



# Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy

## **Introduction**

Central Model Senior School caters for children from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class. We are an inclusive school community and we welcome children of all faiths and beliefs.

## **School Ethos**

Central Model Senior School is an inclusive school community with a Catholic tradition, under the patronage of the Minister for Education.

We aim to provide a happy, secure learning environment where children, parents/guardians, teachers, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership, where each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

We seek to foster an appreciation and celebration of the different religious and cultural backgrounds represented in our school.

## **Definition of R.S.E**

R.S.E (Relationship and Sexuality Education) is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships. The programme will help students to form values and friendships by promoting good self-image and developing respect for themselves and others.

## **Relationship and Sexuality Education within Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.)**

The *Draft Guidelines for RSE* (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that Social, Personal and Health Education is “spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology”. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one’s relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

## **Aims of our RSE Programme**

1. To promote feelings of self esteem and value in each individual.
2. To promote respect, tolerance, and fairness towards others and ourselves.
3. To promote a sense of responsibility in which social, moral and civic values are respected.
4. To help the child develop understanding of healthy attitudes towards human sexuality in a spiritual, moral and social framework.
5. To ensure the child acquires an understanding of and respect for human love, sexuality and reproduction.
6. To help the child appreciate the gift of birth and new life.
7. To enable the child to feel comfortable with his own sexuality and that of others while growing and developing.
8. To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.



## **Guidelines for the management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school**

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal.

### **Informing and Involving 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 language and answering questions;**

Appropriate language 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 the 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 the disclosure of personal or family information.

### **Confidentiality and Child Protection:**

The school follows the D.E.S child protection guidelines and has a child Protection Policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure; the D.L.P will be informed and will follow the procedures as set out in Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017. Central Model Senior School also ensures that all staff are familiar with and have copies of relevant chapters of the DES guidelines which outline procedures that must be followed where concerns or disclosures of abuse arise. Agreed procedures are in place that aim to protect children and staff e.g. issues around toileting, changing for games, one to one teaching etc. It is also school policy that teachers do not promise absolute confidentiality. Pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal and possibly to parents if the Principal decides it is in the best interests of the pupil to notify them.

### **Participation in the RSE programme:**

- It is school policy that all pupils partake in the R.S.E Programme.
- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme at enrolment.
- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level.
- The letter will be issued in advance, giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teachers if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children, it also gives parents an opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE.



- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Following discussion with Principal and Class Teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be centrally files.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons. e.g. What they may hear on yard.

### **Using visiting speakers and others:**

It is school policy that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However visitors can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of RSE.

We invite a facilitator from Accord to work with our 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6th classes. The content of this programme is designed specifically for these age groups. Parents are asked for their consent in writing in order for their children to take part.

### **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.

### **Ongoing support and development for staff**

The Board of Management of Central Model Senior School 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 and that relevant teaching materials are provided.

The staff will teach from a selection of the following materials:

- The Stay Safe Programme
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (R.S.E)
- Walk Tall Programme
- Making the Links

### **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

This policy will be reviewed in 2022 or as the need arises.



A copy of this policy will be made available on the school website [www.centralmodelseniorschool.ie](http://www.centralmodelseniorschool.ie) and to any parent on request from the school office.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

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

### **Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2019.

**Ratified by the Board of Management of Central Model Senior School on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2019.**

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

**Chairperson Board of Management**



## **Appendix 1**

### ***Topics covered in 2nd class include:***

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

### ***Topics covered from 3rd to 6th classes include:***

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping safe
- Expressing feelings
- Family relationships
- Birth and new life
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- Reproduction, conception (5th & 6th classes)