

# Convoy Joint National School

## Relationships & Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) Policy

**School Ethos/Philosophy:** Convoy Joint N.S. is of joint Church of Ireland and Presbyterian management. In practising this Christian approach, we promote a respect for and awareness of other races and religious traditions and we encourage respect for others within school and in the wider community.

Our school is one where the traditions and teaching of the churches inform the position taken in regard to moral issues that arise in the teaching of secular subjects.

Our school endeavours to be a place where, in conjunction with church influence and home, our children are enabled to become well-balanced and responsible young people who will be well-equipped to make their own judgements on life and its decisions.

**Definition of R.S.E.:** Relationships and sexuality education encompasses the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy.

Relationships and sexuality education seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

### **Context:**

- The school's initial R.S.E. policy was devised by an R.S.E. Policy Committee comprised of 2 Parents, 2 Teacher and 2 Board of Management members in 2004.
- All of the R.S.E. programme will be delivered within the context of S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal Health Education) which is timetabled on our curriculum. Sensitive issues are covered within the strand units 'Taking care of my body' and 'Growing and changing'.
- The R.S.E. programme covers a wide range of themes and those considered to be of a sensitive nature are listed under "Content of 'Sensitive' issues" below.

**Aims:** The aims of R.S.E. are:

- to enhance the personal development, self-esteem 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 the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

**Content of 'Sensitive' issues:** (as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum for S.P.H.E. - Social, Personal & Health Education)

<p><b>Infants</b></p>	<p><b><i>Strand Unit: Taking care of my body</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms (Sen. Infants)</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Strand Unit: Growing and changing</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop an awareness of human birth</li> </ul>
<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup></b></p>	<p><b><i>Strand Unit: Taking care of my body</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Strand Unit: Growing and changing</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• begin to understand that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle</li> </ul>
<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup></b></p>	<p><b><i>Strand Unit: Taking care of my body</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body</li> <li>• realise that these changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Strand Unit: Growing and changing</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty</li> <li>• discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human body, from conception to birth</li> </ul>

5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b><i>Strand Unit: Taking care of my body</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Strand Unit: Growing and changing</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship</li> </ul>
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**Management:**

- Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and we work in a supportive role.
- The R.S.E. Programme is taught year about with the 'Stay Safe' Programme so R.S.E. is taught once every two years.
- All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave 6<sup>th</sup> class. The programme may be introduced on a phased basis.
- Teachers' right to opt out from teaching the sensitive issues will be honoured.
- If no member of staff is available to teach the sensitive issues, we leave it to the discretion of the Board of Management, principal and class teacher to arrange for the education to be made available. A suitable guest speaker may be invited in to deliver the contents of the programme. All information delivered will be within the programme as set down by the N.C.C.A. (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment).
- A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of this decision.
- Should a pupil require information that is not in line with the curriculum content, and considered not to be age appropriate for the general body of pupils, the school will recommend that the pupil talk to his/her parents/guardians as the information he/she requires is not within the programme set down by the N.C.C.A.
- An outline of the lessons will be available to parents before the commencement of the R.S.E. programme. It is envisaged that the sensitive issues will be addressed in the month of May. Where it is deemed appropriate, boys and girls will be addressed separately.

**Resources include:**

- Social, Personal & Health Education Curriculum Documents (NCCA & Department of Education & Skills)
- Resource Materials for R.S.E. - Infants - 6<sup>th</sup> (Dept. of Education & Skills)
- Health Education Resource Workbooks
- 'Busy Bodies' DVD (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class)

R.S.E. resources will be kept up to date.

**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed when the need arises.

Reviewed 2013