

St Joseph's National School

Milltownpass

Roll No. 16304J

Whole School Plan for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Introductory Statement

This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in St. Joseph's National School, Milltownpass. It was developed in conjunction with the teaching staff of St. Joseph's, to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE.

Rationale / Vision for RSE

Education in St. Joseph's National School is characterised by care for the individual. The child's many needs are met in a well-structured environment where she/he can live fully the life of a child. While nourishing the child's young life, we hope to provide her/him with a solid foundation for future growth and development in a Christian tradition. The environment is such that the child is encouraged and stimulated to be confident, appreciate, independent and creative. The Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) programme will be implemented within this framework.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information

(a) RSE in the context of our SPHE programme

Throughout the school year, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to 6th class. A wide variety of topics is included on this

programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE forms a part of this programme; it is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years

(b) Current Provision

Included in the school curriculum is:

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Body resources
- Stay safe Programme / Walk Tall Programme
- Religious Education "Grow in Love"

Aims

The aims of RSE are:

- 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.

Broad Objectives of the RSE programme

The RSE programme should enable the child:

- To acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.

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

We support 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.

Policies which support SPHE / RSE

- Child Safety Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

Child Protection

This policy is cognisant of all aspects of our current Child Safety Statement. The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a Child Safety Statement with the Principal, Emer Bermingham as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Acting Deputy Principal, Emma Martin as the Deputy DLP. Where a child protection concern is raised, the procedures outlined in the schools Child Safety Statement will be followed.

Organisation and Curriculum Planning in RSE

(a) Curriculum Matters

· 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.

RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

STRAND:Myself

STRAND UNITS: Growing and changing / Taking care of my body

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.

Overview of content of RSE Programme

Topics covered up to 2nd class include the following: (Sensitive aspects are in bold)

- Keeping Safe · **Bodily changes from 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
- **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)**

Topics from 3rd to 6th include:

- **Bodily changes**
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- 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 (3rd/ 4th class)**
- **Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd/4th/5th/6th)**

Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (3rd/ 4th/5th and 6th 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.(Fifth and Sixth Class)**

2 Year Cycle Plan for SPHE in our school:

| YEAR : | SPHE Topics to be taught as a 2 year cycle | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 2019/2020; 2021/2022; 2023/2024; 2025/2026; 2027/2028 | RSE: Growing and Changing/ Taking Care of my Body (sensitive topics 3 rd term) | ZIPPY'S FRIENDS |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 2020/2021; 2022/2023; 2024/2025; 2026/2027; 2028/2029 | STAY SAFE (November) | WEAVING WELLBEING |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|

*This plan continues as above on a 2 year cycle

- Where an outside speaker is used, the class teacher will remain in the classroom, as per circular 42/2018. The speaker will be made aware of the school's RSE policy.
- The Stay Safe programme will be implemented throughout the school in line with our 2 year SPHE Cycle above.
- The class teachers will coordinate the teaching of Stay Safe every second year.

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school, therefore, is seen as one of support for the work of the home in this area.

The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account. Appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. The use of slang words will be discouraged.

Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner. The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class. Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme and they will be advised to talk with their parents. Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a questions is very inappropriate

It is our policy not to answer personal questions and to discourage disclosure of personal or family information .

Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the school will take account of parental concerns, and parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves

We invite an outside facilitator to work with our 6th classes for one day annually. The content of this programme is designed specifically for this age group. Parents are made aware of the content in advance and are asked for their consent in writing in order for their children to take part.

(b) Confidentiality

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child we will follow our Child Safety Statement. The Principal Pauline O'Hara is our Designated Liaison Person.

Differentiation

Teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class. Some techniques used:

- ensuring that objectives are realistic for the students
- ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups and spending more time on tasks
- organising the learning task into small stages and ensuring that the language used is pitched at the student's level of understanding
- understanding of the activity using task analysis, outlining the steps to be learned/completed in any given task, posing key questions to guide students through the different stages/processes, and to assist in self-direction and correction
- having short and varied tasks creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible every day materials, and by displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures. Sometimes the stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching
- group work and discussion
- higher and lower order questioning in groups
- moderated whole class discussions through use of a Question Box.

(c) Parental Involvement

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and resources if they wish.
- Contact will be made with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving the 'sensitive elements' of the RSE programme, in the form of contact by letter.
- Parents will be informed in advance when formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme and will be asked to discuss these issues with their child prior to the lessons in school.
- The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme acts as a support to

parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. This must be given *in writing to the principal* and will be centrally filed.

- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child might hear following on from the teaching of the lessons eg on the school yard.

Resources

- Relationships and Sexuality Education Manuals (DES). Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual.
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme
 - Anatomical Dolls
- 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 of ongoing support

- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members. Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE.
- In-school support from PDST was availed of in October 2019
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials.

Pupils with special Educational Needs

Adaptions to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with Special Educational Needs, as the need arises. Any different or specific objectives related to individual pupils' learning needs should be detailed in their IEP in consultation with parents/guardians.

Review

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

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Joseph’s National School at a meeting on:

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Principal