

Monastery National School

Revised Policy Statement on RSE 2016

- Monastery National School is an all boys primary school. A total of 270 pupils attend the school at present. Classes range from Infants to Sixth.
- The school is run by a Board of Management and the ethos is Catholic. This Catholic ethos will inform the RSE policy.

School Philosophy

- The school ethos is one which values and respects the contribution of the entire school community. It sets out to promote close working relations between teachers, management and parents all of whom work together for the benefit of the children.
- The school provides a curriculum and a working atmosphere to help each child develop his potential to the full. The school community believes in the holistic development of the child -academic, social, psychological and emotional, recognising that each child is unique with a history and background that is also unique, and that it is the pupil's right to have access to the entire range of education which the school provides.
- **The school recognises that the parents are the primary educators of their children and supports them in that role. In the area of RSE above all, the schools' role is subsidiary to that of parents and it supports and complements their work.**
- This policy was in the first instance, formulated through collaboration between teachers, parents and management.
- **Appendix 1**
Provision will be made for the rights of parents who hold conscientious or moral objections to their son attending RSE lessons.
- **Appendix 2**
Provision will also be made for those teachers who hold conscientious or moral objections to delivering the core aspects of this Programme while recognising the rights of the pupils to have access to the RSE Programme.

Definition of RSE

RSE is the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, intimacy and sexual identity. In the school context, structured opportunities will be provided for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes that will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Aims of RSE

At primary level RSE aims to help children learn at home and in school about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work will be based on:

Developing a good self-image
Promoting respect for themselves and for others
Providing them with appropriate information.

Central to RSE is the fostering of self-esteem through which the pupil becomes more responsible in making choices and decisions in all aspects of life, and particularly in those relating to sexuality and relationships.

Broad Objectives of RSE

- Enable the child to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well being of others.
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts.
- Develop an awareness and understanding of differing family patterns.
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity.

Broad Objectives of RSE (continued)

- Develop personal skills, which help to establish and sustain healthy relationships.
- Develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse; acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on life styles and decision-making.

RSE in the context of SPHE

SPHE provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills; to foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

Aspects of the SPHE are currently being taught in the school in SESE , Religious Education, Physical Education, The Stay Safe Programme and RSE in 6th. class (see current provision)

In order that SPHE will be taught in a more structured way, a curriculum in SPHE has been prepared by the NCCA as part of the current revision of the school curriculum. RSE is an integral part of this SPHE curriculum.

The school SPHE plan will contain an outline of the RSE Programme for each class. Lesson materials and accompanying visual resources will be available in the school.

Current Provision in SPHE

Policies which support SPHE / RSE

A Code of Discipline and Behaviour and a Policy on *Bullying* have been drawn up for the school *with* the co-operation of Teachers, Parents and Management.

In keeping with the sentiments] and spirit of these policies the school informally supports many of the aims on which SPHE/RSE are modelled.

It encourages good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences and respect for self and for others. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the well being of all members of the school community.

Alive-O Programme

The religious instruction programme, "Alive-O" and "Grow in Love" is used in all classes.

This programme extensively covers many of the topics of the SPHE and RSE Programme. The topics, particularly as they relate to self-esteem and inter-personal relationships, are dealt with as they arise in the programme.

Health Education

Topics related to hygiene, care of the body, diet, adequate sleep etc. are all dealt with in the context of Physical Education and on an informal basis at appropriate levels in the classroom.

Stav Safe Programme

Since 1989 this programme has been taught in the school. Teaching of this programme has always been preceded **by an information letter to the parents** of children being introduced / taught the programme.

Parents will be advised that they may view the materials that will be used in the lessons.

Children in the school will be taught the programme in **Junior and Senior Infants, in Third Class and in Fifth Class** i.e three times during their primary school years.

Relationships and Sexuality

For many years children in 6th class have been offered the opportunity of participating in a one-day programme on RSE at a level suited to their age and in conformity with the ethos of the school. The school organizes a facilitator to deliver this programme and parents are notified of the arrangements in advance.

Parents Association

The Parents Association has also in the past organized meetings for parents to help them in the task of communicating with the children on these aspects of their development. Speakers who have expertise in this area have addressed these meetings and parents have found the meetings to be very useful.

Management and Organisation of RSE

The principal in consultation with the staff will make provision for the delivery of the RSE Programme. Lesson plans from the NCCA will be assessed and where necessary amended by the School staff. Pupil maturity and readiness for the different stages of the programme will be one of the criteria on which this assessment will be based.

Where a teacher has a conscientious objection to delivery of the core lessons, provision will be made for that part of the Programme to be delivered by a colleague/visiting speaker. **(see Appendix 2).**

The child's right to privacy will be respected at all times.

Classroom Strategy re Questions which may arise in class

- Teachers will explain that the amount of information given will be part of the year's Programme and further information will be given at a later stage.
- If a question the factual and within the agreed programme for that age group the teacher may answer it.
- If the question is a moral one, Catholic Church teaching will be adhered to.
- If it is felt that the question is genuine the teacher may advise the child to ask at home.
- Teachers will not answer personal questions.

Ongoing Support, Development And Review

- Where opportunities arise, in-career development will be sought for teachers.
- The Parent's association may be able to access training for parents.
- This policy will be reviewed as necessary and as the school SPHE Policy is reviewed.

APPENDIX 1

Withdrawal of Pupils

- The lesson plans and accompanying visual materials for a given topic (s) / strand unit will be available in the school for inspection by parents beforehand.
- Parents will be notified of this in a standard letter.
It will be stated that it is proposed to teach this material to the class.
- Parents will be invited to contact the school to discuss any concerns / issues that they may have in relation to the teaching of these topics / strand unit to their child.
- Provision will be made for the rights of parents who hold conscientious or moral

objections to their son attending RSE lessons.

APPENDIX 2

- The school SPHE plan will contain an outline of the RSE Programme for each class. Lesson materials and accompanying visual resources will be available within the school.
- Provision will be made for teachers who have conscientious objections to delivering sections of the RSE programme.
- Any teacher who has a conscientious objection to teaching parts of the RSE Programme will inform the principal.
- The principal will make arrangements for another member of the teaching staff or other such suitable person, to teach those lessons on behalf of a teacher who has a conscientious objection to being involved in delivering parts of the RSE Programme.
- The teacher with a conscientious objection to teaching parts of the RSE Programme will co-operate with the arrangements necessary, for another member of the teaching staff or other suitable person, to deliver these sections of the Programme.