



Marymount National School

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Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Definition of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

SPHE is the process which enables pupils to develop an understanding of themselves. It helps them to choose and follow a healthy lifestyle and enables them to play responsible roles as individuals and as members of society: (*NCCA draft Guidelines – yellow book 1995*)

Relationships and Sexuality education

1. **Definition of RSE and relationship to SPHE.** RSE is an integral part of SPHE and deals with aspects such as human growth and development, human sexuality, parenting, personal and social skills and relationships. It provides children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of these areas through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.
2. The Aims of Relationships and Sexuality Education.

Aims

The aims of social, personal and health education are

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- To foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
- To develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participate citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- To enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world

Current provision for RSE in this school.

Up to recently Relationships and Sexuality education has been taught in the context of Religious Education, in Social and Environmental studies, in health education etc.... and through a positive school climate and atmosphere. We have used lessons and activities from Grow in Love, Child Abuse Prevention (Stay Safe Programme), Substance Misuse (Walk Tall Programme), and Relationships and Sexuality (R.S.E. Programme) programmes to do this. Accord has provided R.S.E. to 6th Class.

Management and Organisation of RSE (or for teaching sexually sensitive issues) in our school

A developmental approach

Teaching about relationships and sexuality will be delivered in the context of S.P.H.E. All content objectives will be taught developmentally by the time the children leaves 6th class. All issues will be discussed with sensitivity and professionalism.

Possible sensitive issues will be covered within the strand units “Taking care of my body,” “Growing and changing” and “Safety and Protection”. Further information if required at www.pdst.ie/primary, go to curriculum tab, click on SPHE, click on Relationships and Sexuality Education and programme information can be viewed.

List of possible sensitive issues

Infants

- Name parts of the male, female body using appropriate anatomical terms
- Develop an awareness of human birth – that the baby grows and is nurtured in the mother’s womb until ready to be born.

1st & 2nd Class

- Name parts of the male, female body and identify some of the functions.

3rd & 4th Class

- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth
- Physical changes

5th Class

- Puberty changes
- Reproductive System – male & female

6th Class

- Communicable diseases

- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth (Delivered by ACCORD with prior consent of the parents)

We will give children the correct and appropriate language as outlined in the RSE materials.

- Junior Infants: womb, breast-feeding
- Senior Infants: penis, urethra
- 1st Class: urine passes through the penis in boys and the urethra in girls. Baby is in womb for 9 months and may be breast or bottle fed.
- 2nd Class: penis and urethra, (revised) vagina, navel, breast, umbilical cord
- 3rd Class: developing foetus - simple
- 4th Class: developing foetus – more detailed – pictures
changes in puberty – body shape, menstruation, voice changes, mood changes, skin changes, increases in body hair.
- 5th Class: puberty (revised); physical changes in boys and girls; reproduction
- 6th Class: sexual intercourse in the context of a loving committed relationship

In our school in a multiclass situation. Children will be with drawn and divided among other teachers should information be inappropriate for the younger age group.

Answering questions: Should a pupil require information that is not in line with the curriculum content and not considered to be age – appropriate for the general body of pupils, the school will not give such information and refer her / him to her parents.

Privacy: Everyone has a right to privacy (see Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Un Declaration on the Rights of the Child). Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature which they do not wish to share.

RSE policy and other curricular areas: Our policy on R.S.E. will also inform the teaching of the Strand “Living Things” in Science.

❖ **Rights and responsibilities of Parents / Guardians:**

- In SPHE and RSE parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school will work in a supportive role.
- On enrolment parents, will be provided with a copy of Marymount RSE Policy.
- Sensitive issues will be introduced as per policy.
- A parent’s right to **withdraw** a pupil from the process will be honored on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school in writing of this decision. A separate sheet has been provided for this purpose and is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that the letter is received by class teacher, Principal.

Confidentiality: If a child is withdrawn for the teaching of sensitive issues we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell inform him/her about what happened and correct terminology will be used at all times in the classroom.

Rights and responsibilities of Teachers:

- Each class teacher will teach the SPHE programme including the sensitive issues.
- A teachers' right to opt out from teaching the sensitive issues will be honoured. Then provision will be made for these issues to be taught by
 - ✚ A colleague
 - ✚ Accord – 5th class, review 6th class.
- If a member of staff is unavailable to teach the sensitive issues, arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme will be made by the BOM.
- RSE will be taught: in Junior Infants – 5th Class by the class teacher and a suitable guest speaker from ACCORD will be invited to deliver the contents of the programme 6th Class. Parents will be present with the pupils if this takes place outside school hours / Teachers will be present when this takes place during school hours. All information delivered will be informed by the content objectives of the Social, Physical, Health Education Curriculum. (see SPHE Curriculum Statement p. 32.) We will require the guest speaker to keep within the school guidelines.

❖ Sources and Resources:

- We will use the RSE and the Stay Safe programmes and other resources that are deemed suitable by the principal / SPHE coordinator in consultation with a representative of the parents such as a suitable video.
- We may also invite other visitors such as a mother, father and new baby when teaching certain aspects. These adults may be invited to talk and be questioned by the pupils.

Provision for ongoing support, development and review.

- a) Where necessary or if opportunities arise the Board of Management may be requested to fund/support
 - In-career development for teachers
 - Training for parents organized by the Parents' Association
- b) The draft policy will be circulated to parents, teachers and the school authorities and amended where feasible.

The final agreed policy will be presented to the Board of Management, ratified by them, circulated to all parties involved and implemented.

- c) This policy and RSE programme will be reviewed as necessary. All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review. R.S.E. resources will also be reviewed to ensure they are kept up to date.

Signed: Peter Darcy Date: 15/11/2017
Chairperson Board of Management

