

Holy Trinity National School, Fethard.

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

This policy is being developed in 2017 by parents, staff members and the Board of Management and will be reviewed and amended in 2019. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education 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. (p. 5 NCCA curriculum and guidelines for RSE). RSE is the formal approach to educating children in:

- Relationships with others – parents, siblings, friends and the community in general
- Respect for themselves and others
- Physical development – bodily functions and changes, and personal hygiene
- Emotional development – maturing in society
- Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships
- Sexuality in context – part of a loving relationship.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. (p.5 'Going Forward Together' - Parents Information Booklet).

The key characteristics of this programme are that SPHE is a lifelong process and is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. The main strands of the SPHE programme are:

- Myself
- Myself and Others
- Myself and the Wider World

It is clear that the Relationships and Sexuality Programme is correctly defined as being an integral part of the programme outlined above. Sexually sensitive issues will be covered within the strand units:

- Taking care of my body - RSE
- Growing and changing - RSE
- Safety and protection – Stay Safe Programme – **Mandatory in all National Schools**

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child protection policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Internet Safety Policy
- Administration of Medicines Policy.

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies, we informally support 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 well being of all of the members of the school community.

Aims of our RSE programme

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum should enable the child to:

- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in 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, change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- Develop personal skills, which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop some coping strategies to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire and use an 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 Matters

The curriculum as published by the NCCA will be followed. All content objectives will be covered by the time each pupil leaves 6th class – (see Appendix A and B for further details). The curriculum will be taught from Infants to 6th class. It will be ideally be taught by the teaching staff.

- Growing and Changing and Taking Care of My Body (strand units in SPHE) will be taught to ALL classes across the school at the same time. This is to facilitate implementation and notification of parents/guardians so that they can communicate with all the children they may have in the school.
- Growing and Changing and Taking Care of My body will be taught in in January, February, March and April of every second year – 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024..
- If/When an outside speaker is used, the SPHE coordinator/principal will make them fully aware of school policy. Parents/guardians will be notified of the name of this speaker in advance of the lesson. The class teacher will remain with the class during the lesson.

Organisational Matters

- Prior to the teaching of lessons involving “sensitive issues”, parents will be informed by letter with an accompanying outline of the lesson (including vocabulary to be used)
- It is a parents/guardians right to withdraw a pupil from these lessons. This request for withdrawal must be made in writing and it must include a reason.
- The ‘Busy Bodies’ DVD will be sent home for parents/guardians to view with their child/children prior to the DVD being shown and discussed in class. This DVD has been developed by the HSE for parents/guardians and teachers and provides very useful and supportive information about the physical and emotional changes that your child will experience at puberty.
- If parents/guardians request the withdrawal of a child from RSE lessons, provision will be made for them to leave the classroom at that time. Supervision will be provided. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom. Should a child who is withdrawn from the sexually sensitive classes receive inappropriate information from others outside of these classes, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to address the issues.
- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have

- any concerns.
- Whole-School Code – red pen given to another teacher/Principal – a disclosure has been made and the class teacher needs to be relieved to talk to the child regarding the disclosure.

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 will not be discussed i.e. abortion, masturbation, contraception. Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. If any questions asked by the children are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents, 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

Parental Involvement

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children and as such the school supports them in this role. When RSE is being taught all parents/guardians of children in either 5th/6th class will be given the DVD 'Busy Bodies' to view together at home prior to viewing this DVD in school. This allows home and school to work together and ensures that parents/guardians are well informed of RSE content. **As stated parents/guardians will be given the option of withdrawing their child from a particular lesson(s) if they so wish.** 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. Parents/Guardians may access copies of the policy from the school office, or school website.

Resources

Lesson plans from the DES have been assessed and amended where necessary in line with this school policy. These lesson plans are available in the SPHE press for each class grouping. The resource materials for Relationship and Sexuality Education, the Stay safe programme, the Walk Tall Programme, Busy Bodies DVD and a selection of other appropriate resources will also be used. All resources are available for parents/guardians to view if they so request prior to the delivery of the lesson.

There is a very useful book called, 'Relationships and Sexuality Education – Going Forward Together: An introduction to RSE for Parents and Guardians' available online.

Provision for Ongoing Support

- Parents are welcome to view curriculum if they so wish.
- Funding will be sought for the provision of suitable materials when deemed necessary.
- Opportunities provided by our Education centre will be brought to the attention of staff members. Continued Professional Development will be sought for staff when required, or as requested .

Review

The staff, under the guidance of the Principal and SPHE Coordinator will review this policy every two years. This policy will also be reviewed should the need arise.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of Holy Trinity National School ratified this policy on 7th June 2017.

Signed: Mr. Robert Phelan, Chairperson, BOM

Date: 7/6/15

RSE - Sensitive Areas

Junior Infants:

New Life – mention of baby in the womb.

My Body – specific names for male and female sex organs – vagina, penis, breasts and the words public and private.

Senior Infants:

New Life – mention of baby in the womb.

My Body – specific names for male and female sex organs – vagina, penis, breasts and the words public and private.

First Class:

New Life – New baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord – mention breast feeding.

Second Class:

Birth of baby through vagina. Mention umbilical cord and breast feeding.

Third Class:

As for second class, but in more detail.

Fourth Class:

Language around baby's development in womb, i.e., fertilised egg, cord.

Pictures of fetuses (in RSE manual) to be used.

4th class girls - menstruation

Fifth and Sixth Classes:

Menstruation in the context of hygiene and growth from a girl to a woman.

Boys and girls development – puberty.

How does new life begin? (6th class only)

Biological facts as follows: (6th class only)

- What journey does the egg make?
- What journey does the sperm make?
- Where do they meet?
- What happens when they meet?
- Optional videos : Fifth class – Growing
- Sixth class – Busy Bodies.

RSE – Lesson Content – Sensitive Issues

Class	Lesson	Strand Unit	Language	Date	Home/School
Junior Infants Senior Infants	Theme 6 Caring for New Life pg. 137 Theme 7 My Body pg. 147	Growing and Changing Taking Care of my Body	Penis, Vagina, Breasts, Public, Private – use of appropriate anatomical terms	Term 2 every second year(2018, 2020,2022..)	RSE manual pg. 147 RSE manual pg. 156 (Home/School Links)
First Class Second Class	Theme 6 The Wonder of new Life pg. 59/151 Theme 7 How my Body Works pg. 67 When my body needs special care pg.161 Theme 8 Growing means changing pg. 77/171	Growing and Changing Taking Care of my body	As above Introduce womb, umbilical cord, breast feeding, urethra. Naming as above and identify some of the functions.	Term 2 every second year(2018, 2020,2022..)	RSE manual pg. 65, 160, 169
Third Class Fourth Class	Theme 6 Preparing for new Life pg. 69 Theme 6 from 4 th class The Wonder of new Life pg. 169 Theme 8 As I grow I change pg. 93 Theme 8 (girls in 4th only) Growing and Changing pg. 195	Growing and Changing Taking Care of my body	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 at this stage.	Term 2 every second year(2018, 2020,2022..) Girls in 4 th class, only every year, an introduction to changes with a particular focus on menstruation.	RSE manual pg.181
Fifth Class Sixth Class	Theme 6 My Body grows and changes pg.81 Theme7 The Wonder of New life pg. 93 Theme 8 Caring for new Life pg. 103 Theme 2 Different Kinds of Love pg. 141	Growing and Changing Taking Care of my body	Understand that changes occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty. Reproductive system of males and females. Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth with the context of a committed relationship.	Term 2 every second year(2018, 2020,2022..)	RSE manual pg. 92, 101, 112, 149 Busy Bodies DVDs and Booklets

