

# **Scoil San Carlo Senior National School**

## **Draft Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy 2019**

### **School Details**

San Carlo Senior School is a co-educational primary school in Leixlip Co. Kildare. A total of 275 pupils attend the school from third to sixth. The school is run by a Board of Management under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

### **Introductory Statement**

All schools are required to have an RSE policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including the sensitive aspects. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally. The first RSE policy was developed in 2006 with a committee, revised in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and again in 2019 (due to guideline changes).

### **School Philosophy**

The school ethos is one which values and respects the contribution of the entire school community. It sets out to promote close working relations between teachers, management and parents all of whom work together for the benefit of the children. The school provides a curriculum and working atmosphere to help each child develop his/her potential to the full. The school community believes in the holistic development of the child- academic, social, spiritual, psychological and emotional, recognising that each child is unique with a history and background that is also unique and that it is the pupil's right to have access to the entire range of education which the school provides. The school recognises that the parents are the primary educators of their children and supports them in that role.

Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The curriculum also encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and wider community.

Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that we value respect, tolerance and openness through the lived experience of the children and school community. Parents have the primary role in the social, personal and Health education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting our school and children to develop into healthy young adults.

In formulating and RSE policy there is collaboration between teachers, parents and management. This is represented in the RSE Policy Committee.

### **Definition of SPHE**

'Social personal and health education (SPHE) provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child, to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society' (SPHE Curriculum Statement pg 2)

## **Definition of RSE**

“RSE is an important part of the education of young people, and schools provide a safe context within which young people can learn about themselves and the wider world. This makes access to RSE in schools all the more important”. (Mayock, Kitching and Morgan; 2007).

This policy was developed within the context of both the NCCA’s and the Department’s guideline’s definitions and is in line with the SPHE curriculum.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In particular, it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant to social and personal skills.

## **Relationship of RSE to SPHE**

RSE is an integral part of SPHE. SPHE is taught through school atmosphere and culture, integration and discreet teaching time. Formal RSE lessons and informal RSE messages must be consistent with the whole school approach to SPHE.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for 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.

SPHE:

- Is a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and it not confined to once-off inputs or lessons
- Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community
- RSE education should include an input from all, and collaboration can be fostered through the teaching and delivery of materials
- Is a generic approach. It is not so much about the specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child’s skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues
- Is based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements and individual school situations
- Is spiral in nature. RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child’s time in school, this will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children’s’ needs, abilities and levels of maturity
- Engages children to be involved in activity based learning. RSE should provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one’s own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships.

Through SPHE and RSE, members of the school community should be enabled to enhance their sense of well-being and self-esteem through;

- A sense of identity
- A sense of purpose
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of security
- A sense of competence.

The school has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free from bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with ( SPHE Teacher Guideline, p.25). In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an inter-cultural society.

### **Current provision included in the school curriculum is:**

- SPHE lessons (provided through discreet curricular time and integration)
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Making the Links and Beyond Resource PDST
- WebWise Resources
- All Together Now – **Homophobic and Transphobic bullying lessons**
- RESPECT Guidelines (suggested approaches to teaching about different families)
- Adapted resources for SEN from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)
- Religious Education
- Weaving Wellbeing Programme
- Nurture Room – (specific to needs of the children)

### **Aims of RSE**

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing 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.

### **Broad Objectives**

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should enable the child to (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum)

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.
- Develop and appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.

- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendship and in wider contexts.
- Develop an awareness and understanding of differing family patterns.
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity.
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- Develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse and acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

We support the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the wellbeing of all of the members of the school community

### **Policies which support SPHE/ RSE**

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Discipline and Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy

### **Management and Organisation:**

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and will be taught in this context (see school SPHE Plan). The curriculum is spiral in nature (i.e. similar content is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time at school) and all content will be delivered developmentally throughout the child's time in the primary school. RSE-specific education (or core RSE education) will be covered in the strand units '*Taking Care of my Body*', '*Growing and Changing*' and '*Safety and Protection*'

The strands Taking Care of my Body and Growing and Changing are covered in Year Two of a 2 year SPHE plan i.e. 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes

- The sensitive lessons are covered as part of these broad topics (as outlined below and see appendix 1)
- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

## Language

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Therefore we will give children the correct and appropriate language as outlined in RSE Resource Materials.

## Parental Involvement

- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme at enrolment.
- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level, example of letter see Appendix 2.
- The letter will be issued in advance, giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teachers if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children, it also gives parents an opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE.
- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Following discussion with Principal and Class Teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be centrally filed.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons. e.g. What they may hear on yard.

## Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from 3rd to 6th class. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

Myself
Growing and changing
Taking care of my body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

- 1) The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE
  - Friendship
  - Self-identity
  - Family
  - Self-esteem
  - Growing up

The second section will deal with any sensitive / specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are **in bold**.

Topics from 3rd to 6th include:

- **Bodily changes**
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise

- Keeping safe
- Expressing feelings
- Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family relationships shape us
  - Making healthy and responsible decisions
  - Forming friendships
  - **Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (4th class)**
  - **Introduction to puberty and changes (4<sup>th</sup> and 6th class)**
  - **Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (6th Class)**
  - **Reproductive system of male/female adults (6th class)**
  - **Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (6th class).**

### **Ongoing Support, Development and Review**

Where opportunities arise, in-career development will be sought for teachers. The Parents' Association may be able to access training for parents.

Policy and programme will be reviewed the year after implementation and updated every year thereafter. All the partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review.

## Appendix 1 Sensitive Lessons

- Bodily changes
- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (4th class)
- Introduction to puberty and changes (4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Reproductive system of male/female adults (6<sup>th</sup> class)
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (6<sup>th</sup> class).

## Appendix 2 Letter Home



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Roll No: 19875V | Principal: Seán Ó Casaide | Deputy Principal: Clare MacHugh

4<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians

In line with the Department of Education guidelines and best practice, there will be a change in the implementation of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme in Scoil San Carlo S.N.S. this year. Rather than relying on outside agencies to deliver the programme, the programme will be taught by class teachers. This will begin shortly after the Easter holidays. A consent form will be distributed before the lessons begin.

For this year 2019, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes will participate. In future years the programme will be conducted in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes while the Stay Safe Programme will be taught in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes. It is strongly recommended that Parents/Guardians familiarise themselves with the resource materials the teachers will use so they can discuss the topics covered with their own child. Links to the resource materials are available on the school website [www.scoilsancarlo.ie](http://www.scoilsancarlo.ie) under the useful links tab on the left hand side of the home page. **As this material is sensitive in nature we would request that pupils do not access this information without adult supervision.**

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes will discuss the following themes from the 4<sup>th</sup> class R.S.E. Programme.

Theme 6	The wonder of new life
Theme 8	Growing and changing.

6<sup>th</sup> classes will discuss the following themes from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class resources

5 <sup>th</sup> class	Theme 6	My body grows and changes
	Theme 7	The wonder of new life
	Theme 8	Caring for new life
6 <sup>th</sup> class	Theme 6	Growing and changing
	Theme 7	Relationships and new life
	Theme 8	A baby is a miracle
	Busy Bodies Booklet and video clips	

All topics will be dealt with sensitively and in accordance with the Primary School SPHE curriculum. If topics beyond the prescribed curriculum are raised the pupils will be requested to discuss these particular issues with parents/guardians or informed that these particular issues may be discussed at a later stage in the child's school career.

If you wish to discuss or clarify any issues, please feel free to make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher.

Le gach dea ghúí

Seán Ó Casaide  
Principal.