

Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated in response to a staff evaluation as part of the SSE process in Scoil Bhríde N.S., Portlaoise. It was developed in 2016 by the RSE Policy Committee which included a broad representation from staff. Staff recognise that Parents and Guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme acts only as a support to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from RSE classes.

This policy is cognisant of all aspects of our current Child Protection Policy. The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a child protection policy with the Principal Mrs. Wall Coughlan as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principal Mr. Fennell as the Deputy DLP. Where a child protection concern is raised, the procedures outlined in the schools Child Protection Policy will be followed.

School Philosophy

Scoil Bhríde is a co-educational Catholic Primary school and therefore all policies developed are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the school vision statement:

- Our school is a happy, caring, safe and creative community where we actively seek to understand, accept and respect each individual.
- We work together to consistently create a positive environment in which all can enjoy a full and rounded learning experience.
- We are committed to providing the life skills and knowledge necessary for all in our community to achieve their full potential.

Definition of RSE

In Scoil Bhríde, Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn, at home and in school, about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

Current Provision

Current provision included in the school curriculum is:

- SPHE
- Stay safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Religious Education
- Promotion of a caring atmosphere on a daily basis.
- Lessons dealing on enhancement of self esteem.
- Pax programme
- Focussing/Pause Programme
- Activities organised through H.S.C.L.
- Activities organised through S.C.P.

Aims of our RSE programme

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to relationships.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
- To foster an understanding of, and a 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- Fifth and Sixth Class.
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty- Senior Classes.
- 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.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Code of behaviour and discipline
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

- Internet Safety Policy

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies, we support informally many of the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the wellbeing of all of the members of the school community.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Curriculum Matters

- Curriculum Content -The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and all content objectives will be covered by the time each pupil leaves 6th class (See Appendix A). All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level.
- Where an outside speaker is used, the class teacher will remain in the classroom. The speaker will be made aware of the school's RSE policy.
- The Stay Safe programme will be implemented throughout the school. It will be taught specifically at the beginning of each school year in September and October.
- Topics which include sensitive content will be taught specifically in March and April of each school year, with the exception of 4th class, where there will be a lesson on "Introduction to puberty" at the end of each school year. Boys and girls will be taught separately.

Topics covered up to 2nd class include:

- Keeping Safe
- Bodily changes during growth and birth (birth to 9)
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life
- Recognising and expressing feelings
- Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep
- Expressing opinions and listening to others
- Myself and others
- Myself and the wider world
- Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms. Penis/ Vagina. (Junior/ Senior Infants) (See Appendix B for Sensitive Issues)
- Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions. Revise infant terminology and introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra. (First and Second Class)

Topics from 3rd to Sixth include:

- Keeping safe
- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Expressing Feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb. Introduce Umbilical cord. Any questions as to how the baby got there cannot be answered by the teacher. (Third and Fourth class) (See Appendix B for Sensitive Issues)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (at the end of 4th class, boys and girls taught content separately).
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty. (Fifth and Sixth Class)
- Reproductive system of male/female adults. (Fifth and Sixth Class)
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship. (Sixth Class)

Organisational Matters:

- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme.
- If parents do not give consent for their child to participate in any aspect of the RSE programme they must give notice in writing to the school that they are withdrawing their child. The child will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom in the school.
- Parents have a responsibility 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 invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.
- In the class situation children will be encouraged to recognise that certain information is for them only and it would be inappropriate to discuss this with younger siblings/children for example.
- With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed outside the classroom. Should a child who is withdrawn from the sexually sensitive lessons receive inappropriate information from others outside of these classes, it will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians to address any issues which may ensue.
- If a Teacher has concerns about teaching the "sexually sensitive issues" in RSE they should consult with the Principal. Any teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the

"sensitive parts" of RSE. It is the responsibility of the B.O.M. to ensure content is covered by another teacher or an outside speaker.

- Children with SEN - Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

Dealing with Questions:

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE. However, this area is treated somewhat differently from other subjects due to its sensitive nature.

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics are not in the primary RSE/SPHE programme and will not be discussed i.e.: abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception.

Questions to the teacher may be oral or written within the group setting and answered within boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. All pupils will be asked to complete a question slip. If a child has no question, they just write 'I have no questions'. This approach eliminates the possibility of being identified as the question posers. If any questions asked by children are deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher may refer the child to their parents/guardians, or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information.

At all times the child's and teacher's right to privacy will be maintained.

Children's questions will be dealt with, taking into account the following criteria, when relevant

- By being aware of circumstances in which the question has arisen
- By clarifying what information is required
- By deciding if the issue is relevant/who it is relevant to
- By giving an age appropriate answer
- By deferring the question as one which will be answered in the next lesson, one which should be answered at home or one which will be answered more fully in the future

Parental Involvement

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and resources if they wish.
- Parents will be informed in advance when formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme are happening and will be asked to discuss these issues with their child prior to the lessons in school.

- The home/school links pages accompanying lessons in the RSE Resource books may be used when required.
- The Parents Association may on occasion arrange for speakers/meetings to help them in the task of communicating with their children on aspects of their development.
- Support with RSE/SPHE is available to Parents/Guardians from Ms. Meade the school's H.S.C.L. co-ordinator.

Resources

- Lesson plans from the DES Resource Material for Relationships and Sexuality Education. The appropriate manuals are available to each class level.
- The Stay Safe programme, the Walk Tall Programme.
- Busy Bodies DVD and booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 5th and 6th class component of RSE within the context of SPHE. It is available for download at www.healthpromotion.ie
- All resources are available for parents/guardians to view if they so request prior to the delivery of the lesson.

Provision for Ongoing Support

- Parents welcome to view curriculum if they wish
- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre for CPD will be brought to the attention of staff members.
- In-school CPD will be provided when available and deemed appropriate.

Review

The policy will be reviewed every two years. The policy may also be reviewed should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting during school year 2016-17

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson:

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Principal:

Appendix A

<i>Classes</i>	Senior Infants Second Class Fourth Class Sixth Class	Junior Infants First Class Third Class Fifth Class
<u>Strands</u>	<u>Strand Units</u>	<u>Strand Units</u>
Myself	Safety & Protection and Self Identity (Sept/Oct)	Safety & Protection (Sept/Oct)
	Taking care of my body (Mar / Apr)	Taking care of my body (Mar/Apr)
	Growing & Changing (Mar/Apr) *In 4 th class only - introduction to puberty talk given to boys and girls separately at end of school year.*	Growing and Changing (Mar/Apr)
	Making Decisions & Sensitive Issues (Jan/Feb if applicable)	
Myself and others	Myself & my family (Nov/Dec)	
		My friends and other people (Nov/Dec)
		Relating to others (May/June)
Myself and the wider world	Developing Citizenship (May/Jun)	
		Media Education (Jan/Feb)

Appendix B

Lesson Content – Sensitive Issues

Class	Lesson	Strand Unit	Language	Date	Home/School
J.I. S.I.	Theme 6 Caring for new life p.137 Theme 7 My Body p.147	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	Penis/Vagina Naming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms	Term 2 every year	S.I. RSE Manual p. 145 S.I. RSE Manual p. 156
1 st 2 nd	Theme 6 The wonder of new life p.59/p.151 Theme 7 How my body works p67 When my body needs special care p.161 Theme 8 Growing means changing p. 77/p.171	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	As above: introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra. Naming as above and identify some of the functions.	Term 2 every year	RSE Manual p. 65, 160, 169
3 rd 4 th	Theme 6 Preparing for new life p.69 Theme 6 from 4th class The wonder of new life p.169 Theme 8 As I grow I change p.93 Theme 8 (girls and boys only in 4th class) Growing and changing p.195	Growing and changing	Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby in the womb. Umbilical cord. Any questions as to how the baby got there cannot be answered by the teacher.	Term 2 every year *Girls and boys in 4 th class only, taught separately at the end of the school year, an introduction to changes with a particular focus on puberty.*	RSE Manual p. 181
5 th 6 th	Theme 6 My body grows and changes p.81 Theme 7 The wonder of new life p.93 Theme 8 Caring for new life p.103 Theme 2 Different kinds of love p.141	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty. Reproductive system of male/female adults. Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a committed relationship.	Term 2 every year	RSE Manual p. 92,101,112,149 Busy Body Booklets and DVDS 