**Callystown National School**

**RSE Policy**

**School Philosophy**

1. Callystown National School is a co-educational, Catholic, Primary School, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While Callystown N.S. is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also takes due recognition for all other religions. The main aim of the school is to prepare the pupils to take their place in society as good and responsible citizens.

**Relationship & Sexuality Education**

1. Relationship & Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of Social, Personal & Health Education 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, relationship growth and development, relevant personal and social skills and aspects of parenting.

Central to relationships and sexuality education is the fostering of self-esteem, through which the pupil becomes more responsible in making choices and decisions in all aspects of life and particularly in those relating to sexuality and relationships.

**Aspirations**:

* The school recognises that in this area its role is subsidiary to that of the parents.
* The dignity of privacy and modesty of each individual child will be respected.
* The overall aim of all policies in this school is to ensure the total development of the “whole child” in the context of the Catholic ethos of this school. Hence the RSE Policy will be developed in line with the policies on Health & Safety, Science, SESE, etc. i.e. all areas of the curriculum in which RSE is already a part.
* We aspire to help the child to improve his/her self-esteem by developing his/her skills of listening, communication and conflict resolution. We believe that if we, here in Callystown N.S., offer the children the values of respect, trust, openness, freedom, love, responsibility, commitment, tolerance and patience, they will develop these skills.

**Aims**

* To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
* To foster in the child a sense of care and respect for him/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, 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.

 **Context**

 All of the sexually sensitive issues will be delivered within the context of SPHE which is

 timetabled in our curriculum. Sensitive issues will be covered within the strand units.

1. Taking Care of My Body.
2. Growing and Changing
3. Safety and Protection.

**Organisation**

* The school encourages the class teacher to take his/her own class when dealing with the “sensitive” areas of the RSE programme. In the event of teacher having reservations about the task in hand, other teachers might stand in or speakers will be invited from “ACCORD” or other such approved HSE personnel. The classroom teacher will remain in the room.
* The RSE content will be taught in conjunction with the Stay Safe programme on an alternate year basis. Year 1 (years ending in odd digit) RSE Programme / Year 2(years ending in an even digit) Stay Safe Programme.
* Accord will be invited to teach its RSE programme to 6th class pupils. The content of which is attached to this policy.
* Fifth class students will be taught the 5th class lessons every year to ensure that they are prepared for the Accord programme in 6th class.
* Our RSE programme strives to give children clear, factual, age appropriate information on sexuality and relationships. 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.
* The methodology used will be similar to that already in use. The following are the main elements of the methodology to examine, explore and discuss such topics, attitudes, values, beliefs and emotions of the pupils, through stories/poems/classroom discussions/group work/games/art activities/quiet time/classroom visitors/educational drama/video/DVD.
* Teachers will deal only with questions on the sensitive issues that have been covered within the programmes of work being taught in the school. All answers will be given at an age appropriate level and keeping the Catholic ethos of the school in mind.
* Parents have a right to have their child opt out when the sensitive areas are being taught. Parents may withdraw their child from class on the specific day the”sensitive areas” are being taught. The child may be moved to another class for the duration of the talk.
* The content of this programme will be based on the Alive-O series/resource materials for Relationship and Sexuality Education. DES-Junior Infants to 6th Class/Making the Links/ Walk Tall/Stay Safe/Busy Bodies/Video/DVD.
* The RSE Curriculum and Guidelines recommend a spiral curriculum. This involves revisiting key topics in a developmental manner at regular intervals.
* Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher/principal if they have any concerns.
* Parents will sign a permission form at the beginning of the child’s first year of school, regarding the child’s participation in the RSE/Walk Tall/Stay Safe Programmes. If a parent seeks to withdraw a child from sensitive lessons a written request must be made to the Principal.
* The specific RSE AND Stay Safe lessons will be taught in the second term of the school year. Advance notice of the teaching of these will be sent home. An email outlining the

 content and information of how to access the lessons to be taught will be sent home to each family.

* With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom.
* When opportunities arise informally in class to clarify language, the teacher can take that opportunity to explain using proper terms for parts of the body and bodily functions in an age appropriate manner.A simple example of this might be where a child whose mother is expecting a baby says “my mammy has a baby in her tummy”. The teacher may take the opportunity to explain that the special place in a woman’s body where the baby spends nine months before it is born is called the womb.

**Sensitive Lessons Organisation:**

* **4th Class** The information regarding Menstruation will be taught only to the girls in 4th class.
* **5th Class:** Boys and girls will be taught the lessons on boys’ and girl’s puberty separately. The DVD of changes to boys and changes to girls during puberty will be shown to the pupils a number of times over a week. The three videos that will be shown are***; Introduction to puberty, How boys bodies grow and develop during puberty, How girls bodies grow and develop, including menstruation.*** These videos can be accessed on [www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy\_bodies](http://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy_bodies).
* **6th Class:**The Accord programme dealing with Relationships and Sexuality will be taught to both boys and girls together. This programme is attached to the policy.

**Dealing With Questions:**

 All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Topics outside those covered in the RSE programme will not be discussed. Any questions that maybe asked by the children and are judged to be inappropriate will be referred to the child’s parents.

***The Board of Management will actively***

1. Encourage in-career development opportunities for teachers and provide relevant RSE school resources.
2. Support efforts of the Parents’ Council to provide educational opportunities for the parents of the school.

**Evaluation**

The direct contribution of RSE to the development of the whole person may be difficult to assess because of the many influences on a young person’s attitude and behaviour. However, it is important to evaluate and review programmes regularly at a number of levels – the level of the student, the teacher, the parent and the Board of Management.

Essential questions are:

* How is the programme working?
* What are its strengths?
* What are its weaknesses?
* What changes are necessary?
* How are these changes to be affected?
* What is the scale for implementation and for further review?

**Brief outline of the sensitive areas**.

**Taking Care of My Body**

**Infants**

* Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms.
* ***Each child may their own names for their private parts however the vocabulary to be taught*** ***will be*** Penis/Vagina

**First & Second Classes**

* As above and identify some of their functions.
* ***Sensitive language to be taught:*** womb, breast, breast feeding.

**Third & Fourth Classes**

* Understand the physical changes taking place in the body male and female.
* ***Sensitive language to be taught:*** Girls in 4th class Menstruation

**Fifth & Sixth Classes**

* Identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in girls and boys at puberty.
* Understand the reproductive system of male and female adults.

**Growing and Changing**

**Fourth Classes**

* Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth.

**Fifth & Sixth Classes**

* Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship.