

# **St. Brigid's N.S. Annacurra**

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

### **Introductory Statement:**

The school has a responsibility to put in place an RSE policy as part of the wider Social, Personal and Health Education subject of the curriculum. The process of writing this policy was initiated on 19-4-2012 when the teaching staff met to review and record the School's un written policy for RSE since 2003.

**Present:** A. McNamara, E. Ryan, M. Kirwan, E. Gahan, A. Dolan, C. Cotter, F. McLean.

### **Rationale:**

The need for this policy arises from our schools obligation to provide for all the needs of the student body and respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues relating to emerging sexuality.

### **Aims:**

- To enhance the personal development, well being and self-esteem of each child.
- To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive and measured way.
- To enable the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.

### **Relationships to School Ethos:**

The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. To this end parents are encouraged to play a meaningful role in the RSE programme. Parents also have the right to withhold their children from participating in RSE classes.

## **School Provision**

### **Strand Units:**

**Myself** - Self identity, taking care of my body, growing and changing, safety and protection

**Myself and Others** - Myself and family, friends and relating to other people

**Taking Care of My Body** – Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate terminology (Senior Infant, Junior and Lower Middle classes). Identifying physical changes, understanding puberty and the reproductive system (Senior Classes)

**Growing and Changing** – The stages of development of a baby from conception to birth (Middle Classes). Understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed loving relationship (Senior Classes).

Teachers do not cover topics such as contraception and same sex friendships. Children who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum are talked to individually and discreetly. Parents are usually informed and asked to talk to their child.

## Methodology

Circle time is used to build confidence and address fears. Boys and girls are taught together in all classes. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents. The Alive O 8 resource materials are used extensively in senior classes.

### **The Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes:**

The Stay Safe programme is taught in all classes on alternate years with the RSE programme. Aspects of the programme such as bullying are revised in all classes.

### **RSE in Senior Classes**

A guest speaker from Accord delivers a full day programme to senior classes on alternate years, where issues such as physical and emotional development, bodily changes and sexual awakening are explored. The cost of the lecture is borne by the BoM.

### **Topics covered up to 2<sup>nd</sup> class include;**

- Keeping safe
- Naming body parts using correct terminology
- Bodily changes during growth and development
- Making and keeping friends
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life
- Recognizing and expressing feelings
- Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep (link with P.E. Healthy Eating Policy and S.P.H.E.)
- Expressing opinions and listening to others

### **Topics covered from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes include;**

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping safe
- Expressing feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- Reproduction, conception (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes)

### **Guidelines for Management:**

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school R.S.E. Programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils within a moral and spiritual framework. Teachers are present at all times when guest speakers are visiting a class. The sexual content of the programme is taught in the Third Term of the year. Parents are informed by the appropriate letter in the class resources, of the content to be covered, approximately one week before the programme is taught. Children are encouraged not to discuss age inappropriate content in the playground with younger children.

**Child Protection:**

The school follows the DES Child Protection Guidelines and has a Child Protection Policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure; the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

**Staff Development:****Staff have availed of training in;**

- The Child Abuse Prevention Programme (Stay Safe)
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (RSE)

The SPHE whole school plan is available on a shared resource file in the School Office. Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning, comprising of a yearly and fortnightly scheme of work. A Cuntas Miosuil is retained in the School Office.

**School/Community Links:**

The school is involved in;

- Cumann na mBunscoil – Football and Camogie
- Choir for First Communion and choir for Confirmation every second year
- Christmas Carol Service
- Credit Union Quiz
- Arklow Music Festival
- G.A.A. Indoor Hurling
- Various other activities

**Evaluation:**

- Teacher observation
- Inventory of what needs to be changed
- Ensuring all strands are covered
- Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation
- School Community feedback

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

The school community of BoM, staff, pupils and parents play a key role in the formulation and implementation of the plan.

**Implementation and Review:**

This policy is already in place.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and not more than two years from the date of ratification.

**Ratification:**

This policy was ratified by the BoM.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

Board of Management