**Ballaghlea National School**

# Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

## Introductory Statement:

The school has a responsibility to put in place an RSE policy as part of the wider social, personal and health education strand of the curriculum. The process was initiated in 1999-2000 when the policy committee (steering committee of 6 people) was charged with setting parameters for the organisation and management of RSE in the school and reviewed again in 2011 and 2017.

## Rationale:

RSE is a life long process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. In a school situation RSE, provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework, appropriate to their age. RSE is taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the Philosophy framework of the school. Teachers will not teach any content outside the Religion programme used by the school or the DES curriculum. The teaching methods used in the school are child centred and reflect the age and stage of development of each child. Sensitive issues will be dealt with appropriately.

## Aims:

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

# 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 (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).

**Dealing with Questions:** Teachers do not cover content outside that of the DES curriculum or the school's religion programme. Topics excluded include contraception, same sex relationships, abortion etc. Answers to questions must be in line with the Catholic Church's teaching i.e. sexual intercourse will be discussed within the context of marriage. At the same time teachers should

answer questions sensitively aware that there are children in our school from many social backgrounds. No child should be made feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when these issues are raised. Children, who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum taught, should be talked to individually and discreetly, as soon as is possible, by the teacher and encouraged to seek answers from their parents. If a child poses such a question the parents will be informed and asked not to ignore it but to deal with it as they see fit.

## Child Protection:

The school follows the DES Child Protection Procedures for post primary and primary schools, with the Principal AnneMarie Farrell as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure; the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in these guidelines.

## 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 BoM. The teacher may need to plan the specific material to be covered and should be present during the talk.

**The staff have availed of training in;**

- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (RSE)
- Community feedback

## Roles and Responsibilities:

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

## Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the BoM in [dd/mm/yy].

## Implementation:

Implementation with immediate effect.

## Review:

This policy will be reviewed in [dd/mm/yy].