

# St. Attracta's National School:

## RSE Policy

### **Introduction:**

This policy was drawn up a number of years ago by a policy committee whose members consisted of:

- A teacher's representative
- A parent's representative
- A member of the Board of Management.

The draft policy was then sent to parents for further consultation and was approved by the Board of Management.

### **Home:**

The school recognises that the parent is the primary educator of the child. This RSE policy, as in all other policy areas, acknowledges this and seeks to support parents in this role.

Our school fosters close contact between the school and the home. Parents and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another as partners in leading the young pupils to the fullness of their potential as they grow and mature.

### **Our School Philosophy:**

St. Attracta's is a Roman Catholic School. As such, we aim to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, based on gospel values. This is also in keeping with our school vision.

Within the school, a spirit of mutual respect is promoted between children, parents, teachers and members of the Board of Management. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities and ethnic groups. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils and supportive of their parents' role.

The Relationships and Sexuality programme will be taught within this ethos. Within our school, we promote the following ideals.

- people feel valued
- self esteem is fostered
- respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
- high expectations and standards are promoted
- there is support for those with difficulties

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- open communication is the norm
- effort is recognised and rewarded
- uniqueness/difference is valued
- conflict is handled constructively
- initiative and creativity are encouraged
- social, moral and civic values are promoted

### **Definition of RSE**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is about gaining knowledge and understanding of physical, social, cultural, psychological and moral development. It includes attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy within a moral, spiritual and social framework. This understanding of RSE will contribute to the development of personal well-being, will enhance personal relationships and will have positive implications for family and community life.

### **Relationship of RSE to SPHE**

RSE will be taught within the wider context of Social Personal and Health Education and religious and moral education. The programme will be covered using a cross curricular approach but some topics will be under specific curricular headings. For these sensitive lessons, the cross curricular approach will not apply. These lesson topics will be listed separately.

### **The Aims of Our RSE Programme**

We aim to provide an education in which each child can develop a responsible awareness and caring attitude towards their own and other's sexuality and human worth, enabling them to form caring and appropriate relationships throughout their lives. This education will be provided sensitively in a manner and content appropriate to individual needs.

Our RSE programme aims to:

- Help young people develop healthy friendship and relationships.
- Promote an understanding of sexuality
- Promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to relationships
- Promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- Enable young people to develop healthy attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- Respond to individual pupil needs as appropriate.

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Strand	Infant Classes	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes
	Strand Units	Strand Units
<b>Myself</b>	I am unique My Body As I grow I Change New Life Feeling Safe Feelings and emotions Making decisions	I am unique My Body As I grow I change New life Feeling Safe Feelings and emotions Making decisions
<b>Myself and Others</b>	Myself and my family Myself and my friends Special people in my life Relating to others	Myself and my family Myself and my friends Other people Relating to others

Strand	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Class
	Strand Units	Strand Units
<b>Myself</b>	Accepting myself Physical development Growing and changing Birth and new life Feelings and emotions Personal hygiene Personal safety Making decisions	Accepting myself Physical development Growing and changing Birth and new life Feelings and emotions Personal hygiene Personal safety Making decisions
<b>Myself and Others</b>	Roles and responsibilities in families Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Roles of males and females in society Relating to others	Changing relationships in families and friendships Group affiliation and loyalty Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Sexual stereotypes Relating to others

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### Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

The RSE content and methodology to be used will be based on the guidelines for Primary Schools drawn up by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. In order to promote the joint involvement of parents and teachers in implementing the RSE programme the following will be available in the school should parents wish to see them.

- The guidelines on RSE for Primary Schools
- RSE Resource material
- Busy Bodies Book (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>)
- Busy Bodies DVD (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>)

The principal and teachers will also be available to assist parents.

We recognise 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 for the work of the home in this area. The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account.

Appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. The use of slang words will be discouraged. Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner. The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class. Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme and they will be advised to talk with their parents.

Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is very inappropriate. It is our policy not to answer personal questions and to discourage disclosure of personal or family information. Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the school will take account of parental concerns, and parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. In Fifth/Sixth classes and third and fourth classes, the children will be taken as one group for some of the lessons but in other cases lessons will be given to boys and girls separately by male and female teachers. Some children might be reluctant to discuss some of the above issues and this might provide an opportunity for them to raise concerns or ask questions.

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The content of this programme is designed specifically for these age groups. Parents are made aware of the content in advance and are asked for their consent in writing in order for their children to take part.

### Confidentiality

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow our Child Protection Policy. The Principal is our Designated Liaison Person.

### Ongoing Support, Development and Review

The Board of Management of St. Attracta's supports the implementation of the RSE programme.

We recognise that our school has a supportive role to that of the home and we have a commitment to ensuring that:

- Our teachers have access to in-career development opportunities.
- Relevant teaching materials are provided.

This policy was reviewed in 2010-2011 following a staff development session with an RSE facilitator, ratified by the BOM and is being implemented by teachers. It will be reviewed informally at planning meetings. As with all of our plans and policies, parents have access to this policy on request.