**Relationship and Sexuality Policy**

###### INTRODUCTION

St. Colman’s N.S., Mucklagh is a co-ed mainstream primary school catering for pupils from infants to sixth class. Our school is a catholic primary school under the patronage of the Diocese of Meath. The ethos of our school is founded on Christian principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. It is our intention that everyone feels valued .Our pupils are encouraged to develop to their full potential in a caring environment. Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) encompasses the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexuality and intimacy. In St. Colman’s N.S. we seek to promote the overall development of the child which involves the integration of Relationship and Sexuality into personal understanding growth and development within the context of our Catholic Ethos.

###### Rationale

St. Colman’s N.S. is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. Relationship and Sexuality are integral parts of the human personality and impact biologically, psychologically, culturally, socially and spiritually. The Christian ethos of the school is the cornerstone of our Relationship and Sexuality Policy. R.S.E. is a life process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs morals and values. While we believe that the primary responsibility for addressing these issues rests with parents, we acknowledge the vital part the school can play in supporting and complementing this.

**Definition of RS.E.**

Relationship and Sexuality Education seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through the processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework. R.S.E. 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 image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information.

###### Relationship of R.S.E. to Social Personal and Health Education

All of the R.S.E. programme will be delivered within the context of S.P.H.E. and will include elements of R.S.E., Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Grow in Love programme.

Sexually sensitive issues, those issues/areas of R.S.E. that deal with understanding sexuality and the process of growth, development and reproduction will be covered within the units “Taking care of my body” and “Growing and changing” and “Safety and Protection”. These issues will furthermore be delivered within the context of a moral and spiritual framework consistent with the values and ethos of our school. Within this framework pupils begin to clarify their own value systems and develop their moral reasoning ability.

Continuity of language and content will be maintained throughout the school. In teaching issues related to R.S.E., teachers will use the correct biological terms for the parts of the body.

###### Aims

The aims of R.S.E. are situated within the broader aims of S.P.H.E.

We aim:

* To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of the child.
* To enable the child to develop healthy relationships and friendships
* To foster an understanding of, and develop a healthy attitude to sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
* To enable the child to acquire an understanding of , and respect for human love 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 his/her own sexuality and that of others while growing and developing.

These are the overall aims of the programme to be met in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children

###### Planning and Implementation

In planning and implementation the R.S.E. programme we will have regard to the following:

* The child’s entitlement to appropriate R.S.E.
* The right to confidentiality and privacy of children, parents and staff.
* The rights and responsibilities of parents (Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children. The school works in a supportive role.)
* The materials, information and speakers used as part of the programme conform with policy and ethos.(if outside speakers are used)
* Promotion of gender equality.
* The professional judgement and expertise of teachers.

###### Management Organisation

* All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave 6th class
* Time-tabling- one half hour per week is time-tabled in each class for S.P.H.E. .R.S.E. will be included in the programme taught during this time alternatively certain areas of R.S.E. will be taught in block from 3rd to 6th in the third term during the same week.

###### Rights and Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

* In S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school will work in a supportive role.
* The parents will be notified when the lesson/sensitive issues will be taught prior to their teaching, in order that they will have the children prepared
* 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 this decision.
* If parents choose to withdraw their children from these lessons they can have their children accommodated in another classroom

###### Confidentiality

If a child is withdrawn for the teaching of sensitive issues, we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what has been taught.

###### Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

* Each class teacher will teach the S.P.H.E. programme
* A teacher’s right to opt out of issues with which they feel uncomfortable will be honoured. Then provision will be made for these issues to be taught by a colleague
* If a member of staff is unavailable to teach the sensitive issues, the Board of Management in the school will make arrangement regarding the teaching of the programme.
* The school recognises that the parent is the prime educator of the child and the role of the teacher is subsidiary to that of the parents in giving the child a sound, moral and Christian education.

###### Language

* The acquisition of appropriate language in R.S.E. is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, of their sexuality and their relationships. Not being familiar with the biological terms of the body can put children at a disadvantage.

We will give the children the correct and appropriate language as outlined in appendix 1

###### Answering Questions

In so far as it is possible, teachers will endeavour to answer all questions asked by children, which are relative to the lessons being taught in a manner that is in keeping with our Catholic ethos.

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 the pupils, the school will refer him/her to their parents.

###### Privacy

Everyone has the right to privacy. 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. Any disclosures by children, which the teacher feels must be reported will have to be reported to the principal and relative authorities.(in keeping with the Child Protection Policy)

###### Mixed Groups

Our school is co-educational and we teach the R.S.E. programme to the boys and girls together up to and including third class. The boys and girls are taught separately in fourth, fifth and sixth class when dealing with some of the more sensitive issues.

###### Family Status

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of a stable family life and the importance of marriage as the ideal conditions for rearing children. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in the school and will endeavour to treat the situations sensitively.

###### Sources and Resources

We will use the R.S.E, Busy Bodies from the H.S.E. and Stay Safe programme and other resources that are deemed suitable by the principal/ S.P.H.E. co-ordinator in consultation with a representative for the parents such as books, photocopiable materials.

###### Provision for support/ development/review

There is need for ongoing support, development and review of R.S.E. policy and programme. This will include:

* Inservice training for staff when appropriate.
* Review at staff meetings and teacher/parent meetings
* This policy will be reviewed every two years there after. All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review.
* The development of appropriate resources

**Implementation and Review:**

Adherence to the policy is the responsibility of all school staff supported by the school community

This policy has been in operation since September 2008, reviewed in 2011 again in2013. The policy has been ratified and communicated to parents.

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**Resources**

R.S.E. Books for all levels Junior Infants – 6th

Stay Safe Programme

Busy Bodies –H.S.E.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **class** | **Strand** | **strand unit** | **Content objectives** | **Language** | **RSE Book** | **Walk Tall book** | **Other resources** |
| **Junior infants** | Myself | Growing and changing | * Become aware of new life and birth in the world | Penis  Vulva  Womb |  |  |  |
| **Senior infants** | Myself | Growing and changing | * Develop an awareness of human birth * Identify what babies need to help them to grow and develop | Penis,  Vulva ,  Vagina  Womb  Breast  Breastfeeding | Caring for new life p.137  My body p.147  Giving a doll a bath p.150  At the beach or swimming pool p.153 | Our amazing bodies – p.94 | Anatomical dolls  Picture books of new baby  Visit of a baby to the class |
| Taking care of my body | * Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms |
| **1st class** | Myself | Growing and changing | * Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of a life cycle * Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new born babies in both the animal and human world | Penis,  Vulva ,  Vagina  Urethra  Womb  Breast  Breastfeeding | The wonder of new life p.59  How my body works p.67  Growing means changing p.77 |  | Picture books of going to the doctor.  Tom’s Flower Power.  Books about animal lifecycles and birth & new life in nature |
|  |  | Taking care of my body | * Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions |  |
| **2nd class** | Myself | Growing and changing | * Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new born babies in both the animal and human world | Penis,  Vulva ,  Vagina  Urethra  Womb  Breast  Breastfeeding  Naval, | The wonder of new life p.151  When my body needs special care p.161  Growing and changing p.171 | Our amazing bodies – p.37 |  |
| Taking care of my body | * Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions |  |
| **3rd** | Myself | Growing and changing | * Discuss the stages and sequences of development of human baby from conception to birth * Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty | Penis,  Vulva ,  Womb,  Umbilical Cord, Vagina,  Breast, Breastfeeding | Preparing for new life p.69  As I grow I change p.93 | As I grow I change p.175 |  |
|  |  | Taking care of my body | * Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body * Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal |  |
| **4th class** | Myself | Growing and changing | * Discuss the stages and sequences of development of human baby from conception to birth * Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty | Boys & Girls together - Womb,  Lining,  Round Egg,  Umbilical Cord,  Sac  Chemicals, Testosterone (boys), Oestrogen & Progesterone (Girls)  Girls (dealt with separately) – underarm hair, breasts, nipples, pubic hair, hips broaden, mention shaving.  Menstruation, Periods, Vagina, Egg Ripening, Ovulation, Fallopian Tube, Uterus, Womb, Sanitary Towel, Tampons.  Boys (dealt with separately) - Facial Hair, Adams Apple, Chest Hair, Underarm Hair, Sexual Organs, Penis, Testicles.  Teeth, Body, Hair, Sweat Glands, Body Odour | The wonder of new life p.169  Growing and changing p.195 | Changing and growing – p.140 | PDST website – puberty quiz |
|  |  | Taking care of my body | * Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body * Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal |  |
| **5th class** | Myself | Growing and changing | * Identify and discuss the changes that are experienced in growing from child to adult * Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent | Boys & Girls together - Womb, Lining, Round Egg, Umbilical Cord, Sac  Chemicals, Testosterone (boys), Oestrogen & Progesterone (Girls)  Girls (dealt with separately) – underarm hair, breasts, nipples, pubic hair, hips broaden, mention shaving.  Menstruation, Periods, Vagina, Egg Ripening, Ovulation, Fallopian Tube, Uterus, Womb, Sanitary Towel, Tampons.  Boys (dealt with separately) - Facial Hair, Adams Apple, Chest Hair, Underarm Hair, Sexual Organs, Penis, Testicles, Scrotum, Wet dreams,  Teeth, Body, Hair, Sweat Glands, Body Odour | My body grows and changes p.81  The wonder of new life p.92  Caring for new life p103 | My amazing body – p.345 |  |
|  |  | Taking care of my body | * Identify and discuss the physical changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone * Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults |  |  |  |
| **6th class** | Myself | Growing and changing | * Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship * Identify and discuss the changes that are experienced in growing from child to adult * Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent | Puberty – Menstrual Cycle, Periods, Sanitary Products, Sexual Intercourse, Oestrogen, Progesterone, Testosterone (may need to be explained – as on DVD)  *General talk together, then separate Boys & Girls*  Boys – pubic hair, penis, testicles, scrotum, foreskin, circumcision, erection, sperm, semen, Wet dreams,  Girls – pubic hair, vagina, urethra, labia, clitoris, uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, cervix, ovulation, menstruation.  Also: fertilisation, ejaculation | Different kinds of love p.141  Relationships and new life p.200 | Creation – p.121 | Busy bodies DVD / videos  Puberty quiz – PDST website |
|  |  | Taking care of my body | * Identify and discuss the physical changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone * Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults |  |  |  |