

# Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy of Knockminna N.S.

## ***Introduction***

R.S.E. Means ‘Relationships and Sexuality Education’. It is part of Social, Personal and Health Education. (S.P.H.E.)

The sensitive issues to be taught in this programme are as follows:

- ✓ Naming body parts
- ✓ Puberty
- ✓ Menstruation
- ✓ Sexual Intercourse

This policy has been developed in partnership with parents, teaching staff and Board of Management representatives of Knockminna N.S. who formed an R.S.E. committee. Representation by a parent came about by democratic decision. They were joined by a volunteer from the B.O.M. and the school principal. The policy was formulated over a period of 3 meetings. Each body represented was informed of decisions reached by the R.S.E. committee. The policy was originally ratified by the Board of Management on 08.09.2004. It was reviewed again most recently by the class teachers in November 2018 following Ms McDonagh’s attendance at an R.S.E. course in Sligo Education Centre.

## ***Original Committee Members:***

Teacher Representative: Mrs. Louise King (Principal)  
B.O.M. Representative : Mr. Bertie Langton  
Parents’ Representative: Ms. Patricia Cawley

## ***Rationale***

An R.S.E. policy is a vital part of the school plan, as a structured approach is needed to develop the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs and practical skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships as children and subsequently, as adults.

It is also part of the S.P.H.E. curriculum which has been implemented from September 2003. R.S.E is an integral part of this curriculum and indeed of daily living, right throughout life.

## ***Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School***

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Mission Statement of Knockminna N.S. which states that ‘ Knockminna N.S., is a small, rural, co-educational, Catholic primary school which aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of all those who attend and work in this school’. The teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education clearly plays a huge role in fulfilling this statement.

### **Aims:**

- ✓ R.S.E. is part of the general aim of education which is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure.
- ✓ To foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
- ✓ To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
- ✓ To provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

### ***Policy Content:***

#### **Educational:**

1. All of the R.S.E. programme will be delivered within the context of the S.P.H.E. curriculum which will be timetabled for a half an hour per week in our school. It is however, at the discretion of the class teacher to decide, whether a block of time would be more suitable for delivering certain aspects of the R.S.E. programme with their particular group.
2. The sensitive issues mentioned in the introductory statement of this policy will be dealt with under the S.P.H.E. strand units 'Taking care of my body' and 'Growing and changing'. These strand units will be taught every second year in keeping with the layout of the S.P.H.E. curriculum.

#### **Management and Organisation:**

1. The Sensitive Issues
  - Naming Body Parts – will be dealt with in the infant and 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> classes. The following words are the ones to be used by the class teacher during a suitable lesson eg: bathtime : -

*Penis*

*Vagina*

*Womb*

*Umbilical Cord*

*Urine*

*Urethra*

*Anus*

*Faeces*

*Breastfeeding*

- Puberty – will be mostly dealt with in 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> class except for the following sections which will be deferred to 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class: -

***Mood Changes***

***Interest in the opposite sex***

***Menstruation***

- Sexual Intercourse - will be dealt with in 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class
2. Teachers have the right to opt out from the teaching of the sensitive issues and this will be honoured. If no member of staff is available to teach the sensitive issues, the Board of Management of the school must arrange for this education to be provided. A suitable guest speaker may be invited in to deliver the contents of the programme to the senior classes. At present, the teaching staff are happy to provide the relevant education.
  3. Parents are acknowledged as primary educators of their children and school plays a supporting role. A parent therefore has a right to withdraw a pupil from delivery of all or some of the sensitive issues. The parent however, must then take full responsibility for this aspect of their child/children's education themselves and the school will require this undertaking in writing. Parents are responsible for the withdrawal and supervision of their child at the particular times in which the sensitive issues of the R.S.E. curriculum are being delivered and will be notified by the teacher of these.
  4. If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive R.S.E. 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 the yard etc.
  5. All content objectives will be covered by the time children leave 6<sup>th</sup> class.
  6. Should children ask questions requiring information that is not in line with the curriculum content, the teacher involved will answer the child as sensitively as possible and in an age appropriate manner. This may entail referring the child to their parents/guardians to deal with the query.
  7. An outline of the lessons will be available to parents before commencing the R.S.E. programme each year. Parents will be informed of this fact and also given their chance at this stage to opt out, if they so wish. They may also request to view the lessons in more detail by making an appointment to see the class teacher involved.

### ***Resources:***

Resource materials which we use to teach Relationships and Sexuality Education include:

- ✓ R.S.E. Manuals
- ✓ Busy Bodies Resources
- ✓ Stay Safe Programme
- ✓ Walk Tall Programme
- ✓ Webwise Resources
- ✓ R.E. Programmes
- ✓ Adapted Resources for S.E.N. from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)
- ✓ Anatomical Dolls

### ***Review:***

This policy document will be reviewed after every two year cycle of the S.P.H.E. curriculum has been completed. All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review.

Re-ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: