



Roll No. 12180 U

Presentation Primary School

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Phone: 052 - 6123548/6122940. Fax: 052 - 6121253. E-mail: presclon.ias@eircom.net

Presentation Primary School, Clonmel

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction

This RSE policy was originally developed by a committee representing the parents/guardians, staff and members of the board of management of the school. It was reviewed in February 2019 by staff, the parents' council and the board of management. This policy reflects the core values and ethos of the school as set out in the school Mission Statement.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexuality identity.

Aims of the RSE programme

The aims of the RSE programme 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 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 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 his/her own sexuality and the sexuality of others while growing and developing.

Content of RSE curriculum

Topics covered include:

- Myself - self identity, self care, hygiene, diet, exercise, sleep, keeping myself safe
- Myself and others – appreciating family, making and keeping friends, recognizing and expressing feelings, expressing opinions and listening to others, making age-appropriate choices
- Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms (from Junior Infants) and identify some of their functions (from 1st/2nd classes)
- Growing and changing – begin to understand reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle, both in animal and human life (from 1st/2nd classes)
- Birth and new life - stages of development of a baby from conception to birth, appreciation of wonder of a new-born (from 3rd class)
- Understand physical changes in girls and boys, and how emotions are affected by physical changes at puberty, menstruation (4th /5th classes)
- Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults, and understand sexual relations within the context of a committed, loving relationship (6th class)

The full Stay Safe programme will be taught in Senior Infants, Rang 2, Rang 4 and Rang 6. Aspects of the Stay Safe Programme will be revisited each year e.g. Antibullying, Touches (in conjunction with RSE programme)

Methodologies and organisation

The school supports RSE through creating a supportive and open school climate. RSE will be taught as part of the Social and Personal Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. Some aspects of the programme will be taught during specific timetabled periods and the remainder will be linked with the other subject areas, including Religious Education, Social and Environmental Studies and Circle Time.

Resources used include programmes including Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Alive O, Bi Follain and Action for Life. A wide range of teaching approaches will be used for RSE, including teacher input, discussion, video, role play and drama.

The role of the school authorities

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme acts as a support to parents/guardians, and the school will seek to have open and effective communication in relation to RSE. The school will be sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs of all parents while fulfilling its responsibility to ensure the availability of RSE for all the children. The school will be sensitive to different family patterns.

Role of the parent/guardian

This policy recognises the parent/guardian as primary educator. This policy considers it important that children learn the proper terms for the parts of the body and bodily functions from their parents/guardians from the earliest age. It is also important that children do not learn about sexuality and human reproduction for the first time at school so the school will inform parent/guardian in advance when topics of menstruation is being discussed in 4th and 5th classes and when reproduction and conception is being discussed in 6th class. If a parent/guardian chooses to provide RSE at home, a parent/guardian's rights with regard to their child's participation in timetabled sessions in class will be respected. This will be communicated in a letter to parents informing them of the topics to be covered in R.S.E. each year. Parents may make contact with the principal in order to discuss opt out options from such lessons (See Appendix 1 for Parent/Guardian Opt out form).

Role of principal

This policy recognises that the principal has a key role in facilitating open and collaborative process in the implementation of the RSE programme and in the on-going review of RSE. Arrangements regarding the planning and teaching of the programme, liaison with community agencies, staff training and on-going review will be made by the principal, in consultation with parents/guardians, staff and board members.

Role of teacher

At all times, the role of the teacher will be considered as being complimentary to that of the parent/guardian. Teachers will create a safe and affirming environment in class in which sensitive and personal issues can be explored safely, with due respect and right to privacy for all. In teaching RSE, the teacher will establish specific boundaries with the class around issues such as respect, confidentiality, and the right of privacy of individuals and families. If children ask questions in class on content outside the school RSE curriculum, they will be referred to their parent.

It is important that all school staff understand that the RSE programme is taught and reinforced by the general climate and everyday interactions of the classroom and school. The teacher will ensure that the RSE class programme is appropriate in terms of content, materials and teaching methodologies. The teacher will identify the links between RSE and other areas of the curriculum, and will teach RSE using an integrated approach.

Recognising the importance of the unique relationship between students and their class teacher, it is ideally the class teacher who will teach the more sensitive issues of the RSE programme to their own class group. This policy also recognises that there will be occasions when it may not suit that the class teacher delivers a

particular aspect of the programme. In this case, the principal in consultation with the class teacher and other colleagues will agree how the particular topic will be delivered. It is envisaged that another teacher who has a close working relationship with the class could deliver that aspect of the programme.

Readiness of children

This policy recognises that the kind of maturity which a child requires to discuss matters with his or her parents is different to the much higher level of maturity required before a child is ready for the discussion of such matters in the context of a classroom.

A flexible approach will be required because of the very considerable differences that exist in the emotional and intellectual maturity of students in every class group. In the case of students with particular individual needs, parents/guardians and teachers will consult to adapt the programme. In the case of combined classes, provision will be made that students can be grouped separately in which a teacher judges that all children are not ready for the full programme

On-going support and development

This policy recognises that the training of staff is essential for the effective implementation of the RSE programme. This school is committed to ensuring access to training for staff that is appropriate to their professional needs.

Evaluation:

The overall effectiveness of the programme will be evaluated based on:

- Observations of staff
- Feedback from students and their parents/guardians
- Discussion at parents' council and board meetings.

Ratification and Review:

This RSE policy was displayed on the school website, inviting feedback from parents and was also discussed with the Parents' Council and ratified by the board on management.

The policy will be monitored on an on-going basis and will be reviewed formally every two years. Amendments will be undertaken as required.

Signed: 
(Chairperson B.O.M.)

Date: 5/01/19.