



Ard Rí Community National School
Balreask Old,
Navan,
Co. Meath

Roll No. 20352T

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

December 2016



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement

Ard Rí Community National School has a responsibility to put in place a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy as part of the wider Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) strand of the curriculum. Our school aims to develop a policy on RSE which reflects our ethos of respect for diversity, inclusion and partnership in education and our school vision. This policy is in accordance with the 'National Curriculum and Guidelines for RSE' as prepared by the 'National Council for Curriculum and Assessment' (NCCA).

Development of the Policy

The policy was initially developed by a committee of teachers; Emer Kavanagh, Naomi Davis, Rachel Plummer and Tara Power. Parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the RSE policy formation and the ratification of the finished product. The draft policy was presented to the 2016-2017 Parent Consultative Forum; a representative group of the school community. Members of the Parent Consultative Forum are Michelle O'Toole, Damien Byrne, Samira Smlali, Arosha Dharmasena, Danielle Coffey, Mary Doherty and Darragh Roe. The policy was then ratified at a Management Meeting.

Definition of RSE

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in an age appropriate manner and in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a positive self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with age-appropriate information.

Delivery of the RSE Programme

This programme is divided into two main parts;

1. The general programme which contains content such as;
 - Friendship
 - Self-identity
 - Family
 - Self-esteem
 - Growing up
2. The second section will deal with any sensitive and sexual content. This section of the programme will be covered by the child's class teacher. Each member of staff will be trained in the content of the programme before teaching the lessons. Content will be explained to parents and permission will be sought in writing from parents prior to the lessons being taught.



School Philosophy and Ethos

Ard Rí Community National School is a multi-belief school which welcomes pupils of all beliefs and none. Our school is committed to inclusion, equality and fairness. We believe that Ard Rí Community National School should be a happy, pleasant place for the children, where there is cooperation between parents, teachers and pupils. All three parties have a duty to work together in order to establish a friendly, happy atmosphere. In drawing up this RSE policy we recognise and respect the racial and ethnic diversity among our school community and to this end we appreciate the different values and morals regarding relationship and sexuality education. This policy seeks to be cognisant and respectful of the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of our school community.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Throughout the school year in Primary School, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to Sixth class. A wide variety of topics are included in this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE forms a part of this programme. RSE is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

Myself

- Self-Identity
- Taking care of my body
- Growing and Changing
- Safety and Protection
- Making decisions (3rd Class onwards)

Myself and Others

- Myself and my family
- My friends and other people
- Relating to others

Aims of our RSE Programme

The RSE programme aims:

- To assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children so that they may guide their child's physical, social and emotional development
- To enhance the personal development, well-being and self-esteem of each child
- To acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- To enable the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, relationships and sexuality in a moral, ethical and social framework
- To develop and promote in the child, a sense of understanding of and respect for the process of new life



Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE

Informing and Involving Parents:

Ard Rí Community National School recognises 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. A copy of this policy will be made available on the 'About' section our school website www.ardricns.ie and to any parent on request from the school office.

Content:

One half hour period per week is timetabled in each class for SPHE; RSE will be included in the content taught during this time. The approach to the teaching of RSE will be kept as normal as possible and will be delivered within the child's class by the class teacher. Parents will be made aware of times and dates when the sensitive topics will be taught. Written permission will be sought for all children to participate in this element of the programme.

RSE in the Classroom:

When implementing the programme, Ard Rí Community National School will endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural family backgrounds experienced by the children.

- The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times.
- The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals).
- The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.
- It is intended that most themes will be revisited every second year.
- The RSE curriculum will be taught through
 1. Stories and poems
 2. Classroom discussion
 3. Group work
 4. Games
 5. Art activities
 6. Reflection
 7. Circle time

Explicit Questions:

Questions which may arise with regard to the sensitive content of the programme will be answered by the class teacher depending on the nature of the question and provided that they relate to topics covered in the RSE programme, in line with our school ethos and this policy. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy. If topics arise which do not feature in the curriculum, children will be requested to address these questions to their parents and wherever needed, involvement and cooperation of parents may be sought.

Confidentiality and Child Protection:

Where there is a disclosure made, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, they will report these concerns to the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person. The school will refer to the Child Protection policy, which is in accordance with the requirements of the Department Of Education and Skills'



'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' (2011). The Designated Liaison Person is Darragh Roe (Principal). The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Emer Kavanagh (Deputy Principal). (See Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for further information.) These policies are available on the school website www.aridricsns.ie and on request from the school office.

Topics to be covered in each class:

Junior Infants:

- New Life – Mention of baby in the womb

Senior Infants:

- My Body – specific names for the male and female sex organs – vagina, penis, womb

First Class:

- New Life – New baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord – mention breast feeding.

Second and Third Class:

- Birth of baby through vagina. Mention umbilical cord and breast feeding.
- (More detail given in Third Class)

Fourth Class:

- Language around baby's development in womb, i.e. fertilised egg, cord. Pictures of foetuses (in RSE Manual) to be used.

Fifth and Sixth Class:

- Naming of the male and the female body parts using appropriate anatomical terms. (5th and 6th Class)
- Discussing the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth. (5th and 6th Class)
- Identifying and discussing the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty. (5th and 6th Class)
- Understanding the reproductive system of both male and female adults. (5th and 6th Class)
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship. (6th Class only)
- Discussing and exploring the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent. (6th Class only)
- Exploring and discussing how relationships between boys and girls can change as they grow and develop. (6th Class only) The above content will be outlined to parents at a meeting prior to the lesson.



Withdrawing pupils from the sensitive topics of the RSE programme:

- Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. A parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues, as outlined above will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. In co-operation with parents who do not want their children to attend an RSE lesson alternative supervision will be organised for the child (e.g. they can help out in a younger class etc.)
- Parents who opt to withdraw their children from these sensitive areas of the RSE lessons should also be aware that material taught during the RSE programme may be discussed by the children outside class time, and the staff will have no control over what aspects of the information are passed on. Furthermore, television, videos, advertising, magazines, computers and friends may be informal sources of information which may influence children's attitudes to relationships and sexuality. Parents may not even be aware of, or indeed may not like, the messages their children are getting from these informal sources. Ard Rí Community National School believes that it is preferable that this information is presented accurately and sensitively by a professional educator.



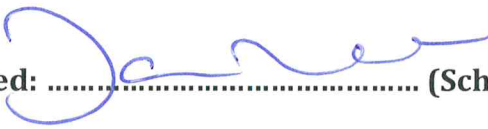
Monitoring/Evaluation/Review

The Single Manager of Ard Rí Community National School supports and fosters the development of this RSE policy. This policy will be reviewed informally at planning meetings. This policy will be evaluated and reviewed formally during the 2018 – 2019 academic year.

The policy was reviewed by Teachers and SNAs before being passed through the Parent’s Consultative Forum and being ratified on20/12/16..... by the school manager.

This will be circulated to parents, available on the ‘About’ section of the Ard Rí Community National School website www.ardricsns.ie and on request from the office.

Signed:  (School Manager)

Signed:  (School Principal)

Signed:  (Staff Representatives)

Signed:  (Parent’s Consultative Forum Rep.)