St John Bosco Junior Boys’ School

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

**School Philosophy**   
St John Bosco Junior Boys’ School caters for children from a wide variety of backgrounds. As a Catholic school we aim to create and maintain a happy atmosphere where each child can grow and develop physically, emotionally, academically and spiritually. Each child has a right to learn and each teacher has a right to teach in a safe, disciplined and disruptive-free environment and to be treated with due courtesy and respect. In such an atmosphere, self-discipline, responsibility for actions and respect for order and authority are fostered. Communication channels are open, with parents meeting teachers on both a formal and informal basis. Integration of children with Special Educational Needs is encouraged as much as possible. We recognise parents as the primary educators of their children, particularly in the area of R.S.E. Provision will be made for the rights of parents who hold conscientious or moral objections to their children's participation in the R.S.E. programme. Provision will also be made for teachers who hold conscientious or moral objections to delivering particular areas of the programme while recognising the rights of the pupils to have access to the R.S.E. programme.   
  
**Definition of R.S.E.**   
R.S.E. 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. At primary level R.S.E. aims to help children learn at home and in school about their own development, 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 and SPHE**

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. SPHE/RSE will be taught throughout the school in a spiral curriculum, and will be formally timetabled.  
RSE is also offered informally to pupils through a caring and supportive school atmosphere. It is fostered in positive relationships between home, school and community

**Policies and Programmes**

* Our school has a Positive Behaviour Policy and an Anti-Bullying Policy which were drawn up with the co-operation of teachers, parents and the Board of Management. In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies the school informally supports many of the aims on which S.P.H.E. / R.S.E. 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 Alive O Programme is used in all classes. This programme extensively covers many of the topics of the S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. Programmes. 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 SPHE and on a formal and informal basis at appropriate levels in the classroom.
* **Stay Safe Programme**   
  The Stay Safe Programme is taught in Senior Infants. We aim to have a Parent Talk on this once every three years.

**Aims of R.S.E.**   
The aims of our RSE Programme are as follows  
1. To assist parents in their role as primary educators so that they may guide their child's development physically, socially and emotionally.  
2. To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.  
3. To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships.  
4. To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, relationships and sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.  
5. To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.  
6. To acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.  
7. To understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts  
8. To acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction  
9. To develop and promote in the child a sense of understanding of and respect for the process of birth and new life.  
10. To develop some coping strategies to protect oneself and others from various forms of abuse.

**Content of R.S.E. Programme**   
It is school policy that the content objectives are covered with each class level as outlined in the SPHE curriculum statement and within the context of the school’s Catholic ethos. One half hour period per week is timetabled in each class for SPHE and RSE will be included in the programme taught during this time. The approach to the teaching of RSE will be kept as normal as possible and will be delivered within the child’s class by the class teacher.   
  
Parents are the primary educators of their child. The school has a role to play in supporting and complementing parents in this work, helping to communicate the Christian visions of human life and relationships through the RSE programme. It is the policy of our school to nurture Catholic values in relation to love, marriage, parenthood and family life.  
The curriculum is spiral in nature and all content will be delivered developmentally throughout the child's time in our school. All information delivered will be informed by the content objectives of the SPHE Curriculum.

RSE specific education will be covered in the following strands and strand units

Myself

* Self-identity
* Taking care of my body
* Growing and changing
* Safety and Protection

Myself and Others

* Myself and my family
* My friends and other people
* Relating to others

**The Management and Organisation of R.S.E.**

* On enrolment, parents will be provided with a brief overview of the SPHE/RSE programme in the Parent Information Booklet.
* Teachers will teach only the content/topics advised for the class level and will answer only questions relevant to the programme for that class level. If it is not possible to answer a question or if the question is outside the scope of the content for the class the teacher will suggest to the child that he talks to a parent.
* The school will endeavour to accommodate the request of any teacher who does not wish to teach the RSE aspect of the programme provided that a suitable arrangement can be put in place to ensure that the children are taught the RSE content. (i.e. another teacher from the school may teach the RSE lessons to the class)
* A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education.
* It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw and their willingness to cover sensitive issues with their child outside of school hours. A child who has been withdrawn from class for the duration of a RSE lesson will be accommodated in another classroom under the supervision of another teacher. If a child is withdrawn from the class for the teaching of sensitive issues we cannot guarantee that the other children will not inform him about what has been taught. The teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the issue at another time while that child is present.
* Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature which he does not wish to share.
* Parents/guardians are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.
* Prior to the teaching of the lessons which deal with sensitive issues, parents/guardians will be sent a letter to inform them that the topic is coming up. This will allow parents/guardians the opportunity to prepare the child if they so wish.

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.

The following is a list of specific vocabulary which is used in our school and the objectives they relate to in the SPHE curriculum.

**Junior Infants**

Theme: New Life - new life in Spring, pets and family.

Vocabulary: born, womb, breastfeeding

**Senior Infants**

Theme: My Body – personal hygiene and self-awareness

Vocabulary: penis, vagina, breasts

**First Class**

As RSE is spiral in nature themes covered in Infants will be revised in First Class.

**Implementation and Review**

RSE is a shared responsibility. We recognise that within our school community, parents/guardians, teachers and the Board of Management all have a responsibility for the relationships and sexuality education of our children.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of the RSE programme as part of the SPHE curriculum in St. John Bosco Junior Boys’ School. Class teachers are responsible for the implementation of the RSE programme for their own classes.

It will be necessary to review this policy on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE/RSE curriculum in our school. Any amendments will be noted and acted upon.

**Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2014

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_