

Burrane N.S.

RSE Policy

Our school Philosophy:

Burrane N.S. is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. Our school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual including a living relationship with God and other people and promotes a Christian philosophy of life.

There are two mainstream teachers including a Teaching Principal and 1SET teachers. Also there is a secretary and care-taker, both of whom are on part-time hours. The school caters for variety of classes from infants to sixth class.

A code of behaviour has been established, in co-operation with parents to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. Pupils at the school are expected to respect the dignity of other pupils, teachers and other staff in the school and have the right to expect that their own dignity will be respected. This ethos of dignity and mutual respect will be reflected in our school's RSE policy.

Definition of RSE:

RSE as a programme 'provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human growth and development, human sexuality and relationships, parenting, personal and social skills through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.' (p. 5 National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) interim curriculum and guidelines for RSE)

Relationship of RSE to SPHE:

RSE is an integral part of social, personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. RSE aims to provide children with the opportunity to learn, at home and in school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information. Within the school, RSE will form an integral part of a wider programme, covering several core subjects areas, which will be encompassed in the SPHE programme.

What the school currently provides:

- We currently use the Walk Tall SPHE programme in our school for the teaching of SPHE. SPHE is assigned one half hour weekly at each class level.

- As support material we use the 'First Steps' programme.
- Material from the 'Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education' are used from Junior Infants to 6th class in supporting the teaching of the 'taking care of my body' and 'Growing and Changing' strand unit of the SPHE programme.
- The 'Stay Safe' programme is in use at all class levels in teaching the 'Safety and protection' strand unit of the SPHE programme.
- Over the past number of years an outside agency was brought in to give a talk to 5th and 6th class pupils on puberty, intercourse and reproduction.
- From this year forward it will be school policy that each class teacher will cover all RSE material in their own class, or that a dedicated member of staff will do so in cases where teachers don't feel comfortable delivering the material.
- RSE will be taught in Aril/May following the two year cycle attached.

The Aims of our RSE Programme:

It is the general aim of our school to promote the personal, cognitive, emotional, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual development of the each child. The appropriate delivery of the RSE programme will help us to achieve this aim.

The aims of Relationship and sexuality education are:

- 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 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 enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others, while growing and developing.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our school:

- The following guidelines have been drawn up in consultation with the staff of Burrane National School.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and will be taught in this context. Content will be taught developmentally with age appropriate lessons being taught at each class level in primary school. RSE- specific education will be covered in the strand units 'Taking care of my Body' 'Growing and Changing' and 'Safety and Protection'.
- All issues will be discussed with sensitivity, professionalism and awareness of the varying levels of development within a class.

RSE and Appropriate language:

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships (Interim Guidelines p 53). Not being familiar with the biological terms for the body can put children at a disadvantage. (DES Resource Materials for RSE Jnr/Snr Infants, p.148-149).

Management of RSE within our School:

1. Arrangement regarding the deployment staff and teaching of the programme will be made by the principal.
2. The RSE programme will be taught by all teachers to all class levels at a dedicated time period during the school year.
3. Parents are the primary educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important.
 - Upon enrolling their child in the school parents will be issued an information booklet. This will contain details of what will be covered in the RSE Programme.
 - Prior to the teaching of the RSE programme, a letter will be sent to all parents informing them that the “sexually sensitive issues” will be covered in the coming weeks. This letter will contain information for parents reiterating exactly what will be covered at each class level.
4. If children are withdrawn from the RSE programme, where possible arrangements will be made for this child to be accommodated in another class or the child may be taken home if the parent so wishes.
 - Parents withdraw their children with the understanding that they are now solely responsible for this aspect of their child’s education.
 - The school does not take responsibility for different versions of the material the withdrawn child may hear on the school yard.
5. The principal will endeavor, where possible to accommodate any teacher who does not wish to teach the RSE material to their class.
6. In a multi class setting, classes may be withdrawn to facilitate the delivery of the material at age appropriate levels.
7. In a Junior and senior infant class, material will be covered in the final term of the year and will be delivered to both classes.
8. Parents will be invited to view the curriculum if they wish and raise any concerns they may have with the teacher.

Dealing with questions.

Teachers will use their discretion when answering questions and will only answer questions that relate to the material covered. The teacher will not answer any questions that would be considered inappropriate and may refer the child to their parents.

In the senior classes teachers will adopt the policy of using a 'question box'. Children write their questions and place them in the question box at the end of the session. The teacher screens the questions and only answers those that are appropriate.

Special Needs

Children with special needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.

In the ASD class a differentiated programme will be taught and will be drawn up by the ASD class teacher. The resource teacher may deliver some parts of the programme to some children if deemed appropriate.

Visiting Speakers:

It is the policy of our school that teachers are best placed to deliver the RSE programme to the pupils with whom they have a relationship of mutual respect and trust.

Should the school decide to employ a visiting speaker in the future, that speaker will be provided with a copy of the schools RSE policy and will be made aware of the ethos of the school. The Principal will be made aware of how the material will be delivered by the speaker, how questions will be dealt with etc. In the event of such a talk taking place, the principal and the pupils' parents will be present.

Resources:

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school allow.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE programme:

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme.

Specifically important to the RSE Programme are:

- a) pupil feedback;
- b) staff review and feedback;
- c) parental feedback.