



# **Castleplunkett NS**

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy (RSE)**

### **Introduction**

This policy was drawn up in December 2018 involving all relevant stakeholders. RSE is a shared responsibility between parents and teachers. It was reviewed by all stakeholders in September 2020. The policy was further reviewed in January 2023.

### **Rationale**

Education in Castleplunkett NS is characterised by respect and care for each individual. The child's many needs are met in a well-structured environment where she/he can live fully the life of a child and develop as a whole person-academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. While nourishing the child's young life, we strive to foster an atmosphere that will enable each child develop to his/her full potential in a safe environment. The environment is such that the child is encouraged and stimulated to be confident, appreciative, independent and creative. The Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) programme will be implemented within this framework.

### **Definition of RSE**

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible

way. This work will be based on developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information for their age-group.

### **RSE in the context of our SPHE programme**

Throughout the school year, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to 6th class every year. A wide variety of topics are included in this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE forms a part of this programme; it is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years.

### **Aims of our RSE programme**

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To help children develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable the older 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.

### **School Policies and Curricular Plans which support our RSE:**

Castleplunkett NS is a child centred primary school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our curricular planning and policy making processes.

Included in the school curriculum in Castleplunkett NS is Religious Education.

- (Grow in Love and Alive-O Programme).
- SPHE Curriculum
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Policies which support SPHE/RSE.
- School's Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- Healthy Eating Policy.
- Anti –Bullying Policy.

- Child Protection Policy.
- Enrolment Policy.
- Internet Safety Policy.
- Administration of Medicine Policy.

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies we informally support many of the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for staff and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the well-being of all the members of the school community.

Overview of content Strand	Infant Classes	1st and 2nd Classes
	Strand	Strand Units
<b>Myself</b>	I am unique My Body As I grow I change New Life Feeling Safe Feelings and emotions Making decisions	I am unique My Body As I grow I change New Life Feeling Safe Feelings and emotions
<b>Myself and others</b>	Myself and my family Myself and my friends Special people in my life Relating to others	Myself and my family Myself and my friends Other people Relating to others

Overview of content Strand	3rd and 4th Classes	5th and 6th Classes
	Strand	Strand Units
<b>Myself</b>	Accepting myself Physical development Growing and changing Birth and new life Feelings and emotions Personal Hygiene Personal Safety Making decisions	Accepting myself Physical development Becoming an adult Parenthood Feelings and emotions Personal Hygiene Personal Safety Making decisions
<b>Myself and others</b>	Roles and responsibilities in families Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Roles of males and females in society Relating to others	Changing relationships in families and friendships Group affiliation and loyalty Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Sexual stereotypes Relating to others

**Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in Castleplunkett NS:**

- R S.E. is taught as an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education.
- We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school, therefore, is seen as one of support for the work of the home in this area.
- On enrolment, parents will be directed to the school website where the R.S.E. policy is available to read. They will also be sent a reminder letter a week

before the sensitive topics are taught.

- The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account.
- Appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. The use of slang words will be discouraged. (See appendix 1 for language).
- Some aspects of RSE will be taught through discrete lessons with the remainder being taught in a cross curricular manner. Teachers will undertake to identify the appropriate links with other subject areas to ensure that children receive a broad based approach to RSE.
- Discrete lessons with regard to sensitive and areas of RSE (physical changes at puberty, menstruation, intercourse, conception for senior classes) will be timetabled for the end of 2nd term/beginning of 3rd term.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified in advance and invited to talk to the teachers if they have any concerns and also may view the contents if they wish. A copy of the H.S.E booklets, 'Talking to your young child about Relationships, Sexuality and Growing up' and 'Tom's Flower Power', will be given to parents of 4<sup>th</sup> class in the second term.. This provides the parents with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the content of the sensitive topics of the R S.E. programme.
- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner. The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class. Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme and they will be advised to talk with their parents.
- Arrangements may be made with colleagues by mutual agreement to deliver whatever sections of the programme a teacher may have difficulty with.
- Staff members own privacy will be respected and they should not feel obliged to disclose aspects of their own personal life.

### **Withdrawal of a child from the lessons with sensitive topics**

Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the school will take account of parental concerns, and parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. The onus will be on the parent to inform the school in writing of this decision. This letter from the parents will be attached to the child's enrolment form from January 2019 onwards. If a child is withdrawn from the lesson, the school cannot guarantee that other children

will not inform the child in question of the content of the lessons or that the children in the class may not refer incidentally in class to aspects of the lesson during subsequent days/weeks.

### **Confidentiality**

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow our Child Protection Policy. The Principal is our Designated Liaison Person.

### **Ongoing support, development and review**

The Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents of Castleplunkett NS supports the implementation of the RSE programme. We recognise that our school has a supportive role to that of the home and we have a commitment to ensuring that our teachers have access to in-career development opportunities and access to relevant teaching materials.

Teaching Methodologies/Approaches:

- Integration with other curricular areas, SPHE, SESE, Art, Religion and Drama.
- Direct Teaching for the discrete, sensitive areas of the programme.
- Discussion, group work, role play, circle time.
- The age and development of the pupils are considered and arrangements made as necessary.
- Most topics are addressed to the whole class but it may be deemed more suitable at times to teach certain topics separately–eg. Menstruation for girls

Resources:

- RSE Interim Curriculum Guidelines for Primary Schools (NCCA).
- Relationship and Sexuality Education. Department of Education and Skills.
- Social Stories.
- Busy Bodies DVD (5th Class).
- Busy Body Booklet for Parents (5th class).

Evaluation

- Teacher Observation

- Pupils Behaviour.
- Pupils/Parents Feedback.

Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The School's RSE programme only acts as a support to parents.

#### Implementation

This revised policy will be implemented from January 2023 and will be reviewed again in two years.

#### Ratification:

The Board of Management of Castleplunkett NS ratified this plan on **22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023**.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

Date: **22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Date: **22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023**

This plan is available to view at the school by the parents on request and on our website [www.castleplunkett.com](http://www.castleplunkett.com) .

Class	Language Taught
Junior Infants	<p>"Womb"</p> <p>'Private parts'</p> <p>'Bottom'</p> <p>"Penis", 'vulva', 'breast', "vagina" and "urethra"-taught as obvious physical differences between boy/girl</p> <p>"Breast-feeding" may be used in conversations as a means of feeding a baby.</p>
Senior Infants	As for Junior Infants
First Class	<p>"penis" and *urethra" taught in terms of passing urine</p> <p>(See DES Resource Materials p 70-71)</p>
Second Class	As for First class
Third Class	<p>Revision of terms listed above.</p> <p>"Developing foetus"</p> <p>'Umbilical cord', 'Navel'</p> <p>'Genitals'</p>
Fourth Class	<p>'Baby begins life a a round fertilised egg in the womb'. Children will sequence the development of the baby in the womb.</p> <p>Should children ask about how the baby leaves the womb they will be told, 'the baby leaves the womb through the vagina'.</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> class girls- Menstruation</p> <p>H.S.E booklets will be sent to 4<sup>th</sup> class parents when the children have completed the lessons about the baby in the womb. It will be left to the parent's discretion when and if they would like to use the booklet with their child.</p>
Fifth class	As for 4 <sup>th</sup> class
Sixth Class	<p>"Growth spurt"</p> <p>"menstruation" (to be covered with all 6<sup>th</sup> class children and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> class girls)</p>

“development of breasts”

“ovaries” ‘ova’

“fallopian tubes”

“puberty”,

(See DES RSE resource materials for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>)

“pregnancy”

Male and female reproductive organs

Development of baby in womb

**Visiting R.S.E teacher**

Contractions

Birth of baby

“human reproduction” and “sexual intercourse” in the context of a loving family.

“erection”

“sperm production”

‘wet dreams’

“sexual intercourse”

“conception”