

*Ballyfin N.S*  
*Relationships &*  
*Sexuality Education*  
*Policy.*

**Relationships and Sexuality Education  
Policy Document.**

**Ballyfin N.S.**

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**Steering Committee Members  
Nominated by Parent's Council**

**Bernie Scott**

**Ann Heffernan**

**Nominated by Teachers**

**Jane Farrell**

**Nominated by Board of Management**

**Tommy Finn**

**Mary McEvoy**

**Committee Chairperson**

**Michael Moloney**

Ballyfin N.S. is a rural Catholic National School serving the parish of Ballyfin. It is co-educational and has a current enrolment of 228 pupils. The classes are arranged in mixed age groups and range from infants to sixth. Our Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy will be informed by all these factors.

### **The Ethos of our School**

Ballyfin N.S. aims to provide a happy, positive and secure learning environment where each child can grow and develop socially, physically, academically, spiritually and emotionally. It depends on the co-operation of pupils, parents, teachers, Board of Management, parish and the community.

Our mission is to provide for the academic, physical, emotional, social and spiritual education of our pupils. The varying needs of all the children, the talents, personalities and learning styles of both pupils and teachers will determine our delivery and approach.

We endeavour to build on the children's strengths and support them when they encounter difficulties.

We recognise that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we depend upon their support and co-operation together with that of the Board of Management, the Department of Education and Science and the wider community.

### **What is R. S. E. ? Relationships and Sexuality Education.**

R.S.E. provides opportunities for children to learn about themselves, their relationships with others and human sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring, responsible way.

### **The Aims of the R. S. E. Programme**

To achieve by the end of their Primary School Education

- Good self-esteem and self-respect.
- Good social skills.
- Good communication skills.
- The necessary skills for building and maintaining healthy friendships and relationships.
- Respect for family life and an awareness of the responsibilities of parenthood.
- An understanding of and respect for the creation of life.
- An understanding of human sexuality in a moral, social and spiritual framework.
- The development of decision-making skills and the ability to evaluate external influences.

## **R.S.E. Policy      Why do we need a policy?.**

To ensure the R.S.E. programme taught in our school

- is suitable to the needs of our children
- has the approval of their parents
- meets with the educational approval of our teachers and is one which they are willing to deliver.
- is framed within the Catholic ethos of our school and is deemed suitable by the Board of Management.
- upholds the rights of individual parents or teachers to decide that they do not wish to participate in this particular programme.
- takes full regard of the various needs of our particular situation.
- helps our children to acquire essential knowledge and life skills in the area of human relationships and sexuality in a happy, secure, comfortable environment.

## **Why we needed a policy committee?**

To act as a microcosm of the school community.

To act as a sounding board for the various elements of the programme.

## **What does the school currently provide in this area?**

- 1    The Religious Education Programme - Alive - O.  
This programme is currently being covered in the school. There is a large over-lap between the material covered in this programme and the proposed material for the R.S.E. programme.
- 2    Stay Safe Programme.
3.    Health Education Programmes e.g. The Space Quest Programme.  
Social, Personal, Health Education (S.P.H.E.)  
P.E. Programme.  
School Code of Discipline, promotes responsibility and respect for others  
promotes healthy eating and safety etc.

The formal curriculum is only part of the process of relationships education. Each day children learn how to relate to others socially, how to resolve their differences and how to live with and respect others. The ethos of the school teaches the children these essential skills. We encourage good behaviour, respectful communication, understanding and tolerance of others, pride in our work and in our achievements. We nurture good self-esteem when we encourage our children by building on their strengths and supporting them when they encounter difficulties. We celebrate their efforts and their achievements, especially those little steps which take great personal effort.

### **How will the R.S.E. Programme be delivered?**

When the R.S.E. policy has been agreed upon all the interested parties the principal and staff will begin making provisions for the delivery of the agreed programme.

Pupil maturity and readiness for the different stages of the programme will be of the utmost importance. It may be necessary sometimes to defer a particular lesson to the next school year due to the manner in which the classes are grouped .

Where a topic is too advanced for the younger class it may be deferred to the next school year. It is envisaged however that all topics will have been covered by the end of sixth class.

As in the case in other subjects, outside professionals may sometimes be invited to speak to the children on some aspects of R.S.E. Likewise visitors e.g. mother and baby may be invited in to visit the children.

### **Classroom Strategy for handling Questions which arise**

If the question is factual and within the agreed programme for that age group the teachers will answer the question.

Where the question is outside the range of the years programme the teacher will explain that the information given must be part of this years programme and that further information will be given at later stage.

Where the teacher feels that the question is of real concern to the child but outside the agreed programme for that age group, the teacher will advise the child to ask for information at home or may consult with the parents where necessary.

**Teachers will not answer personal questions.**

### **Parents Rights**

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the programme or particular aspects of the programme.

It will be the responsibility of the parents to inform the class teacher in writing if there are lessons in the programme which they do not wish their children to cover.

Be sure that you are satisfied with the programme.

It may be possible to structure the time for particular lessons close to the end of the school day in order to facilitate parents who may wish to withdraw their children from certain areas of the programme.

### **Teachers Rights**

Where a teacher has a conscientious objection to delivery of certain aspects of the programme, provisions will be made for those aspects to be delivered by a colleague or trained speaker.

### **Assessment and Review**

Once R.S.E. has been taught for one school year the policy will be reviewed by the policy committee.

## **For your information - the sensitive areas of the programme.**

### **Infants**

Has anyone got a new baby? Have you seen a new baby?

Where was the baby before it was born? Mammy's tummy - in a special room called a womb.

The word "**penis**" to be used in the context of what a boy uses to go to the toilet.

The word "**vulva**" to be used for a girl.

It is hoped that these words would be naturally and informally incorporated into the children's vocabulary - eyes, ears, nose, mouth, arms, tummy, penis, legs, toes etc. and would be used when necessary.

### **First/Second**

The focus is on new babies and how they are cared for in both the animal and human worlds. When discussing how babies are fed reference is made to **breast milk**.

By now children will be familiar with the idea of the baby staying in it's Mammy's tummy or womb. The word "Vagina" is introduced as the special opening where the baby leaves Mammy's womb and is born.

### **Third/Fourth**

Children are introduced to the wonder of how you grow from a dot the size of a full-stop to being a fully grown baby over the nine months in the womb.

An egg - size of a full stop

after four weeks - the size of a baked bean .... four months - you fit in a tea-cup ..... five months - the palm of an adults hand ....etc.

You are nourished through the **umbilical cord**.

### **End of Fourth/Fifth Class**

The changes involved in growing from girl to woman/boy to man. Body shapes/ menstruation/voice changes. Changes in friendship and moods/ skin changes/body hair-pubic hair/hygiene, food, exercise, sleep.

### **Fifth /Sixth.**

- Physical changes which occur in males and females with the onset of puberty. Recognise that physical changes are part of the on-going process of growth common to everyone.

Accept that changes occur at different times for different people.

Girls growing up - breast development, menstruation/periods begin, growth spurt, underarm and pubic hair begin to grow, hips broaden, perspiration may increase, oily skin and pimples may develop.

Boys growing up - growth spurt, testicles, scrotum and penis enlarge, pubic, facial and other body hair begin to grow, voice deepens, nocturnal emissions/wet dreams occur, sperm, ejaculation, perspiration may increase, oily skin and pimples may develop.

- Conception - Understand how intercourse and conception take place within a committed loving relationship.  
Become familiar with the reproduction system  
ovum, egg, ovaries, fertilised egg, periods, umbilical cord.
- It will be of vital importance to the success of the programme that the person who is delivering the particularly sensitive areas of intercourse and conception will be completely at ease and comfortable doing so.  
With this in mind the teachers reserve the right to seek the assistance of trained professionals to discuss these sensitive areas of the R.S.E. programme.

**NB. External facilitators /tutors must work under the guidance and supervision of the classroom teacher, who must remain in the classroom with the pupils at all times and retain the central role in the delivering of the subject matter in the R.S.E. lessons. Visitors must never replace the class teacher. To do so would undermine the integrity of the curriculum, the credibility and professionalism of the teacher and the school and could compromise the safety and welfare of the pupils.**

**(Taken from D.E.S. Circular 0022/2010 - Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) ).**

### **Concluding Comment.**

This policy has been prepared based on conditions existing in the school at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised or updated at a future date so as to comply with any changes in conditions.

All amendments and updates will be recorded in the -

R.S.E. Policy.

Signed : Patrick B. Hennessy  
Chairperson B.O.M.  
Ballyfin N.S.

Date : 13/10/02  
Updated 9/12/13