



Whole School Plan for Learn Together Ethical Education Curriculum

December 2023

Le Cheile E.T.N.S

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1. Introduction

The Learn Together Programme is taught for :

Stage 1	Junior and Senior Infants	1 hour and 40 minutes
Stage 2 - 4	1 st to 6 th class	2 hours per week

The Learn Together Ethical Education curriculum is very much integrated with the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum. This programme is taught by teachers to embed the ethos of our school. Our ethos reflects the four guiding principles of all multi-denominational schools as defined in the Educate Together Charter.

- Equality Based
- Co-Educational
- Child-Centred
- Democratically run

The four curriculum strands for the delivery of the Learn Together programme are

1. An Ethical Approach to the Environment
2. The Belief Systems Strand
3. Equality and Justice
4. Values and Ethical Perspectives

The aim of these strands is to nurture and develop in the children a caring and responsible approach to society. In our programme, the children learn about different religions, belief systems and traditions that are part of human development.

Please note:- Religious Instruction classes for individual religions are organised by parents and held outside school hours. They do not form part of the school programme.

2. Vision Statement

The Learn Together Ethical Education Curriculum in our school will provide opportunities for each child to celebrate differences in belief, culture, race and ethnic background, to learn about social and environmental issues and to develop a sense of an ethical and moral conscience. It will foster in children an awareness of the need for equality and justice in everyday life and help him or her to become an active and responsible citizen in society.

Every opportunity will be taken to learn about and celebrate festivals from many different world religions, without imposing the beliefs of any one faith on children or promoting one faith over another. An emphasis will be placed on informative rather than definitive teaching, or in other words children will be taught to appreciate different belief systems without any system being taught as 'truth'. As teachers, parents and others in the whole school community work together, each child will be able to learn in a culture of safety and acceptance where no child is an outsider. The Ethical Education Curriculum in our school will reflect our commitment to the multi-denominational, co-educational, child-centred and democratic principles of Educate Together which are encapsulated in the curriculum motto, 'Learn Together to live Together.'

3. Aims and Objectives

In implementing the Ethical Education Curriculum in our school, we aim to nurture and develop in each child a caring and responsible approach to society. Specifically, the curriculum will aim to:

- Foster self confidence and self worth in each child to become self-aware, reflective individuals with a secure sense of belonging and identity.
- Develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will facilitate them to live as ethical people who are empathetic, socially aware and committed to democratic principles and values, global citizenship, and equality.
- Foster in each child a knowledge and understanding of different value and belief systems in an atmosphere of critical enquiry and mutual respect.
- Become familiar with the tenets and beliefs of the major religions and rational understandings of the world.
- Support children in cultivating their spirituality in a secure environment.
- Prepare children to become caring members of a multicultural society with the necessary inter-cultural skills to enrich such a society.
- Address issues of spirituality and morality.
- Facilitate in children the ability to make reasoned and informed moral judgements.
- Develop and use critical thinking skills that will enable them to critique their world and empower them to give reasoned explanations for their opinions, decisions and actions.
- Raise awareness in children of issues of human rights, justice and equality in society.
- Provide children with a range of dispositions and skills to enable them to participate in and contribute to the democratic process and become informed, socially responsible and fair-minded citizens.
- Promote co-operation and teamwork.
- Encourage each child to be adaptable and self motivated and to act with initiative, independence and creativity; to promote the skills and courage to tackle unfamiliar fields.
- Encourage each child to explore and reflect on their experiences; to facilitate them to express and cope with the full range of human emotions; to help them develop a greater insight into self and into other people and their feelings.
- Develop in each child qualities such as courage, respect, tolerance, responsibility, integrity and trust.
- Recognise their role as active members of a democratic society with the potential to take action that will lead to positive change.
- Develop in children an ethical and reasoned approach to caring for the environment.
- Help each child appreciate beauty in the natural world and to nurture a sense of wonder, awe and creative searching.
- Foster an appreciation of and respect for the environment and to encourage to take an active role in this regard.

- Recognise the impact of the climate crisis and their role as active members of a democratic society with the potential to take action that will lead to positive change.
- Foster awareness of each other's responsibilities with due regard to the rights and needs of the children themselves and of others in the family, the school, local community and wider world.
- Help children manage conflict.
- Foster empathy and concern for people who are excluded, vulnerable, marginalized with disabilities, both in the school and outside.
- Develop ethical principles in relation to human rights, equality and justice, and apply these principles to their daily lives.
- Promote equality, fairness and justice and to help children recognise prejudice and discrimination.
- Enable the child to contribute positively to the school community and to society in general and to equip the child with the potential to contribute as an adult.
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of different philosophical, religious traditions with prejudice and with respect.
- Foster a safe environment for the children to express their own traditions, beliefs and non-beliefs.
- Teach and encourage the children to put into practice the aspirations of the Learn Together Programme in a manner appropriate to their age and ability.
- Teach children to critically and constructively reflect on the means used in the wider world to influence and shape their values, attitudes and beliefs such as media advertising and peer pressure.
- Relate this learning to their individual experience in the context of their local, national and global community.

Learn Together Curriculum (2022)



An Ethical Approach to the Environment

Equality and Justice

Values and Ethical Perspectives

Belief Systems

Objectives of the 4 Strands	
<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a knowledge, understanding and respect for the natural environment and an appreciation of its fragility and vulnerability. • Explore the interdependence of life and the impact of over-consumption on the planet. • Recognise the importance of active citizenship in attempting to redress the impact of human over-consumption on the environment. • Demonstrate an understanding of the urgency needed to protect the environment for present and future life on the planet. 	<p>Equality and Justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of issues relating to human rights, equality, culture, diversity, social justice and social inclusiveness. • Develop a critical way of being, fostering questioning, analysis and open engagement with ethical and social justice issues. • Feel empowered to become informed, ethical and active citizens.
<p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of right and wrong and a heightened awareness of social, ethical, and moral standards through reflection on life itself. • Learn to explore their own identities and in doing so, strengthen and enhance their self-worth and self-esteem. • Explore, understand and identify appropriate responses to the multitude and richness of human emotions. • Identify values integral to personal development which can inform ethical decisions. • Engage in philosophical discussion and enquiry. 	<p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop knowledge and understanding of the richness of belief systems and worldviews, both religious and secular, and relate these to the human experience and day-to-day life. • Develop an understanding of the right to hold and to practice a belief or worldview and to change that belief at any time. • Develop their knowledge of conceptual understandings as they relate to religious and secular beliefs. • Relate aspects of religious and secular beliefs to individual experience, leading to enhanced mutual understandings. • Develop an understanding that beliefs and the practice of beliefs can vary from culture to culture and individual to individual.

4. Curriculum Planning

(i) Strands and Elements/Themes

Specific class objectives for each strand are outlined in the Learn Together curriculum document, a hardcopy of which is available in each classroom and digital copy on the Educate Together website. A Planning Tool is available on the school server to facilitate planning. Teachers will incorporate Learn Together objectives into their individual plans for Ethical Education.

(ii) Approaches and Methodologies

Key Figures and Celebrations will be marked continuously throughout the year and will be largely dependent of the festival calendar and will also be reflected in many school assemblies which will mark special celebrations during the year.

Methodologies

Our school will implement teaching and learning processes, which will nurture the skills and attitudes that enable children to live out the values inherent in the curriculum. These will include:

- Conceptual Enquiry approach
- Class discussion and debate
- Collecting ideas through processes such as brain storming
- Small group experiential work
- Reflection Time
- Stories, Poems and Music
- Drama and role play
- Co-operative games
- Written activities/Art activities
- Class visits/Classroom visitors
- 'Circle Time' and 'Sharing Time'
- Structured play activities (Active Learning)
- Project work
- Using the Environment
- Use of ICT
- Assemblies
- Integration and linkage with other curricular areas

As part of the implementation of the curriculum, opportunities will be provided for children to explore issues raised by the programme, and will be allowed to:

- Reflect and experience a sense of awe and wonder.
- Express their opinions in a safe environment.
- Search for meaning and purpose through a study of issues that emerge in their lives such as grief and loss.
- Grow in self-knowledge through opportunities for reflection and quiet time.
- Debate, investigate, imagine, predict, record and critically analyse issues.
- Explore class and school incidents such as bullying, name-calling and exclusion through the use of the values that are implicit in the Ethical Education Curriculum.
- Engage in positive action to address issues of equality and environmental concerns.

(iii) Linkage and Integration

The Learn Together Programme will be delivered as part of an integrated, cross curricular approach throughout the school. Every opportunity will be sought to integrate the programme with other areas of the curriculum and all aspects of school life. In particular, there are opportunities for linkage with subjects such as S.P.H.E., Music, Art, Drama, English and Gaeilge, but there are many more possibilities. Teachers will make use of this to their advantage and will be mindful of similar topics when planning units of work.

(iv) Assessment

Assessment in this curriculum will be largely informal and will mainly take the form of

- teacher observation
- written work
- project work
- exploration of attitudes
- portfolio of children's work
- homework
- checklist and indicators of desirable outcomes

(v) Children with Differing Needs

The Ethical Education Curriculum in our school will provide opportunities for all children to benefit from the full range of experiences offered in the programme, regardless of ability or background. The range of individual differences within the school or classroom will always be taken into account when planning units of work and assessing outcomes.

(vii) Equality of Participation and Access

All children will have equal access to the Ethical Education Curriculum and Learn Together programme, regardless of gender, race or religious background. Every effort will be made to ensure that no one faith, race or gender is promoted over another in the delivery of the curriculum.

5.Organisational Planning

(i) Timetabling

The Department of Education Curriculum guidelines allow for

Stage 1 Junior and Senior Infants 1 hour and 40 minutes per week

Stages 2 – 4 1st to 6th class 2 hours per week

Of discreet teaching time per week for a religious and moral values education programme. It is recommended that this be divided into 20 minutes of discrete teaching time per day for Stage 1 and 24 minutes of discrete teaching time per day for Stages 2 to 4.

However, there is room for individual teacher-adaptation. Assemblies can be taken into account when dividing this time.

(ii) Resources

(iv) Staff Development

Teachers will be made aware of opportunities for professional development in courses available in local education centres and other venues and online. Skills and expertise within the school and locally, may also be availed of.

(v) Parental Involvement

The curriculum recognises parents and guardians as the primary educators of their children's moral and spiritual development. Parents will be encouraged to engage with their children in developing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes around the four strands. Each strand lends itself to the involvement of parents and guardians and the individual teacher will decide the best way of making this involvement a positive experience for all concerned.

(vi) Community Links

Teachers will seek opportunities to visit local sites of interest relating to the curriculum, for example local places of worship or of environmental interest. In addition, speakers such as members of UNICEF, Amnesty International, or local religious leaders may be invited to make presentations to the staff or students.

(vii) Success Criteria

The success of this plan will be measured using the following criteria:

- Implementations of revisions will be evident in teachers' work.
- Continuity of content and methodology will be evident in teachers' long term plans and monthly reports.
- Ongoing informal assessment will show that children are acquiring an understanding of age-appropriate concepts relating to the curriculum.

(viii) Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

Class teachers are responsible for carrying out the Ethical Education Curriculum within their own class. Post-holder with responsibility will support staff in the implementation of the programme and look after the distribution and monitoring of resources.

Timeframe

These changes have been implemented during the academic year 2023/2024

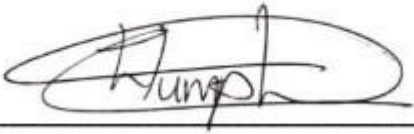
Review

The plan for the Ethical Education Curriculum for Le Chéile ETNS was initially drawn up in 2005. Developments and changes were made in the school year (2023/2024) and will be reviewed initially at the end of the school year 2024/25.

Ratification and Communication

The current review and changes were ratified by staff and the Board of Management in December 2023.

Signed by:



Christopher Humphries

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 5th December 2023

Appendix A

Whole School Learn Together Yearly Plan

Junior Infants

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Junior Infants	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We Are All Different • Values • Philosophy for/with Children 	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the Natural World • Fairness • Remembering 	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Books • We Can Make a Difference

Senior Infants

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Senior Infants	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • Feelings • Our Environment 	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing Democracy and Democratic Practices • Food • Love 	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasons • Making a Difference

First class

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
First Class	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We Are All Different • Values • Philosophy for/with Children 	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the Natural World • Communication and Democracy • Celebrating 	Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and Changing • We Can Make a Difference

Second class

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Second Class	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Educate Together School • Feelings • Our Environment 	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights • Food • Special Clothes/Dress 	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving Things Up • Making a Difference

Third Class

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Third Class	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Issues <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Process • Human Rights and Global Citizenship <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Issues and Dilemmas • Values and Dialogue <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging 	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdependence of Life <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Issues • Examples of Equality-based Initiatives <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolism 	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of Environmental Initiatives • Environmental Activism <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality-based Activism <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy for/with Children <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrimage

Fourth Class

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Fourth Class	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Issues <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic Process Human Rights and Global Citizenship <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical Issues and Dilemmas Values and Dialogue <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacred 	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdependence of Life <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Issues Examples of Equality-based Initiatives <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ritual Prophecy 	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of Environmental Initiatives Environmental Activism <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality-based Activism <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philosophy for/with Children <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith

Fifth class

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Fifth Class	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Issues <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic Process Human Rights and Global Citizenship <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p>	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdependence of Life <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Issues Examples of Equality-based Initiatives <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p>	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of Environmental Initiatives Environmental Activism <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality-based Activism

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Issues and Dilemmas • Values and Dialogue <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trinity (Christianity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torah (Judaism) 	<p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy for/with Children <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalism (Atheism, Agnosticism and Humanism)
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Sixth class

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Sixth Class	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Issues <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Process • Human Rights and Global Citizenship <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Issues and Dilemmas • Values and Dialogue <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nirvana (Buddhism) 	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdependence of Life <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Issues • Examples of Equality-based Initiatives <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Khalsa (Sikhism) 	<p>An Ethical Approach to the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of Environmental Initiatives • Environmental Activism <p>Equality and Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality-based Activism <p>Values and Ethical Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy for/with Children <p>Belief Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brahman (Hinduism) • Ummah (Islam)

LEARN TOGETHER
WHOLE SCHOOL PLAN
CONCEPTS LINKED TO BELIEF SYSTEMS
JUNIOR INFANTS TO 6TH CLASS

Class	CONCEPT	T E R M	BELIEF SYSTEM
JUNIOR INFANTS	REMEMBERING SPECIAL BOOKS	2 3	CHRISTIANITY ISLAM – THE KORAN
SENIOR INFANTS	LOVE SEASONS	2 3	HINDUISM HUMANISM/ATHEISM/AGNOSTICISM
1 ST CLASS	CELEBRATING GROWING AND CHANGING	2 3	JUDAISM BUDDHISM
2 ND CLASS	SPECIAL CLOTHES/DRESS GIVING THINGS UP	2 3	SIKHISM CHRISTIANITY
3 RD CLASS	BELONGING SYMBOLISM PILGRIMAGE	1 2 3	SIKHISM BUDDHISM ISLAM
4 TH CLASS	SACRED RITUAL PROPHECY FAITH	1 2 2 3	HINDUISM HUMANISM/ATHEISM/AGNOSTICISM JUDAISM CHRISTIANITY
5 TH CLASS	TRINITY TORAH RATIONALISM	1 2 3	CHRISTIANITY JUDAISM HUMANISM/ATHEISM/AGNOSTICISM
6 TH CLASS	NIRVANA THE KHALSA BRAHMAN UMMAH	1 2 3 3	BUDDHISM SIKHISM HINDUISM ISLAM

Appendix B (Timetables) Learn Together Board Sample

Month	Class
September	
October	4 th Class
November	Junior Infants
December	5 th Class
January	1 st Class
February	3 rd Class
March	2 nd class
April	6 th Class
May	Senior Infants
June	

Appendix B Learn Together Value of the Month

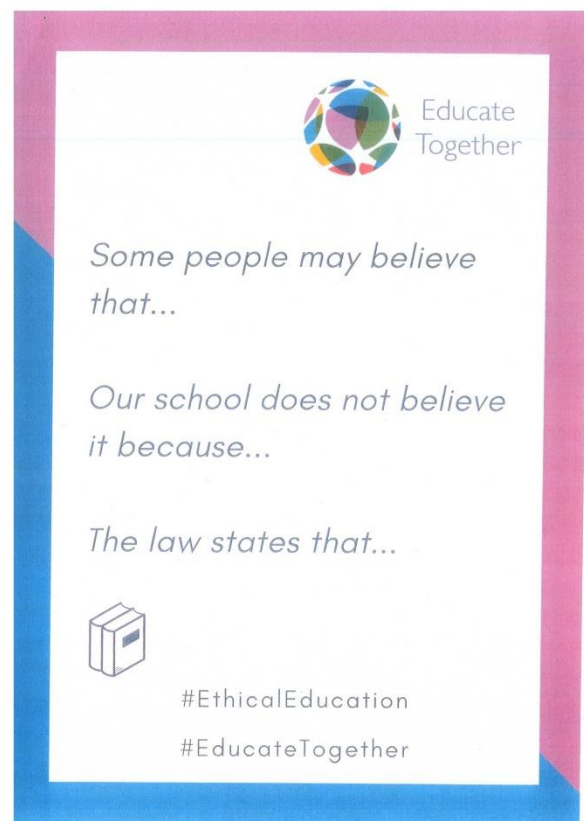
Month	Value for the month
September	RESPECT
October	CO-OPERATION
November	HONESTY AND TRUST
December	GENEROSITY
January	KINDNESS
February	CREATIVITY
March	EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS
April	EMPATHY
May	RESPONSIBILITY
June	GRATITUDE

Post-holders will communicate these tasks and plans annually to staff.

Appendix C



Appendix D



Appendix E

Dear X,

Thank you for your letter dated [insert date] and your instruction to have [name of child] withdrawn from 'sexual education curriculum instruction'. I assume that you mean the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum which is taught in all primary schools within Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

I would be very happy to meet with you to talk about what the school teaches in this subject area and to respond to questions you may have. I've outlined below important information about the subject.

RSE is taught in all class groups, from junior infants up to 6th class, taking into account the age and stage of the children. The subject is aimed at equipping children with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to develop self-awareness and self-esteem; realise their health, wellbeing and dignity; develop positive and respectful, social and intimate relationships; consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others; and understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to themselves and others. You can find out more about the curriculum at this link: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Social,-Personal-and-Health-Education/SPHE-RSE-Toolkit/>

In Educate Together schools RSE is taught in line with Educate Together's ethos. We are committed to the principles of equality, child-centredness, co-education and democracy. In our Ethos Quality Standards, which were adopted by all our member schools in 2021, equality is understood to mean that :

all students should be afforded equality of esteem in all aspects of school life, where individual difference and diversity is recognised, mutually respected, and welcomed.

What this means in day-to-day school life is that we acknowledge the diversity that makes up the school community and the range of identities within that community including those related to individuals' age; belief system; dis/ability; ethnicity; family type; gender; gender identity; religious background; sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

It is important that you are aware that while you may wish to withdraw [name of child] from RSE, it is not possible, in an Educate Together school, to isolate specific areas of the curriculum or school programmes where LGBTQ+ content is focused on, due to the Educate Together equality-based ethos. To be clear, RSE is only one area of school life where LGBTQ+ people and their identities will be discussed. Other areas may include, for example, school library books, assemblies, celebration days, and within Educate Together's Learn Together curriculum, in the context of human rights and equality.

Please get in touch if you would like to discuss this in person. If I do not hear from you, you will be notified of when RSE is scheduled to be taught with [name of child]'s class. If you wish to withdraw them, it will be your responsibility to collect [name of child] for the period of the RSE class that day and subsequent days. Unfortunately, if you do not collect your child at these times we will not be in a position to remove your child from the classroom during this lesson, as we don't have (additional classrooms and / or staff) available for supervision.

Thank you again for your (email / letter). Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to meet to discuss this matter.

Kind regards,