



ST. ANNE'S SCHOOL

Relationship and Sexual Education Policy

School Ethos

The responsibility of the staff of St Anne's School is to help each student reach his/her full potential.

This means fostering the spiritual, moral intellectual, social and cultural development of each student.

Definition of R.S.E.

R.S.E will be part of our Social Personal and Health Education programme. RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of S.P.H.E and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes that will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In particular, it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant personal and social skills and aspects of parenting. In multi-class situations maturity levels will be taken into consideration and specific issues will be managed in a sensitive way. Content and language are carefully selected so that children get the necessary factual knowledge in the context of the ethos of the school.

Special Needs Assistants and the school nurse will support SPHE/RSE where appropriate.

Aims:

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the pupil.
- To acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction, while developing healthy and appropriate friendships.
- To acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, and to develop an understanding of their sexuality, growth and development.
- To promote personal safety taking into consideration the needs and ability of each individual pupil.

- The implementation of our RSE programme will be based on the individual educational needs and level of the pupils.

Objectives:

The programme will;

- Help to develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others.
- Help each child to develop a positive sense of worth.
- Encourage respect for self and others in the school and wider community.
- Provide opportunities where pupils can share their concerns.
- Enable children to recognise the importance of choices they make, and to accept the responsibility for the decisions they take.
- Come to understand that they are part of a family and a wider community.
- Enable pupils to develop an understanding of themselves, their own bodies and their feelings as they grow and change.
- Develop personal skills, which will help them to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- To understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts.
- To develop an awareness of differing family patterns.
- To come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- To develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- To become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change, and to understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity.
- To develop some coping strategies to protect themselves and others from various dangers and vulnerabilities.
- To acquire and use appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.
- To develop in the child a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Current Provision

We in St Anne's School already address many aspects of RSE programmes informally, using hygiene programmes, Stay Safe Programmes and appropriate classroom and Department of Education and Skills materials and publications.

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school, therefore, is seen as one of support for the work of the home in this area.

The approach in school is child centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account. Appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. The use of slang words will be discouraged.

Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in a stage appropriate manner. The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for the class. Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme

and they will be advised to talk with their parents. Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is very inappropriate.

It is our policy not to answer personal questions and to discourage disclosure of personal or family information.

Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the school will take account of parental concerns and parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves.

Parents are made aware of the content of our RSE programme in advance and are asked for their consent in writing in order for their children to take part. RSE will be discussed for each individual pupil at yearly parent teacher meetings and IEP meetings.

Confidentiality

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow our Child Protection Policy. The Principal is our Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

On-going support, development and review

The Board of Management of St Anne's School supports the implementation of the RSE programme.

We recognise that our school has a supportive role to that of the home and we have a commitment to ensuring that

- Our teachers have access to in-career development opportunities.
- Relevant teaching materials are provided.

Ratification: The Board of Management ratified this policy on -----

Signed: _____ Chairman of BoM