

# **RATHBARRY NATIONAL SCHOOL**

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education / Sensitive Issues Policy.**

### **A. SCHOOL :**

**Rathbarry National School, Castlefreke, Clonakilty, Co.Cork.**

Uimhir Rolla: 17715M

Phone no.: 023 – 8840651

**Category: Rural, Co-Educational**

**Enrolment: 32 (Sept 2010)**

### **B. SCHOOL ETHOS/PHILOSOPHY**

Rathbarry National School is a two teacher, co-educational school in West Cork under Catholic Management and the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross --- Bishop John Buckley.

In our School Mission Statement we commit ourselves to promoting the well being of all the pupils in our care by developing the spiritual, emotional and physical potential of each individual.

We strive towards developing the full potential of every child in communication, literacy, numeracy and relevant life skills.

### **C. DEFINITION OF R.S.E.**

Relationships and sexuality education (R.S.E.) 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.

### **D. RELATIONSHIP OF R.S.E. TO SOCIAL, PERSONAL, HEALTH EDUCATION (S.P.H.E.).**

All of the R.S.E. will be delivered within the context of S.P.H.E. which is timetabled on our curriculum.

S.P.H.E. provides opportunities for all pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

R.S.E. is an integral part of S.P.H.E. since it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, human growth and development, relevant personal and social skills and aspects of parenting. Furthermore central to R.S.E. is the fostering of self-esteem through which the pupil becomes more responsible in making choices and decisions in all aspects of life and particularly in those relating to sexuality and relationships.

Possible “sexually sensitive issues” will be covered within the strand units “Taking care of my body”, “Growing and changing” and “Safety and protection”.

A copy of the programme content, where there are “possible sensitive issues” with sexual connotations will be distributed to all parent(s)/ guardian(s) with a copy of the policy.

(Appendix 1)

## **E. CURRENT PROVISION IN THE SCHOOL**

At present we teach R.S.E. in Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) and use lessons from the Religious Education Programme (Alive-O), and Substance Misuse Programme (Walk Tall), Stay Safe Programme and RSE Programme.

We have a school Anti – Bullying policy.

## **F. THE AIMS OF OUR R.S.E. PROGRAMME:**

- ❖ To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- ❖ To help the child to develop healthy 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.

## **G. GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF R.S.E. IN RATHBARRY NATIONAL SCHOOL.**

**Parent(s) / Guardian(s) are the primary educators of their children and the school works in a supportive role.**

### **(a) Content of R.S.E.**

The S.P.H.E. curriculum and guidelines outline the content and methodology to be used in the teaching of R.S.E. programmes.

S.P.H.E. is covered over a two-year cycle.

R.S.E. will be delivered within the context of S.P.H.E., which has been timetabled on our curriculum since September '03. "Possible Sensitive issues" such as naming the body parts, sexual intercourse, will be covered within the strand units: "Taking care of my body" and "Growing and changing". All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave 6<sup>th</sup> class. An outline of the lessons will be available to parents if necessary before the commencement of the programme each year.

For 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class, if no staff member is available to teach the "sex education" lesson, an outside speaker from the H.S.E. will be engaged to deliver same.

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 pupils, the school will refer him/her to the parent(s) / guardian(s) and inform them that such a query was made.

When inviting a speaker to talk to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class children about the "possible sensitive issues" in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class curriculum the teachers will discuss the lesson and the resources being used beforehand with the speaker. A copy of the lesson content will be distributed to the parent(s) / guardian(s) prior to the meeting. It is the parent(s) / guardian(s) choice whether the child / children attend this class or not. Written notification of parent(s) / guardian(s)' decision is required by the Board of Management.

***(b) Resources***

We will use the S.P.H.E. curriculum , R.S.E. lessons, Walk Tall, North Western Health Board and the Stay Safe programmes and any other resource that are deemed suitable by the principal in consultation with a representative of the parents from the policy committee.

***(c) Parent(s) / Guardian(s)' rights and responsibilities***

Parent(s) / guardian(s) are acknowledged as primary educators of their children and we work in a supportive role. A parent(s) / guardian(s)' right to withdraw a pupil from the process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) / guardian(s) are taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to inform the school of this decision in writing.

Should a child / children who are withdrawn from the class receive inappropriate information from others it will be the responsibility of their parent(s) / guardian(s) to address the issues.

***(d) Teachers' rights and responsibilities***

Each class teacher will teach S.P.H.E. programme.

Teachers' have the right to opt out from teaching the "possible sensitive issues" and this will be honoured. If no member of staff is available to teach the "possible sensitive issues", arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme will be made by the Principal and an outside speaker will be engaged to deliver same.

As there are multi-grades in each classroom – Junior Infants to Second Class, Third Class to Sixth Class – the "possible sensitive issues" lessons will be taught to First and Second classes when the Infants will be gone home from school between 1.45pm. and 2.45 pm. These lessons will be taught during the last term when the children will be more mature.

In the senior room the Third and Fourth Class "possible sensitive issues" programme in as far as humanly possible will be completed by the end of Fourth Class.

The Fifth and Sixth Class "possible sensitive issues" programmes will be covered by inviting in a suitable guest speaker e.g. school nurse or a doctor to deliver the contents of the programme to the children in the presence of an adult.

***(e) Confidentiality***

We would hope that the children would be responsible enough not to discuss the "possible sensitive issues" content of the programme with the children in classes more junior than themselves.

We ask the children to respect the confidentiality of others in the class.

**H. ONGOING SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

The Board of Management will provide

- ❖ On going support and development for the teachers, and policy committee members
- ❖ Provide relevant R.S.E. resources
- ❖ Finance for the provision of a guest speaker

The programme will be evaluated regularly at the level of

- ❖ Pupils
- ❖ Teachers
- ❖ Board of Management
- ❖ Parents

This Policy and the R.S.E. programme will be reviewed 1 year after inception and every 2 years thereafter.

All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review.

R.S.E. resources will be reviewed to ensure they are kept up to date.

This policy was drawn up by the following Policy Committee:

- |  |     |                        |
|--|-----|------------------------|
| 1. Catriona Scally<br>Parents' representatives             | and | 2. Joseph Hodnett      |
| 3. Ann Twohig- Kearns<br>Teachers' representatives         | and | 4. Colette Barrett     |
| 5. Marian Cullinane<br>Board of Management representatives | and | 6. Marguerite Jennings |

Who met on the following occasions 18<sup>th</sup> May 2004 and 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2004.

This review took place in April 2007.

The following people were consulted:

Máire Áine Ní hAodha (School Development Planning Support)

Claire Bradley (Primary Curriculum Support Programme for S.P.H.E.)

The draft policy was circulated to parents, teachers and the school authorities by the Principal and amended where feasible.

The final document was reviewed and presented to the Board of Management on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2004.

This updated policy was ratified by the Board of Management on : \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson Board of Management  
Rathbarry National School.

This policy was reviewed and updated in Sept 2010.