise the child to ask at home
 - b) Explain to the child that the particular topic will be introduced at a later stage.
- Thus, it is hoped **not** to compromise the special bond that exists between child and parent or to breach the trust between parent, teacher and child.
- It will be our policy not to answer personal questions about ourselves
- Home links pages from R.S.E Materials will be sent home at the discretion of the teacher.

G. Relationships of RSE to Social, Personal & Health Education.

In the school setting, R.S.E. will be part of a wider programme of Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.). The content of the S.P.H.E. programme includes a wide range of topics such as healthy eating, substance abuse, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as R.S.E. The core framework will consist of Myself; Myself and Others; Myself and the Wider World.

Current Provisions:

(i) Religious Instruction

The Alive-0 Programme is taught in all classes. This programme deals with many of the topics of S.P.H.E. and R.S.E., particularly in the area of self esteem and personal relationships.

(ii) Stay Safe Programme

This programme has been taught in our school since 1991. It is taught to Senior Infants, Second, Fourth and Sixth classes it is implemented in full in compliance with the reviewed Child Protection Policy (2011). The programme is referred to crosscurricularly in other classes.

(iii) Physical/Health Education

Topics of exercise, hygiene, diet, sleep etc. are dealt with informally in class in the context of Physical Education and other Strand Units of S.P.H.E

(iv) Relationships and Sexuality

The two year programme has been offered to Fifth and Sixth Class for many years. The programme is usually conducted by a qualified facilitator, is age appropriate and in keeping with the ethos of the school. It is often preceded by an information night for parents. The content of this programme is quite similar to what is contained in the R.S.E programme.

(v) Information on Drugs and Alcohol

The Walk Tall Programme is used in our school to provide education on drugs and alcohol use at an appropriate level.

See Substance Use Policy

(vi) Code of Discipline

The school has a code of discipline and an anti-bullying policy which encourage good behaviour and respect for self and others. The underlying philosophy of these codes supports many of the aims of S.P.H.E. and R.S.E.

(vii) Child Protection

The school at all times will follow child protection guidelines as laid out in the school “Child Protection Policy” and the guidelines set out by “Children First”.

H. Guidelines for Managing the R.S.E Programme

Much of the content of R.S.E will be taught in a cross curricular manner, as many of the topics fall naturally into other subject areas. This integrated approach ensures that the children will encounter R.S.E in a holistic manner rather than in isolation.

For certain topics on the R.S.E. programme it may be deemed appropriate to invite visiting speakers to the school. They will be approved by the Board of Management. The classroom teacher or an alternative staff member arranged by the principal will be present at all such deliveries

Parents have a right to:

- Be fully consulted and informed about the R.S.E. programme
- View resources
- Withdraw their child from all or part of the R.S.E. programme. This will be dealt with as sensitively and as confidentially as possible without embarrassment to parent or child.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from all or part of RSE Programme they must do so in writing. They must also supervise their child.

The Child has a right to:

- Privacy which must be respected at all times by both the teachers and all other pupils in the class.
- Not to feel pressured to reveal or discuss private matters.
- Discuss the contents of the R.S.E. lessons at home.

The Teacher has a right to:

- Opt out of delivery of sensitive issues within the R.S.E./S.P.H.E. curriculum.

It is the principals' responsibility to make suitable alternative arrangements for the delivery of these elements of the programme.

Provision for ongoing Support, Development and Review

The policy is committed to

- ensuring access to in-career development opportunities for teachers
- supporting the Parents' Council in the provision of information on the R.S.E. programme
- providing relevant R.S.E. school resources
- be reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure all new members will have had R.S.E training and existing staff have update of training as required.
- As RSE is part of our S.P.H.E. Curriculum, the staff member with special duty responsibilities for S.P.H.E. will co-ordinate the programme.

H. Evaluation/Review

It is proposed that this policy will be reviewed where necessary.

It is also proposed that this policy will be available on our website.

This policy was approved by the Board of Management in April 2013.