



Powerstown Educate Together National School

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to assist teachers, pupils and parents in understanding the Relationship and Sexuality Education programme taught through the SPHE Curriculum.

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Our School Philosophy

To develop each child to their fullest potential morally, emotionally and educationally while welcoming and encouraging parents and teachers to actively become complementary factors in the education of each whole child.

Definition of RSE

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. Within the school, RSE will form an integral part of a wider programme, covering several core subject areas, which will be encompassed in the SPHE programme

What our school currently provides

Many of the strands of SPHE/RSE recommended by the Department of Education and Science are already in place within the school. Named below are a number of subject areas which fall into this category:

✓ Language Development

Language has a vital role to play in SPHE/RSE. It is important that a child be able to articulate her feelings and this is why Language Development is emphasised from day one. Topics of conversation include: Myself, My News, Friends, My Family.

✓ Learn Together

Several of the lessons in the LT Programme are based on the child as a person. Some examples of these include: I Am Unique, My Body, Resolving Conflicts, Growing.

✓ Social and Environmental Studies

This subject deals with a wide range of issues including: Personal Hygiene, Life Cycle, My Body.

✓ Gaeilge

Certain themes within the RSE programme already form part of the Irish curriculum, where familiar topics are discussed informally with the children, for example, My Body, Myself, My Family.

✓ Stay Safe Programme

This programme deals with many of the issues developed upon in the RSE syllabus, namely: the Development of Self-Esteem, My Body, and Self-Protection.

✓ Art and Craft

Through many of the varied Art and Craft activities the children already interpret and display an understanding of some of the information contained in the RSE programme, for example, making a Spring Frieze (introducing new life), Myself, Sense and Touch (My Body), Hand and Feet Prints (awareness of physical growth).

✓ Music, Movement and PE:

Through music, movement and PE the children become aware of the physical nature of their bodies and

various exercises are carried out within the classroom which develop upon the idea of physical growth, for example, Stay Safe Song, Lambs at Play (song), Physical Education.

✓ Science

As part of the science curriculum "the identification of the parts of the human body is included at each level of the primary programme" and "children will be helped to develop ideas about the human body, growth, movement and breathing ... the development of children's ideas about body changes and reproduction should be done in accordance with the school's policy on SPHE". (Science Curriculum Teacher Guidelines, Page 10). Our policy on RSE will also inform the teaching of the strand "Living Things" in Science.

As is apparent from the above, much of the RSE programme is already contained within today's curriculum. Many more examples exist, as the school currently provides a large number of programmes both formal and informal, which all come under the umbrella term SPHE.

The aims of our RSE 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 relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- ✓ To develop and promote in the child a sense of understanding at the process of birth and new life.
- ✓ That the child be able to identify external parts of the male and female body.
- ✓ That the child is able to articulate fluently information about herself, her thoughts, her ideas, her feelings and her attitudes.
- ✓ To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well being of others.
- ✓ To develop an awareness of differing family patterns.
- ✓ To develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

In SPHE and RSE parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school will work in partnership in a supportive role.

On enrolment in our school parents will be provided with an overview of the SPHE/RSE programme (parents' booklets available from Drumcondra Education Centre) and the list of possible sensitive issues.

The school will allocate a set 2 weeks per year whereby the "sensitive issues" of the RSE curriculum are taught. Parents will be provided with an outline of the lessons/sensitive issues

before they are taught, so that they can prepare the child before they are dealt with in school, if they so wish. Parents will also be provided with a timetable by class teacher detailing the days/times of lessons.

A parent's right to "**withdraw**" a pupil from the process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education. A minimum of fourteen days notice is given to parents in relation to the "sensitive areas" in the RSE curriculum.

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school in writing a minimum of 7 days before RSE lessons commence of their decision to withdraw and their willingness to cover sensitive issues with their child outside of school hours.

A child who has been withdrawn from class for the duration of a discrete SPHE lesson ***needs to be supervised by their parent/ guardian pending the completion of the lesson*** (approx 30minutes). The child will then return to class for the continuation of his/her school day.

If a child is withdrawn from the class for the teaching of sensitive issues we cannot guarantee that the other children will not inform them about what happened. The teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the issue at another time while that child is present.

Although we aim to set specific times for the teachings of RSE, parents/ guardians must be aware that these times can change at short notice due to reasons beyond our control. The school will notify parents as soon as possible of these time changes.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Each class teacher will teach the SPHE programme including the sensitive issues. Teachers will teach only the topics laid down for the class and will answer only those questions on the above programme for that year.

RSE will be taught in Junior Infants to Fourth Class. All information delivered will be informed by the content objectives of the SPHE Curriculum (see SPHE Curriculum Statement, page 10).

Possible Sensitive Issue SPHE – Infant Classes

Content Objectives from SPHE Curriculum Statement and Teaching Resource

The relationship aspect of RSE is covered right throughout SPHE as per our school plan with our pupils. The sexually sensitive issues for Junior Infants and Senior Infants are:

| Curriculum Guidelines | RSE Programme | |
|---|--|--|
| Taking Care of My Body | | |
| Curriculum Page 17 | | |
| Point 3: Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms to include penis and vulva. | Senior Infants Theme 7 "My Body", pages 148–156 | |
| Point 4: Explore and discuss the different things the body can do: move, feel, think, grow, heal | Junior Infant lesson 2,3,7,9 Senior Infant lesson 2,3,7,9 | |
| Growing and Changing | | |
| Curriculum Page 18 – New Life | | |
| Point 1: Become aware of new life and birth in the world. <i>New growth in springtime / Baby animals being born</i> | (Junior Infants) Theme 7 "New Life" pages 67-70. | |
| Point 2: Develop an awareness of human birth. <i>That a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born.</i> | RSE (Junior Infants) Theme 7 "New Life" pages 71-76. | |
| Safety and Protection | | |
| Curriculum Page 19 - Personal Safety | | |
| Point 2: Identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk – <i>being in a supervised playground, going on an outing with family; going into unfamiliar places –feeling unsafe with people, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes him/her feel uncomfortable.</i> | (Junior Infants) Theme 5 "People Who Teach Us About Keeping Safe", page 51 RSE (Senior Infants) Theme 4 "I Can Be Safe" page 123. | |

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| Point 3: Realise how other people can persuade him/her to engage in unsafe behaviour | | Stay Safe Programme |
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Possible Sensitive Issue 1st / 2nd class

| Curriculum Guidelines | RSE Programme | |
|---|---|---|
| Stay Safe Growing and Changing | | |
| Curriculum Page 28 – New Life | | |
| Point 1: Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle | 1 st Class Theme "The Wonder of New Life" page 59. | |
| Point 2: Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for newborn babies in both the animal and human world. Love, regular feeding, nappy changing, careful bathing, medical check-ups | | |
| Growing and Changing | | |
| Curriculum Page 28 - As I Grow I Change | | |
| Point 1: Begin to recognise the physical, emotional, social and spiritual factors that promote growth /love, food, warmth, shelter, communication, friendship, sleep./ | 1 st Class Theme 8 "Growing Means Changing" page 77. | |
| Point 2: Realise that growth takes place in many different ways and is unique to each individual | | |
| Point 3: realise that growing up brings increased responsibility for himself/herself and others | | |
| Safety and Protection | | |
| Page 30 - Personal Safety | | |
| Point 1: Recognise and explore situations where children feel safe and those where safety might be at risk. <i>Getting lost, being left alone, coming in contact with unsafe or unknown substances./ Being with people who make me feel unsafe</i> | Theme 4 "Keeping Safe" pages 40-47. | |
| Point 3: Inappropriate or unsafe touches, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes me feel uncomfortable). / | | Stay Safe Programme Explore how other people can |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | persuade a child to engage in unsafe behaviour and how this maybe counteracted. |
| Taking Care of My Body | | |
| Page 27 - Knowing About My Body | | |
| Point 3: Explore the various things the body can do, see, hear, move, breathe, make energy, feel, think | RSE 1st Theme 7 "How My Body Works" pages 68-75. | |
| Point 4: Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions – penis, vulva, and urethra. | | |
| Point 5: | | Stay Safe – Touches. |
| Note: At all stages in the RSE programme the correct terminology is used for body parts e.g penis, vulva, testicles etc. | | |
| For each lesson in the RSE programme a home/school letter is sent out to parents detailing the content of the lesson, areas covered and possible questions arising. It is the responsibility of the parent to familiarise themselves with the topics covered. Additional texts, dvds etc used in the school as part of the RSE programme are available for perusal on appointment in the school and parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the class teacher, RSE co-ordinator (Lorraine) or principal. | | |

Possible Sensitive Issues 3rd & 4th class

In the wonder of New Life section the arrival of a new baby is addressed. The umbilical cord as a feeding tube in the womb is discussed. If the question arises as to how the baby comes out the students will be informed that the baby exits through the vagina. Detailed descriptions of labour and birth are not necessary.

In the wonder of New Life section the growth of the embryo in the womb is addressed.

- Conception is not covered.

In the Growing and Changing section a very simple explanation of menstruation is given. Changes in shape, voice, body hair, skin and mood are also discussed.

Possible Sensitive Issue 5th and 6th class

Use is made of the Busy Bodies DVD and accompanying booklet in 5th and 6th class. The booklet is available for parents to download from www.crisispregnancy.ie/BusyBodies_eng.pdf

It deals with puberty for boys and girls.

In fifth class:

- Puberty is dealt with in “My Body grows and changes”,
- Conception is dealt with in “The Wonder of New Life”
- The growth of an embryo is discussed in “Caring for New Life”.

In Sixth Class these areas are revisited in the RSE sections, “Growing & Changing”, Relationships and New Life”, A Baby is a Miracle”.

Before these lessons are covered in school, a Home School Links sheet is sent home informing the parents what is to be covered. Materials in use in the school are available for viewing on appointment or the school may hold an open morning to allay parents' apprehensions.

RSE Lessons

- At all stages in the RSE programme the correct terminology is used for body parts e.g penis, vulva, testicles etc
- For each lesson in the RSE programme a home/school letter is sent out to parents detailing the content of the lesson, areas covered and possible questions arising. It is the responsibility of the parent to familiarise themselves with the topics covered. Additional texts, DVDs etc used in the school as part of the RSE programme are available for perusal on appointment in the school and parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the class teacher, RSE co-ordinator (Lorraine) or principal.

Sources and Resources

We will use the RSE and the Stay Safe Programmes and other resources that are deemed suitable by the Principal/SPHE co-ordinator.

We may also invite other visitors such as a mother, father and new baby when teaching certain aspects. The content of the visitor's talk will be discussed and agreed by the class teacher in advance of the visit. These adults may be invited to talk and be questioned by the pupils. The teacher will be present and will oversee the delivery of the visitor's talk at all times.

Answering Questions

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:

- not give such information;
- refer him/her to the parents.

Privacy

Everyone has a right to privacy (see Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child). Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature which they do not wish to share.

Provision for Ongoing Support, Development and Review

Where necessary or if opportunities arise, the BOM may be requested to fund/support:

- In-career development for teachers
- Training for parents organised by the Parents' Association

Any future reviews of the policy will involve possible changes/comments and suggestions added to present policy. Then it will be circulated to parents, teachers and the BOM by the Principal and amended when consensus has been reached by all parties. The final agreed policy will be presented to the BOM, ratified by them, circulated to all parties involved and implemented.

This policy and the RSE programme will be reviewed after two years and thereafter as necessary. All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review. RSE resources will also be reviewed to ensure they are kept up to date.

All relevant RSE school resources will be available to both teachers and parents.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in PETNS

- The RSE policy will be implemented in this school from September 2013.
- Lesson plans will be based on the NCCA curriculum guidelines.
- Any parent who does not wish their child to participate in the RSE programme/individual lesson topics will need to supervise their child for the duration of the lesson.
- Parents enrolling their child in Powerstown Educate Together School will be advised to familiarise themselves with the SPHE Policy which will be available in the office.
- Curriculum lessons for a specific class will be strictly adhered to by that class, as advised.

Ratification

Ratified by the Board of Management of Powerstown Educate Together School.



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Appendix 1: RSE Withdrawal Letter

Child's Name: _____

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

I wish to withdraw my child from the sensitive issues taught in the Relationship and Sexuality Education Curriculum.

I am taking responsibility to cover the sensitive issues with my child outside of school hours.

I understand that the school cannot guarantee that the other children will not inform my child about what happened. I am aware that the teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the sensitive issues at another time while that child is present.

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENT COPY RSE WITHDRAWAL

Child's Name: _____

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

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Parent signature: _____ Date: _____