

**New Quay National School**

**Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

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This policy supersedes policy (02/19)

### **Rationale**

Education in New Quay N.S. is characterised by respect and care for all children. The child's many needs are met in a well-structured environment where she/he can live fully the life of a child and develop academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. While nourishing the child's young life, we strive to foster an atmosphere that will enable each child to develop to his/her full potential in a safe environment. The environment is such that the child is encouraged and stimulated to be confident, appreciative, independent and creative. The Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) programme will be implemented within this framework.

### **Definition of RSE**

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information for their age group.

### **RSE in the context of our SPHE programme**

Throughout the school year, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. A wide variety of topics are included in this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE forms a part of this programme; it is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years.

### **Aims of our RSE 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 older children to acquire an understanding and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
- To develop and promote in the 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.

### **School Policies and Curricular Plans which support our RSE**

- SPHE Curriculum
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Policies which support SPHE/RSE
- School's Code of Behaviour
- Healthy Eating Policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Safeguarding Statement
- Admissions Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy for Internet Use

Included in the school curriculum in New Quay N.S. is Religious Education. This is taught through the Grow in Love Programme.

We are a child centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our curricular planning and policy making processes.

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies, we endeavour to support the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for staff, pupils and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the well-being of all members of the school community.

Strand	Strand Units	
	Infant Classes	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes
<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 others</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  Special people in my life  Relating to others

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

**Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in New Quay N.S.**

**R.S.E. is taught as an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education.** We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school therefore, is seen as one of support for the work of the home in this area.

- Upon Request, parents will be provided with a copy of the R.S.E. policy. They will receive notification in advance of sensitive topics being taught.
- The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account.
- Appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. The use of slang words will be discouraged. **(Appendix 1)**

- Some aspects of RSE will be taught through discrete lessons with the remainder being taught in a cross curricular manner. Teachers will have to identify the appropriate links with other subject areas to ensure that children receive a broad-based approach to RSE.
- Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of sensitive topic lessons. Parents may talk to the teachers if they have any concerns.
- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner. The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class. Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme and they will be advised to talk with their parents.

### **Children with Special Needs**

- Children with Special Needs will need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up.
- They may also need more help with learning what sorts of behaviour are/are not acceptable.
- The S.E.T. can input here.
- *For Mild General Learning Difficulties & children with ASD see **Appendix 2***

### **Confidentiality**

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about the child, the school authorities will follow our Child Protection Safeguarding Statement. The school principal is our Designated Liaison Person.

### **Ongoing support, development and review**

The Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents of New Quay N.S. supports the implementation of the RSE programme. 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 in-career development opportunities and access to relevant teaching materials.

### **Teaching Methodologies/Approaches**

- Integration with other curricular areas, SPHE, SESE, Art, Religion and Drama.
- Direct Teaching for the discrete, sensitive areas of the programme.
- Discussion, group work, role play, circle time, video education.
- The age and development of the pupils are considered and arrangements made as necessary.
- Most topics are addressed to the whole class but it may be deemed more suitable at times to teach certain topics separately – e.g. Menstruation for girls.

### **Resources**

- RSE Interim Curriculum Guidelines for Primary Schools (NCCA)
- Relationship and Sexuality Education Department of Education and Skills.
- Busy Bodies DVD (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Busy Body Booklet for Parents (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Illustrative Diagrams. (Male, Female)
- Walk Tall Programme
- Stay Safe Programme

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school's RSE programme only acts as a support to parents.

### Appendix 1.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Language Taught</b>
<b>Junior Infants</b>	<p>"womb"</p> <p>"penis", "vagina" and "urethra" – taught as obvious physical differences between boy/girl</p> <p>"breast-feeding" may be used in conversations as a means of feeding a baby.</p>
<b>Senior Infants</b>	As for Junior Infants
<b>First Class</b>	"penis" and "urethra" taught in terms of passing urine (See DES Resource Materials p. 70-71)
<b>Second Class</b>	As for First Class
<b>Third Class</b>	<p>Revision of terms listed above.</p> <p>"developing foetus"</p>
<b>Fourth Class</b>	<p>"developing foetus"</p> <p>"umbilical cord"</p> <p>"navel"</p>
<b>Fifth Class</b>	<p>"growth spurt"</p> <p>"menstruation"</p> <p>"development of breasts"</p> <p>"ovaries"</p> <p>"fallopian tubes"</p> <p>"sperm production"</p> <p>"erection"</p> <p>"sexual intercourse"</p> <p>"conception"</p>

	<p>“puberty”, “human reproduction” and “sexual intercourse” in the context of a loving family.</p> <p>(See DES RSE resource materials for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes)</p>
<b>Sixth Class</b>	<p>As in 5<sup>th</sup> class</p> <p>“pregnancy”</p> <p>Development of baby in womb</p> <p>Contractions</p> <p>Birth of baby.</p>

## Appendix 2

### RSE FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD GENERAL LEARNING DISABILITIES

THE NCA 'GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH GENERAL LEARNING DISABILITIES' ([WWW.NCCA.IE](http://WWW.NCCA.IE)) HAS A WEALTH OF INFORMATION AND MATERIAL FOR TEACHING SPHE TO STUDENTS WITH GENERAL LEARNING DISABILITIES.

RSE 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 feelings.

RSE 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 SPHE/RSE 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 at puberty.

#### When teaching RSE it is worth remembering that:

- The development of interpersonal skills and knowledge about one's body is dependent on the development of communication and language skills. This is the most fundamental skill that children need in order to describe themselves, to relate to their peers, and to interact with the outside world.
- The education of the child should be needs led, meaning that the teacher should try and establish what the needs of the student are and what the child's emotional readiness and level of understanding are. This can be done through consultation with the parents and with the child.
- Consultation with the parents on sensitive issues is advisable. They may find the subject of sexuality in relation to their child difficult and may need information and support.
- Following consultation with parents and other members of staff, an Individual Education Plan for the student should be developed.
- The child will be better able to learn if the teacher uses key words, diagrams and active learning methodologies. Children with learning difficulties may also need more repetition and reinforcement.
- The SET could consider integrating some of the RSE content into lessons in order to reinforce the learning from mainstream classroom.
- Children with learning difficulties need to learn in a variety of contexts in order to be able to generalise what they have learned.
- Inappropriate behaviour is not necessarily sexual but may stem from the fact that the child is stressed, bored, lonely or lacks access to other sensory experience. This should be borne in



mind when helping a student to understand the boundaries between public and private behaviour.

- Many inappropriate behaviours in children are preventable if the school initiates a conversation with parents while their child is in infant classes. This should stress the importance of putting a consistent approach in place which grows with the pupil and which, from the time the child is young, teaches what is appropriate, in what setting, and when.

## **Teaching RSE to Children with ASD**

### **General Principles**

- *Consulting with Parents:* Given the sensitivity of some of the topics in RSE, it is advisable to talk to parents if there are specific issues, if the teacher is unsure about anything or if the child is behaving in ways that are inappropriate.
- *Small Group Work:* Children with learning difficulties, including children with autism, can benefit from small group work. This allows for repetition and re-enforcement and also facilitates development of social skills.
- *Development of Social Skills:* This is an important aspect of the RSE programme for children with autism. A useful resource for this is 'Social Skills Training for Children and Adolescents with Asperger's Syndrome and Social and Communication Problems'.
- *Use of Visual Resources:* Children with autism often learn better from visual resources. Suggested resources are: Busy Bodies DVD and Parents Booklet.

## Ratification and Communication

The school policy on the **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy** has been amended and ratified by The Board of Management of New Quay N.S.

Gerry Naughton                      Chairperson

Mary Reidy                              Principal

This policy will be communicated to all relevant parties.

This policy will be reviewed when deemed necessary.