

## ***Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy***

### ***Introductory Statement***

The school has a responsibility to put in place an R.S.E. policy as part of the wider social, Personal & Health Education subject of the curriculum. The process was initiated when a policy committee was charged with setting parameters for the organization and management of R.S.E. in this school. The following content contains amendments to the policy as a result of a review by a committee lead by the Deputy Principal, Mrs. O'Connor-Daly in March 2011

### ***Rationale***

The need for this policy arises from our schools obligation to provide for all the needs of the student body and respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues relating to emerging sexuality. Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The R.S.E Programme within Scoil Oilibhéir only acts as a support to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from these classes.

### ***Aims***

- a) To enhance the personal development, well being and self-esteem of each child
- b) To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive and measured way.
- c) To enable the child develop healthy friendships and relationships

### ***Relationships to School Ethos***

The school's Catholic ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. To this end parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the R.S.E. policy formation, through a series of meetings, full representation on the Steering Committee and the ratification of the finished product. Parents also have the right to withhold their children from participating in R.S.E classes.

## ***School Provision***

### ***Strand***

### ***Strand Units***

#### ***Myself:***

- Self identify, taking care of my body, growing and changing, safety and protection

#### ***Myself & Others***

- Myself and family, friends and relating to other people

### ***Strand:***

### ***Strand Units:***

### ***Sensitive Lessons***

#### ***Myself***

#### ***Taking Care of my Body***

#### ***Growing & changing; Bodily changes; Reproduction***

After consultation with the various parties; the following amendments have been made regarding the facilitation/teaching of the sensitive lessons.

- The naming of the body parts both male and female using appropriate terminology will be initiated in Junior and Senior Infants and will continue throughout the school.
- Teaching of the process of menstruation will be taught in 5<sup>th</sup> class (not 4<sup>th</sup> as suggested in the R.S.E. manual). The different stages of baby development in the womb (new life time line) will continue to be taught in 4<sup>th</sup> class.
- Identifying physical changes, understanding puberty will be introduced in 5<sup>th</sup> class along with the teaching of the process of menstruation.
- Understanding physical changes and understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed loving relationship will be taught and consolidated in 6<sup>th</sup> class, including reproduction.

On occasion it may be necessary to impart information in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class in single sex groups. This decision will be left to the discretion of the class teachers.

- It is the policy of Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa, Kilcloon, to inform parents in advance of the sensitive lessons being taught. Individual teachers will also notify the parents in advance of teaching the sensitive lessons using the home school links page in the R.S.E Teachers Book.

Each teacher has an agreed copy of the whole school plan on teaching R.S.E which allows for whole school planning and facilitation of the sensitive lessons at an agreed time during the school year.

Teachers do not cover topics such as contraception and same sex friendships. Children who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum are talked to individually and discreetly. Parents are usually informed and asked to talk to their child.

### ***Methodology***

Circle time is used in Junior Classes to build confidence and address fears. Boys and girls are taught together in all classes. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents. The Alive O eight-resource materials are used extensively in Senior Classes.

### ***The Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes***

The Stay Safe Programme is taught in all classes. Aspects of the programme such as bullying are revised in all classes.

### ***Topics covered up to 2<sup>nd</sup> class include:***

- Keeping safe
- Naming bodily parts using correct terminology
- Bodily changes during growth and development
- Making and keeping friends
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life
- Recognizing and expressing feelings
- Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep (link with P.E. Healthy Eating Policy and S.P.H.E.)
- Expressing opinions and listening to others.

### ***Topics covered from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes include:***

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping safe
- Expressing feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- Reproduction, conception (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes)

## ***Guidelines for Management***

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school R.S.E programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils within a moral and spiritual framework. Teachers are present at all times when guest speakers are visiting a class.

## ***Child Protection***

The school follows the D.E.S child protection guidelines and has a child Protection Policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure; the D.L.P will follow the procedures as set out in Children First., Guidelines

### ***The Responsibility of the School in Child Protection***

In addition to the need for schools to have in place a programme of education, which contributes to the prevention of child abuse, Scoil Oilibhéir also ensures that:

- All staff are familiar with and have copies of relevant chapters of the DES guidelines which outline procedures that must be followed where concerns or disclosures of abuse arise,
- Agreed procedures are in place that aim to protect children and staff e.g. issues around toileting, changing for games, one to one teaching etc.

## ***Teacher Choice/Staff Development***

The teacher's right to choose is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the programme or require additional resources, the Board of Management will make alternative arrangements. The teacher may need to plan the specific material to be covered and should be present during all lessons.

The staff will teach the programme from the following:

- Busy Bodies (Booklet, DVD) H.S.E.
- The Child House Prevention Programme (Stay Safe)
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (R.S.E)
- Walk Tall Programme (S.M.P.P)
- Children First (Child Protection Guidelines)
- Making the Links

The Whole School Plan is available in the staff room. Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning comprising of a yearly and fortnightly scheme of work. A Cuntas Míósúil is retained in the Principal's Office.

## ***Personal Safety Education***

The Stay Safe Programme is a personal safety skills programme, which aims to:

- Give children the skills necessary to enable them to recognise and resist abuse/victimisation
- Teach children that they should always tell an adult about any situation, which they find unsafe, upsetting, threatening, dangerous or abusive.
- Develop children's self-esteem, assertiveness and self-protective skills.

The Stay Safe Lessons are taught as part of the SPHE curriculum under the strand units 'Myself' and 'Myself and Others'.

With the introduction of the DES guidelines on child protection and the changing emphasis that the SPHE curriculum has brought about it is essential that members of school boards be aware of their role and responsibilities in relation to child abuse prevention, reporting procedures and good practice in child protection. CAPP trainers are available on request to facilitate a meeting for members of boards of management where the above can be outlined and discussed.

## ***Parent Education***

Parental involvement is an essential part of the Stay Safe Programme. Parent education is provided by CAPP personnel on an on-going basis to schools. This involves providing parents with information on child abuse and bullying, outlining the content of the Stay Safe classroom lessons, the DES guidelines for schools and detailing available services.

Parent meetings are normally evening meetings lasting one and a half hours but may be organised during school time.

### ***Materials available from CAPP:***

- Stay Safe Programme for mainstream schools available in English or Irish
- Stay Safe for children with Learning Difficulties
- Parent Booklet – Stay Safe – A Parent's Guide
- CD of all CAPP materials.

**The Child Abuse Prevention Programme may be contacted at:**

CAPP, Bridge House

Cherry Orchard Hospital

Dublin 101

Telephone: (01) 6206347

Fax: (01) 6206347

Email: [staysafe@indogo.ie](mailto:staysafe@indogo.ie)

**Aims of the Service**

The Child Abuse Prevention Programme (Stay Safe) is a primary-school based approach to the prevention of child abuse. The aim of the programme is to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying through the provision of:

- Personal safety education for children at primary school level – mainstream and special needs
- In service training for teachers
- Board of management training
- Parent education

**Training in Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Procedures**

Since being established in the early nineties CAPP has developed training modules to meet the varying needs of schools around child protection, the implementation of the Stay Safe Programme and reporting procedures.

CAPP training is delivered by a network of teachers and social workers with specific training in these areas. All CAPP information and training sessions are free of charge to primary and special schools as funding for this training is provided to CAPP by the Teacher Education Section of the DES.

**Staff Training**

This training is designed to give all staff, teachers, special needs assistants, care staff etc. a greater understanding of child abuse and to assist schools in drawing up a whole school policy on child protection. The following areas are normally covered.

- **Child Abuse** – signs and symptoms etc
- **The Stay Safe Programme** – the aims objectives and main messages of the programme: teaching the programme within the context of a Social, Personal and Health Education Programme
- **Procedures for Dealing with Concerns or Disclosures** – children First Guidelines and the DES Guidelines on child protection
- **Best Practice in Child Protection** – Developing and adopting safe practices in relation to child protection e.g. issues around toileting, changing for games, one to one teaching etc
- **Relevant Legislation covering the area** – Protection for Persons Reporting Act. Etc.

While most schools avail of this training during the school day some smaller schools like to combine an evening of training for staff and BOM followed by an information meeting for parents. CAPP will make every effort to meet the needs of the school in this regard.

### ***School/Community Links***

The school is involved in:

- Athletics and Basketball inter-school competitions
- Cumann na mBunscol – football, hurling and camogie
- Choir for First Communion and Confirmation
- Concert every second year
- Annual Carol Service
- Credit Union Quiz
- G.A.A Indoor Hurling
- F.A.I Schools Soccer

### ***Evaluation***

- Teacher observation
- Inventory of what needs to be changed
- Ensuring every strand is covered
- Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation
- Community feedback

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

The whole school community of Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents play a key role in the formation and implementation of the plan.

### ***Ratification***

This policy will be subject to ratification by the Board of Management at the next available meeting.

### ***Implementation***

Implementation is on approval by all parties and ratification by the Board of Management

### ***Review***

This policy will be reviewed in two years from this day, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Ratified by Board of Management on:

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011



Signed:

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*Chairperson, Board of Management*