

# **RSE POLICY**

Rahara N.S is a rural two teacher primary school catering for pupils from infants to sixth class. The school is a catholic primary school under the patronage of the Diocese of Elphin. 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 and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive 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, sexual identity and intimacy. In Rahara N.S. we seek to promote the overall development of the child which involves the integration of Relationships and Sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development within the context of our Catholic ethos.

## **Development of this Policy**

Parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the R.S.E. policy formation, through representation on the Policy Development Committee and the ratification of the finished product. Consultations took place with staff, parents and Board of Management in the writing of this policy.

## **Rationale**

Rahara N.S. is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. Relationships 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 Relationships and Sexuality Policy. RSE is a lifelong 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 Relationships and Sexuality Education**

Relationships and Sexuality Education seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. 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 and Health Education**

In Rahara N.S, RSE will be taught in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education. SPHE is a subject in the primary school curriculum. SPHE contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. SPHE is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth class and is formally timetabled.

RSE will be facilitated in the following ways within our school:

- In the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere
- As part of timetabled S.P.H.E.
- On an integrated, cross-curricular basis

The RSE Curriculum is a spiral curriculum. This involves revisiting key topics in a developmental manner at regular intervals. As it is a progressive programme it is taught annually over the 8-year primary cycle.

### **Aims of our RSE Programme**

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To help children develop healthy and 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 enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse 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 the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing

### **Management and Organisation of the R.S.E Programme in our school**

#### **Parental Involvement:**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an on-going process throughout life. Parents and the family are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children. We work in a supportive role with the parents of our school, by complementing their role with a school based programme in R.S.E. The curriculum books and resource materials are available in the school and parents are welcome to view them if desired. Parents with particular concerns should then discuss these with the principal or class teacher.

#### **Withdrawal from RSE:**

Since RSE is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education and Science, it should be inclusive. Rahara N.S. actively promotes the implementation of RSE and strongly discourages withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parental concerns and a parent's right to withdraw a pupil 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 obliged to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw the child from the sensitive issues classes. Parents may collect their child from Rahara N.S and withdraw them from these lessons. Otherwise the child will be accommodated in the other mainstream classroom. The school can take no responsibility any information which the pupil may receive outside the direct teaching of the RSE lessons.

#### **Content:**

All the content objectives of the RSE Programme will be covered by the time children leave sixth class. It is school policy that the content objectives are covered with each class level as outlined in the SPHE curriculum statement, within the context of the school's Catholic ethos and without personal slants from the class teacher. One half hour period per week is timetabled in each class for SPHE and RSE will be included in the programme taught during this time. The approach to the teaching of RSE will be kept as normal as possible and will be delivered within the child's class by the class teacher.

**Teachers' Opt Out Right:**

A teacher's right to opt out will be honoured which will not affect the teaching of the subject. In such circumstances the Principal/Acting Principal will make arrangements to have this section of the programme taught. In the short term absence (*less than a month*) of either permanent member of staff the other permanent member of staff will assume responsibility for all SPHE lessons, including RSE. In longer term absences (*more than a month*) of either permanent member of staff the substitute will assume responsibility for all SPHE lessons, including RSE. In the absence of both permanent members of staff the long term substitutes will deliver the lessons strictly according to the RSE lesson plans in the RSE teacher's manuals. In the event of two substitute teachers opting out, the Chairperson will consult with staff to ensure the delivery of the RSE lessons to the pupils.

**Multi-Grade Class:**

The delivery of the RSE programme will be co-educational within the context of the class group. Where multi class groups are concerned the teacher may decide to separate classes and gender to ensure that pupils are taught the appropriate class level objectives. The teacher may decide this based on class numbers and his/her own judgement. The remainder of the class group will be accommodated by the other mainstream class teacher or Learning Support teacher.

**Terminology:**

In teaching issues related to RSE, teachers will use the correct biological terms for parts of the body as stated in the SPHE curriculum documents. (See Appendix 1 attached)

**Questions:**

Questions arising from curriculum content will be addressed by the teacher or in a sensible, sensitive and age-appropriate manner. The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class. Pupils will be informed that that question/issue is not on the programme and they will be referred back to the parents.

**Confidentiality and Child Protection:**

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, the school will follow the Department of Education and Science child protection guidelines and guidelines as set out in 'Children First 2011' and our Child Protection Policy.

**Family Status:**

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

**Sources and Resources:**

The RSE, Busy Bodies, Stay Safe Programmes and other resources that are deemed suitable by the Principal will primarily be used for the delivery of the RSE themes.

**Ongoing support, development and review**

The Board of Management of Rahara N.S. supports and fosters the development of a R.S.E school policy. The programme of work will be reviewed at regular intervals by teachers. Rahara N.S. will ensure access to in-career development opportunities for teachers and the policy committee in R.S.E. The policy and programme will be reviewed by the policy committee after the first year and every four years thereafter. Any amendments necessary as a result of reviews will be undertaken.

Rahara N.S. RSE Policy was updated in the school year 2012-13 through a process of consultation with RSE policy committee members, parents and the Board of Management.

**Ratified by Board of Management on** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson, Board of Management**

## RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) PROGRAMME

### APPENDIX 1

List of sensitive areas of Relationships and Sexuality Education- language to be used.

#### Junior and Senior Infants:

- Womb
- Seed
- Penis
- Vagina
- Breast

#### First and Second Class:

- Penis
- Urethra
- Womb
- Vagina
- Breasts

#### Third Class:

- Womb
- Umbilical cord
- Vagina

#### Fourth Class:

- Penis
- Menstruation
- Menstruate
- Periods
- Pubic areas
- Pubic hair

#### Fifth Class:

- Sperm
- Ovaries
- Vagina
- Cervix
- Testicles
- Scrotum
- Penis
- Semen
- Ejaculation
- Wet dreams
- Erection
- Sexual intercourse

**Sixth Class:**

- HIV virus