



# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy Statement

## **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE**

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh. RSE is mandatory at primary level. The content taught is informed by the programme outlined by the Department of Education and Science. The policy was disseminated amongst parents, teachers and members of the Board of Management for feedback and approval. The aim of the policy is to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE and how this material is taught in our school. Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes.

## **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh is a Catholic school and therefore all policies are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the ethos of the school. An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others, this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm. The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 provide protection against discrimination on nine grounds. The inclusive school prevents and combats discrimination. It is one that respects, values and accommodates diversity across all nine grounds in the equality legislation: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. It seeks positive experiences, a sense of belonging and outcomes for all students across the nine grounds. Outcomes include access, participation, personal development and achieving education credentials.

The ethos of the school is also characterised by the following:

- Sensitivity to the reality of our children's lives in a changing world
- Mutual respect between all partners in education
- Child-centred
- Aims to ensure each child reaches full potential in the holistic sense
- Hopes that children are equipped with high self-esteem to enable them to live happy and fulfilled lives
- Aims to teach the truths of human relationships and sexuality in a way that is child centred and supportive of parents as their child's first teacher.

## **DEFINITION OF RSE**

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. (p.4 Going Forward Together parents Information Booklet)

## **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. (p.5 NCCA interim curriculum and guidelines for RSE)

## **CURRENT PROVISION AND RESOURCES**

Available to support the SPHE/RSE curriculum:

- SPHE school plan
- Use of the RSE Manual and Busy Bodies DVD and booklet
- Social programmes: Zippy's Friends, Friendship Terrace, Fun Friends, Socially Speaking, Friends for Life, Assertiveness programme for 6<sup>th</sup> (Circle Time and 101 Games for Self-Esteem and Social Skills by Jenny Mosely in staff library)
- Mental Health programme 8-12 years: Weaving Well-Being Tools for Resilience
- Webwise, Think B4 you Click (6<sup>th</sup> only) (both are Anti-Cyber Bullying programmes)
- Stay Safe programme
- INTO poster and lesson plans "Different Families Same Love"
- Religious education through the Alive O programme (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>) and Grow in Love (Infants to 4<sup>th</sup> from Sept. 2017)
- Walk Tall
- Programme for conflict management: SALT
- Behaviour management: Incredible Years
- ASD Unit: "Stop Think Do "Social Skills training programme
- Bullying Posters
- Be Safe: Road, Fire and Water Safety
- Mindfulness: CD available on the LAN for visualisation, relaxation and meditation

## **AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME**

To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships

To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child

To promote and 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF RSE IN OUR SCHOOL**

### **CURRICULUM MATTERS:**

Curriculum content- The curriculum by the NCCA will be followed as published and will be taught from Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. All resources will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and will also be informed by the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 and the school's Child Protection Policy. The curriculum for RSE will follow a two-year model as outlined below. Each class teacher will be responsible for teaching the content for their class level. (see Organisational Matters)

Overview of content for SPHE with **Stay Safe** in **Jan/Feb**

### **For Junior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>**

**\*\*\* 5<sup>th</sup> class to do Puberty Talk at end of Stay Safe programme**

**(end of Feb – 2 lessons over a week)**

STRANDS	STRAND UNITS
Myself	Growing and Changing( <b>Sep</b> )
	Taking care of my body ( <b>Oct</b> )
	Self-Identity ( <b>Nov-Dec</b> )
	<b><u>Stay Safe (Jan-Feb)</u></b>
Myself and Others	Myself and my family ( <b>Mar -Apr</b> )
Myself and the Wider World	Developing Citizenship ( <b>May-June</b> )

Overview of content for SPHE with **RSE** in **Jan/Feb**

**For Senior Infants, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>**

STRANDS	STRAND UNITS
Myself	Safety and protection( <b>May</b> )
	Making Decisions ( <b>Mar-Apr</b> )
	<b><u>RSE (Jan-Feb)</u></b>
Myself and Others	My friends and other people ( <b>Sep-Oct</b> )
	Relating to others ( <b>Nov-Dec</b> )
Myself and the Wider World	Media Education ( <b>June</b> )

**Topics covered up to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class include:**

- Keeping safe
- Bodily changes during growth and birth (from birth to 9 months)
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life
- 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 identifying some of their functions (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>)

**Topics from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> include:**

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise, sleep
- Keeping Safe,
- Expressing Feelings
- Family Relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human body in the womb (4<sup>th</sup> class)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)
- Reproductive system of male and female adults (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)

- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship (6<sup>th</sup>)

### **ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS:**

- Children may be withdrawn on request from their parents. Parents must give notice in writing to the school principal that they are withdrawing their child. Parents will be asked to cover the appropriate topics with their children at home. Recognising that the Department of Education and Science does not allow a child to stay away from school while RSE is being taught the child will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom in the school.
- Any teacher has the right to opt-out of teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be taught to the children by another teacher.
- Teachers will be asked to sign at the end of each school year, confirming that they have taught the RSE curriculum to their class or that another teacher has covered the sensitive material on their behalf.
- Parents are to be informed in advance, regarding when formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme e.g. puberty, will be covered in school. (see sample letters in Appendix A and B)
- Parents are to be informed that the complete RSE/SPHE curriculum is available for them to view online at [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) (link: Primary/ Health and Wellbeing)
- Parents of children with special needs may be offered an opportunity to view the DVD Busy Bodies at home prior to the topics being covered in class.
- Parents have the responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content, to prepare their child for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas covered in RSE/SPHE
- Children will be encouraged to discuss the material being covered in class with their parents, guardians and **older** siblings. Where possible handouts, worksheets etc. will be provided to facilitate this.
- Teachers will encourage children to recognise that certain information is for them only i.e. that it is inappropriate for them to discuss information received about puberty, intercourse and birth with younger siblings, friends from outside school etc. It will be explained that other children will be given this information by their own parents and teachers when they reach the appropriate age.
- Children will also be taught to recognise that certain personal disclosures are inappropriate. Teachers will neither give nor request personal information. A respect for personal privacy will be emphasised. However, regarding accidental/deliberate disclosures of a confidential, private nature, the school cannot take responsibility for these occurrences in class or in the playground.
- Parents are requested to inform teachers of special family situations. These will be dealt with in confidence
- Students with General Learning Disabilities: The NCCA "Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities" contains comprehensive guidelines on teaching SPHE to students with mild general learning difficulties at primary and post-

primary, and to students with moderate and severe and profound general learning disabilities.

- Boys and girls will be taught RSE together
- Children's questions will be dealt with, considering the following criteria, when relevant
  - All questions will reflect the parameters of the curriculum
  - Certain topics will not be discussed i.e. abortion, masturbation, contraception
  - Homosexuality and transgender may be defined in the context of Homophobic Bullying (Stay Safe programme) and the INTO lesson plans based on "Different Families Same Love"
  - Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and school policy
  - Any questions asked by the children that are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents or will explain that this will be covered at second level
  -

\*\*\* There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils.

### **PROVISION FOR ONGOING SUPPORT**

The Board of Management will continue to facilitate provision of support for teachers and parents in the delivery of the RSE programme. This support may take the form of:

- Access to in-career development opportunities for teachers
- Access to educational opportunities organised by parents for parents through the school's Parents Association
- Access to relevant and up to date school resources for RSE

### **Link to other policy areas:**

#### **Child Protection Policy**

The school follows the DES child protection guidelines, teaches the Stay Safe programme and has a Child protection Policy with the Principal, Sinéad Flannery, as Designated Liaison person. In cases of disclosure, the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

#### **Review:**

This policy will be reviewed in 12 months and every two years thereafter. This policy will also be reviewed should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made to this policy.

#### **Date:**

May 2017

## **Appendix A**

Letter to parents re Stay Safe programme: generic letter suitable for all relevant classes i.e. Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>. (Stay Safe programme)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are planning to teach a personal safety education programme called Stay Safe over the next few weeks. The aim of the Stay Safe programme is to teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous.

It deals initially with common situations which most children will experience at some stage or other, e.g., getting lost or being bullied. The programme also teaches children the safety skills necessary to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse and emphasises the importance of telling a trusted adult about any problems they have.

The Stay Safe programme is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential to the success of this programme.

It is important that parents are aware of the content of the Stay Safe lessons and are able to discuss the lessons with their children. Your child may bring home worksheets which will inform you on the topics being covered in class and how you can reinforce the messages at home.

You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at [www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm](http://www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm). Please contact the school if you wish to discuss the programme further.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Class Teacher

## **Appendix B**

### **LETTERS FOR PARENTS INFORMING THEM THAT SENSITIVE AREAS ARE COVERED IN RSE:**

Junior Infants

2<sup>nd</sup> Class

4<sup>th</sup> Class

5<sup>th</sup> Class (puberty talk) 6<sup>th</sup> Class

#### **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Class**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, the students in 6<sup>th</sup> Class will learn about the human reproductive system.

These lessons will occur over the next couple of weeks. The lessons will be delivered by the class teacher.

There will also be a review of the lessons learned in 5<sup>th</sup> Class in relation to puberty, growth and hormone changes.

Parents can view the content of these lessons on [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) link: Health and Wellbeing/RSE/5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class

The children will view the DVD “Busy Bodies” If parents wish to order a free copy for themselves contact the Health Promotion Dept., HSE South, Eye Ear and Throat Hospital, Cork

Should you have any concerns, please contact myself or the deputy principal as soon as possible.

Le meas,

S. Flannery

Príomhoide

**Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

**5<sup>th</sup> Class**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, the students in 5<sup>th</sup> Class will learn about puberty, growth and hormone changes.

These lessons will occur over the next couple of weeks. The lessons will be delivered by the class teacher.

Parents can view the content of these lessons on [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) link: Health and Wellbeing/RSE/5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class

The children will view part of the DVD "Busy Bodies" The section on human reproduction will be covered in 6<sup>th</sup> Class. If parents wish to order a free copy for themselves contact the Health Promotion Dept., HSE South, Eye Ear and Throat Hospital, Cork

Should you have any concerns, please contact myself or the deputy principal as soon as possible.

Le meas,

S. Flannery

Príomhoide

**Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

**4<sup>th</sup> Class**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, the students in 4<sup>th</sup> Class will learn about the stages of development of the human baby from conception to birth. These lessons will sequence the development of the baby in the womb.

**They will not make any reference to how the mother becomes pregnant.** This information will be taught in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class.

These lessons will occur over the next week. The lessons will be delivered by the class teacher.

Parents can view the content of these lessons on [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) link: Health and Wellbeing/RSE/3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Class

Should you have any concerns, please contact myself or the deputy principal as soon as possible.

Le meas,

S. Flannery

Príomhoide

**Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Class**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, the students in 2<sup>nd</sup> Class will learn the names of the following body parts and identify their associated functions: vagina: opening where a baby leaves a mother's womb, penis: through which urine is passed (boy), urethra: through which urine is passed (girl), breasts: for feeding a baby, navel: where a baby was joined to its mother before being born.

These lessons will occur over the next week. The lessons will be delivered by the class teacher.

Parents can view the content of these lessons on [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) link: Health and Wellbeing/RSE/1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class

Should you have any concerns, please contact myself or the deputy principal as soon as possible.

Le meas,

S. Flannery

Príomhoide

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

## **Junior Infants**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, the students in Junior Infants will learn to name and identify the private parts of the male and female body: vagina, penis, bottom and breast.

The children will do a couple of lessons on bathing the baby, where an anatomically correct baby doll will be used (one boy and one girl) and these words will be introduced in a natural way.

The children will be taught that the private parts of their body are those that are covered by their swimsuit.

These lessons will occur over the next week. The lessons will be delivered by the class teacher.

Parents can view the content of these lessons on [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) link: Health and Wellbeing/RSE/Junior and Senior Infants

Should you have any concerns, please contact myself or the deputy principal as soon as possible.

Le meas,

S. Flannery

Príomhoide