



## **Relationships and Sexuality - Policy**

### **Our School:**

Donabate/Portrane Educate Together National School opened in 2002. Our school operates under the direct patronage of Educate Together. Like all Educate Together schools our school ethos is based on four principles:

We are: `Child-centred; Co-educational; Multi-denominational and Democratically Run.

### **Our School Philosophy:**

Children who attend our school are encouraged to reach their full potential mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially, in an atmosphere and environment in which they feel safe, valued and secure and in which respect for self and others is the norm. The Staff, conscious of the need for a positive working environment, will encourage the involvement of the wider school community in the achievement of these ends through a 'whole school' approach whereby every individual is involved in the development of a school environment where each person is respected and valued.

### **Definition of RSE:**

RSE 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.

### **Relationship of RSE to SPHE:**

In the school setting RSE will be taught in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). SPHE contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of the child. SPHE looks at issues such as relationships at home and in school, building self-esteem and learning skills of communication, decision-making and expressing feelings in an appropriate way. It also includes giving clear information on a wide range of topics relating to social, personal and health education.

**What the school currently provides:**

SPHE is currently being taught in all classes in our school. The SPHE Policy outlines the programmes being used and the class levels they are being taught in. The RSE programme forms part of the overall SPHE policy.

**Aims of SPHE:**

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- To foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
- To develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- To enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world

**Management and Organisation of RSE in our School:**

- Our school will follow the RSE Curriculum as set out by the Department of Education and Science. In Sixth Class Theme 7 “Relationships and New Life” different kinds of love, heterosexual, homosexual and platonic love will be defined for the children. We are satisfied that topics are introduced at age appropriate times in the development of the child.
- Children will be introduced to the correct anatomical names for body parts in all classes from Senior Infants to Sixth Class.
- Letters will issue to parents in advance of lessons of a sensitive nature (i.e. lessons relating to puberty, sexual intercourse etc.) These letters will outline the content of the lessons to be taught and afford parents the opportunity to speak to their child in advance of the lessons if they wish and/or the chance to discuss content with the class teachers.
- Copies of the PDF “Relationships and Sexuality Education; Going Forward” are kept in the school. This document will be made available to parents on request. The school policy on RSE is also available for parents to see on request.

- RSE is a compulsory school subject and one which has huge value and relevance for the child in today's society. It is hoped that no parent will want to withdraw their child from any RSE lesson. We would encourage parents to raise any concerns or issues they may have with the Class teacher or the Principal. Arrangements will be made for children to be withdrawn from certain RSE lessons if this is requested by parents in writing.
- Teachers who are not comfortable teaching certain RSE lessons are requested to inform the Principal. Alternative arrangements will be made to ensure that all lessons are taught to each class.
- Lessons on puberty and body changes/developments will be taught separately to girls and boys. When they have become more comfortable with the subject the children (boys and girls) will be brought together and the topics reviewed.
- Arrangements will be made for children of Mixed Level classes to be taught the more sensitive lessons separately.
- Teachers will adhere to the content of the lessons as prescribed by the Department of Education and Science. If children ask questions of a more advanced or inappropriate nature these questions will not be answered in class. Class teachers will encourage children to seek answers to questions at home and will explain that in school we must adhere to the curriculum as set down by the DES.

**Ongoing support, development and review:**

This policy will be reviewed in two years time.