



*St. Margaret's National School,
Curraclloe, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.*

Tel: 053 9137283 / Fax: 053 9137056

E-mail:stmargaret.ias@eircom.net

www.curraclloens.ie

Roll Nr. 14492D

R.S.E. Policy

The initial policy statement for R.S.E. was drawn up by a committee including principal, R.S.E. coordinator, representatives of B.O.M., parents and patrons representative and ratified by B.O.M. in 2000.

The policy was first updated in 2005 and again ratified by the B.O.M.
The policy was again updated in 2010 and ratified by the B.O.M.

Copies of the previous policies are on file in the school.

The review in 2010 was initiated following attendance at in-service on R.S.E.

St. Margaret's N.S. is a rural Primary School of mixed gender. There are 4 mainstream class teachers, a shared learning support teacher and a shared resource teacher.

We in St. Margaret's N.S. aim to create an ordered and orderly environment in which children feel secure, in which self esteem is fostered and in which children can make progress at their work. We aim at a balanced education, which embodies high academic standards allied to a broad range of experience, which will develop the whole child and prepare him/her for the demands of further education and the rapidly changing society in which we now live.

We see our school as the extension of the home; a place where children are not just taught, but where the teachers and children work, play and pray together. The ethos of the school is Catholic and in this atmosphere the spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth of the children is fostered.

It is in keeping with the Catholic ethos that we present our Relationship and Sexuality Education while at the same time valuing different faiths and beliefs.

Definition of R.S.E.

R.S.E. is part of Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.). R.S.E. provides children with structured opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs and practical skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships as children, and subsequently, as adults.

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual,

moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. Relationships and Sexuality Education is clearly a part of this general aim.

Aims of our R.S.E. Programme:

With regard to Relationships and Sexuality Education our aims are:

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- To create an atmosphere where dignified discussion regarding human sexuality can take place. While recognising and respecting people's right to different beliefs, it is the policy of this school to nurture Catholic/Christian values in relation to love, marriage, parenthood and family life.
- While we acknowledge parents as primary educators of their children, so that they may guide their children's development, this programme is aimed at assisting the children in their understanding of their sexuality, and others while growing and developing.
- To assist students in developing the skills necessary to assess and cope with sexual stimuli contained in advertisements and the media.
- To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future
- To provide sufficient educational opportunity to help young people make appropriate decisions on sexual matters based on factual information.
- To help students grow towards the understanding and management of emotions leading to responsible behaviour.
- To increase knowledge of anatomy and physiology and explain the basis for the feelings that accompany growing up and the period of adolescence so as to provide accurate information far preferable to that they would otherwise acquire from their peers.
- To give information that will protect the child against possible abuse or exploitation.
- To extend the child's understanding of human nature, human relationships and life itself.

Recognising that this school has a complementary role to that of the home in fostering the personal growth and development of those in our care, we continue to invite parental co-operation and participation. Any material e.g., books, d.v.d.'s which will be used in this programme will be available for parents to view in school or use at home with their own children at the appropriate stage of development.

Content of R.S.E. Programme:

R.S.E is an integral part of the S.P.H.E. programme, as is education in child abuse, substance use/misuse, nutrition, hygiene, etc.

There are three strands in the S.P.H.E. Curriculum and Guidelines: "Myself", "Myself and Others", and "Myself and the Wider World". Within these strands the topics are arranged in Strand Units. Under "Myself" the Strand Units include self-esteem, growing and changing, new life, feelings and emotions, keeping safe and making decisions.

Under “Myself and Others” the topics are based on relationships with family, friends and other people.

A spiral curriculum is recommended across all areas. This involves revisiting key topics in a developmental manner at regular intervals.

Topics will be introduced over several years and some will be dealt with in the more senior classes only. The teaching will differ in depth in the different years. When a topic is first mentioned in the programme, this should be understood to suggest the most appropriate time to introduce it. The topics are progressively developed on an ongoing basis, from infants to sixth.

R.S.E. will be facilitated in three ways within the 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.

Language:

The acquisition of appropriate language in R.S.E. is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships.

We will give the correct and appropriate the correct language as outlined in the R.S.E. materials.

<u>Infants:</u>	womb, breast feeding, penis, vagina
<u>1ST & 2nd Class:</u>	urine, penis, urethra, naval, breast.
<u>3rd & 4th Class:</u>	developing foetus
<u>5th Class:</u>	puberty, physical changes in boys and girls,
<u>6th Class:</u>	sexual intercourse, reproduction and birth in the context of a loving, committed relationship, such as marriage.

Management and Organisation of R.S.E.

Presentation of Content:

One half hour period is timetabled in each class for S.P.H.E. each week. R.S.E. will be included in the programme taught during this time.

In our school, there are children of different class levels and abilities in the same classroom. Given that class groupings can vary from year to year, should information be inappropriate for the younger age group, we will withdraw them.

In accordance with the Department of Education and Science’s Policy on R.S.E. we acknowledge and respect the right of parents to withdraw child. A broad outline of content will be sent to parents in advance of sensitive areas of the curriculum being taught with the parental option for their child to be withdrawn from certain lessons. On receiving this letter, which outlines topics being covered, parents may like to discuss the

contents and prepare their child at home for the lessons. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school in writing of any decision to withdraw their child.

Content dealing with sensitive issues will be sent to parents of children in Junior infants, 5th class and 6th class. Worksheets sent home should be returned prior to lessons being taught in school.

In order to cover certain aspects of the programme, we may call on Health Professionals, such as nurse/doctor to address the classes. The classes being of mixed gender it may be necessary to separate boys and girls for certain sessions.

Classroom strategy:

To take into account individual differences in maturity we have devised the following strategy for coping with questions we are not prepared to answer in class:

- The teacher explains that the amount of information given is part of that year's programme and that more information will be given as part of the following year's programme.
- If the question is factual and within the programme as agreed on for that age-group the teacher will answer it.
- If the question is a moral one we will adhere to Catholic Church teaching as we feel we have a responsibility to the vast majority of children who come from Catholic homes.
- If it is felt that any question is genuine, the teacher may advise the child to ask at home or may ask his/her permission to contact the parents so that they may answer the child's question.
- Thus we would hope not to compromise the special bond that exists between parent and child or break the bond of trust between teacher and parent or teacher and child.
- Information on relationships and sexuality will be given in the context of God's wonderful plan for creation. We will stress its importance. From the outset we will ask the children to be responsible about the information they are given. Thus we hope to discourage playground gossip.
- It will be our policy not to answer personal questions about ourselves.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

This policy and the R.S.E. programme will be continued to be reviewed every five years or as necessary by the R.S.E. coordinator. All partners will be informed about any amendments necessary after such a review. R.S.E. resources will also be reviewed to ensure they are kept up to date

Ratification and communication

This policy was ratified by: B.O.M. of St. Margaret's N.S.

Chairperson:

Principal:

Date:

Feb 17

Review Date:

As needed

A copy will be disseminated to all members of staff. It will be available for perusal by all members of school community in the organisational policies file.