

GAELSCOIL CHNOC NA RÉ- R.S.E. Policy Statement

Introduction

Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) encompasses the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy. In Gaelscoil Chnoc na Ré we seek to promote the overall development of the child which involves the integration of Relationships and Sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development within the context of our Catholic ethos. R.S.E is a partnership involving parents, teachers and management. This policy statement was drawn up following the formation of the R.S.E policy committee. The committee included representatives from An Bord Bainistíochta, Cairde na Scoile, na tuismitheoirí, na múinteoirí agus An Príomhoide. All members of the committee attended Policy Development Seminars. The committee subsequently met in Gaelscoil Chnoc na Ré to draft a R.S.E policy statement.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Relationship of R.S.E. to S.P.H.E.

In Gaelscoil Chnoc na Ré, R.S.E. will be taught in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education. S.P.H.E. contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development.

S.P.H.E. is taught from Naíonáin Shóisir to Rang a 6 and is formally timetabled. It is also taught through other subjects. The children will experience S.P.H.E. as it is lived in everyday life. S.P.H.E. will be expanded to include R.S.E. with the use of programme resource materials such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, New Life, Be Safe and Bí Folláin, R.S.E.

resource materials and Busy Bodies Video. The principal and staff will, on a yearly basis, set the programme taking into account the class groupings, mental and physical maturity of the pupils and any Special Educational Needs requirements.

The S.P.H.E. Curriculum is divided into three strands, namely:

- **Myself**
- **Myself and other people**
- **Myself and the wider world**

The S.P.H.E. curriculum is further sub-divided into 10 strand units. It is a 2-year programme with 5 units taught every year.

An outline of R.S.E lessons and themes are available in the school.

R.S.E will be facilitated in the following ways within our school:

- In the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere
- As part of timetabled S.P.H.E.
- On an integrated, cross-curricular basis

The R.S.E Curriculum is a spiral curriculum. This involves revisiting key topics in a developmental manner at regular intervals. As it is a progressive programme it is taught over the 8-year primary cycle.

Aims of our R.S.E Programme

The aims of R.S.E are

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- 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

Curriculum Content for R.S.E.

The following are the R.S.E content objectives, according to class groups, which are taken from the S.P.H.E. Curriculum: Each objective will be presented and taught using an approach which is sensitive and age appropriate e.g. New life and birth in the world – baby animals, lambs etc.

Na Naíonáin

Myself: Taking Care of my Body

1. Respect his/her own body and that of others
- *2. Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms

Myself: Growing and Changing

1. Become aware of new life and birth in the world
2. Develop an awareness of human birth

Myself: Safety and Protection

1. Explore appropriate safety strategies
2. Identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk
3. Realise how other people can persuade him/her to engage in unsafe behaviour

Rang a 1 & 2

Myself: Taking Care of my Body

*1. Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms

Myself: Growing and Changing

1. Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle

2. Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world

3. Realise the various roles parents and other family members have in providing for new-born babies

Myself: Safety and Protection

1. Recognise and explore situations where children feel safe and those where safety might be at risk

2. Discuss and practise appropriate strategies for dealing with these situations

3. Realise how other people can persuade him/her to engage in unsafe behaviour and how this may be counteracted

Rang a 3 &4

Myself: Self-identity

1. Explore the factors that influence his/her self-image (how I feel about my own body)

Myself: Taking care of my body

1. Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body e.g. growing taller, stronger etc.

2. Realise that these changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and

3. That being different is normal

4. Recognise the adverse effects of sexual stereotyping and realise that these effects can become more exaggerated as the physical differences between males and females are more apparent

Myself: Growing and Changing

1. Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty
2. Begin to appreciate the need for space and privacy in life
- *3. Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth
4. Identify the care that needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born
5. Develop an appreciation of the wonder of a new-born baby

Myself: Safety and Protection

1. Identify people, places and situations that may threaten personal safety
2. Begin to realise that as independence increases, responsibility for personal safety increases, and that a strategy for keeping safe with people has to be developed and adhered to by each individual.

Myself and others: My friends and other people

1. Examine different types of friendship

Rang a 5 & 6

Myself: Taking care of my body

- * 1. 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
2. Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults
3. Become aware of some communicable diseases (chickenpox, mumps, rubella etc.) and explore how diseases and infections are spread.

Myself: Growing and Changing

1. Identify and discuss the changes that are experienced in growing from child to adult
2. Explore patterns of development and growth, comparing present development with that at earlier stages: physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual
3. Appreciate the need for individual space and privacy as he/she is growing and developing
- *4. Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship
5. Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent
6. Acquire the ability and confidence to identify, discuss and explore a range of feelings, especially those that are difficult to express
7. Discuss and practise how to express and cope with various feelings in an appropriate manner
8. Understand how feelings help in understanding him/herself
9. Differentiate between needs and wants and recognise and explore the concept of learning to wait.
10. Discuss the different types of love that exist and explore how love is portrayed and defined in music, films, books, magazines and other media.

Myself: Safety and Protection

1. Identify situations and places that may threaten personal safety

Myself and others: My friends and other people

1. Explore the differences between boy/girl and same-gender friendships.
2. Consider problems that can arise in friendships and other relationships and how these could be handled

Myself and the wider world: Media education

1. Recognise unequal treatment of sexual roles and other issues in literature, advertising, drama, magazines and other media

Management and Organisation of the R.S.E Programme in our school

- Relationships and Sexuality Education is an on-going process throughout life. A child's first experience of love, of intimacy and of relationships takes place in the family. Parents and the family are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children. We work in a supportive role with the parents of our school, by complementing their role with a school based programme in R.S.E.
- All the content objectives of the R.S.E Programme will be covered by the time children leave sixth class.
- The teachers' right to opt out will be honoured which will not affect the teaching of the subject.
- Parents will be informed of sensitive issues classes two weeks in advance. A fully qualified visitor may be invited to the school to cover sensitive issues with 6th class annually. A teacher will be present with a visitor in the class. Parents will be invited to meet with the visitor, before the visitor meets with the class, for an information meeting. Parents are encouraged to use this opportunity to discuss these topics with their children beforehand. Parents are advised to inform childminders etc. that the sensitive topics are going to be discussed.
- A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the sensitive issues process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves.
- Parents are obliged to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw the child from the sensitive issues classes. Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child are asked to discuss with the principal how this may be facilitated.
- Curriculum books and resource materials are available in the school and parents are welcome to borrow them if desired.
- The school has no responsibility for any information which the pupil may receive outside the direct teaching of the R.S.E lessons
- Questions arising from curriculum content will be addressed by the teacher or by the visitor in a sensible, sensitive and age-appropriate manner. Questions arising outside of the curriculum will be referred back to the parent(s)

Ongoing Support, development and review

The Bord Bainistíochta of Gaelscoil Chnoc na Ré supports and fosters the development of a R.S.E school policy. The programme of work will be reviewed at regular intervals by teachers. Gaelscoil Chnoc na Ré will ensure access to in-career development opportunities for teachers and the policy committee in R.S.E. The policy and programme will be reviewed by all partners after the first year and every four years thereafter. Any amendments necessary as a result of reviews will be undertaken.

Implementation

The R.S.E policy will be implemented in September 2006.