



SN Tulach Uí Chadhain

Relationships & Sexuality Education Policy

Introduction:

This policy was drafted by the staff and Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde, Tulach Uí Chadhain. Scoil Naomh Bríde is a mixed sex school in Ireland. The school has a Catholic ethos. There are three mainstream classrooms with multi-grade classes in each

Rationale

All schools are required to have an RSE policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including the sensitive aspects. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally.

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In particular, it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant to personal and social skills.

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.

SPHE:

- Is a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and is not confined to once off inputs or lessons.
- Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. RSE education should include input from all, and collaboration can be fostered through the teaching and delivery of materials.
- Is a generic approach. It is not so much about specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues
- Is based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements and individual school situations

- Is spiral in nature. RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in school, this will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity
- Engages children to be involved in activity-based learning. RSE should provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one's own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships.

Through SPHE and RSE, members of the school community should be enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through;

- A sense of identity
- A sense of purpose
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of security
- A sense of competence.

In an ever-changing world, RSE encourages children through consistent messages that are taught in line with SPHE. The school has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with. In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an intercultural society.

Current Provision

Current provision included in the School Curriculum:

- SPHE Lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- Use of RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Webwise resources
- Adapted resources for SEN from www.pdst.ie
- Religious Education

Aims of our RSE Programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- 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

- 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

Broad Objectives:

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum) enable the child to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-worth
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and wider contexts
- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our school

Curriculum Content

The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from infants to 6th class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level as laid out in the curriculum, and utilising the RSE manuals to complement their teaching.

Management of RSE:

- The strands Growing and Changing and Taking Care of my Body are covered in Year One of a 2-year SPHE plan
- The sensitive lessons are covered as part of these broad topics (as outlined below)
- Special arrangements exist for the delivery of the sensitive elements from 4th class up

- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. 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

Parental Involvement

- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme at enrollment.
- 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 invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any 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 filed.
- 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. eg. What they may hear on yard.

Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from infants to 6th class. RSE will be covered under the strand **Myself** in the strand units: **Taking Care of my body** and **Growing and Changing**.

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

1. The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE
 - Friendship
 - Self-identity
 - Family
 - Self-esteem
 - Growing Up

2. The second section will deal with any sensitive/specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are in **bold**.

<u>Topics covered up to 2nd include:</u>	<u>Topics from 3rd to 6th include:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping safe • Bodily changes from birth (bith-9) • Making age-appropriate choices • Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school community • Recognising and expressing feelings • Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep • Expressing opinions and listening to others • Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/Senior Infants) • Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily changes • Helathy eating, personal hygiene and exercise • Keeping safe • Expressing feelings • Appreciating thee variety of family types within our school and community and how these family relationships shape us • Making healthy and responsible decisions • Forming friendships • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (3rd, 4th class) • Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class) • Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6th class) • Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th and 6th class) • Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th class)

Sensitive content is taught as per 2-year SPHE plan. This is per the school's SPHE policy and can also be seen below:

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September/October	Self-Identity	Myself and my Family (Myself and Others)
November/December	My Friends and Other People (Myslef and Others)	Relating to others (Myself and Others)
January/February	Safety and Protection (Myself)	Growing and Changing (Myself)
March/April	Making Decisions (Myself)	Taking Care of my Body (Myself)
May/June	Media Education (Myself and the Wider World)	Developing Citizenship (Myself and the Wider World)

Approaches and Methodologies:

When implementing the programme, staff will endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times and the materials and approaches used will reflect the needs of the children.

The use of talk and discussion is an important approach in the teaching of SPHE. The main aim of talk and discussion is to create an atmosphere where children feel comfortable to ask important questions and that the relationship in these sessions is open, controlled and safe for all pupils. It is important that children feel able to ask questions and where possible teachers will endeavour to answer these. The following principles will apply:

- Children should not ask personal questions of the teacher
- A question box may be availed of by the children
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions asked
- Questions do not have to be answered straight away but a teacher may need to consider an appropriate response
- It may not be appropriate to answer some questions and in this case children 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 or needs to be communicated with home because of other reasons

If issues arise which might be seen to contravene Children First Guidelines, the teacher will notify the Designated Liaison Person in the school.

Assessment

Assessment in RSE is important to enable the teacher to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group. The teacher uses:

- Observation and questions to assess the children's engagement and interest
- Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games
- Use of reflection or learning log

Confidentiality

During RSE lessons often children may wish to connect and disclose personal or related stories and information. Teachers will establish ground rules for the sharing of information in relation to the topics covered in RSE. In all cases the school follows the Children First Guideline 2011 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011.

It should be noted that if a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues the school cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what was discussed.

Differentiation

Teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class. Sometimes the stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Adaptions to the way in which content is delivered will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/ guardians in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

Resources

Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it online/pdf format. Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:

- Stay Sfae Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls and Story books
- Busy Bodies DVD and Booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class component of RSE within the context of SPHE

Ratification and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 3rd March 2022 and will be reviewed every 2 years. The policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent's Association.

Signed _____



Date: 03/03/2022

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____



Date: 03/03/2022

School Principal