

# **COURTENAY SCHOOL R.S.E .POLICY**

The Courtenay School is a mainstream school, catering for pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class and also has a Class for children with Special Educational Needs and a Speech and Language Class. It is a Catholic Primary School situated near the town centre of Newcastle West. In our Mission Statement, we state that: “We at the Courtenay endeavour to create a happy, secure learning environment for all. Our aspiration is that our pupils become mature, responsible individuals, respecting themselves and others. It is our aim that all pupils will reach their full potential, enabling them to become fully integrated members of society”

Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) encompasses the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy. In the Courtenay School, we seek to promote the overall development of the child which involves the integration of Relationships and Sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development within the context of our Catholic ethos.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THIS POLICY**

Parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the R.S.E. policy formation through a series of meetings, representation on the Policy Development Committee and the ratification of the finished product. Consultations took place with staff, parents and Board of Management in the writing of this policy.

## **RATIONALE**

The Courtenay School is committed to the education of children regardless of race, gender or status. Relationships and Sexuality are integral parts of the human personality and impact biologically, psychologically, culturally, socially and physically. The Christian ethos of the school is the cornerstone of our Relationships and Sexuality Policy. R.S.E. is a life process that involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values. While we believe that the primary responsibility for addressing these issues rests with the parents, we acknowledge the vital role that the school can play in supporting and complementing this.

## **DEFINITION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND EDUCATION**

Relationships and Sexuality Education seeks 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 behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework. R.S.E. aims to help children learn at home and in school about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others.

This work will be based on developing a positive self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information.

## **RELATIONSHIP OF R.S.E. TO SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (S.P.H.E.)**

In the Courtenay School, R.S.E. is taught in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education. S.P.H.E. is a subject in the Primary School Curriculum. S.P.H.E. contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. S.P.H.E. is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth Class, in our Speech and Language Class and Special Needs class and is formally timetabled.

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

R.S.E. is part of the educational entitlement of all students. All young people whatever their ability, develop physically and emotionally, and all need help to understand their bodies and their feelings. R.S.E. helps students with their overall development, confidence and self esteem. Some students with mild learning disabilities may lack confidence and need opportunities to develop the following skills through a structured S.P.H.E. /R.S.E. programme

- Development of positive self esteem
- Social and communication skills
- Appropriate expression of feelings
- Safety and protection skills
- An understanding of their body and the changes that take place during puberty

The education of the child should be needs led, meaning that the teacher should try to establish what the needs of the student are and also what the child's emotional readiness and level of understanding are. This can be done through consultation with the parents and the student him/herself. Our Special Needs Assistants play a vital role in the everyday care of these children and are very much a part of this process.

R.S.E. will be facilitated in the following ways within our school:

- In the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere
- As part of timetabled S.P.H.E.
- On an integrated, cross curricular basis

The R.S.E. Curriculum is a spiral curriculum. This involves revisiting key topics in a developmental manner at regular intervals. As it is a progressive programme it is taught annually over the 8-year primary cycle.

#### AIMS OF OUR R.S.E. 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 child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
- To develop and promote in each 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

### **MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF RSE PROGRAMME IN OUR SCHOOL**

#### Parental Involvement:

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an ongoing process throughout life. Parents and the family are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children. We work in a supportive role with the parents of our school, by complementing their role with a school based programme in R.S.E. We ask parents' permission for their children to be taught the Stay Safe and R.S.E. programmes on our admission form and refer them to the relevant websites for further information. See Appendix A.

#### Withdrawal from RSE:

Since R.S.E. is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education and Skills, it should be inclusive. The Courtenay School actively promotes the implementation of R.S.E. and strongly discourages withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parental concerns, and a parent's right to withdraw a pupil from certain themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. Parents are obliged to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw the child from sensitive issues. Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child should make arrangements for the supervision of the child while the R.S.E. class is in progress. The school can take no responsibility for any information which the pupil may receive outside the direct teaching of the R.S.E. lessons.

## **CONTENT**

All the content objectives of the RSE programme will be covered by the time children leave Sixth Class. It is school policy that the content objectives are covered with each class as outlined in the S.P.H.E. curriculum statement, within the context of the school's Catholic ethos and without personal slants from the class teacher. One half hour per week is timetabled in each class for S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. will be included in the programme taught during this time. The approach to the teaching of R.S.E. will be kept as normal as possible and will usually be delivered within the class by the class teacher. Teachers will be encouraged and supported to teach the sensitive issues to their own class. In the event of outside speakers being invited to give a talk on Relationships and Sexuality, they are made aware of our school's R.S.E. policy and must adhere to the content of the R.S.E. curriculum. The class teacher will remain in the classroom during this time.

In the second term of the school year, the 6<sup>th</sup> Class teacher meets the parents of the children in his class .He gives each Parent a copy of "Busy Bodies" which is a book about puberty. This book informs the parents of the exact content of the R.S.E. lesson which the teacher will teach in the second term. It covers topics such as: puberty, decision making, reproduction and sexual intercourse. Parents are then informed the week before this lesson is going to be taught so that they can discuss the content with their children and prepare their children in any way they see necessary.

# Courtenay School

## R.S.E.

### Overview of content

Strand	Infant Classes	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes
	Strand Units	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 Making decisions
<b>Myself and other</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

Strand	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Classes	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Classes
	Strand Units	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 of 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

## **TEACHERS OPT OUT RIGHT**

Notwithstanding the above (see section on Content) the teachers right to opt out will be honoured which will not affect the teaching of the subject. In such circumstances the Principal will make arrangements to have this section of the programme taught. Where possible, arrangements will be made wherein R.S.E. will be taught by a teacher with whom the children are familiar.

## **TERMINOLOGY**

In teaching issues related to R.S.E., teachers will use the correct biological terms for the parts of the body.

## **QUESTIONS**

Questions arising from curriculum content will be addressed by the teacher in a sensible, sensitive and appropriate manner. The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objective for a class. Pupils will be informed that the question/issue is not on the programme and they will be referred back to parent(s). Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents if they feel that a question is very inappropriate.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION**

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, the school will follow the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection guidelines as set out in "Children First". The Principal is our Designated Liaison Person.

## **FAMILY STATUS**

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of a stable family life and the importance of marriage as the ideal setting for rearing children. We acknowledge the different family units that are represented in school and will treat all situations with sensitivity and respect.

## **SOURCES AND RESOURCES**

- R.S.E. manuals for all classes
- Busy Bodies book and video
- Walk Tall
- Stay safe
- Alive O!
- R.S.E. Interim Curriculum Guidelines
- Our R.S.E. policy
- Resource pack for Primary teachers

- Parent Guide to R.S.E. Going Forward Together
- Making the Links ([www.walktall.ie](http://www.walktall.ie))
- Invited speakers where necessary

## **ONGOING SUPPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

The Board of Management of the Courtenay School supports and fosters the development of the R.S.E. Policy. 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 training and development opportunities for R.S.E.
- Relevant teaching materials are provided
- The programme of work will be reviewed informally at regular intervals by teachers.
- This policy will be reviewed in September 2016 . Any amendments necessary as a result of review will be undertaken.

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## **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of The Courtenay School on

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A copy of the policy will be made available to the teachers. Parents of Special Educational Needs pupils and other parents may obtain a copy from the office on request.

**Ratified by Board of Management on** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson, Board of Management**

**Please sign and return to the school a.s.a.p.**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Courtenay School Code of Behaviour and I agree to accept the code on behalf of my child.  Yes  No

I give my child permission to leave school in order to go with his class on School trips/visits while he is a pupil in this school.

Yes  No

I give my child permission to take part in the "Stay Safe" and RSE Programmes

Yes  No

**\* You are advised to read the following guidelines for further information**

I give my permission for my child to be videoed for school purposes:

Yes  No

I give my permission for my child to be photographed at school events:

Yes  No

If published in local newspapers do you wish your child's name to be included?

Yes  No

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

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

**\*Stay Safe - A Parents Guide website: [www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)**

**\* RSE – Going forward together website: [www.education.ie/1997 going-forward-together](http://www.education.ie/1997-going-forward-together)**