

R.S.E. Policy for Crehana N.S.

Name: Crehana National School

Address: Carrick-Beg,
Carrick-on-Suir,
Co. Waterford.

Phone Number: 051-641286

Category: Catholic, 4 teacher,

Enrolment Numbers: 106

2. Introductory Statement and Rationale

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Crehana N.S. It was developed by Crehana N.S. R.S.E. Policy Committee which included two teachers, one representative of the Board of Management and two parents representatives. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE.

3. School Philosophy

Crehana N.S. 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-centered.
- 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 to live happy and fulfilled lives.

4. Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework (NCCA- National Council for Curriculum and assessment Guidelines)

5. Aims of our RSE 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 well-being of the child.
- To foster 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, and 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.

6. Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

7. Topics for pupils from Junior Infants to Second Class- Strands/Strand units

- Expressing opinions and listening to the opinions of others
- The different changes taking place in the children's bodies as they grow and develop.
- Caring for themselves regarding hygiene, exercise and sleep
- Recognising and expressing feelings like happiness and sadness
- Appreciating and understanding family life

- Making and having friends
- Coping with “falling out” with friends.
- Making responsible choices appropriate to their age.

8. Topics for pupils from third to sixth – Strand and Strand Unit

- Caring for themselves regarding hygiene, exercise and sleep
- Keeping themselves safe.
- Changes in their bodies as they mature and develop
- How babies are conceived and born.(5th & 6th programme)
- Their feelings and the appropriate expression of these feelings.
- Extended family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- The nature of friendship.
- Handling conflict in friendships.
- Evaluating the portrayal of relationships and sexuality in the media.

9. Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our school.

Management 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 (as outlined on the sheet attached) 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;* with the Senior classes. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school 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 during the lesson.
- Speaker will meet parents prior to visit.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the programme.

Organisational Matters:

- If children are withdrawn, arrangements will be made to cater for these pupils.
- 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 RSE. It is responsibility of Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be taught to the children by another teacher or an outside speaker.
- Parents are invited/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. Discretion and common sense will be used in these situations. 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 confidently if a child asks a question of a personal nature to themselves or discloses personal information.

10. Provision for Ongoing Support

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

11. Sexual Orientation

General Points

- Schools can foster a culture that is accepting of difference. This can be expressed where appropriate, rather than making the assumption that everyone understands it.
- An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others; this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm.

- The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 provide protection against discrimination on nine grounds, one of which is sexual orientation. The Acts oblige those who manage schools to protect students and staff from discrimination or sexual harassment.
- If children are using the word ‘gay’ in a negative fashion it is better not to ignore it in hope that it will go away. The same advice would apply for any instance of bullying.
- Schools are advised to develop a strategy for responding to children who have questions about sexual orientation or who are taunting others about being gay. This should be done in the context of the school’s ethos and RSE policy and with awareness that primary school children are probably too young to engage in any detailed discussion of sexual identity.

Practical Suggestions

- Depending on the context and the age group of the children, the teacher could ask a child or a class group what they mean by the word ‘gay’
- The school has decided on the following response: ‘The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being homosexual or gay’
- To give factual information like this in an open and straightforward way may help to remove the secrecy which is necessary for any bullying to flourish.
- Homophobic insults should be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults – the teacher can calmly explain to the child that such insults are hurtful to the other person and are not acceptable.

12. Evaluation

- Teacher observation
- Committee review when needed
- Community feedback

13. Roles and Responsibility

The whole school, community, Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents play a key role in the formulation and implementation of the plan.

14 Review

This Policy will be reviewed after a 12 month period has passed, by the RSE Policy Committee. This policy will also be reviewed should a need arise.

Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made by the RSE Policy Committee.

15. Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in _____.

16. Implementation

Implementation is on a phased basis from _____.

Part 2

Lesson Content and Language

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*” (SPHE 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 in these lessons may be of concern to some parents. To alleviate any fears you may have, we have compiled list of specific vocabulary which is used in each of the classes and the objectives they relate to in the SPHE 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

Junior Infants: the theme of new-life is dealt with, which relates to nature and family e.g. New life in Spring, pets and family (RSE Teaching Materials p. 68-76).

Vocabulary Introduced: born womb

Senior Infants: taking care of my body – covers personal hygiene and self-awareness (RSE Teaching Materials p. 148-156)

Vocabulary Introduced: Penis vulva/vagina breasts

As SPHE is spiral in nature, the work in Junior Infants is revisited re; New Life and expanded (RSE Teaching Materials p. 158-167).

Vocabulary introduced: breastfed little seed – 9 months in womb

Relevant objectives from SPHE Curriculum

The child should be enabled to

* *develop an awareness of human birth*

that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mothers womb until ready to be born (*SPHE Curriculum – Infants p.18*

** name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms (SPHE Curriculum – Infants p.17)*

First and Second Class

First Class: The themes covered include “New Life “ and “how my body works” (RSE Teaching Materials p.68-75)

Vocabulary Introduced : urine urethra

Second Class: Themes explored include “The Wonder of New Life”, “When My Body Needs Special Care” (RSE Teaching Materials p.162-169)

Vocabulary Introduced: vagina anus

Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum:

The child should be enabled

- to name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions(SPHE Curriculum – 1st & 2nd class – p.27)
- appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both animal and human world. (SPHE Curriculum – 1st & 2nd class – p.28)

Third and Fourth Class:

Third Class: Preparing for new life (RSE Teaching Materials p.70-79)

Vocabulary Introduced: pregnancy umbilical cord navel(belly button)

Fourth Class: theme include “The Wonder of New Life” and “Growing and Changing” which deal with all stages of pregnancy and birth and encourages children not to take these daily miracles for granted(respect). (RSE Teaching Materials p. 170-181 & 196-205)

Vocabulary Introduced: fertilized egg scan hormones cells
menstruation periods pubic areas pubic hair perspiration

Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum:

The child should be enabled

- discuss the stages and sequences of development of the human baby, from conception to birth (SPHE Curriculum – 3rd & 4th class- p.42)
- understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body – *growing height and weight, increase strength growing from boy to man, growing from girl to woman.* (SPHE Curriculum – 3rd & 4th class –p.39)

Fifth and Sixth Class

Fifth Class: themes developed include “My Body Grows and Changes”, “The Wonder of New Life” and “Caring for New Life” (RSE Teaching Materials p. 184-197& 200-2008& 210-219)

Vocabulary Introduced: adolescence responsibilities

Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum:

The child should be enabled

- 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 reproduction system of both male and female adults (SPHE Curriculum – 5th & 6th Class 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 the offspring from birth onwards, emotional, psychological and practical provisions* (SPHE Curriculum – 5th & 6th Class p.58)

