



## **St. Columba's N.S.,**

Tullow,  
Co. Carlow.

**Roll Number:** 13607M  
**Telephone & Fax:** 059-9151873

**Email:** stcolumbasnstullow@eircom.net  
**Website:** stcolumbasnstullow.com

### **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in March 2012.

#### **School Philosophy:**

St. Columba's N.S. encourages parents, teachers and the Board of Management work as a team to further the educational, physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual well being of the children in the school.

#### **Ethos of School**

St. Columba's N.S. is a Church of Ireland school.

All pupils are equally valued and respected – irrespective of gender, nationality, social background, religious denomination, family circumstances, or educational achievement.

In St. Columba's N.S., moral values such as honesty, truthfulness, justice, fairness, sensitivity to others and civic responsibility are nurtured and protected. These moral values are based on Biblical teaching.

#### **Definition of R.S.E.**

RSE aims to help children learn 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. (Going Forward Together, Parents' Information Booklet p.4)

#### **Relationships of R.S.E. to S.P.H.E.**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is situated within Social, Personal and Health Education. It deals with specific aspects of S.P.H.E. such as human growth and development, human sexuality, parenting, personal and social skills and relationships.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

The RSE element of SPHE deals with specifically with human growth and development from baby to puberty, sexual intercourse, relationships with others and development of personal and social skills.

#### **Current Provision**

- SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education)
- Religious Education
- Stay Safe Programme – completed in full annually as directed by Circular 65/2011
- RSE Programme

## **Aims of our R.S.E. Programme**

1. To enhance the personal development, self esteem and well-being of the children.
2. To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
3. To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to relationships
4. To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
5. To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
6. To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
7. To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
8. To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing

## **Sensitive Issues in R.S.E.**

It is recognised that R.S.E. is a child-centred programme. It is envisaged that the programme will be aimed, as far as possible, at the individual needs of the children, and that all aspects of the course will be taught in a sensitive manner.

## **Curriculum Matters**

### **Curriculum Content**

The RSE curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught in Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. Sensitive issues will be taught in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes. It will be taught by the teaching staff.

## **SPHE and RSE**

The SPHE Curriculum encompasses the RSE curriculum in the following areas:

### Myself

Self identity, taking care of my body, growing and changing, safety and protection.

### Myself and Others

Myself and family, friends and relating to other people.

### Taking Care of My Body

Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate terminology i.e. vagina, penis, breasts (whole school)

Identifying physical changes, Understanding puberty and the Reproductive System (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>)

### Growing and Changing

The stages of development of a baby from conception to birth (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>).

understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>)

discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>)

From Junior Infants, appropriate terminology will be used to name parts of the male and female body i.e. penis, vagina, breasts.

In fifth and sixth classes, the sensitive lessons of puberty, the reproductive system and understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed loving relationship will be taught.

A parents' pack will be sent home before these lessons are taught, informing parents of the lesson content which will be covered. The parents' pack will request that parents discuss the information which will be covered with their child prior to the school teaching it. This is to accommodate parental involvement and to put emphasis on the family nature of this education.

All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the policy.

When an outside speaker is used, the class teacher is responsible for making them aware of school policy and there will be a staff representative present.

### **Organisational Matters:**

If children are withdrawn from RSE lessons during the school day, they will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom.

With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed amongst the children in the yard or classroom.

Any teacher has the right to opt-out from teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is responsibility of Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be taught to the children by another teacher or an outside speaker.

If a child is absent, every effort will be made to include the child in RSE lessons. However, this may not always be possible and parents are encouraged to cover the material with the child.

Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.

### **Dealing with Questions**

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics will not be discussed i.e. abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception. Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and policy. Any questions asked by the children that are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature (personal to themselves or others) or discloses personal information.

### **Parents – Their Role, Rights and Responsibilities**

St. Columba's N.S. recognises that parents are the key figures in helping their children cope with the physical and emotional changes of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings. R.S.E. is, at its best, a partnership between home and school.

At Senior Level parents will have the right to inform the school in writing, if they do not wish their child(ren) to take part in aspects of this programme. They will be informed beforehand when the lessons will take place, and can arrange with the school to withdraw their child(dren) from the classroom during this time. However, parents must note that if they choose to withdraw their child from the sensitive aspects of the RSE programme, they take responsibility for the teaching of the aspects. Written notification of withdrawal and acceptance of responsibility must be provided to the Principal. If parents choose to withdraw



# St. Columba's N.S.,

Tullow,  
Co. Carlow.

**Roll Number:** 13607M  
**Telephone & Fax:** 059-9151873

**Email:** stcolumbasnstullow@eircom.net  
**Website:** stcolumbasnstullow.com

their child from the sensitive aspects of the programme, the school cannot guarantee that the child will not be made aware of these aspects by other children who have been present.

## Teachers' Rights in relation to R.S.E.

All teachers have the right to refuse to teach the sensitive areas (puberty, sexual intercourse and reproduction) of the R.S.E. programme. However suitable arrangements will be made by the Principal and staff, in consultation with the Board of Management to provide instruction in these areas.

## Teaching RSE

RSE will be taught in a two year cycle. The sensitive topics will be taught annually.

<u>Junior and Senior Infant Classes</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes</u>
Look What I Can Do These are my Friends This is my Family I Can be Safe Other People Have Feelings Too Caring for New Life My Body I Grow and Change Making Decisions	Things I like to do My Friends My Family Keeping Safe Showing our Feelings The Wonder of New Life How My Body Works – (Using correct terms) Growing Means Changing Decisions and their Consequences Other People are Special Being Friends Keeping Safe Coping with our Feelings When my Body needs Special Care Growing and Changing Personal Decisions

<u>3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Classes</u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes</u>
Valuing Self and Others Feelings Choices Substances Standing Up for Myself	Me and Others Feelings Influences Decision-making Alcohol Smoking Drugs Relationships and New Life The Wonder of New Life A Baby is a Miracle Caring For New Life My Body In and Out of Balance Making Healthy Decisions