**RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY FOR DUNHILL NATIONAL SCHOOL**

**A. SCHOOL**

Category: 7 Teacher - 5 Classroom Teachers, 1 Part-Time

Resource Teacher and 1 Special Education Needs

Teacher

Enrolment: 121

**B. OUR SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

We are a Catholic Primary school. We recognise the uniqueness of each child and we strive to nurture in every child all the dimensions of his/her life – spiritual, moral, cognitive, creative, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical whilst taking into account each individual child’s personality, intelligence and potential for development.

**C. DEFINITION OF RSE**

RSE is the process by which the school, together with the parent/s, develop in children, knowledge and understanding, attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy, within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

**D. RELATIONSHIP OF RSE TO SPHE**

All of RSE will be delivered within the context of SPHE (SOCIAL, PERSONAL & HEALTH EDUCATION), which has been timetabled on our Curriculum from September, 2003. SPHE is the process which enables children to develop an understanding of themselves. It helps them to choose and follow a healthy lifestyle and enables them to play responsible roles as individuals and members of society.

RSE is situated within SPHE, but it deals with specific aspects of SPHE such as

- human growth and development

- human sexuality

- parenting

- personal and social skills

- relationships

**E. PROVISION OF RSE IN DUNHILL N.S.**

There are 3 different ways that RSE can be provided

- Whole school atmosphere

- Cross Curricular approach – Science / Grow in Love

- Core teaching time

**F. THE AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME**

***Our aim with regard to relationship education would be***

- to develop in children healthy attitudes to relationships and friendships

- to enable children to recognise and to know how to cope with disharmony

- to help children understand the changing nature of relationships

- to help children in making informed decisions and choices in their relationships

- to help children recognise their own self-worth and that of others.

- to help children improve their skills of communication and social interaction

- to help pupils acquire and use appropriate vocabulary to discuss their own feelings

- to develop coping skills in children which would enable them to deal with change within themselves

- to help children appreciate the role of mother, father or guardian in parenting

***Our aims with regard to sex education***

- As a staff we feel that parents are the prime educators of their children. In an ideal world we feel that children should hear 'the facts of life' from their own parents. Parents are, in law and in fact, the primary educators and home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place.

- Our school has a role to play in supporting and complementing the work of the home in this task. We will facilitate the children of 5th/6th classes to increase their own understanding of human sexuality.

While recognising and respecting people's right to different beliefs, it will be

the policy of this school to nurture Catholic values in relation to love, marriage,

parenthood and family life.

- To provide sufficient educational opportunity to help the children of 5th/6th class to make appropriate decisions on sexual matters based on factual information within a moral and spiritual framework.

- To increase knowledge of anatomy and physiology (growing and changing) and explain the basis for the feelings that accompany growing up and the period of adolescence.

- To give information that will protect the child against possible abuse or exploitation.

- To assist children in developing the skills necessary to assess and cope with sexual stimuli contained in advertisements and the media.

By far the most contentious area of the programme is the section that deals with the sexuality.

Parents/Guardians have a right to withdraw their children from the sexually sensitive issues of the Curriculum and we acknowledge this right. This applies to the parents/guardians of children in all classes.

***WHAT THE PROGRAMME PROPOSES***

- It is envisaged that in **Infants** Children should be able to name all the parts of the male and female body.

Content Pages in National School Curriculum – Pages 17 & 18

- In **1st & 2nd** class they will be taught the names and parts of their body and their function. They will also become familiar with the concept of the life cycle of certain plants and animals.

Content Pages in National School Curriculum – Pages 27 - 29

- In **3rd and 4th** class the programme discusses the stages and development of a human baby from conception to birth.

Content Pages in National School Curriculum – Pages 39 - 42

- In **5th and 6th** class it is proposed that children be enabled to identify and explore the physical changes that occur in males and females with the onset of puberty. They will become familiar with the reproductive system of both male and female. They will understand how sexual intercourse, conception and birth take place within the context of a ‘committed relationship'*.* They will recognise the physical changes as part of the ongoing process of growth and development which is common for everyone.

Content Pages in National School Curriculum – Pages 55 - 58

***THE PRESENT POSITION re SEXUALITY EDUCATION***

We feel that the children ***in 5th and 6th class only*** should be exposed to the explicit sexuality of the programme.

**A Sex Education Programme for 5th/6th class children** is in place in Dunhill N.S. An outside speaker, who is a counsellor, speaks with the children. The parents permission is sought as to whether they would like their children to be taught the 'Facts of Life' in accordance with Catholic teaching.

Parents who wish to withdraw their children from this class during RSE are thus responsible for their child’s education in this area.

It is important to note that the school is not responsible for inappropriate information that the child receives from another child.

Other resources that we intend to use

* Busy Bodies
* Department of Education Publication – Resource Materials for RSE
* The Stay Safe Programme

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in December, 2016.