



Swords Educate Together National School

Roll Number 20145 O

General Information

Name of School	Swords Educate Together N.S.
Address	Applewood, Swords, Co. Dublin
Telephone	01 - 8903899
Email	info@swordseducatetogether.ie
Denominational Character	Equality Based
Patron	Educate Together

Relationships and Sexuality

Relationships and Sexuality Education

What is Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.)?

R.S.E. guides/leads the child in an informative and dignified manner to an understanding of his/her sexuality, the process of growth, change and human reproduction. It fosters healthy relationships and promotes respect for self and others. It equips the child with the language to express himself/herself in an appropriate and respectful manner.

R.S.E. is an active, collaborative and positive process, using appropriate methodologies, whereby the child acquires a knowledge and understanding of:

1. Self, friendships and relationships.
2. The moral, spiritual and social framework of human sexuality.
3. A respect for love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
4. A sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.

R.S.E. must be taught in our school, in line with the Primary School Curriculum, through the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme. All staff members acknowledge the importance of the need for a whole-school approach to the teaching of R.S.E.

Relationship of R.S.E. within the overall curriculum.

R.S.E. will be taught under the umbrella of Social, Personal and Health Education, (S.P.H.E.)

- Sexual education pertains specifically to the strand *Myself*, strand unit *Growing and Changing - as I grow I change, birth and new Life*.
- Relationships education pertains to the strand *Myself* and *Others*.

There will also be links between R.S.E. and other curriculum areas such as Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (S.E.S.E.) and the *Learn Together* Programme.

Our school's ethos

The R.S.E. Programme of Swords Educate Together National School is developed in the context of the core values that inform the ethos of the school: child-centred, co- educational, equality-based and democratically run. Honesty, respect, justice, integrity, trust and responsibility should emanate from a basic sense of social, ethical and moral standards.

Swords ETNS wishes to encourage children to base relationships with others on friendship and understanding, and to be sensitive to difference and variety among people, including developing sensitivity to people's various strengths and vulnerabilities.

The ethos of the school provides a supportive climate to help children understand themselves, communicate with others, make decisions, deal with conflict, and develop a positive self-concept.

The working partnership of parent/guardians and teacher, and the inclusive nature of the ethos of our school, enables our children to develop the aspects of their personality that will help to make them a rounded, balanced person.

R.S.E. is an integral part of S.P.H.E. It also shares content with language, the arts, physical education, the Ethical Education curriculum (Learn Together Programme) and with Social Environmental and Scientific Education (S.E.S.E.). Many of the personal and social skills which we hope to develop in R.S.E. e.g. safety, communication, understanding cause and effect are explored in subject areas like the Ethical Education programme, English, History, Geography and Science. Giving children opportunities, through music, dance and the arts, to role-play feelings and situations, can develop their personal and social skills. An integrative approach is very significant for R.S.E. The R.S.E. lessons will be integrated into various subject areas as outlined above, thus ensuring that the pupils encounter R.S.E. in a holistic manner rather than in isolation.

Provision for Relationships and Sexuality Education

This is made through some aspects of S.P.H.E. Social Personal and Health Education is already provided through the informal activities of the school. Provision is also made for S.P.H.E. in the discrete timetable. Formal activities vary and include the use of the following programmes:

- Walk Tall
- The Stay Safe Programme
- R.S.E. Books
- Making the Link and Beyond
- Lift Off
- Learn Together Programme (Ethical Education)

Resources also include library books and DVDs for pupils, staff and parents. (Please see Appendix 3 for list of resources related to R.S.E)

Aims

The Aims of R.S.E are:-

- To enhance the personal development, self acceptance and well-being of the child.
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- To enable the child to be comfortable with his/her own sexuality and that of others while growing and developing.

Content Objectives

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances the Relationship and Sexuality Education curriculum, should enable the child to:-

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self acceptance and self-worth.
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well being of others.
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts.
- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns.
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity.
- Develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse.
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision-making.

(Manual - Relationships and Sexuality Ed. 1996)

Guidelines for the management and organisation of R.S.E. Genuine, open, respectful attitude by teacher, in a warm, caring and supportive classroom -

- Respect for self and others will be central at all times.
- Language to communicate confidently about themselves, their relationships and their sexuality will be developed.
- Positive, healthy attitudes will be fostered.
- Information will be clear and unambiguous.
- A spiral approach to content will be used -
 - discussion
 - drama activities
 - co-operative games
 - pictures, photos, visual images
 - viewing and discussing videos
 - story and poetry
- Teacher input will be complementary to the role of parents/ guardians. Where possible the classroom teacher will be responsible for the teaching of the RSE programme, **rather than a substitute teacher.**
- Parents/ Guardians will be informed when the RSE lessons take place, in the school newsletter (usually Spring, term 2). Class teachers **will send home** the "Home-School Links" page as appropriate, with each lesson ie. some of the lessons for different grades require the "home-school links" page, goes home ***before*** the lesson is taught in school.
- The communications journal for children with Special Needs will also be used to inform parents of the topic.
- The teacher will only teach the specified curriculum content for each class. If children raise issues not covered in the curriculum, teachers will defer/postpone discussion on such issues to allow for consultation with the Principal Teacher and/or the teacher with curriculum responsibility for R.S.E. The school will use its discretion as to when the issue will be dealt with or not at all. In all instances, the child will be encouraged to talk to his/her parents/guardians.
- All teaching aids and resources will be viewed by teachers prior to classroom use. All such resources will be available to parents/guardians to view.
- All visitors/speakers/presenters from outside the school will be approved by the Board of Management. They will be made aware of the school R.S.E. policy and will only speak within its parameters. A teacher will be present at all times during such talks/presentations.

The school ethos of inclusion of all children, must prevail at all times.

If a parent/guardian has any queries or difficulties regarding the teaching of sensitive issues, they should refer to the Principal or the Deputy Principal for clarification.

Guidelines for when/if children are withdrawn from the R.S.E. programme:

The child may be withdrawn from school and supervised by their parent/guardian pending the completion of the R.S.E. lesson (approx 30/40 minutes). The child will then return to class for the continuation of his/her school day.

If a child is withdrawn from the class for the teaching of sensitive issues, the school cannot guarantee that the other children will not inform them about the content discussed. The teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the issue at another time while that child is present. Although we aim to set specific times for the teachings of R.S.E., parents/guardians must be aware that these times can change at short notice. The school will notify parents as soon as possible of these time changes.

Role of the Parents/Guardians

- This plan was formulated by the teaching staff of Swords Educate Together National School, in consultation with the Board of Management and the Parent body (represented by the Parent Teacher Association), as we believe that S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. is a shared responsibility and their contributions and involvement are essential to the effective implementation of the R.S.E and S.P.H.E. programmes in the school.
- In S.P.H.E. and R.S.E., parents/ guardians are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children, and the school will work in partnership with them in a supportive role.
- On enrolment in Swords ETNS parents/ guardians will be provided with the opportunity to view the S.P.H.E./ R.S.E. programme. (See the link on the enrolment form).
- This will be highlighted at the Infants Evening meeting at the start of Term 1 each year. (Additional information is available for parents/guardians through the parents' booklets, which are available from Drumcondra Education Centre).

- Taking into account the independent needs and family background of the children, it is the parents/guardians responsibility to impart their own chosen values and beliefs.
- The school will allocate a set 2 weeks per year whereby the 'sensitive issues' of the R.S.E. curriculum are taught. Parents/guardians will be provided with an outline of the lessons/sensitive issues before they are taught, so that they can prepare the child before they are dealt with in school, if they so wish.
- This information will be in the form of handouts for parents from the R.S.E. programme.
- A parent's/guardian's right to withdraw a pupil from the sensitive lessons of the R.S.E. programme will be honoured, on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education.

Special Educational Needs Provision

The R.S.E. programme will be adapted and implemented in co-operation with teachers, parents and the child, where relevant, to ensure that key messages are taught to and understood by all pupils.

Provision for ongoing support, development and review

- The R.S.E. programme will reflect this policy document.
- The BOM and school will encourage staff to avail of in-service development in R.S.E. and will endeavour to provide up-to-date school resources.

Implementation

a. Roles and Responsibilities

The post-holder with responsibility for S.P.H.E., as well the Principal and Deputy Principal (overseen by the BoM) are responsible for overseeing and supporting the implementation of the S.P.H.E. Programme.

Class teachers are responsible for the implementation of R.S.E Programme in their classes, including the distribution of relevant information and notes to parents/guardians.

b. Timeframe

This whole-school policy will be implemented from ratification by the BoM.

Review

Prior to the launch of this RSE policy, a draft policy was reviewed by staff members and by the Parent/Teacher Association. This policy will be reviewed as and when required.

Ratification and Communication

The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to this whole-school plan upon their appointment to the school by the S.P.H.E. Coordinator. This policy will be published on the school website, and a copy of it will be provided to the Parent/Teacher Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school upon request.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management.

Signed:  (Chairperson, BOM)

Signed:  (Principal)

Date: 14th December 2020

Appendix 1: Sensitive Issues Key Vocabulary

Junior Infants

Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	<i>Growing and Changing</i> <u>Objective:</u> The child should be enabled to develop an awareness of human birth - that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born.
Language (RSE programme pgs. 68-76, 158-167)	Born, womb, breastfed, little seed, nine months in the womb.

Senior Infants

Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	<i>Taking Care of my Body</i> <u>Objective:</u> The child should be enabled to name the parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms
Language (RSE programme pgs. 148-156)	Penis, vulva/vagina, breasts

1st Class

Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	<i>Growing and Changing</i> <u>Objective:</u> The child should be enabled to appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies, in both animal and human world- <i>love, regular feeding, nappy changing, careful bathing and regular check-ups</i>
Language (RSE programme pgs. 162-169)	Vagina, anus

2nd Class

Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	Taking Care of my Body <u>Objective:</u> The child should be enabled to name body parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions
Language (RSE programme pgs. 68-75)	Vulva, urine, urethra

3rd Class

Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	Growing and Changing <u>Objective:</u> The child should be enabled to discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human body, from conception to birth
Language (RSE programme pgs. 70-79)	Pregnancy, umbilical cord, navel (belly button)

4th Class

Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	Taking Care of my Body <u>Objective:</u> The child should be enabled to understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and the female body - <i>growing, height and weight, increasing strength, growing from boy to man, growing from girl to woman</i>
Language (RSE programme pgs. 170-205)	Fertilized egg, scan, hormones, cells, menstruations, periods, pubic hair, pubic areas, perspiration
	Girls and boys will be taught these lessons together.

5th Class

Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	<p><i>Growing and Changing</i> <u>Objective 1:</u> The child should be enabled to identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone. <u>Female:</u> hormonal changes, changing body shape, development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, onset of menstruation (periods) <u>Male:</u> physical growth, enlargement of testicles and penis, appearance of pubic, underarm and facial hair, breaking of the voice, beginning of sperm production, onset of nocturnal emissions</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> The child should be enabled to understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults</p>
Language (RSE programme pgs. 82-92, 94-101)	Ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, testicles, scrotum, sperm production, erection, wet dreams/ejaculation, conception

6th Class

Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	<p><i>Growing and Changing</i> <u>Objective 1:</u> The child should be enabled to understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed and loving relationship</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> The child should be enabled to discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent (Preparing for the birth of a baby, taking care of offspring from birth onwards, emotional, psychological and practical provisions)</p>
Language (RSE programme pgs. 184-197)	Adolescence, responsibilities, intercourse

Appendix 2:
Resources to support the teaching of R.S.E.

Websites

www.sexualwellbeing.ie - Sample questions and age appropriate answers
<https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/HealthyBodies/> - Visual resources particularly for those with SEN
<http://spnenetwork.ie/resources/> <http://www.belongto.org/all-together-now/> Anti-LGBT bullying

Books

Walk Tall, Stay Safe, Making the Links etc.

Selection of Picture books;

- Mommy, Mama & Me
- Daddy, Papa & Me
- Introducing Teddy
- My Princess Boy
- And Tango Makes Three
- King and King
- Princess Smartypants
- 10000 dresses

Referenced from INTO Documents

Different Love Same Love pdf

Respect; Guidelines for primary teachers in addressing homophobic and Transphobic bullying pdf

We all belong pdf

50 Picture books to change the world pdf

Misc.

Anatomically correct dolls

Appendix 3:

Letter of withdrawal of pupil from sensitive lessons in R.S.E. Programme

Child's Name: _____

Child's Class: _____

Teacher: _____

I wish to withdraw my child from the sensitive issues taught in the Relationship and Sexuality Education Curriculum. I understand I will withdraw and supervise my child pending the completion of the R.S.E. lesson (approx 30/40 minutes). My child will then return to class for the continuation of his/her school day,

I understand, I am taking responsibility to cover the sensitive issues with my child outside of school hours.

I understand that the school cannot guarantee that the other children will not inform my child about the content of these sensitive lessons. I am aware that the teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the sensitive issues at another time while my child is present.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

A COPY OF THIS LETTER WILL BE KEPT ON THE CHILD'S FILE.

A COPY OF THIS LETTER WILL BE SCANNED AND UPLOADED TO THE CHILD'S ALADDIN PROFILE.

A COPY OF THIS LETTER WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CHILD'S PARENT/GUARDIAN FOR THEIR RECORDS.

Appendix 4:
Glossary of Terms and Class - Appropriate Explanations

	Infants to 2nd Class	3rd Class to 6th Class
Lesbian	A woman who loves another woman and they can be a family together.	A woman who has or wants to have a loving relationship with another woman.
Gay	A man who loves another man and they can be a family together.	A man who has or wants to have a loving relationship with another man. Sometimes this term is also used to refer to lesbians.
Bisexual	A person who can love a man or a woman and form a family with a person of either gender.	A person who can have or wants to have a loving relationship with either a man or a woman.
Transgender (or Trans for short)	A girl who feels like they are a boy / A woman who feels like they are a man. A boy who feels like they are a girl / A man who feels like they are a woman.	A person who was born with the physical characteristics of a boy/girl but deep inside they feel like they are a different gender and want to live their life as that gender.
Heterosexual (or Straight)	A man who loves a woman or a woman who loves a man and they can be a family together	A man who has or wants to have a loving relationship with a woman or a woman who has or wants to have a loving relationship with a man.
Homophobic Bullying	When people are hurtful to others because they are lesbian., gay, bisexual, or transgender or because people think they are.	When people hurt others (verbally, psychologically, physically, cyber bullying etc.) because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender or because people think they are.
Transphobic Bullying	When people are hurtful to others because they are transgender or because people think they are.	When people hurt others (verbally, psychologically, physically, cyber bullying etc.) because they are transgender or because people think they are.
LGBT	A short way to say lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender	An acronym used to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.
Homosexual	This is another term for gay or lesbian, sometimes used by scientists or doctors. LGB people generally prefer the terms lesbian, gay, or bisexual to be used.	An acronym used to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

