



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOLS

JOHNSTOWN, DÚN LAOGHAIRE, CO. DUBLIN

Relationships & Sexuality Education Policy

School Details:

Name:	Our Lady of Good Counsel Boys' School
Address:	Johnstown, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
Phone Number:	01 – 285 1449
Category:	Catholic Vertical Boys' School
Enrolment Numbers:	444
School Roll No.	19320W

School Philosophy

Johnstown B.N.S. caters for pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth class. The school is a Catholic primary school in the parish of Johnstown, Killiney. The ethos of the school is founded on Christian principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. Our Mission Statement is displayed in the school foyer. It is our intention that everyone feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment.

Mission Statement

We endeavour to create a caring, Catholic and child-centred environment, promoting tolerance, co-operation, courtesy and respect, catering for children of all abilities and backgrounds. We aim to provide a broad and diverse education both curricular and extra-curricular, which develops the child's self-confidence, happiness and security through the work of a united team of staff, management and parents.

Development of Policy

Consultations took place with staff, parents and Board of Management in the writing of this policy.

Definition of SPHE

Social, personal and health education (SPHE) provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child, to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society.

S.P.H.E. has moral and spiritual dimensions and will, therefore, be developed within the context of the ethos or characteristic spirit of the school. Issues examined will include relationships both at home and in school, building self-esteem, developing communication skills, promoting decision making and the expression of feelings in an appropriate way. It also includes giving clear information on a variety of topics which include nutrition, alcohol, drugs, human growth and development, personal safety and social responsibility. Active participation in a wide range of activities is encouraged so that children will

become increasingly responsible for their own learning and be able to apply what they have learned in a variety of situations in their own lives.

Definition of R.S.E.

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 others and providing them with appropriate information.

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) is taught as part of the broader subject, Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.). It fosters in children a respect for and an understanding of their own dignity and that of others. S.P.H.E. contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of all the children. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. Opportunities will be provided for children to learn basic personal and social skills which help to foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem whilst also nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

Relationship of R.S.E. to S.P.H.E.

R.S.E. is an integral part of S.P.H.E. and will be taught in this context. It is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. At the primary level, R.S.E. aims to help children learn, **at home and in school**, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. The school recognises that parents have primary responsibility in this area but that there is also a need for the school's involvement to support and complement the work of the home. SPHE is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth class and is formally timetabled.

Current Provision

Relationship Education is already an integral part of education in the school. Elements are already included in Religious Education, Physical Education and S.P.H.E. as illustrated:-

Alive-O takes fully into account the formation of relationships for children in today's world.

The Code of Discipline promotes positive relationships between pupils and fellow pupils and also between pupils and teachers.

The Stay Safe programme teaches personal safety skills and assists pupils in determining when a relationship may be invasive. It encourages children to seek appropriate adult assistance where necessary. It is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth class.

Mutual respect and tolerance of others are promoted on an ongoing basis.

Through the **Anti-Bullying Policy** every effort is made to exclude bullying in any form be it physical, verbal, gesture, extortion or exclusion. Everyone within the

school is committed to ensuring a safe, caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all.

The RSE curriculum is spiral in nature. This involves revisiting key topics in a developmental manner at regular intervals. As it is a progressive programme it is taught over the eight year primary cycle.

Other programmes in use are:

- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Drug Awareness
- Walk Tall
- Be Safe Be Seen
- Supportive School Climate: School Rules
- Accord talk for 6th class pupils

Aims

The aims of R.S.E. are:

To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.

To help the child to 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 child to acquire an understanding of, 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 himself and others while growing and developing.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of R.S.E. in our School

Curriculum Matters

The curriculum will be followed as laid down by the D.E.S. As we are a Boys' school, topics relating to girls must be handled with sensitivity and in an age appropriate way. When the Accord facilitators visit in June, the class teacher is always present.

Organisational Matters

Children whose parents choose to withdraw them from the R.S.E. programme will be sent to the alternative class on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. However, as RSE is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education and Skills, withdrawal should be discouraged. Parents with particular concerns should discuss these with the class teacher.

If a child is withdrawn, the school cannot guarantee that other children will not inform the child in question of the content of the lesson from which the child was withdrawn or that the children will not refer incidentally in class to aspects of the lesson during subsequent days/weeks.

The teacher must be discreet in handling matters of a confidential nature. In the event of this occurring the teacher should try to curtail and defer the discussion to a more appropriate time and place. The teacher may also need to discuss the matter or seek the advice of the Designated Liaison Person (D.L.P.).

Teachers have the right to withdraw from the sexuality aspect of R.S.E. if they feel uncomfortable with it. Alternative arrangements will be made e.g. within the school/external agency.

Language/Terminology

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Not being familiar with the biological terms for the body can put children at a disadvantage.

Therefore in teaching issues related to RSE the teachers will use the children the correct biological terms as outlined in RSE Resource Materials as follows:

Jnr. /Snr. Infants:

Term "womb" will be taught

Terms "penis" and "vagina" will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy/girl term "breast feeding" may be used in conversation as a means of feeding a baby

1st/2nd

"Penis" and "urethra" will be taught/revised in terms of passing urine. Teachers will teach that baby is in womb for nine months and may be breast or bottle fed.

3rd/4th

Developing foetus and menstruation, "umbilical cord" and "navel" taught/revised

5th/6th

Puberty, human reproduction and sexual intercourse in the context of a committed loving relationship will be taught using the language outlined in DES RSE Resource Materials for 5th/6th classes

Dealing with Questions

Appropriate questions will be answered by the teacher or Accord visitor in a sensible, sensitive and age appropriate manner. The child will be advised to discuss questions which are deemed to be outside the teacher's remit with his parents/guardians. The school recognises the primary role of parents as educators. Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel a question is very inappropriate.

Pupils with Different Needs

In line with our subject plan for SPHE, teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in the Stay Safe to encourage participation by children with special needs. The learning support and resource teachers will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. Our Lady of Good Counsel B.N.S. will liaise with trained professionals/appropriate agencies when dealing with sensitive issues such as bereavement or loss to ensure that the children involved are fully supported.

The implementation of a successful R.S.E. programme is the responsibility of the entire school community – Board of Management, parents, teachers and pupils. Full collaboration and good communication between home and school is essential in delivering a meaningful and worthwhile programme for the benefit of pupils and their families. Each partner in the school community has individual and distinctive contributions to make regarding the formation, implementation, ongoing management and review of the programme.

Review and Development

The R.S.E. policy will be reviewed on a two year basis or beforehand if necessary.

APPENDIX

The Role of Parents

The school recognises that, in this area above all, its role is subsidiary to that of the parent. The parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children.

The home is recognised as exerting a major influence on all aspects of the child's life, and especially so in the domain of relationships and sexuality. This aspect of a child's development can be complemented by a school-based R.S.E. programme. The parents are welcome to view RSE teaching materials at the school.

In relation to the sexuality aspect of R.S.E. parents will be given prior notice of what is proposed, thereby affording them the opportunity to deal with these matters at home. This will also enable them to deal with follow up work thereby complementing the work done in class.

The Board of Management

The Board will support, facilitate and resource the development and implementation of the R.S.E. programme.

The Board will:

Facilitate the consultative process thereby enabling the school community to contribute and respond.

Examine and approve the completed R.S.E. policy and programme prior to its implementation in the school

Recognise the rights of parents not to delegate in whole or in part the responsibility for dealing with R.S.E. issues, and will equally respect the rights of teachers in this regard.

At all times seek to accommodate and be sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs of all parents while fulfilling its responsibility to ensure the availability of an adequate R.S.E. programme for all children.

The Principal

The Principal has a key role in implementing R.S.E. policy in the school.

The Principal, in consultation with the teaching staff, will present the revised document to the Board of Management for approval. It will then be made available to all parents on the school website or in hard copy where requested.

The Principal will allocate time for planning, training, delivery, review and evaluation of the R.S.E. programme on an ongoing basis.

Teachers

Teachers have a major and diverse role in planning, implementing and delivering R.S.E. in the school. The role of the teacher will at all times be complementary to that of

parents taking due cognisance of the individual needs, stage of development and family background of each child.

The extent to which content will be treated will be dependent upon the emotional and intellectual maturity of the children. Care will be exercised within the classroom so that no child is exposed to information or discussion which would be inappropriate to his age or level of maturity. Parents may discuss any reservations they have in this regard with the class teacher.

The programme will be delivered by way of core periods complemented in a cross-curricular manner.

Teachers will select and review resource materials bearing in mind the views of parents and the Board of Management. They will also be involved in the ongoing review and evaluation of the programme in conjunction with parents and the Board of Management.

A child's right to privacy will be respected in all classes by both the teacher and all other pupils. Teachers equally share this right and should never feel obliged to impart information about his/her own personal life.

Teachers will be encouraged to adopt an approach which is genuine, open and respectful. Communication strategies used in the classroom will reflect those advocated in the R.S.E. programme – listening to all sides of the argument, resolving conflict without aggression.

Teachers will identify links between R.S.E. and other curricular areas thus ensuring that children experience a broad based approach to R.S.E.

External Facilitators

Where appropriate, a suitable person outside of the school staff (e.g. Accord) may deliver any aspect(s) of the R.S.E. programme with the prior express approval of the Board of Management. The class teacher must be present.

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11th May 2015. It will be reviewed in 2017/2018.

Signed: _____
Michael J. Hunt
Chairperson B.O.M.

Neil Cadogan
Principal