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***Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy***

***for***

***Saint Michael’s N.S.***

***Castletown Geoghegan***

**Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

**Introductory Statement and Rationale**

(a) **Introductory Statement**: The School has a responsibility to put in place an RSE policy as part of the wide, Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum. The process was initiated in 2004 and is reviewed on an ongoing basis in the school.

(b) **Rationale**: The need for this policy arises from our schools obligation to provide for all the needs of the student body and respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues 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.

(d) To incorporate all the aims of the SPHE programme into RSE.

**Relationships to school Ethos**

The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. The school recognizes the role of parents as the primary educators of their children and parents have the right to withhold their children from participating in RSE classes, but must provide reasons for this in writing.

**School Provision – Strand One**

**Taking care of my body**

* Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate terminology (Junior and Lower Middle classes)
* Identifying physical changes
* Understanding puberty and the reproductive system (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).

**Education Programme**

The RSE programme is the specific programme used to cover/fulfill the Content Objectives relating to Relationships and Sexuality.

It is taught in the overall context of the SPHE Curriculum and is supported by the Stay Safe Programme, the Walk Tall Programme and other health promotion programmes.

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating children in sexual matters. The RSE programme acts as a support to parents and parents retain the right to withdraw their pupils from the lessons ethos of the school, but must provide reasons for this in writing.

**RSE and Stay Safe Programme**

All areas including sensitive areas will be covered by class teacher e.g. Birth and New Life, Reproduction – 3rd and 4th, Hormonal changes – 5th and 6th. The teacher will decide on groupings with regard to class level. The teacher will deliver specific talks in relation to puberty to the whole class. The teacher will also set the ground rules for taking questions. If parents are concerned about any aspect of the school’s programme for the RSE elements of SPHE they should discuss their concerns with their child’s class teacher or principal. If teachers are concerned about any aspect of the school’s programme for the RSE elements of SPHE they should discuss their concerns with the principal.

**Child Protection**

This school will follow the Department of Education and Skill’s Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and Welfare of Children. These are based on Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The Board of Management has designated the principal, Mrs. Margaret Gorman to have specific responsibility for child protection. She will be the Designated Liaison Person for the school. Should the need arise the Deputy Principal, Mrs. Barbara Reynolds will act as Designated Liaison Person. Staff are familiar with this policy and the procedures in place for reporting suspected cases of abuse. Parents have been informed that the school will follow the recommendations as laid down in the guidelines through the school booklet.

**Teacher Choice/Staff Development**

The teacher’s right to choose is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not feel confident to teach specific aspects of the programme or require additional resources, they will be encouraged to attend CPD in this specific area and a suitable speaker will be employed by the Board of Management. The teacher may need to plan the specific material to be covered and should be present during the talk.

Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in all areas in relation to RSE on an on-going basis.

The staff have availed of training in:

* Stay Safe Prodramme
* Relationships and Sexuality Programme (RSE)
* Walk Tall Programme
* Zippy’s Friends

**Evaluation**

* Teacher observation.
* Inventory of what needs to be changed.
* Ensuring all content objectives of the particular strand unit are covered.
* Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The whole school community of Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents play a key role in the formulation and implementation of the plan.

**Review and Evaluation**

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management and staff with input from parents.

This policy has been prepared based on the conditions existing in the school at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised and updated to comply with any changes in conditions statutory requirements or advice involving all the partners in the education process.

Ratified by Board of Management on:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management Date

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Date