

Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E)

The R.S.E. programme is offered to the children of St. Paul's National School as part of the Social, Personal and Health (S.P.H.E.) element of the curriculum.

R.S.E. is a life-long process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. In a school situation RSE, provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and to establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework, **appropriate to their age**. RSE will be taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the Philosophy framework of the school. Teachers will not teach any content outside the Religion programme used by the school or the DE curriculum. The teaching methods used in the school are child centred and reflect the age and stage of development of each child. Sensitive issues will be dealt with appropriately.

Overview of RSE programme

Aims

- To promote an understanding and healthy attitude to sexuality and relationships.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.
- To provide structured opportunities for the children to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality, within an appropriate moral and spiritual framework.

Content

There are nine themes, which are covered with five hours teaching time each year. The programme is spiral in nature, which means that the key topics will be revisited, in a developmental manner each year.

Dealing with questions

Teachers do not cover content outside that of the D.E. curriculum or the school's religion programme. Answers to questions must be in line with the Catholic Church's teaching. Teachers should answer questions sensitively and be aware that there are children in our

school from many social backgrounds. No child should be made to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when these issues are raised.

Children who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum taught, should be talked to individually and discretely by the teacher, and should be encouraged to seek answers from their parents. If a child poses such a question, the parents will be informed and asked not to ignore it but to deal with it as they see fit.

Parental concerns

If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the R.S.E programme, they are welcome to visit the school to examine the content of the programmes and discuss their concerns with the principal. Following this meeting if parents wish to have their child/ren withdrawn when sensitive issues are being taught, they are requested to submit this in writing to the Principal. Parents will be expected to make their wishes known each year to the new class teacher. Efforts will be made by the school, using the resources it has, to accommodate these children by providing supervision within another classroom.

Teachers' concerns

A teacher who is concerned about teaching a particular topic within the R.S.E. programme should talk to the principal about their concerns. Such concerns will be handled discretely. The Board of Management will endeavour to accommodate such teachers. Resources outside the school profession may be availed of if considered appropriate.

The Stay Safe Programme

Aim

To teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous.

Content

The lessons cover the following areas:

- Feeling Safe and Unsafe
- Friendship and Bullying
- Touches
- Secrets and Telling
- Strangers

Children participating in this programme will learn:

- To distinguish between safe and unsafe feelings
- What to do if lost
- What to do if the phone or doorbell rings when they are alone in the house
- The importance of friends in children's lives
- What to do if bullied
- Stay Safe Rules: Say No/ Get Away/ Tell
- Why not to bully others
- Appreciating normal, appropriate touches
- That unsafe touches should never be kept secret
- How to respond to inappropriate touches (Stay Safe Rules)
- Good and bad secrets
- That some secrets should not be kept
- Who and how to tell if in trouble
- About strangers and safety strategies

Parental concerns

If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the Stay Safe programme, they are welcome to visit the school to examine the content of the programmes and discuss their concerns with the principal. Following this meeting if parents wish to have their child/ren withdrawn when sensitive issues are being taught, they are requested to submit this in writing to the Principal. Parents will be expected to make their wishes

known each year to the new class teacher. Efforts will be made by the school, using the resources it has, to accommodate these children by providing supervision within another classroom.

Teachers' concerns

A teacher who is concerned about teaching a particular topic within the Stay Safe programme should talk to the principal about his/her concerns. Such concerns will be handled discreetly. The Board of Management will endeavour to accommodate such teachers. Resources outside the school profession may be availed of if considered appropriate.

Timetable

Teachers will decide the timetabling of the Stay Safe lessons.

Review and ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management and reviewed on the 4th of October 2023.