



RSE Policy

Roll No: 18377A

Principal: Geraldine Burke

Deputy Principal: Gary Flynn

Chairperson: Brian Shinnick

Introductory Statement

St Joseph's NS has a responsibility to put in place an R.S.E. policy as part of the wider, Social Personal & Health Education strand of the curriculum. This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St Joseph's National Schools. This policy was written during the school year 2020/2021 and is being reviewed by teachers Mike Flynn, Mary Manning, two representatives of the Board of Management and two parent representatives in September 2023. The purpose of the Policy is to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum.

School Philosophy

St Joseph's National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Cloyne. It is managed by a Board of Management, elected according to the procedures agreed by the Partners in Education. The school has a Catholic ethos and this ethos is a guiding principle in the formulation and implementation of this RSE Policy. This ethos recognises the value and dignity of each pupil and all those working in the school community, and aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person, including:

- a) relationship with God
- b) relationship with family
- c) relationship with teachers
- d) relationship with self
- e) relationship with others
- f) relationship with the environment.

This ethos also acknowledges the cultural and religious values of all the pupils attending the school. The school recognises that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we support them in that role.

In the area of RSE, above all, the schools' role is subsidiary to that of the parents. We support and compliment their work.

Definition of R.S.E.

“Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers,

peers, adults and the media. In Irish schools, RSE will provide structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. This approach gives opportunities to children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner. At primary level, RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and for others, and providing them with appropriate information”. (N.C.C.A. Policy Guidelines for R.S.E. 1997)

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, personal hygiene
- Emotional development – maturing in society
- Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships
- Sexuality in context - part of a loving relationship

Rationale:

The need for this policy arises from our school's obligation to provide for all the needs of the student body and respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues relating to emerging sexuality.

Relationship of R.S.E. to S.P.H.E. and Religion

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
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection.

The content of all lessons will be governed by the schools' Catholic ethos as taught in the Grow In Love Religion programme.

Curricular Content and School Provision

Aspects of RSE are taught using lessons and activities from the RSE programme, Stay Safe programme, Walk Tall programme, Busy Bodies (HSE) and Grow In Love.

Traditionally we have been a child-centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our planning and policy making processes. We have always, and will always continue to put the welfare of the children first.

Included in the school curriculum in St Joseph's National School is:

- Religious Education (Grow In Love)
- SPHE
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall
- Relationships & Sexuality Education Manuals

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Code of behaviour and discipline policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child protection policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- School Tour Policy
- School Visitors 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 wellbeing 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

Curriculum Strand and Strand Units:

Myself

- o Self identity
- o Taking care of my body
- o Growing and changing
- o Safety and protection

Myself and Others

- o Myself and family
- o My Friends and Other People
- o Relating to other people

Taking Care of My Body

- o Naming parts of the male and female body using appropriate terminology
(Junior and Lower Middle classes)
- o Identifying physical changes
- o Understanding puberty and the Reproductive System
(Senior Classes)

Growing and Changing

- o The stages of development of a baby from conception to birth
(Middle Classes)
- o Understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed loving
relationship
(Senior Classes)

Teachers will deal solely with topics which are on the curriculum. It is important to note that parents are children's primary educators in this area. It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area or RSE. However, this area is treated somewhat differently from other subjects due to its sensitive nature

St Joseph's NS - Two Year Plan For SPHE

SPHE strand units over a two-year period ensures pupils will have covered the entire curriculum relevant to their class grouping with a balanced offering from the three strands. It also ensures adequate time is allocated to each strand unit. RSE will be taught on a yearly rotation with The Stay Safe Programme. The Busy Bodies Programme will be taught every year for 5th and 6th class students.

See Appendix A for St Joseph's NS Two Year Plan

Dealing With Questions

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics will not be discussed i.e. abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, 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.

Differentiation

The age and stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies for differentiation can support gradual and appropriate learning. In School St Joseph's NS, teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the curricular objectives and content to best suit the needs of all pupils.

Methodology

Circle time is used extensively in Infants to build confidence and address fears. Boys and girls are taught together in all classes. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents.

The Stay Safe Programme

The Stay Safe programme is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. All aspects of the programme are revised in all classes. The Stay Safe programme is taught every second year.

The R.S.E. programme is taught in the years in which Stay Safe is not taught.

Topics covered in Junior Infants to 2 nd class include:

- Keeping safe.
- Naming body parts (including the private parts) using correct terminology.
- Bodily changes during growth and development.
- Making and keeping friends.
- Making age appropriate choices.
- Appreciating family life.
- Recognising and expressing feelings.
- Self care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep (link with P.E. Healthy Eating Policy and S.P.H.E.).
- Expressing opinions and listening to others.

Topics covered from 3 rd to 6 th Classes include:

- Bodily changes.
- Names of private body parts for girls and boys.
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise.
- Keeping safe.
- Expressing feelings.
- Family relationships.
- Making healthy and responsible decisions.
- Forming friendships.
- Reproduction, conception (5 th and 6 th classes).

Terminology used in each class level

It is important that children are given correct terminology for their body parts from an early age.

See Appendix B for Anatomical Terminology Guide for all class levels

Children with Special and Additional Needs

Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with special and additional educational needs. Both consultation with parents/guardians/carers in advance of lessons and the anticipation of the pupil's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful. This may be reflected in the student's support file.

Guidelines for Management

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school R.S.E. programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. If this is the wish of a parent they must inform the Principal of the school, in writing. Parents will be notified in advance when teaching of the R.S.E. programme is to begin. Parents will be directed to this policy which advises them on the content of and language used in each lesson. The curriculum content bands classes together in the following way; Junior and Senior Infants; First and Second class; Third and Fourth class; Fifth and Sixth class. Children are only introduced to concepts and topics appropriate to their class level. The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils.

The SPHE curriculum will underpin all teaching and learning of RSE in St Joseph's NS. The Wellbeing Policy Framework (2022) allows for 2.5 hours of allocated Wellbeing in the timetable for Infants and 3 hours weekly from 1st to 6th Class. Teachers will use their professional discernment to allocate the required and sufficient time to the teaching of SPHE. Teachers are encouraged to use an integrated approach for the delivery of SPHE. All resources used will be in keeping with this RSE policy and will take into consideration the sample criteria for choosing resources, as outlined in the SPHE Teacher Guidelines p.103.

Parental Involvement

In St Joseph's NS parents/guardians/carers will be informed at enrolment that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE curriculum. Parents/guardians/carers will be informed in advance of the teaching of the formal RSE lessons. This will offer parents/guardians/carers an opportunity to meet with relevant teachers to discuss/view the material that will be covered and share any personal details they feel the teacher should be aware of prior to their child engaging in RSE lessons. If they wish to withdraw their child from specific formal RSE lessons, and have notified the Principal in writing, alternative arrangements will be considered and agreed upon by the class teacher and parent. The school cannot accept responsibility for indirect RSE related information delivered to the child outside of formal RSE lessons i.e. on yard, walking home etc.

Confidentiality

St Joseph's NS follows the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017. If a child is withdrawn from specific RSE lessons, the school cannot guarantee that the withdrawn child will not hear the information from another source. Parents are invited to share any changes in circumstances with the school as necessary e.g. changes in family structures etc. For the welfare of some children, this information may be important for a teacher to know prior to engaging in specific topics on family/relationships etc.

Teacher Choice/Staff Development

The teacher's right to choose is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the programme or require additional resources, a suitable speaker will be employed by the B.O.M.

Pupil Voice

In our school the voice of our pupils is acknowledged, valued and respected. Children are given opportunities to reflect and feedback on SPHE/RSE provision via Student Council meetings and questionnaires. This information will be used to inform school improvement in relation to future RSE provision.

Evaluation

- Teacher observation
- Use of tasks such as worksheets
- Ensuring all strands are covered through the CuntasMíosúil
- Questioning

Provision of Ongoing Support

St Joseph's NS ensures the provision of ongoing support by the following:

- encouraging teachers to attend RSE CPD
- utilising staff meetings as a platform for discussion and development of RSE
- seeking the support from a PDST Advisor
- budgeting for the updating and development of RSE materials
- reviewing RSE policy on a regular basis
- ensure special education teachers have adequate training opportunities
- staff will reflect on information gathered from Student Council meetings and pupil questionnaires. This will be used to inform future developments regarding RSE.
- signposting staff to resources available from PDST and other sources

Review

St Joseph's NS will review this policy every three 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 read and discussed by the teachers; Mike Flynn, Mary Manning, two members of the Board of Management and two parent representatives at a meeting on Tuesday 19th of September 2023.



Brona Shinnick Chairperson 28/10/2023

Appendix ASPHE 2 Year Plan

Months	2023/2024	2024/2025
	Walk Tall Programme (J.I., 1 st , 3 rd , 5 th)	Walk Tall Programme (S.I., 2 nd , 4 th , 6 th)
September and October	Myself: Self Identity (Walk Tall)	Myself And Others: Relating To Others (Walk Tall)
November and December	Myself And Others: Myself And Other People (Walk Tall)	Myself And Others: My Friends And My Family (Walk Tall)
January and February	Myself: Stay Safe Programme (Stay Safe)	Myself: Growing And Changing (RSE)
March and April	Myself: Making Decisions (3 rd to 6 th) Safety And Protection (Infants to 2 nd) (Walk Tall)	Myself : Taking Care Of My Body (RSE)
May and June	Myself And The Wider World: Developing Citizenship (Walk Tall)	Myself And The Wider World: Media Education (Walk Tall)
	Myself: Growing And Changing Busy Bodies(5th and 6th)	Myself: Growing And Changing Busy Bodies (5 th and 6 th)

Appendix B

Strand /strand Unit	Content Objectives <i>Consult curriculum for complete objectives in Growing and Changing and Taking care of my body</i>	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book	Pages in Walk Tall	Supplimental resource
Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of new life and birth in the world • Develop an awareness of human birth • Taking care of my body • Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms <p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles • Taking care of my body • Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions 	womb breastfeeding penis vulva	New Life p68 My Body p147 Caring for new life p137 At the beach or swimming pool p.153	Our Amazing Bodies p94 (Senior Infants book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anatomic dolls • Picture book new baby • Visit of baby
Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles • Taking care of my body • Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions 	penis vulva vagina womb breastfeeding urethra	The Wonder of new life p59 /151 How my body works p67/ 161 Growing means changing p77/171 A Visit to the Doctor p.154	Our Amazing Bodies p37 (2 nd class book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture book going to the doctor • Tom's Poo • Books / articles • Life cycle: Birth and nature
Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body • Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal • Taking care of my body • Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth 	Revise above umbilical cord changes in puberty menstruation	Preparing for new life p69 The wonder of new life p169 As I grow and change p83 Growing and changing p195	As I grow I change p175 (3 rd class book) Changing and Growing p140 (4 th class book) The Wonder of New Life p.150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body System • Picture book Growing & Changing
Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship • Taking care of my body • Identify and discuss the physical changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone • Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults 	Revise above wet dreams <u>Busy Bodies</u> language semen sexual intercourse	My body grows and changes p81 The wonder of new life p92 Caring for new life p103 Different kinds of love p141	My Amazing body p345 (5 th class book) Creation p121 (5 th class book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busy Bodies • Power point • Question • Puberty C