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RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY Lavally N.S.

Lavally N.S. has a Catholic ethos and is governed by a Board of Management. The original RSE Policy which was formulated by a sub-committee of the Board of Management has been reviewed and updated during the school year 2019.

OUR SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

To develop each child to her fullest potential morally, emotionally and educationally while welcoming and encouraging parents and teachers to actively become complementary factors in the education of each whole child.

DEFINITION OF RSE

RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information.

RELATIONSHIP OF RSE TO SOCIAL PERSONAL HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)

Within the school, RSE will form an integral part of a wider programme, covering several core subject areas, which will be encompassed in the SPHE programme. It makes sense not to teach RSE in a vacuum as all strands are already successfully in place within the school. In this way, RSE will simply develop upon the programme already in place.

WHAT OUR SCHOOL CURRENTLY PROVIDES

All of the strands of SPHE/RSE recommended by the Department of Education and Skills are already in place within the school. Named below are a number of subject areas which fall into this category:

Language Development:

Language has a vital role to play in SPHE/RSE. It is important that a child be able to articulate her feelings and this is why Language Development is emphasised from day one. Topics of conversation include: *Myself, My News, Friends, My Family*.

Religion:

Several of the lessons in the Religion Programme are based on the child as a person. Some examples of these include: *I Am Unique, My Body, Resolving Conflicts, and Growing*.

Social and Environmental Studies:

This subject deals with a wide range of issues including: *Personal Hygiene, Life Cycle, and My Body*.

Gaeilge:

Baintear úsáid as an Gaeilge, go háirithe Gaeilge neamhfhoirimiúil chun gnéithe éagsúla ón gclár Oideachas Caidrimh agus Gnéasachta a phlé, m. sh. *Mo Choirp, Mé Féin, Mo Chlann*.

Certain themes within the RSE programme already form part of the Irish curriculum, where familiar topics are discussed informally with the children, for example, *My Body, Myself, My Family*.

Stay Safe Programme:

This programme deals with many of the issues developed upon in the RSE syllabus, namely: *the Development of Self-Esteem, My Body, and Self-Protection*.

Art and Craft:

Through many of the varied Art and Craft activities the children already interpret and display an understanding of some of the information contained in the RSE programme, for example, making a Spring Frieze (introducing new life), *Myself, Sense and Touch (My Body), Hand and Feet Prints (awareness of physical growth)*.

Music, Movement and PE:

Through music, movement and PE the children become aware of the physical nature of their bodies and various exercises are carried out within the classroom which develop upon the idea of physical growth, for example, *Stay Safe Song, Lambs at Play (song), Physical Education*.

Science:

As part of the science curriculum “the identification of the parts of the human body is included at each level of the primary programme” and “children will be helped to develop ideas about the human body, growth, movement and breathing ... the development of children’s ideas about body changes and reproduction should be done in accordance with the school’s policy on SPHE”. (Science Curriculum Teacher Guidelines, Page 10). Our policy on RSE will also inform the teaching of the strand “Living Things” in Science.

As is apparent from the above, much of the RSE programme is already contained within today's curriculum. Many more examples exist, as the school currently provides a large number of programmes both formal and informal, which all come under the umbrella term SPHE.

THE AIMS OF OUR RSE 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 relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of understanding at the process of birth and new life.
- That the child be able to identify external parts of the male and female body.
- That the child is able to articulate fluently information about himself/herself, his/her thoughts, his/ her ideas, his/ her feelings and his/ her attitudes.
- To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.
- To develop an awareness of differing family patterns.
- To develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse.

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 partnership in a supportive role.
- Parents will have access to an overview of the SPHE/RSE programme available through the school office.
- A parent's right to **withdraw** a pupil from the process will be honoured 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 their decision to withdraw and their willingness to cover sensitive issues with their child outside of school hours. The content of the RSE curriculum is available on the Drumcondra Education website.*
- A child who has been withdrawn from class for the duration of a discrete SPHE lesson will be accommodated in another classroom under the supervision of another teacher pending completion of the lesson.

Confidentiality

If a child is withdrawn from the class for the teaching of sensitive issues we cannot guarantee that the other children will not inform her about what happened. The teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the issue at another time while that child is present.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

- Each class teacher will teach the SPHE programme including the sensitive issues.
- Teachers will teach only the topics laid down for the class and will answer only those questions on the above programme for that year.
- RSE will be taught in Junior Infants to sixth class. All information delivered will be informed by the content objectives of the SPHE Curriculum (see SPHE Curriculum Statement, page 10).

Possible Sensitive Issues SPHE – Infant Classes

Content Objectives from SPHE Curriculum Statement and Teaching Resource

The relationship aspect of RSE is covered right throughout SPHE as per our school plan with our pupils. The sexually sensitive issues for Junior Infants and Senior Infants are:

Content Objective	Teaching Strategy/Resource
<p>Taking Care of My Body Page 17 (Knowing About My Body, bullet points 3, 4 in CS). Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms to include penis and vulva.</p>	<p>Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). Senior Infants Theme 7 “My Body”, pages 148–156.</p>
<p>Explore and discuss the different things the body can do <i>move, feel, think, grow, and heal</i>.</p>	<p>Action – Junior/Senior Lessons 2, 3, 7, 9.</p>
<p>Growing and Changing Page 18 (New Life bullet points 1, 2 in CS). Become aware of new life and birth in the world. <i>New growth in springtime.</i> <i>Baby animals being born.</i></p>	<p>RSE (Junior Infants) Theme 7 “New Life” pages 67-70.</p>
<p>Develop an awareness of human birth. <i>That a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother’s womb until ready to be born.</i></p>	<p>RSE (Junior Infants) Theme 7 “New Life” pages 71-76.</p>
<p>Safety and Protection Page 19 (Personal Safety bullet points 2, 3 in CS). Identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk – <i>being in a supervised playground, going on an outing with family; going into unfamiliar places – feeling unsafe with people, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes him/her feel uncomfortable).</i></p>	<p>RSE (Junior Infants) Theme 5 “People Who Teach Us About Keeping Safe”, page 51.</p> <p>RSE (Senior Infants) Theme 4 “I Can Be Safe” page 123.</p> <p>Stay Safe Programme.</p>

Possible Sensitive Issues SPHE 1st & 2nd Class
Content Objectives from SPHE Curriculum Statement

<p>Growing and Changing Page 28 (New Life bullet points 1, 2 in CS) Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle.</p>	<p>RSE 1st Theme 6 “The Wonder of New Life” page 59.</p>
<p>Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world. <i>Love, regular feeding, nappy changing, careful bathing, medical check-ups.</i></p>	
<p>Growing and Changing Page 28 (As I Grow I Change bullet points 1, 2, 3 in CS) Begin to recognise the physical, emotional, social and spiritual factors that promote growth <i>love, food, warmth, shelter, communication, friendship, sleep.</i></p>	<p>RSE 1st Theme 8 “Growing Means Changing” page 77.</p>
<p>Safety and Protection Page 30 (Personal Safety bullet points 1, 3 in CS). Recognise and explore situations where children feel safe and those where safety might be at risk. <i>Getting lost, being left alone, and coming in contact with unsafe or unknown substances. Being with people who make me feel unsafe. Inappropriate or unsafe touches, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes me feel uncomfortable).</i></p>	<p>RSE 1st Theme 4 “Keeping Safe” pages 40-47.</p> <p>Stay Safe Programme.</p>
<p>Explore how other people can persuade a child to engage in unsafe behaviour and how this may be counteracted.</p>	
<p>Taking Care of My Body Page 27 (Knowing About My Body bullet points 3, 4, 5 in CS). Explore the various things the body can do <i>See, hear, move, breathe, make energy, feel, think.</i></p>	<p>RSE 1st Theme 7 “How My Body Works” pages 68-75.</p>
<p>Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions – penis, vulva and urethra.</p>	<p>Stay Safe – Touches.</p>

Sources and Resources

- We will use the RSE and the Stay Safe Programmes and other resources that are deemed suitable by the Principal/SPHE co-ordinator e.g. making the links on the Stay Safe (CD Rom and website).
- We may also invite other visitors such as a mother, father and new baby, a nurse when teaching certain aspects. The content of the visitor's talk will be discussed and agreed by the class teacher in advance of the visit. These adults may be invited to talk and be questioned by the pupils. The teacher will be present and will oversee the delivery of the visitor's talk at all times. For RSE the specific pages are Pages 11 and 12 under Teaching Strategies/Resources "A Visitor to the Classroom" a - e.
- www.ec/drumcondra.ie/programmes/relationshipsandsexualityeducation

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;
- refer her to the parents e.g. *"That's something you could talk to your parents about/you might talk about that when you are older"*.

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.

Provision for Ongoing Support, Development and Review

- (a) Where necessary or if opportunities arise, the BOM may be requested to fund/support:
 - a. In-career development for teachers
 - b. Training for parents organised by the Parents' Association.
 - c. Providing relevant school resources.
- (b) Any future reviews of the policy will involve possible changes/comments and suggestions added to present policy. Then it will be available to parents, teachers and the BOM by the Principal and amended when consensus has been reached by all parties. The final agreed policy will be presented to the BOM, ratified by them and made available to all parties involved and implemented.
- (c) This policy and the RSE programme will be reviewed after five years and thereafter as necessary. All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review. RSE resources will also be reviewed to ensure they are kept up to date.
- (d) All relevant RSE school resources will be available to both teachers and parents.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in Our School

- The RSE policy was implemented in this school in September 2003.
- Lesson plans will be based on the NCCA curriculum guidelines.
- Any parent who does not wish their child to participate in the RSE programme/individual lesson topics will be accommodated with alternative arrangements for their child.
- Parents enrolling their child in Lavally N.S. will be advised to familiarise themselves with the SPHE Policy which will be available in the office and also on the Drumcondra Education website.
- Curriculum lessons for a specific class will be strictly adhered to by that class, as advised.

Review and Ratification:

This Policy was reviewed on _____

This Policy was ratified on _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____