



St. Louise de Marillac Primary School

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Our School Philosophy

St. Louise de Marillac Primary School is a Catholic school and therefore all policies developed are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school.

We in St. Louise's Primary School commit ourselves to value and respect each child in a happy and safe learning environment. The school, with the co-operation and support of the family, encourages each child to grow in confidence and self-esteem and actively seeks the development of his/ her full potential.

A Definition of RSE

RSE is an ongoing process, whereby teachers and parents provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in a way that will help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

RSE is an integral part of the larger Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum 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 enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In St. Louise's School our work with the children will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and for others and providing them with age-appropriate information reflecting our Catholic ethos. We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children in the area of RSE and our school aims to support the parents' work in this important task.

RSE within SPHE and our Current Provision in this Area

The school's Catholic ethos will inform the teaching of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme and it will be delivered to the children by their class teacher. The class teacher is responsible for the teaching of RSE as part of the weekly 30 minute SPHE lesson. The content of the RSE programme covers the following themes:

- Myself and my identity
- Myself, family and friends
- Feelings and emotions
- Choices
- Physical growth
- New life

Social, Personal and Health Education provides opportunities for the children to learn personal and social skills which foster self-confidence and self esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

The SPHE Plan is available on the server, the school website/blog and in hard copy in the staffroom and parents' room. We are currently covering the following topics through the use of programmes and initiatives such as the RSE Programme, Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall, Grow in Love, HSE Busy Bodies, Botvin's Lifeskills, Friends for Life, Roots of Empathy, Physical Education, Health Education and Social Environmental Studies:

- Healthy Living
- Bullying/Cyber bullying
- Peer Pressure
- Developing Safety Strategies
- Developing Resilience
- Environmental Issues
- Smoking/alcohol and drug mis-use
- Moral Education / Spirituality
- Communicating, Sharing and Co-operating

- Developing Empathy for Others
- Body changes for boys and girls at puberty including information on periods
- How babies are made (the male and female body parts are included in this element of the programme)

The Aim of our RSE Programme

In St. Louise's we aim to provide all the pupils with the information on the RSE programme that is age-appropriate. We will do this while keeping within the guidelines laid down by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in its RSE programme, while reflecting at all times the Catholic ethos of the school.

Our Primary Aims are:

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To help children understand that they have choices and can make choices
- To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing
- 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 acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- To encourage openness to factual and correct information about themselves and accept that they will receive the appropriate information suitable to their age as they move from class to class
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of new life
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of acceptance and tolerance of minority fringe groups in the community e.g. travellers, refugees

- To assist parents in their role as primary educators so that they may guide their children's development
- To acknowledge the important role of our teachers in the imparting of the RSE programme.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our Schools

1. Confidentiality

The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and other pupils in the class.

2. Parents' Rights and Responsibilities

The parent's role and responsibility for their child must be respected. Parents will have been informed that RSE is part of the school SPHE curriculum. The programme is not a substitute but a support for work with their children.

a) Parents' Rights

Parents have a right to be fully consulted and informed about the RSE Programme, to freely express their wishes about the content and timing of the programme and to withdraw their child from instruction in class if they so wish. However, as it is a core part of the recognised SPHE programme as set down by the DES, there will be no alternative supervision offered by the school.

This will be dealt with as sensitively and as confidentially as possible without embarrassment to parent or child.

b) Parents' Responsibility

Parents have a responsibility to inform themselves about what is being taught in school in order that they can co-operate with what the teachers are teaching, to listen to their children and to discuss the content of RSE lessons with him/her as appropriate.

3. Visiting Speakers

Where appropriate, visiting speakers may be invited to talk to the children. In this event, parents will receive prior notification and may be invited to attend if it is deemed appropriate and should they wish to do so. Care will be taken to ensure that all visiting speakers will be professional and familiar with the RSE policy of St. Louise's School. Class teachers will be present in the classroom while a guest speaker delivers a talk.

4. Sensitive Issues

Our programme will adhere to the Department of Education and Skills guidelines when dealing with sensitive issues. It may arise that all of the children are not ready for a classroom treatment of some issues. However, it is envisaged that all sensitive issues as per guidelines will be dealt with before the end of a child's primary schooling.

Provision for Ongoing Support, Development and Review

While the school recognises that the Department of Education and Skills is currently not providing funding for further in-service training for teachers, we will endeavour to provide development opportunities for the staff in the form of courses, visiting speakers and the provision of adequate resources when resources allow.

We will encourage and support the Home School Liaison Teacher in any undertaking to provide educational opportunities for parents. The policy will be monitored and assisted on an ongoing basis by the partners involved.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year cycle of review in the school year 2020-2021.

Signed: *Sr. Claire McKiernan*

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: November 2017