



SCOIL BARRA, BALLINCOLLIG

POLICY DOCUMENT ON RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE)

Revised – June 2021

In line with Department of Education and Science guidelines, students at Scoil Barra have available to them a programme of Relationships and Sexuality Education. This programme is an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.

RSE is a programme which promotes the development of responsible attitudes, values and beliefs about relationships, sexual identity, and intimacy. Much of the information that students receive comes from peers and the media, sources which may lack accurate information and/or may have objectives which are not educational. Therefore all partners in the education process acknowledge the importance of RSE.

The programme reflects and contributes to the objectives of the school, namely to promote the physical, mental, spiritual, social, and moral development of each child. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that we value respect, tolerance and openness through the lived experience of the children and school community. Parents have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting our school and children to develop into healthy young adults.

The staff of Scoil Barra teach RSE based upon the programme (*RSE Guidelines and Resource Materials*) published by the Department of Education and Science in 2000. The content of the RSE programme and methodologies employed to teach the programme will be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from 'sensitive' lessons in the RSE programme, i.e. those dealing directly with puberty, sexuality and reproduction. Parents wishing to exercise this option are required to indicate this to the school in writing. Parents will be requested to state their reasons for doing so and this will be filed centrally. (RSE materials, as well as the RSE Policy Statement, are always available in the school office for parental viewing). If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons, e.g. what they may hear on yard.

The aims of the RSE programme are:

- (i) To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of each child
- (ii) To support the child in developing healthy friendships and relationships

- (iii) To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude towards, human love, relationships, sexuality, puberty and reproduction, in a moral, spiritual and social context
- (iv) To promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- (v) To enable the child to be comfortable with his/her own sexuality and the sexuality of others, while growing and developing. This reflects the ethos of Scoil Barra
- (vi) To equip the child to deal adequately with the transition to post-primary schooling, in particular his/her social adaptation in the new setting.

Broad Objectives

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should enable the child to (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum)

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-worth
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and 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 personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

The Board of Management shall promote a commitment to the programme.

The school-based element of the programme will be implemented by the teachers of the school. It will be co-ordinated in such a way as to ensure consistent and comprehensive delivery.

Review and evaluation of the programme will be carried out at a whole school level and at sub-committee level. The sub-committee may include members of the parent body. All reviews require the endorsement of the Board of Management before implementation. The programme will be evaluated at regular intervals.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 14th of June 2021.

Signed:  (Michael Farrell, Chairperson of the Board)