

SCOIL NÁUSIÚNTA MUIRE NA nGAEL

BAY ESTATE, DUNDALK.

RELATIONSHIP & SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY.

UIMHIR ROLLA: 19598V.

Phone: 042-9336158

MISSION STATEMENT

Scoil Mhuire Na nGael is a co-educational Catholic primary school where children of other religions are equally welcome.

We strive to provide a well ordered, happy and secure atmosphere where the self esteem of each child will be enhanced and the educational, spiritual, moral and cultural needs of each child identified and developed with compassion, enthusiasm and due regard for the child's individuality.

We work in partnership with parents and the community to empower our pupils to live in and contribute to a rapidly changing society, and to act as responsible, independent and later, self sufficient adults, who care about others and the environment.

Ethos:

Scoil Mhuire na nGael is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere, where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, mortal and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and nurtured.

While Scoil Mhuire na nGael is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for other religions.

We will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for themselves and for others based on Christian values.

We support the role of our parents and carers, as the primary educators, in their efforts to teach our students about relationships and sexuality, which will help them, think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

RSE as part of Social Personal and Health Education aims to help children learn at Home and in school about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work is based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information.

RSE 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.

Relationship to SPHE

All of the RSE will be delivered within the context of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) which is timetabled on our Curriculum. SPHE is spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology. The RSE programme is designed this principle and pattern.

Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills – all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

RSE specific context will be covered in the Strand Units; taking care of my body, growing and changing and safety and protection

The aims of RSE

- To enhance personal development, self-esteem and well being 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 help the child understand and develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
- To develop and promote in the children a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- To enable the children to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and other while growing and developing.
- The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on any aspects of sexual behaviour

Management and Organisation of RSE in S.M.G:

Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the teachers will work in a supportive role in delivering the RSE curriculum. A developmental approach will be adopted in this curriculum area and teaching about relationships and sexuality will be delivered. in the context of S.P.H.E. All content objectives will be taught developmentally by the time the children leave 6th class. All issues will be discussed with sensitivity, professionalism and awareness of the varying levels of development within the class.

Possible sensitive issues such as naming the body parts and sexual intercourse will be covered with the Strand Units "Taking care of my body", "Growing and changing", and "Safety and protection".

Class Specific Content

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Not being familiar with the biological terms for the body can put children at a disadvantage. Therefore we will give the correct and appropriate language as outlined in RSE Resource materials (appendices):

JNR/SNR infants

- The term womb and navel will be taught,
- The term penis and vagina will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy/girl.
- The term “breast feeding” may be used in conversation as means for feeding a baby.

1st/2nd Classes

- Penis, vagina, womb and urethra will be taught/revised in terms of passing urine.
- Teachers will teach that baby is in the womb for 9 months and may be breast or bottle fed.

3rd/4th Classes

- Developing foetus and menstruation.
- Nutrition in the womb and the function of the umbilical cord.
- Good nutrition – Mother needs to eat healthy to look after the baby.
- Taking care with medicines, alcohol and smoke environments – mother should avoid all of these as some of the medicine alcohol could travel through the umbilical cord to the baby.
- Ways that family members can help – Helping a mother who is expecting.
- Travel/Work – Letting pregnant women have a seat on public transport.
- Exercise – Mother needs to stay healthy and exercise.
- Medical checkups – Mother who is expecting goes to the doctor regularly.
- After 9 months the baby is born.
- Menstruation and puberty for 4th class only – changes in body shape, voice changes, body hair, hormones, penis, and breasts.

Most common question: How did the baby get out of the Mammy?

Answer to be given: Through an opening in the Mammy’s body called the vagina.

5th/6th Classes

5th class

- Different kinds of friends
- Feelings and Emotions – psychological and emotional changes during puberty
- My body grows and changes – Puberty, physical changes in girls and boys, sperm, semen, testicles, scrotum, erection, wet dreams, female reproduction, ovaries, fallopian tubes, womb/uterus, cervix, menstruation.
- The wonder of new life – how the sperm and egg meet.
- Caring for new life

6th class

- Puberty
- Different kinds of love
- Keeping safe and healthy – virus, bacteria and AIDS
- Feelings and emotions – psychological and emotional changes during puberty.
- Growing and changing – what age must I be....
- Relationships and new life – male reproduction and sexual intercourse in the context of a committed loving relationship. This will be taught using the language outlined in DES RSE resource Materials for 5th/6th classes.
- Caring for new life.

Special Education Needs

All lessons will be differentiated appropriated to cater for the individual needs of children.

Both the age and stage of the child will be considered. Our SEN policy will be followed.

Explicit Questions

When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy. Teachers will only answer questions relating to the relevant part of the curriculum for that class level.

On occasion, children may ask questions that are not age appropriate. Teacher may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time or may suggest that the child ask their parents.

If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the SPHE Co-ordinator or the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

Confidentiality:

It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to

the DLP. The DLP will decide whether to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling.

The following is also school policy:

- Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality;
- Pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the DLP and possibly to parents if the Principal decides that it is in the best interest of the pupil to notify parents;
- Teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential – the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.
- Any action taken would be fully in compliance with our Child Protection Policy.

The Child Protection Guidelines for Primary schools state in 4.1.1. and 4.2.1.

4.1.1. If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he/she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location of the Designated Liaison Person. The need for confidentiality at all times, as previously referred to in Chapter 1 Paragraph 1.2. of the guidelines, should be borne in mind. The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

4.2.1. If the Designated Liaison Person is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspicion or allegation he/she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians/Teachers:

In SPHE and RSE the parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school will work in a supportive role.

While the Stay Safe Programme is now a mandatory part of primary school curriculum a parent has the right to withdraw a pupil from the RSE section of the SPHE curriculum. The parent's right to withdraw the pupil will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of their child's education. It is the responsibility to inform the school in writing of this decision.

Parental involvement should exist in terms of language used and parents should see this policy.

All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave 6th class.

Teachers will only teach the topics laid down for the class and will answer only those questions on the programme for that year.

In the event of a teacher's discomfort with a particular topic, that teacher should make an arrangement with a colleague to support him/her.

A suitable guest speaker may be invited in to deliver the contents of the programme to 5th/6th class.

All information delivered by such a speaker will be informed by the content objectives of the SPHE curriculum. A teacher will remain in the classroom at all times during the guest speaker's presentation, the speaker does not replace the teacher, they act as a support.

Everyone has a right to privacy. Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature which they do not wish to share.

Resources:

We will use the RSE, Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes and other resources that are deemed suitable by the Principal and SPHE coordinator.

Anatomical dolls can be used to demonstrate body parts. On occasion we may also invite a mother/father and new baby to visit a particular class when teaching certain aspects of the programme. These adults may be invited to talk and be question by the pupils having been advised of the curriculum parameters and the schools guidelines by the teacher.

Timescales

RSE lessons will be taught throughout the year with special attention to the sensitive personal issues during the months of February/March each year.

Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management will support the teaching of RSE through ensuring the adequate supply of relevant course material and through the provision of sufficient training. Also the BOM are active in developing and reviewing of this policy.

Review

Our RSE policy was ratified by the BOM on the 27/06/2012. This review took place at a BOM meeting on 11/03/2015. Any amendments to the previous policy will be circulated to parents, teachers and the B.O.M.

Signed: Sr. Maighread Ní Ghallchóbhair
Chairperson BOM

Date: 11/03/2015