

## **R.S.E. POLICY STATEMENT**

### **School Philosophy**

Scoil Seanain Naofa is a Catholic primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of the diocese of Killaloe. The school community undertakes to create a Christian atmosphere of compassion, mutual respect and honest endeavour. Within this framework the school endeavours to enable each child to reach his/her full potential – spiritually, emotionally, socially, aesthetically, culturally, physically and intellectually. Children are encouraged to become considerate, respectful, confident and self-disciplined.

### **Mission Statement**

The school community endeavours to enable each child to reach his/her full potential in a Christian atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation.

### **Relationship and Sexuality Programme**

At primary level the general R.S.E. programme has been drawn up by the Department of Education and Science to enable children to learn at home and at school about their friendships and relationships with others.

In this school the R.S.E. programme will be part of a wider programme of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). This wider programme will contribute to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and wellbeing of the children. The content of the programme will include a range of topics such as healthy eating, drugs awareness, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as R.S.E.

### **Why do we need R.S.E.?**

It is felt that many children get information and misinformation about relationships and sexuality from television “soaps”, in the playground and from older friends etc., in many settings and in many ways that parents cannot control and may not be too happy about.

Furthermore, children may be picking up messages from television, videos and films such as “it’s okay to be dishonest if you are not caught”, “aggression works” and “I can do exactly what I want now!” There is a need to help children to listen, to distinguish between differing points of view and to express themselves in an appropriate way.

### **□ Aims of R.S.E.**

1. To promote self esteem.
2. To promote respect for the rights of others, encouraging tolerance, and understanding of differences between people.
3. To foster responsibility in decision-making.
4. To help children develop healthy friendships and relationships.
5. To promote an understanding of sexuality leading to a healthy attitude to it and to relationships.

6. To promote knowledge and respect for human love.
7. To encourage children to develop healthy attitudes and values towards sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
8. To equip children with the appropriate language to talk about themselves, their feelings, their development and their relationships with others.

Many people experience unease and embarrassment when discussing feelings, emotions and bodily functions. This may be due in part to an inadequacy of language or the negative associations acquired over time about these issues. The R.S.E. programme should equip children with the appropriate language to talk about themselves, their feelings, their development and their relationship with others.

#### Guidelines for the implementation of R.S.E. in the school

It is proposed that the contents of the R.S.E. programme will be taught in a cross curricular and integrated manner as most of the objectives of the programme are shared with other areas of the curriculum. In fact, the Alive O Series (Religious programme of the school) share many, if not all the aims of the R.S.E. programme. Any areas of the R.S.E. not already covered by the programme will be taught separately (5/6 lessons) normally during 2<sup>nd</sup> term of the school year.

In general, the class teacher will teach the programme. Another teacher, however, may at the discretion of the Principal, in consultation with the staff, teach certain aspects of the programme.

#### Methodology and Resources

A variety of teaching methods will be applied in the programme. No one method would suffice for the multiplicity of issues involved. The school will support research into additional/alternative resource material to that already available, which would conform to the Catholic ethos of our school.

##### □ Points to note:

- This programme in no way takes from the rights and the responsibility of parents as the prime educators of their children in this area, rather, it aims to be complementary to the work of the home. Furthermore, all relevant materials will be made available to any parent on request.

Moreover, parents who wish to provide R.S.E. exclusively at home have the right to withdraw their children from any aspect of the programme. This should be done in writing at the start of the school year. Consultation with the principal will be necessary regarding practical issues, such as arranging supervision.

- Teachers reserve the right to withdraw from teaching certain aspects of the programme. In which case, the principal in consultation with the Board of Management, may arrange for another staff member or outside teacher to undertake the task.
- The dignity, privacy and modesty of each child will be respected so that no child will be pressured to reveal or discuss private matters.
- The programme will be taught in class groups mainly. However, it may be deemed beneficial to discuss some aspects in single sex groups.

Children's questions will be answered as per Department of Education and

Science guidelines.

**Evaluation:**

This programme will be evaluated annually by the Board of Management of the school. Should any issues arise, these will be referred to the Policy committee for its deliberations.