

SCOIL MHÁIRTÍN

KILWORTH

Co. CORK

(025) 27446

**RELATIONSHIPS AND
SEXUALITY EDUCATION
(R.S.E.)
POLICY**

R.S.E. DRAFT POLICY

KILWORTH JUNIOR & ST. MARTIN'S SENIOR SCHOOLS

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name: Scoil Mháirtín **Phone No.:** (025) 27446

Address: Kilworth, Co. Cork.

Category: Catholic.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

This Policy Statement is an approved approach to the teaching of R.S.E. in Scoil Mháirtín, Kilworth. It was developed by the Schools R.S.E. Policy Committee which included 2 teachers (*Eileen O'Keeffe & Eileen Bracken*), 2 representatives of the Boards of Management (*Olga O'Sullivan & Eugene Roche*) and 2 parent representatives (*Christine Dobson & Deirdre Kenneally*). It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the R.S.E. programme within S.P.H.E.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Scoil Mháirtín is a **Catholic** school and therefore all policies developed are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the ethos of the school. The ethos of the school is characterised by the following:

- Sensitive to reality of our children's lives in a changing world*
- Mutual respect between all partners in education*
- Child-centred*
- Aims to ensure each child reaches full potential in the holistic sense*
- Hopes that children are equipped with high self-esteem to enable them to go on to live happy and fulfilled lives*

DEFINITION OF R.S.E.

R.S.E. aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way within a social framework (*p.4 Going Forward Together Parents Information Booklet*).

RELATIONSHIP OF R.S.E. TO S.P.H.E.

Social, Personal and Health Education contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development (*p.5 Going Forward Together Parents Information Booklet*).

CURRENT PROVISION

Included in both schools curriculum is:

- Religious Education (Alive O)
- S.P.H.E.
- H.S.E. School Support Services, e.g. School Nurse, Dental Hygienist, etc.

AIMS OF OUR R.S.E. PROGRAMME

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to relationships
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child
- 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

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF R.S.E. IN OUR SCHOOLS

Curriculum Matters:

- Curriculum Content – the curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught in Infants to 6th class. It will be taught by the teaching staff, -or- an outside speaker will address the “sexually sensitive issues”, i.e. puberty, stages of baby in the womb, reproductive system, conception, birth and sexual intercourse, at 5th & 6th classes. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of both schools and the policy.
- In a multi-class situation, the younger class will be withdrawn when topics being taught are not age-appropriate.
- When an outside speaker is used, the class teacher is responsible for making them aware of school policy and that teacher will sit in during the lesson.

Organisational Matters:

- If children are withdrawn, they will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom.
- With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom.
- Any teacher has the right to opt out from teaching the sexually sensitive issues in R.S.E. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be taught to the children by another teacher or an outside speaker.
- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.

Dealing with Questions:

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics will not be discussed, i.e. abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception. Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and policy. Any questions asked by the children that are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature to themselves or discloses personal information.

PROVISION FOR ONGOING SUPPORT

- Parents welcome to view curriculum if they wish
- Regular contact with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving "*sensitive issues*" in the form of the home/school link page accompanying such lessons in the R.S.E. Resource Books **-or-** contact will be made with parents prior to the address by the outside speaker.
- "*Going Forward Together*" booklet will be given to parents of Junior Infants at enrolment.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed after the initial 2 year period has passed by the R.S.E. Policy Committee, and every 2 years thereafter. This policy will also be reviewed should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made by the R.S.E. Policy Committee.

R.S.E. LANGUAGE & THEMES

Social, Personal and Health education “*provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the child and to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society*” (S.P.H.E. Teacher Guidelines, p.2).

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an important part of S.P.H.E. Relationships and Sexuality Education aims to help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships and to promote an understanding of and a healthy attitude towards human sexuality and relationships. The themes relating specifically to sexuality are only a small part of the S.P.H.E. programme. Perhaps some of the language used in these lessons may be of concern to some parents. To alleviate any fears you may have, we have compiled a list of specific vocabulary which is used in each of the classes and the objectives they relate to in the S.P.H.E. curriculum.

We expect that this factual information is delivered to the children in a sensitive, healthy and relaxed manner, with the view to awaken in each child a sense of wonder of themselves and others.

INFANTS

The theme of new life is dealt with, which relates to nature and family, e.g. new life in spring, pets and family (*R.S.E. Teaching Materials, p. 68-76*).

Taking care of my body – covers personal hygiene and self-awareness (*R.S.E. Teaching Materials, p. 148-156*).

Vocabulary Introduced:

born	womb		
penis	vulva/vagina	breasts	
breastfed	little seed	- 9 months in womb	

Relevant Objectives from S.P.H.E. Curriculum

The child should be enabled to:

- ❖ develop an awareness of human birth
that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother’s womb until ready to be born
(S.P.H.E. Curriculum – Infants – p.18)
- ❖ name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms
(S.P.H.E. Curriculum – Infants – p.17)

Relevant Objectives from S.P.H.E. Curriculum

The child should be enabled to:

- ❖ discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth
(S.P.H.E. Curriculum – 3rd & 4th classes – p.41)
- ❖ understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body
(growing height and weight, increasing strength growing from boy to man, growing from girl to woman)
(S.P.H.E. Curriculum – 3rd & 4th classes – p.39)

Given the sensitive nature of the above topics and vocabulary, the committee decided that initially the boys and girls would be given the information separately.

FIFTH AND SIXTH CLASSES

Themes developed include “My Body Grows and Changes”, “The Wonder of New Life” and “Caring For New Life” (*R.S.E. Teaching Materials, p. 82-92 & 94-101*).

Themes covered include “Growing and Changing”, “Relationships and New Life” and “A Baby is a Miracle” (*R.S.E. Teaching Materials, p. 184-197, 200-208 & 210-219*).

Vocabulary Introduced: ovaries fallopian tubes uterus cervix

 testicles scrotum sperm production

 erection wet dreams conception

 adolescence responsibilities

Relevant Objectives from S.P.H.E. Curriculum

The child should be enabled to:

- ❖ identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone.

Female:

hormonal changes, changing body shape, development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, onset of menstruation (periods)

Male:

hormonal changes, physical growth, enlargement of testicles and penis, appearance of pubic, underarm and facial hair, breaking of the voice, beginning of sperm production, onset of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)

- ❖ understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults

(S.P.H.E. Curriculum – 5th & 6th classes – p.56)

- ❖ understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship

- ❖ discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent, and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent

(preparing for the birth of the baby, taking care of offspring from birth onwards, emotional, psychological and practical provisions)

(S.P.H.E. Curriculum – 5th & 6th classes – p.58)

RATIFICATION:

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 30/04/07.