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POLICY ON RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY PROGRAMME

Our School Philosophy

Our school is multi-denominational under the patronage of Educate Together. We follow the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme as set out in the Revised Primary Curriculum of 1999 and we follow the Ethical Core Curriculum as set out in the Educate Together *Learn Together* programme.

What is the Relationship and Sexuality Programme?

The Relationships and Sexuality Programme (RSE) aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

R.S.E. within the Overall Revised Curriculum

R.S.E. will be taught under the umbrella of S.P.H.E. Sexual education pertains specifically to the strand *Myself*, strand unit *Growing and Changing - as I grow I change; birth and new life*. Relationships education pertains to the strand *Myself and Others*. There will also be links between R.S.E. and other curriculum areas and the Educate Together Programme, *Learn Together*.

What the School Currently Provides.

This school was founded in September 2002 and thus far teachers have implemented the S.P.H.E. curriculum, discrete modules such as the *Walk Tall* programme and now began to implement the *Learn Together* programme.

Aims of R.S.E. Programme:

- 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 develop and promote in the child, a sense of wonder at the process of birth and new life.

Broad Objectives

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme should enable the child to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.
- Develop a positive sense of self awareness, self esteem and self worth.
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well being of others.
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts.
- Develop and awareness of differing family patterns.
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self identity.
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- Develop some strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse.
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality growth and development.
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

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

- Parents will be informed when sensitive areas of the programme will be delivered to the children.
- Where appropriate and with the approval of the Board of Management, suitable external speakers may be invited to present specific aspects of the R.S.E. programme. The content of these sessions will be carefully vetted by teachers to ensure that the information imparted, and its delivery, are consistent with the ethos of the schools and the aims of the R.S.E. programme.
- Respect for cultural and moral mores of the different faith groups within the school will be taken into account.
- Sensitive areas of the programme may be delivered in gender specific groups if it is deemed appropriate for that particular group of children.
- Sensitivity will be shown in dealing with pupils' special needs.
- Children may be withdrawn from specific elements of the programme if requested by parents or guardians.

Content and Methodology

The school accepts the content of the R.S.E. curriculum as outlined by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (N.C.C.A. 1996). The programme will consist of two strands at each class level: *Myself* and *Myself and Others*.

- Resources re: Pictures of boy/girl - Walk Tall
- Wording.

Overview of content for Infant, First and Second Classes

Strands	Infant Classes Strand Units	First and Second Classes Strand Units
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I am unique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Self esteem</i> - <i>Developing and expressing self confidence</i> ▪ My body ▪ As I grow I change ▪ New life ▪ Keeping safe ▪ Feelings and emotions ▪ Making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I am unique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Self esteem</i> - <i>Developing and expressing self confidence</i> ▪ My body ▪ As I grow I change ▪ New life ▪ Keeping safe ▪ Feelings and emotions ▪ Making decisions
Myself and Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Myself and my family ▪ Myself and my friends ▪ Special people in my life. ▪ Relating to others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Communicating</i> - <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> - <i>Resolving conflict.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Myself and my family ▪ Myself and my friends ▪ Special people in my life. ▪ Relating to others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Communicating</i> - <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> - <i>Resolving conflict.</i>

Overview of Content for Third to Sixth Classes

Strand	Third and Fourth Classes Strand Units	Fifth and Sixth Classes Strand Unit
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accepting myself - <i>Self esteem</i> - <i>Developing and expressing self confidence</i> ▪ Physical development ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Birth and new life ▪ Feelings and emotions ▪ Personal hygiene - <i>Identifying and assessing risks</i> - <i>Developing safety strategies</i> ▪ Making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accepting myself - <i>Self esteem</i> - <i>Developing and expressing self confidence</i> ▪ Physical development ▪ Becoming an adult ▪ Parenthood ▪ Feelings and emotions ▪ Personal hygiene - <i>Identifying and assessing risks</i> - <i>Developing safety strategies</i> ▪ Making decisions
Myself and Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roles and responsibilities in families ▪ 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> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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>

Ongoing Support, Development and Review

- The school is committed to ensuring in-career development opportunities for teachers and the policy committee members.
- The school will support any effort by parents to provide educational opportunities for other parents in this area.
- The school will seek to accumulate a comprehensive store of classroom resources to support the implementation of the policy.

Policy Development: A Shared Responsibility

Initial responsibility for drafting the R.S.E. policy was given to the policy committee comprising of teachers, parents and Board of Management representatives.

The group sources material from the N.C.C.A., the Revised Primary Curriculum, the Educate Together *Learn Together* programme and sought assistance from other Educate Together schools. The group also attended and R.S.E. planning seminar in Drumcondra Education Centre in January 2005. The group met and agreed to issue a first draft of the policy.

An agreed version of this document is now presented to the Board of Management and with their consent will be circulated to the parent body.