

**Scoil Chormaic**  
**COMMUNITY NATIONAL SCHOOL**  
*SCOIL NAÍSIÚNTA POBAIL*



Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin  
*Baile Stiofáin, Baile Brigín, Co. BÁC*

**Whole School Policy**  
**For**  
**Relationships and Sexuality Education**  
**Policy**

**April 2019**

## 1. School Details

Scoil Chormaic Community National School aims to *cherish, nurture* and *educate* the children in its care. Scoil Chormaic CNS opened in September 2010 and is a developing school situated in Balbriggan, Co. Dublin. Scoil Chormaic CNS is a very diverse school; over half of our population speaks English as an additional language and over forty different countries are represented within our walls.

Our school is expanding rapidly and as it changes, we foresee our R.S.E. policy to change also. This policy was drafted in April 2018 and will be ratified by the Board of Management by February 2019.

## 2. Introductory Statement

Scoil Chormaic Community National School has a responsibility to put in place a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy as part of the wider Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) strand of the curriculum. Our school aims to develop a policy on RSE which reflects our ethos of respect for diversity, inclusion and partnership in education and our school vision. Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing RSE as Scoil Chormaic CNS believes that RSE is a shared responsibility. This policy will be available to parents to inform them of the programme for RSE. They are also welcomed as committee members on the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy.

This policy is in accordance with the 'National Curriculum and Guidelines for RSE' as prepared by the 'National Council for Curriculum and Assessment' (NCCA).

## 3. School Philosophy and Ethos

Scoil Chormaic Community National School is a multi-belief school which welcomes pupils of all beliefs and none. Our school is committed to inclusion, equality and fairness. We believe that Scoil Chormaic Community National School should be a happy, pleasant place for the children, where there is cooperation between parents, teachers and pupils. All three parties have a duty to work together in order to establish a friendly, happy atmosphere. In drawing up this RSE policy we recognise and respect the racial and ethnic diversity among our school community and we acknowledge the different values and morals regarding relationship and sexuality education. This policy seeks to be cognisant and respectful of the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of our school community.

## 4. Definition of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in an age appropriate manner and in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a positive self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with age-appropriate information.

### 4.1 The Aims of RSE

- 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.

## Whole School Policy for RSE

- 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 develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- To enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

### 5. Definition of Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE)

SPHE encompasses the all-round personal development of each child; its aim is to give children the skills to deal with the changing and challenging world in which they live.

#### 5.1 Aims of the SPHE Curriculum

The aims of social, personal and health education are:

- to promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- to foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
- to promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- to enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
- to develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- to enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

(Curriculum Statement, pg. 9)

SPHE is the process which enables pupils to develop an understanding of themselves. It helps them to choose and follow a healthy lifestyle and enables them to play responsible roles as individuals and as members of society.

### 6. Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Throughout the school year in Primary School, SPHE is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to Sixth class. A wide variety of topics are included in this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE forms a part of this programme. RSE is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

#### **Myself:**

- Self-Identity
- Taking care of my body
- Growing and Changing
- Safety and Protection
- Making decisions (3rd Class onwards)

#### **Myself and Others:**

- Myself and my family

- My friends and other people
- Relating to others

### 7. Aims of our RSE Programme

#### Aims of RSE

(Within the normal school day, the class teacher will deal with delivering the RSE programme, however the class teacher has the full support of the school to opt out of teaching sensitive, sexual content lessons at their wish. A guest speaker can then be utilised to cover the sensitive/ sexual issues on an agreed date and parental permission will be sought in this case. For more information see page 4, Section 8.6 – ‘Guest Speaker’ of this policy.)

- 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 develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- To enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

### 8. Guidelines for the Management and Organisation on RSE

#### 8.1 Informing and Involving Parents:

Scoil Chormaic Community National School recognises that parents are the primary educators of their children and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school therefore is seen as one of support. A copy of this policy will be made available on our school website (<http://www.scoilchormaiccns.ie/>) and to any parent on request from the school office. A parent information night will also be held prior to the teaching of the RSE programme.

#### 8.2 Content:

One half hour period per week is timetabled in each class for SPHE; RSE will be included in the content taught during this time. The approach to the teaching of RSE will be kept as normal as possible and will be delivered within the child’s class by the class teacher. The class teacher and, in some cases, a guest speaker will teach the sensitive issues of the RSE programme to the pupils of fifth and sixth class. Parents will be made aware of times and dates when the guest speaker will visit the school. Parents will be notified, in writing, in advance of commencing the RSE programme.

#### 8.3 RSE in the Classroom:

When implementing the programme, Scoil Chormaic Community National School will endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural family backgrounds experienced by the children.

- The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times.

## Whole School Policy for RSE

- The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals).
- The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.
- It is intended that most themes will be revisited every second year.
- The RSE curriculum will be taught through;
  - Stories and poems
  - Classroom discussion
  - Group work
  - Games
  - Art activities
  - Reflection
  - Circle time
  - Guest speaker (if required)

### ❖ Delivery of RSE Programme

This programme is divided into two main parts;

1. The **general programme** which contains content such as;

- Friendship
- Self-identity
- Family
- Self-esteem
- Growing up

2. The second section will deal with any **sensitive and sexual content**.

This section of the programme will be covered by the class teacher or a guest speaker in fifth and sixth class. Parents will be notified in writing, prior to the guest speaker visiting the school.

### ❖ A Developmental Approach

Teaching about relationships and sexuality will be delivered in the context of SPHE. All content objectives will be taught developmentally by the time the children leave 6<sup>th</sup> class. All issues will be discussed with sensitivity, professionalism and awareness of the varying levels of development within a class.

Possible sensitive issues such as naming body parts and sexual intercourse will be covered within the strand units “Taking care of my body”, “Growing and changing” and “Safety and Protection”.

### ❖ Language

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Not being familiar with the biological terms of the body can put children at a disadvantage.

We will give children the correct and appropriate language as outlined in the RSE materials.

Class Level	Language
<b>Junior Infants/Senior Infants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Womb</li><li>• Breast</li><li>• Breast-feeding</li><li>• Penis</li></ul>

## Whole School Policy for RSE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vagina/Vulva</li> </ul>
<b>First/Second Class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Womb</li> <li>• Breast</li> <li>• Breast-feeding</li> <li>• Penis</li> <li>• Vagina/Vulva</li> <li>• Urethra</li> <li>• Navel</li> </ul>
<b>Third/Fourth Class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise above.</li> <li>• Umbilical Cord</li> <li>• Developing Foetus</li> <li>• Changes in Puberty (<b>4<sup>th</sup> Class only</b>)- hormones, menstruation, menstruation cycle, period, ovaries, egg (ova), fallopian tube, ovulation, uterus, nipples, pubic hair.</li> </ul>
<b>Fifth/Sixth Class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise above.</li> <li>• Puberty (see RSE Manual and Busy Bodies for additional language)</li> <li>• Testicles</li> <li>• Scrotum</li> <li>• Cervix</li> <li>• Wet dreams/Nocturnal emissions</li> <li>• Reproduction (see RSE Manual and Busy Bodies for additional language)</li> <li>• Busy Bodies language</li> </ul>

### 8.4 Explicit Questions:

Questions which may arise with regard to the sensitive content of the programme will be answered by the class teacher/guest speaker depending on the nature of the question and provided that they relate to topics covered in the RSE programme, in line with our school ethos and this policy. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher/ guest speaker should consider the age of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy. If topics arise which do not feature in the curriculum, children will be requested to address these questions to their parents and wherever needed, involvement and cooperation of parents may be sought.

### 8.5 Confidentiality and Child Protection:

Where there is a disclosure made, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, they will report these concerns to the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person. The school will refer to the Child Protection policy, which is in accordance with the requirements of the Department Of Education and Skills' 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' (2017). The Designated Liaison Person is Deirdre Corcoran (Principal). The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Alan Weston. (See Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for further information.) These policies are available on the school website (<http://www.scoilchormaicns.ie/>) and on request from the school office.

### 8.6 Guest speaker (Fifth and Sixth Class)

## Whole School Policy for RSE

As in the case with all subjects, guest speakers may sometimes be invited to the school to speak to the children. Although we aim for class teachers to deliver the content of the RSE curriculum, they can opt out of teaching the sensitive/sexual topics of RSE. Where this is the case, we will invite guest speakers who are familiar with the RSE programme and have an understanding of our school community and our school policy on RSE. The guest speaker will speak to the pupils in fifth and sixth class in relation to the sensitive issues, for one full school day in fifth class and one full school day in sixth class.

- Scoil Chormaic Community National School respects the wishes of parents as the primary educators of their children. We believe the teaching of sexuality is very much a personal matter and should be in accordance with parents' cultural and religious norms. Thus, each year, the parents of fifth and sixth class students will be invited to attend an RSE information meeting. At this meeting, the sensitive elements of the programme will be discussed and outlined by guest speakers who are trained in the delivery of the RSE programme.
- Scoil Chormaic Community National School will notify parents in writing in advance of the talk delivered by the guest speaker.
- Care will be taken to ensure that the guest speaker only covers the content agreed by the school (see 8.7 below). A copy of this policy will be given to the guest speaker outlining the appropriate content. The guest speaker will be made aware of the ethos of the school and the manner in which the RSE programme should be delivered.
- The Principal has the responsibility to check the credentials of all guest speakers and to ensure that they are Garda vetted.
- The class teacher will remain with the class group while the guest speaker is present for the full day.
- On the day when the guest speaker/class teacher covers the sensitive topics the children will be; 1. Taught together initially 2. Divided by gender into two groups; male and female and 3. Brought together again for consolidation. All children will receive RSE Education on both genders but will receive more specific education on their own gender when divided by gender.

### **8.7 Topics to be covered in Fifth and Sixth Class by the guest speaker:**

- Naming of the male and the female body parts using appropriate anatomical terms. (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Discussing the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth. (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Identifying and discussing the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty. (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Understanding the reproductive system of both male and female adults. (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship. **(6<sup>th</sup> Class only)**
- Discussing and exploring the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent. **(6<sup>th</sup> Class only)**
- Exploring and discussing how relationships between boys and girls can change as they grow and develop. **(6<sup>th</sup> Class only)**

### **8.8 Withdrawing pupils from the sensitive topics of the RSE programme:**

- Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. A parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues, as outlined above (covered by class teacher/guest speaker in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class), will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. Any parent

## Whole School Policy for RSE

who wishes to withdraw their child is responsible in making arrangements for the supervision of him/her on the days/times when the sensitive topics will be covered (guest speaker: one full day in 5<sup>th</sup> Class and one full day in 6<sup>th</sup> Class).

- Parents who opt to withdraw their children from these sensitive areas of the RSE lessons should also be aware that material taught during the RSE programme may be discussed by the children outside class time, and the staff will have no control over what aspects of the information are passed on. Furthermore, television, videos, advertising, magazines, computers and friends may be informal sources of information which may influence children's attitudes to relationships and sexuality. Parents may not even be aware of, or indeed may not like, the messages their children are getting from these informal sources.

### 8.9 Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Adaptions to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/ guardians in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

- Children may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work.
- Children may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material.
- Any different or specific objectives related to the pupils own learning needs should be detailed in their Continuum of Support File in consultation with parents/guardians.

### 8.10 Resources

- We will use the RSE, Busy Bodies and the Stay Safe programme and other resources such as books, photocopiable material, PowerPoints etc., that are deemed suitable by the principal/SPHE Curricular Team in consultation with a representative for the parents.
- We may also invite other visitors such as a mother, father, and new baby when teaching aspects of the curriculum. These adults may be invited to talk and discuss relevant experiences with the pupils.

## 9. Ongoing Support, Development and Review

The Board of Management of Scoil Chormaic Community National School supports and fosters the development of this RSE policy. This policy will be reviewed informally at planning meetings and formally on a two year basis. As with all our policies, parents have access to this policy on our school website and on request from the school office.

### 9.1. Evaluation of policy and programme

This policy and programme will be evaluated through;

- Evaluation forms for teachers and parents.
- Evaluation forms for children.
- Evaluation by the Policy Development Committee.

## 10. Roles and Responsibilities

It will be necessary to review this policy on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school. A designated post holder in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum team is responsible for co-ordinating this review and in his/her absence Deirdre Corcoran.

Those involved in the review will include:

- Teachers
- Pupils
- Parents



## Whole School Policy for RSE

- Post holders/plan co-ordinator
- SPHE Curricular Team
- Management/DES/Others

### 11. Timeframe for Implementation

- February 2019.
- Staff will review this plan under the guidance of Ms D. Corcoran before February 2021.

### 12. Review and Ratification

This school policy was formulated by the principal, staff and parents and parent focus group. The Board of Management would like to thank all involved for the valuable contributions on this policy. The Relationships and Sexuality Education policy was approved by the Board of Management on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Chairperson of the Board of Management: *Gráinne Maguire*

This plan will be reviewed every two years.