**Policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education**

1. **Introduction**

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of R.S.E. in Cloonakilla N.S. and was drawn up initially in 2008 by a policy committee. The policy was reviewed again in September 2015, 2018 and 2022.

1. **School**

This policy has been amended to cater specifically for Cloonakilla N.S., Bealnamulla, Athlone, Co. Roscommon as a growing developing school. This is a mixed school with an Administrative Principal, 17 mainstream teachers, 6 SET teachers and 6 S.N.A’s.

1. **Home**

The school recognises that the parent is the primary educator of the child. The R.S.E. policy, as in all other policy areas, acknowledges this and seeks to support parents in this role. Our school fosters close contact between the school and the home. Parents and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another as partners in leading the young pupils to the fullness of their potential as they grow and mature.

1. **Our School Philosophy**

Cloonakilla N.S. is a Roman Catholic school. As such we aim to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil-intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, based on gospel values.

Within the school, a spirit of mutual respect is promoted between children, parents, teachers and members of the Board of Management. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils and supportive of their parent’s role.

The Relationships and Sexuality Programme will be taught within this ethos. Within our school we promote the following ideas;

* People feel valued
* Self esteem is fostered
* Respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
* High expectations and standards are promoted
* There is support for those with difficulties
* Open communications is the norm
* Effort is recognised and rewarded
* Uniqueness/difference is valued
* Conflict is handled constructively
* Initiative and creativity are encouraged
* Social, moral and civic values are promoted

The R.S.E. programme will reflect these ideas.

1. **Definition of R.S.E.**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is about gaining knowledge and understanding of physical, social, cultural, psychological and moral development. It includes attitudes of beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy within a moral, spiritual and social framework. This understanding of R.S.E. will contribute to the development of personal well-being, well enhance personal relationships and will have positive implications for family and community life.

1. **Relationship of R.S.E. to S.P.H.E.**

R.S.E. will be taught within the wider context of Social Personal and Health Education and religious and moral education. The programme will be covered using a cross-curricular approach but some topics will be under specific curricular headings. For these sensitive lessons, the cross curricular approach will not apply. These lesson topics will be listed separately.

1. **The aims of our R.S.E. Programme**

We aim to provide an education in which each child can develop a responsible awareness and caring attitude towards their own and other’s sexuality and human worth, enabling them to form caring and appropriate relationships throughout their lives. This education will be provided sensitively in a manner and content appropriate to individual needs.

Our aims are to:

* Help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
* Promote and understanding of sexuality
* Promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and relationships
* Promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
* Enable young people to develop healthy attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework
* Respond to individual pupil needs as appropriate
* Equip our pupils with the appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development

1. **Guidelines for Management and Organisation of R.S.E. in our Schools**

The R.S.E. content and methodology to be used will be based on the R.S.E. Guidelines for Primary Schools drawn up by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (NCCA).

In order to promote the joint involvement of parents and teachers in implementing the R.S.E. Programme the following will be available to all parents at the start of each school year.

* The R.S.E. Programme details for each class
* The sensitive areas are outlined in each class

The Principal and teachers are also available to assist parents.

RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child’s time in school and consolidates and builds on previous learning. The Strands Growing & Changing and Taking care of my body are covered every year as part of a 2 year SPHE Plan. The sensitive areas are covered as part of these broad topics. Special arrangements exist for the delivery of the sensitive element from 4th class upwards. Teachers use assessment and professional judgement to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class. The programme will be adapted for children with SEN. Consultation with parents in advance will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

**Resources**

RSE Handbooks

Busy Bodies DVD

SPHE Curriculum Guidelines

1. **Parents Rights and Responsibilities**

The R.S.E. Programme will be delivered to support and complement the process already begun in the home. Parents must make themselves aware in advance of the content of the programme so that they can begin the process of informing their children in advance of school involvement. This may involve teaching specific agreed terminology and content about relationships and human development. The policy recognises the right of a parent to hold concerns about R.S.E. Programme. Where this applies the parent should discuss this with the principal and the teacher. Where concerns persist the school will facilitate a parent’s decision, while taking regard of the need of sensitivity towards the child.

1. **Classroom**

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the development of staff will be made by the principal. Normal class teaching will take place for most of the programme. With regard to the sensitive areas, parents will be notified in advance as to the timetabling of same. Parents are then given an opportunity to withdraw their children from these classes if they so wish. The sensitive areas are outlined on an accompanying sheet. With regard to the sensitive areas in the senior classes i.e. puberty, adolescence, conception and birth, it is the policy of the school to employ an outside speaker who will address the children during the third term of the school year or to use a pre-recorded presentation by a teacher in the school. The class teacher will remain with the class during the lesson. Children are given the opportunity to post any questions they may have in the class box and the outside speaker or teacher will answer all relevant questions. Teachers will use their professional judgement and discretion based on the content and spirit of the policy to decide whether to answer certain questions in the classroom context.

**The following policies support the RSE Programme**

* Child Safeguarding Statement
* Anti-Bullying Policy
* Code of Behaviour/Discipline Policy
* Admissions Policy
* Stay Safe Policy
* Acceptable Use Policy

1. **Confidentiality**

Teachers will deliver lessons in a spirit of respect for the rights of the children and their families concerning privacy and confidentiality.

1. **Provision for development and review**

Appropriate resources will be provided to support the delivery of the programme.

This policy was reviewed by the Principal, staff and BOM in September 2022 and will be reviewed every 2 years.

Tommy Cormican\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mary O’Rourke\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson Board of Management Principal

Date:26/09/2022