

Creora National School

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement:

The school has a responsibility to put in place an RSE policy as part of the wider social, personal and health education strand of the curriculum. The process was initiated in 2004 when the policy committee was charged with setting parameters for the organisation and management of RSE in the school. The committee comprised;

Noel Keating; BOM representative

Peter Hickey; BOM representative

Sinead Toomey; Parent representative

Caroline O' Dowd; Parents representative

Thomas Prendergast; Staff representative

Alice McKenna; Staff representative.

At the time a policy was developed and implemented in accordance with the parameters laid down by this committee.

Rationale:

The need for this policy arises from our schools obligation to provide for all the needs of the student body and respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues relating to emerging sexuality. A review has taken place in light of further training which members of our staff have received in the last two years in relationships and sexuality education.

Aims:

- To provide opportunities for our pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality imparted in a loving and caring way, within a wholesome environment.
- To help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
- To enhance the personal development, well being and self-esteem of each child
- To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive and measured way
- To enable the child develop healthy friendships and relationships

Relationships to School Ethos:

The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. The ethos is one where the children are encouraged to grow in love of God, be courteous and respectful and to grow and develop to the best of their ability in an atmosphere of friendship and trust. To this end parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the RSE policy formation, through a series of meetings, full representation on the steering committee and the ratification of the finished product. Parents also have the right to withhold their children from participating in RSE classes.

School Provision

RSE will be delivered within the context of SPHE and will be timetabled into the curriculum in accordance with DES guidelines.

Strand Units: The following three strands will be taught by the class teacher.

Myself - Self identity, taking care of my body, growing and changing, safety and protection

Myself and Others - Myself and family, friends and relating to other people

Taking Care of My Body – Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate terminology (Junior and Lower Middle classes).

If parents are concerned about the lessons provided, they are welcome to visit the school, view the programme and discuss their concerns with the principal. Following this meeting, if parents wish to have their child withdrawn during such lessons, they are requested to submit this in writing to the principal.

The following strand will be taught by an outside speaker in sixth class. The speaker will firstly make the parents aware of the content which will be delivered to their children. Parents will be given the opportunity to opt out of this talk. However, it will be made clear that the school will not be responsible for anything children may hear from friends in the yard or elsewhere.

Growing and Changing – The stages of development of a baby from conception to birth. Understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed loving relationship.

Topics such as contraception and same sex friendships are not covered. Children who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum are advised to speak to their parents.

Methodology

Circle time is used extensively in Junior Classes to build confidence and address fears. Boys and girls are taught together in all classes. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents. The Alive O 8 resource materials are used extensively in senior classes. Overlap topics such as feeling safe, touches, bullying and secrets are also dealt with using the Stay Safe programmes (from Senior Infants to sixth) and the Walk Tall programme (in all classes).

Topics covered up to 2nd class include;

- Keeping safe
- Naming bodily parts using correct terminology. This will begin in the third term of 2011 in Junior Infants and will be taught up to 2nd class from September 2011.
- Bodily changes during growth and development. This will also be taught from September 2011.
- Making and keeping friends
- Making age appropriate choices

- Appreciating family life
- Recognizing and expressing feelings
- Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep (link with P.E. Healthy Eating Policy and S.P.H.E.)
- Expressing opinions and listening to others

Topics covered from 3rd to 6th Classes include;

- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping safe
- Expressing feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- Bodily changes, reproduction, conception (5th and 6th Classes). This will be taught by a guest speaker.

Guidelines for Management:

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school R.S.E. programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils within a moral and spiritual framework. Teachers are present at all times when guest speakers are visiting a class.

Child Protection:

The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a Child Protection Policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure; the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

Teacher Choice/Staff Development:

The teacher's right to choose is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the programme or require additional resources, a suitable speaker will be employed by the BoM. The teacher may need to plan the specific material to be covered and should be present during the talk.

The staff have availed of training in;

- The Child House Prevention Programme (Stay Safe)
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (RSE)
- Walk Tall Programme (SMPP)

Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning, comprising of a yearly and fortnightly scheme of work. A Cuntas Miosuil is retained in the Principals Office.

Evaluation:

- Teacher observation
- Inventory of what needs to be changed
- Ensuring all strands are covered
- Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation
- Parental feedback

Roles and Responsibilities:

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

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the BoM on 16th February 2011.

Implementation:

Implementation is on a phased basis from April 2011.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed in April 2013.