



Relationships and Sexuality Education: *Policy Statement*

1. Our School Philosophy:

Our school motto “*Together we learn*” sums up the philosophy of our school. The ‘We’ refers to all the stakeholders in the school – Pupils, Parents, Staff, Board of Management, Trustees, DES and all others that interact with the school in any way. If this expectation prevails from day to day, we will be enabled to see opportunities in each new challenge, enjoy our achievements, be on good terms with all we come in contact with, speak the truth quietly and clearly and listen to all others.

2. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

People need people. Being part of a family and having friends give us opportunities to love and be loved, to share thoughts and feelings, to belong. Just because we need to get on with others does not mean we automatically know how to. RSE provides structured opportunities for students with special needs to acquire greater knowledge of human sexuality and relationships in the home and in the school setting, in a manner which is appropriate for their level of development. It addresses the meaning of relationships, growth and development, relevant personal and social skills and sexuality. It necessitates parents and schools working in partnership. The processes through which we learn about RSE are the same as those involved in all teaching and learning and they are bound up with personal and social development. A supportive home/school environment marked by gender equity is essential if RSE is to be effective. Similarly the principles of fair play, respect, tolerance, and reward for effort must permeate the climate of the home and school. Central to RSE too is the fostering of self-esteem through which our pupils can be guided in making appropriate choices and decisions in all aspects of life including those relating to relationships and sexuality. Every parent and every member of school staff has a role to play in the delivery of the RSE programme.

3. Current Provision

Presently Our Lady of Good Counsel School provides Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) formally through the teaching of

- Religious Education
- Physical Education
- The Social Training Programme
- The Life Skills Training
- The Stay Safe Programme
- Drama

and informally through the supportive school environment where

- Pupils feel valued
- Pupils are safe and secure
- Self-esteem is fostered
- Respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
- Open communication is promoted
- Effort is recognised and rewarded
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Initiatives and creativity are encouraged
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted

4. Relationship of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) to Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

RSE is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. RSE draws on the assertiveness and decision-making skills acquired in the SPHE programme and promote a healthy and normal attitude to relationship issues.

5. Aims of the RSE Programme.

RSE aims to help our pupils:

- Learn about their own development
- Learn about friendships and relationships with others
- Learn about sexuality in a healthy and appropriate way.

6. Why do we need RSE?

It is essential to allow for differences between the physical and emotional development of children with special needs in the teaching of RSE. Children get information and misinformation about sexuality from television, in the playground, from older friends and in many other ways that children or parents cannot control. Lack of correct and appropriate information can leave your child vulnerable, confused and anxious. It is important that children learn the appropriate language for discussing aspects of life related to sexuality so they can communicate confidently about themselves.

7. Provision for Ongoing Support, Development and Review.

The school will make a commitment to:

- Ensure access to in-career development for teachers
- Provide relevant RSE resources
- Parent Education programmes shall be encouraged as the permit of the Parent's Association.

RSE Programme for Class 1 & 2

• Myself

Self-awareness

- Develop an awareness of the 5 senses through a range of sensory experiences.
- Develop an awareness of body parts through games rhymes and songs
- Develop an awareness of own skills and abilities; choose a game or activity during free play
- Develop self-confidence and positive self-image; have opportunities to feel positive about him/herself, take responsibility for own belongings, performance and role-play in drama, self expression through art and music
- Become more self reliant and have opportunities to take increasing personal responsibility for him/herself
- Make real choices; pupils are encouraged to make choices and decisions formally and informally throughout the school day

Taking care of my body

- Develop strategies to cope with various changes as they occur; pupils make transition from Class 1 to Class 2, changing teacher, SNA and sometimes friends.
- Show awareness of the basic needs of his/her body; nutrition, personal hygiene and toilet training.
- Explore and discuss the different things the body can do; explore the body through movement, dance and art & craft.
- Identify parts of the body and develop awareness of the private parts of his/her own body: Identification of body parts through action songs, games, jig-saws, computer games and naming games. Private body parts will be named informally during toilet training and un/dressing after swimming. Adults will refer to the private body parts using anatomically correct language.
- Recognise and practice basic hygiene and social skills; Pupil will wash hands before eating, and after using the toilet. Pupils will take care of nasal discharge with as little adult intervention as necessary. Pupils will be encouraged to behave appropriately when eating at the table and observe good table manners to the best of their abilities.

Growing and Changing

- Develop that he/she is growing; growth chart, comparing baby photos to present.
- Identify things pupils can do now that a small baby cannot do.
- Become aware of new life and birth in the world; Baby animals in spring, name and match adult animals to their young.
- Identify and explore a range of feelings; Pupils explore and identify feelings of happy and sad using facial expressions, photos and drawings.

• Myself and Others

Myself and my Family

- Communicate about his/her own family
- Explore the things that families do together

My Friends and Other People

- Communicate about his/her friends. Name and identify class mates from photos
- Identify/Become aware of the importance of friendship through interactive activities and free play activities within a controlled setting
- Use verbal and non-verbal behaviour to perform social functions
- Work co-operatively with others
- Practice care and consideration, courtesy and good manners when interacting with others
- Resolve conflict with others

Safety and Protection

- Identify familiar and unfamiliar people in his her environment.
- Communicate 'no' independently and assertively.
- Use role-play and drama to reinforce the concept of 'no'.
- Develop an awareness of safety in the playground.
- Develop an awareness of safety on the bus.

- Develop an awareness of road safety.
- Show an understanding of the school rules.

Myself and the wider world; Developing citizenship

- Identify the groups outside the family to which he/she belongs
- Identify familiar and unfamiliar people in his/her immediate environment

RSE Programme for Classes 3 & 4

Myself

Developing Self-Awareness

- Develop an awareness of the five senses through a range of sensory experiences
- Develop an awareness of unique features such as fingerprints, weight, shoe size, clothes size.
- Recognise how he/she has changed; examine old photographs/videos
- Develop a positive self-image and present him/herself confidently in a range of situations; have opportunities to feel positive about him/herself – taking part in public performance, helping younger children at playtime/with classwork.
- Express personal opinions and preferences with growing confidence and listen to and respect the views of others.

Developing Self-Confidence

- Accept that making mistakes and trying again are part of the learning process.
- Persevere in difficult tasks
- Take responsibility for certain jobs around the home/at school.
- Continue to develop skills for independent living
- Tidying his/her own room
- Being able to make a complaint, knowing how/where to ask for assistance
- Become aware of and think about choices and decisions that he/she makes every day; What will I wear today? Which book will I choose from the library?

Knowing about my body

- Recognise and practice good personal hygiene

Growing and Changing

- Identify the skills and abilities acquired and the interests/pursuits taken up in recent years.
- Begin to identify the main phases of the human cycle; sequence photographs/pictures of people of different ages: baby, young girl/boy, teenager, woman/man, old woman/man – know that granny/granddad is old and a baby is young.

Feelings and Emotions

- Identify a range of facial expressions, give words for feelings.
- Develop awareness of feeling of others.
- Show awareness that the actions of one individual can affect the feelings of others
- Express feelings in an appropriate way
- Identify people with whom it is appropriate to hug/kiss/shake hands

Safety and Protection

- Identify people in his/her close environment whom he/she can trust
- Develop strategies for keeping safe
- Communicate 'no' independently and effectively, get away from the person, get the attention of others
- Use role-play to practice assertiveness and ways of making safe choices.
- Show understanding of safety rules when travelling/out and about
- Show understanding of safety rules and the school
- Develop awareness of basic safety with regard to medicine and unfamiliar substances

Myself and Others

- Communicate about his/her own family
- Recognise his/her role and place in the family unit and the contribution made by each member to the family; identify jobs that Mammy/Daddy/siblings/student do.
- Recognise and explore bullying behaviour.
- Behaviour; show awareness of wrongdoing if own bullying behaviour is identified; respond by repelling bully or by calling for help if being bullied/another is being bullied.
- Show understanding of the roles of familiar people; principal, school secretary, nurse, postman.
- Demonstrate ability to take turns, share equipment and play safely and co-operatively with peers.
- Practice care and consideration, courtesy and good manners when interacting with others.
- Learn to apologise without prompting from adult and to accept apologies from others.
- Identify those who have special responsibilities for looking after people in the community: gardaí, life guard, crossing warden.

RSE Programme for Classes 5 & 6

Self Identity

1. Develop body awareness

Identify or name parts of the body when requested; indicate parts of own body in response to action songs or games. Explore through play and drama activities various facial features; make happy, sad, funny, angry, frightened faces.

2. Become aware of the features that make a person special and unique

Recognise own name, gender, physical features
Become aware of differences between and similarities with others in class.

3. Develop an awareness of personal abilities, skills and talents.

Become aware of things he/she can do now.
Begin to recognise own strengths and limitations

4. Recognise and communicate personal preferences.

Indicate personal preferences and make independent choices

5. Develop awareness of routine activities

Act appropriately in familiar and unfamiliar situations

6. Become more self reliant and independent

7. Accept that making mistakes and trying again are part of the learning process

8. Have opportunities to take increasing personal responsibility for him/herself

9. Begin to learn how to cope with various changes as they occur

Become more confident in coping with change and with situations that are unfamiliar
Explore changes from babyhood to old age
Puberty; how our bodies change. Relationships with others

10. Make real choices

11. Begin to develop some awareness of factors that may influence decisions or choices taken

Taking care of my Body

1. Show awareness of the basic needs of his/her own body.

Initiate activities for keeping the body healthy and well; seek out exercise and activity, choose a healthy lunch.

2. Explore and discuss the different things the body can do

Show awareness of 'what my body can do'; walk, run, jump, sleep, swim etc.

3. Identify parts of the body and awareness of the private parts of the private parts of his/her own body

Identify independently, the private parts of his/her body. Show appropriate awareness of the need to cover parts of his/her body.

Show awareness that some types of behaviour are not appropriate in public.

4. Recognize and practice basic hygiene and social skills

Recognize and practice good hygiene. Follow basic hygiene practices when eating or using the toilet.

Wash hair and body in bath/shower.

Take proper care of teeth.

Develop personal hygiene routines regarding menstruation cycles and knowledge of the range of toiletries and products available; explore sanitary products during/following trip to chemist, listen to a simple account of what is happening.

Dressing

Undress and dress him/herself with gradually fading physical, gestural, pictorial or verbal prompting; get dressed or undressed without help. Developing basic skills in caring for clothes; hangs up coat, removes jumper during art session.

Washing

Respond to verbal prompts to shower and wash hair after swimming.

Self-care

Participate with some help or respond to reminders to take care of his/her appearance; independently get and use a tissue.

5. Take some responsibility for self care

6. Become aware of the importance food for growth and development

Growing and Changing

1. Develop awareness that he/she is growing

Demonstrate understanding of the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body; growing height and weight, growing from boy to man, growing from girl to woman.

Identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty.

2. Identify new skills and abilities acquired

Demonstrate awareness of own achievements and progress

3. Develop increasing responsibility

4. Become aware of new life and birth in the world

Identify the main phases of the human cycle.

Develop an awareness of human birth,; that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born.

5. Identify and explore a range of feelings

Identify a range of facial expressions. Explore feelings through drama activities.

6. Develop awareness of the feelings of others.

Safety and Protection

1. Develop awareness of people/places that are safe/unsafe

Differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar places

2. Identify people in his/her close environment whom he/she can trust

3. Develop strategies for keeping safe

Communicate 'no' independently and effectively, get away from the person, get the attention of others

4. Show understanding of safety rules within the school/workplace

5. Develop awareness of possible dangers in the environment

6. Develop awareness of basic safety with regard to medicine and unfamiliar substances

Myself and my Family

1. Communicate about his/her own family

Identify members from the wider family circle

2. Explore the things that families do together

Communicate about the ways in which families take care of, love and support each other.

3. Realize that each person has a place and role within the family

Recognize his/her role and place in the family unit and the contribution made by each member to the family.

4. Identify behaviour that is important for harmony within families

My Friends and Other People

1. Communicate about his/her friends

2. Identify/Become aware of the different aspects of friendship

Identify, explore and discuss qualities skills associated with friendship.

3. Develop awareness that friends and other people must be treated with consideration and respect.

Relating to Others

1. Form relationships with other students/adults

Have opportunities to develop relationships with others. Show understanding of the roles of familiar people; principal, school secretary, nurse.

2. Develop effective communication skills

3. Use verbal and non-verbal behaviour to perform social functions

4. Work co-operatively with others

Demonstrate ability to take turns, share equipment and play safely and co-operatively with peers in small and large groups.

5. Practice care and consideration, courtesy and good manners when interacting with others

6. Resolve conflicts with others

RSE Programme for Classes 7 & 8

1. *Self Esteem*

- Develop positive self image and confidence. Pupils may identify areas of personal strengths and personal preferences. Pupils identify people who enhance their lives. Pupils identify ways in which they can enhance other people's lives.

2. *Feelings*

- Develop an awareness of different feelings. Recognize and identify a range of feelings using facial expressions and gestures; happy, sad, frightened, angry, romantic. Develop an understanding that feelings change as we grow up and mature.

3. *Growing up*

- Compile a life chart using personal photos. These life charts introduce pupils to the idea of growing and changing. Pupils develop an understanding of the physical, social and emotional changes that occur from babyhood to adulthood
- Pupils will identify ways in which young boys and girls grow into men and women, taking into account body changes, height, weight, body hair, body size etc.

4. *Body Parts*

- Pupils use a body board to identify and locate body parts visually.
- Pupils name male and female body parts using commonly used words and 'proper' words. Pupils place pictures of male and female body parts on a body board.
- Pupils will identify differences between male and female bodies (height, shape, body hair, voice tone).

5. *Public and Private*

- Understanding the differences between what is public and what is private
- Understanding the differences between public and private places at home and in school
- Understanding the difference between public and private body parts.
- Awareness of appropriate behaviour in public and private places.
- Stay-safe – Pupils identify safe and unsafe touches by others.

6. *Relationships*

- Family relationships

- Pupils identify their friends in school. Pupils identify characteristics of a good friend.
- Making new friends
- Resolving conflicts between friends
- Relationships between boys and girls
- Physical/Sexual relationships are not covered in the school programme but requests to cover these areas can be referred to the principal

7. Keeping Safe

- Enable pupils to understand what to do in difficult or threatening situations
- Pupils learn the rules for saying 'no'
- Making choices.



Our Lady of Good Counsel School

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Re; The Relationships and Sexuality Programme

Date;

Dear Parents,

The Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme for senior pupils will begin this term. Each Class Teacher will teach the programme to the pupils in his/her class over the next 10 weeks. Boys and girls will be taught in separate groups.

Enclosed, please find the 5 outline lesson plans for the sessions (these are the same as last year). Please read them carefully sign and return the consent form giving permission (or not) for your son/daughter to be included in the programme. We recommend that each pupil attends each lesson though you may request that your child opts out of a session if you wish (cf form). Your child will complete worksheets throughout the sessions and we strongly recommend that you read these sheets with your child in the evenings.

If you have any questions regarding the content of the sessions, please phone the class teacher as soon as possible. We hope to begin the programme in the coming weeks.

The programme will be repeated every year until the pupils leave school to provide plenty of opportunity for revision.

Yours sincerely,

Aisling Power,

Principal.

----- Please detach and return to Class Teacher -----

R.S.E. PROGRAMME CONSENT FORM PUPIL:

I give permission for my child to take part in the Relationship & Sexuality Programme in Our Lady of Good Counsel School.

I wish my child to opt out of lesson/s

Signed: _____