

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School Relationships & Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) Policy



Our School's Ethos

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School (RETNS) RSE Programme is developed in the context of the core values that inform the ethos of the school: child centred, multi-denominational, co- educational and democratically run. Honesty, respect, justice, integrity, trust and responsibility should emanate from a basic sense of social, ethical and moral standards. RETNS wishes to encourage children to base relationships with others on friendship and understanding and to be sensitive to difference and variety among people - this would include developing sensitivity to people's various strengths and vulnerabilities. The ethos of the school provides a supportive climate to help children understand themselves, communicate with others, make decisions, deal with conflict, and develop a positive self-concept. The working partnership of parent and teacher, and the inclusive nature of the ethos of our school enable our children to develop the aspects of their personality that will help to make them a whole rounded balanced person.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an active, collaborative and positive process, using appropriate methodologies, whereby the child acquires a knowledge and understanding of

1. Self, friendships and relationships
2. The moral, spiritual and social framework of human sexuality
3. A respect for love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
4. A sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life

Through this process the child is enabled to continue developing a mature sexuality for him/herself and in relation to others, while growing and developing throughout their lives. The programme will be taught in the context of the philosophy and ethos of the school and using the RSE curriculum as set out by the Department of Education.

Parents/Guardians Rights and Responsibilities The parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children in relationships and sexuality, with the teaching staff playing a supportive role. In the context of the S.P.H.E. programme of which R.S.E. is an aspect, the allotted time is approx. six hours per academic year.

Taking into account the independent needs and family background of the children it is the parents/guardians responsibility to impart their own chosen values and beliefs.

Teachers Rights & Responsibilities

- The teachers' role must be considered to be complementary to that of the parents/guardians, taking cognisance of the individual needs, stage of development and family backgrounds of the children
- It is the teachers' responsibility to create a climate where mutual respect is promoted and practiced and the dignity of each individual is respected.
- The teachers' will be responsible for integrating RSE into other areas of the curriculum.
- It is the teachers' responsibility to evaluate the programme.

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

RETNS believes that it is important to teach RSE in the context of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The SPHE programme provides opportunities for children to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence, and self-esteem. It also allows opportunities to nurture sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others. Central to relationships and sexuality education is the fostering of self-esteem, through which the children become more responsible in making choices and decisions in all aspects of life. RSE is an integral part of SPHE. It also shares content with language,

the arts, physical education, the ethical education programme and with social environmental and scientific education. Many of the personal and social skills which we hope to develop in RSE e.g. safety, communication, understanding cause and effect are explored in subject areas like the Ethical Education programme, English, social and environmental studies, history, geography, science education etc. Giving children the opportunities to role-play feelings and situations can develop the personal and social skills through music and dance and the arts in general.

An integrative approach is very significant for R.S.E. and the RSE lesson plans will be integrated into various subject areas as outlined above, this will ensure that the pupils encounter RSE in a holistic manner rather than in isolation

The Aims of the RSE programme:

- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- Help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- Foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- Enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
- Develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- Enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing

Guidelines for the Management & Organisation of RSE in our school

- In the classroom the teacher in his/her professional capacity will endeavour to create an atmosphere, which respects the privacy of each individual child, and to treat all children with due sensitivity and care.
- The teacher will encourage the children to use the RSE information appropriately.
- The teachers will use their professional judgement and the RSE training guidelines in dealing with information or enquiries made by children all topics.
- The children will be advised and encouraged to discuss the course material with their parents/guardians.
- The children will be taught the RSE programme in their class group.
- The content of the curriculum will be adhered to at all times. A copy of the content of the programme for each class will be distributed to all parents/guardians.
- Sensitive Issues. By its nature RSE explores issues which give rise to different views and sensitivities. The teachers, in their professional capacity, will use their training and the RSE guidelines in dealing with these issues with due regard for the ethos of the school.
- Many of the objectives of RSE are similar to those in other curriculum areas and will be treated in a cross curricular manner. Some aspects of RSE will be taught within a specific delineated time in the school timetable and it is the parents/guardians, right to withdraw their child from these RSE classes, should they wish.
- Teachers and parents/guardians have a joint responsibility to collaborate on resources for the RSE programme e.g. curriculum meeting, progress meeting (table with resources) etc.
- Teachers have a right to training.
- Teachers have a right to have adequate resources to teach the programme.
- The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times. It is equally important that the teachers share this right and never feel obliged to impart information about their own personal lives.

Guidelines for children who are withdrawn from the Programme

- A parent/guardian has the right to withdraw their child/children from the RSE programme.
- The child may stay in the classroom, doing a quiet activity agreed by the teacher, whilst the class are being taught the programme.
- If the parent/guardian prefers, the child may go to another classroom under the supervision of another member of staff for the duration of the period that the programme is being taught.
- When the child arrives staff members should acknowledge the child and organise with the child where he or she will sit for the duration.
- Our ethos of inclusion must prevail at all times.
- In the case of a substitute teacher it is important to make sure the arrangement continues.
- If a parent/guardian has any other difficulties regarding the above guidelines refer to the Principal or the Deputy Principal for clarification.

Principal's Role The Principal has a key role to play in implementing school policy on RSE. This will involve the setting up of appropriate communication structures to include parents/guardians, teachers and Board of Management to facilitate a genuinely open collaborative process leading to the development and review of the schools RSE policy.

Visiting Speakers Visiting speakers will be approached using the guidelines already in place for presentations on value and belief systems, as part of the Ethical Education Programme.

RETNS is committed to the provision for ongoing support, development & review by:

- Ensuring access to in career development opportunities for teachers and the policy committees.
- Supporting efforts of parents/guardians to provide educational opportunities for other parents/guardians.
- Providing relevant RSE school resources.

The Principal and teaching staff will undertake review of materials and resources at regular intervals.

Overview of content for Infants, First and Second classes

Strands	Strand Units	Strand Units
	Infant classes	First and Second classes
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am unique 1) <i>Self-esteem</i> 2) Developing and expressing self-confidence • My body • As I grow I change • New life • Keeping safe • Feelings and emotions • Making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am unique 1) <i>Self-esteem</i> 2) Developing and expressing self-confidence • My body • As I grow I change • New life • Keeping safe • Feelings and emotions • Making decisions
Myself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myself and my family • Myself and my friends • Special people in my life • Relating to others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving conflict</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myself and my family • Myself and my friends • Special people in my life • Relating to others <i>Communicating</i> <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> <i>Resolving conflict</i>

Overview of content for Third to Sixth classes

Strands	Strand Units	Strand Units
Myself	3rd & 4th Class	5th & 6th Class
	Accepting myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Self Esteem</i> • Developing and expressing self-confidence Physical development Growing and changing Birth and new life Feelings and emotions Personal hygiene Personal safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identifying and assessing risks</i> • <i>Developing safety strategies</i> • <i>Making decisions</i> 	Accepting myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Self Esteem</i> • Developing and expressing self-confidence Physical development Growing and changing Birth and new life Feelings and emotions Personal hygiene Personal safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identifying and assessing risks</i> • <i>Developing safety strategies</i> • <i>Making decisions</i>
Myself and others	Roles and responsibilities in families Friendship Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Roles of males and females in society Relating to others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communicating</i> • <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> • <i>Resolving conflict</i> 	Changing relationships in families & friendships Group affiliation & loyalty Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Roles of males and females in society Relating to others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communicating</i> • <i>Sharing and co-operating</i> • <i>Resolving conflict</i>