

Milford National School

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introduction:

The school has a responsibility to put in place an R.S.E. policy as part of the wider Social Personal and Health Education strand of the curriculum.

Rationale:

The need for the policy arises from our schools obligation to provide for all the needs of the student body and to respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues relating to emerging sexuality.

Aims:

- a. To enhance the personal development, well-being and self-esteem of each child
- b. To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive and measured way.
- c. To enable the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships.

School Ethos:

The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. To this end, parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the R.S.E. policy formation, through a series of meetings, full representation on the Steering Committee and the ratification of the finished product in 2001. Parents also have the right to withhold their children from participating in R.S.E. classes.

School Provision: Strand Units:

Myself

Self identity, taking care of my body, growing and changing, safety and protection

Myself and Others

Myself and family, friends and relating to other people.

Taking Care of My Body

Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate terminology in Junior and Middle classes.

Identifying puberty and the reproductive system in Senior Classes.

Growing and Changing

The stages of development of a baby from conception to birth (Middle classes).

Understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed, loving relationship (Senior Classes).

Note: Teachers do not cover topics such as contraception and same-sex friendships. Children who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum are referred to parents. Parents are discreetly informed of this and asked to talk to their child.

Methodology:

Circle Time is used extensively in Junior Classes to build confidence and address fears. Boys and girls are taught together in all classes. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents. The *Alive-O 8* resource materials are used extensively in Senior Classes.

Programmes used: Stay Safe, Walk Tall and R.S.E.

The Stay Safe programme is taught in Senior Infants, 1st class, 3rd class and 5th class. Aspects of the programme (such as bullying) are revised in all classes.

Parents of 5th and 6th classes are made aware beforehand that a programme is imminent where issues such as physical and emotional development, bodily and sexual awakening will be explored. They may discuss the issues which will be dealt with at the Parent-Teacher meeting or at a separate meeting if they so wish.

The information book, "Busy Bodies" is given to children in 5th class as school policy.

Topics covered from Junior Infants to 2nd class include:

- ✓ Keeping safe
- ✓ Naming body parts using correct terminology
- ✓ Bodily changes during growth and development
- ✓ Making and keeping friends
- ✓ Making age appropriate choices
- ✓ Appreciating family life
- ✓ Recognizing and expressing feelings
- ✓ Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep (linked with P.E., Healthy Eating Policy and S.P.H.E)
- ✓ Expressing opinions and listening to others

Topics covered from 3rd to 6th class include:

- ✓ Bodily changes
- ✓ Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- ✓ Keeping safe
- ✓ Expressing feelings
- ✓ Family relationships
- ✓ Making healthy and responsible decisions
- ✓ Forming friendships
- ✓ Reproduction and conception (6th class only)

Guidelines for Management:

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school R.S.E. programme acts as a support to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/ topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils within a moral and spiritual framework.

Child Protection:

The school follows the Department of Education child protection guidelines and has a Child Protection policy, with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. (D.L.P.) In case of disclosure; the D.L.P. will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

Teacher Choice/ Staff Development:

The teacher's right to choose is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the programme or require additional resources, a suitable speaker will be employed by the B.O.M. The teacher may need to plan specific material to be covered and should be present during the talk.

The staff has trained in:

- ✓ The Child House Prevention Programme (Stay Safe)
- ✓ Relationships and Sexuality Programme (R.S.E.)
- ✓ Walk Tall Programme (S.M.P.P.)

- ✓ The whole school plan is available in both the Secretary's Office and the Principal's office. Each teacher is responsible for his/ her long term and short term planning comprising of a yearly and a fortnightly scheme of work. A Cúntas Míósúil (monthly report) is retained in the Principal's office.

School and Community Links:

Milford National School is involved in the following:

- ✓ Athletics and Basketball inter-school competitions
- ✓ Cumann na mBunscoil- football, hurling and camogie
- ✓ Rounders, soccer and rugby
- ✓ Christmas carol singing
- ✓ Choir competitions and festivals
- ✓ Shakin' with Shakespeare Literature and Drama Club
- ✓ Christmas Pageants
- ✓ Chess competitions
- ✓ Violin, recorder, guitar, accordion, art, drama lessons after school
- ✓ Lunchtime Concerts in the Music Academy of U.L.
- ✓ School Band
- ✓ School Choir
- ✓ Seachtain na Gaeilge: Féile agus Drámaíocht
- ✓ World Book Day events
- ✓ Credit Union competitions and quiz

Evaluation:

- ✓ Teacher observation
- ✓ Inventory of what needs to be changed
- ✓ Ensuring all strands are covered
- ✓ Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation
- ✓ Community feedback

Roles and Responsibilities:

The whole school community of B.O.M., staff, pupils and parents play a key role in the formation and implementation of the plan.

Ratification/Communication:

This policy was last reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 14th January 2009. It was reviewed and updated on 12th November 2012 and communicated to parents through the school website