



Craggagh National School

Balla, Co Mayo

(094) 9365177 | www.CraggaghNS.ie | Principal@CraggaghNS.ie

Roll no: 12467r | Charity no: 20129439



Policy on Relationship and Sexuality Education

School Details

Craggagh NS is a mixed rural school located between the towns of Balla and Kiltimagh in Co. Mayo. The school is under the Catholic Ethos. There are three classrooms with multi-grade classes in each. We also have one full-time Special Education Teacher (SET) and one part-time SNA.

Introduction

This policy was originally drawn up in 2003. It was reviewed and redrafted by the teaching staff of the school in consultation with the Board of Management and parents in April 2019. This policy details an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally. In this policy document all references to gender are taken to be inclusive and the term 'parent' is taken to include 'guardian'.

School Ethos

Craggagh NS is a Catholic primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Achonry. We aim to cherish and nourish a Catholic ethos within our school. The RSE policy and programme is in accordance with:

- (a) The ethos and core values of the school
- (b) The wishes of the parents and needs of the children
- (c) The aims of the Primary Language Curriculum

Philosophy



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We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The curriculum also encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and wider community. 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. Craggagh NS recognises that 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 adults.

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In particular, it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant to personal and social skills.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

Current Provision

Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education

The Draft Guidelines for RSE (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that Social Personal and Health Education is “spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology”. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the



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development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

Aims of our RSE programme

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to relationships
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- 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- Fifth and Sixth Class
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty- Senior Classes
- 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 the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

We support the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the wellbeing of all of the members of the school community.

Broad Objectives

The RSE education curriculum should enable the child to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self



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- 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.

Craggagh NS supports the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the wellbeing of all the members of the school community.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of behaviour and discipline
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy



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- Acceptable Use Policy

Child Protection

This policy is cognisant of all aspects of our current Child Protection Policy. The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a child protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principal as the Deputy DLP. Where a child protection concern is raised, the procedures outlined in the schools Child Protection Policy will be followed.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Curriculum Matters

- RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from infants to 6th class. RSE will be covered under the strand **Myself** and the strand units **Growing and changing** and **Taking care of my body**. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level.
- Where an outside speaker is used, the class teacher will remain in the classroom, as per circular 22/2010. The speaker will be made aware of the school's RSE policy.

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

1. The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE
 - Friendship
 - Self-identity
 - Family
 - Self-esteem
 - Growing up
2. The second section will deal with any sensitive/specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are in **bold**.



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Topics covered up to 2 nd class include:	Topics covered from 3 rd to 6 th include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping Safe• Bodily changes during grown and birth (birth to 9)• Making age appropriate choices• Appreciating family life• Recognising and expressing feelings• Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep• Expressing opinions and listening to others• Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/ Senior Infants)• Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bodily changes• Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise• Keeping Safe• Expressing Feelings• Family relationships• Making healthy and responsible decisions• Forming Friendships• Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (3rd & 4th class)• Introduction to puberty and changes (4th, 5th & 6th)• Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (Fifth and Sixth Class)• Reproductive system of male/female adults (Fifth and Sixth Class)• Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship. (Fifth and Sixth Class)

Organisational Matters

- If children are withdrawn, they will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom.
- With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom.



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- Any teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive elements of RSE. It is the responsibility of the B.O.M. to ensure content is covered by another teacher or an outside speaker.
- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.

Dealing with Questions

- All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics are not in the primary RSE/SPHE programme and will not be discussed i.e.: abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception.
- Questions to the teacher may be oral or written within the group setting and answered within boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. If any questions asked by children are deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents/guardians, or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum, or in post- primary school. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information.

The following considerations will be made when responding to children's questions:

- Awareness of circumstances in which the question has arisen
- Clarification of what information is required
- Determination of whether the question is appropriate or relevant/who it is relevant to
- Provision of an age appropriate answer
- Deferral of the question to be answered at home or in the future

Parental Involvement

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and resources if they wish. Craggagh NS acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE Programme, with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level. This letter will be issued in advance, giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teachers if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children. It also gives parents an opportunity to become involved, to



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inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas discussed in RSE.

- Following discussion with Principal and Class Teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons, it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be centrally filed.
- 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.

Resources

- Relationships and Sexuality Education Manuals (DES). Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual.
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme.
- Busy Bodies DVD and booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 5th and 6th class component of RSE within the context of SPHE. It is available for download at www.healthpromotion.ie
- All resources are available for parents/guardians to view if they so request prior to the delivery of the lesson.

Provision of Ongoing Support

- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members. Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE.
- Application for in-school support from PDST sought when necessary.



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Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed on a continual basis and/or as the need arises.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Craggagh NS on 16th May 2019.

Signed: _____

Chairperson

Signed: _____

Principal

Date: _____