

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

April 2020

This policy, in accordance with the provisions of the Child Care Act (1991), Education Act (1998), Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the revised 'Primary School Curriculum Guidelines' (1999), details the aims and the content of the agreed programme for the provision and the delivery of '*Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)*' in St Laurence's National School .

School Ethos

St Laurence's National School is a coeducational, vertical school from junior infants to sixth class. We see our school as an extension of the home, a place where children and staff work, play and pray together. The ethos of our school is Catholic and in this atmosphere the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social and physical growth of the children is nurtured. All the children in our care are encouraged to realise their maximum potential in all areas of development, to participate fully in the education they receive and to develop attitudes and beliefs consistent with our ethos. In this way we encourage our children to develop as complete human beings and citizens.

As a school community we value the importance of partnership between staff, parents, management and community, we strive to be open, welcoming and accepting to all. Our school plays an active part in developing a sense of community in Sallins. St Laurence's National School prides itself on being an environment that is warm, friendly, safe, supportive, inclusive and inviting. We strive to maintain this positive climate for the entire school community.

Definition of RSE and Relationship to SPHE

RSE is an integral part of the Social Personal Health Education curriculum. 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. The RSE programme aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. RSE also aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

Current Provision

- SPHE curriculum followed as per DES recommendations.
- Use of RSE Manuals, Walk Tall manuals, Busy Bodies booklets
- Religious Education taught through Grow in Love
- Teachers cover all aspects of RSE in its entirety every second year (see table below)
- Mandatory Stay Safe programme is taught in its entirety every second year (see table below)
- Guest Speakers

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September/October	Self-identity (Myself)	Myself and my family (Myself and others)
November/December	My friends and other people (Myself 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)

Aims of our RSE programme

- To develop skills which help to establish and sustain personal growth and identity
- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To foster an understanding of and healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To develop an awareness and acceptance of differing family patterns
- To acquire the appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- To promote knowledge of and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty
- To promote a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- To enable the child to feel comfortable with his/her sexuality and that of others
- To develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making

Policies which support RSE

These policies and curricular areas below support our teaching of the RSE programme

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Enrolment Policy/Admission Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

- Acceptable Use Policy
- PE curriculum
- SPHE curriculum
- Religion Programme – Grow In Love
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (Circular 0042/2018) - This supersedes SPHE Best Practice Guidelines 0022/2010

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

School

- The Curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published and will be taught in Infants to 6th class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level.
- As an introduction to the RSE programme, the children will be guided on the social etiquette of what is and is not appropriate to share within and outside the group. Children will also be taught to recognise that certain personal disclosures are inappropriate within a group setting.
- Children will be encouraged to discuss material being covered in class with their parents or guardians. Where possible handouts, worksheets etc. will be provided to facilitate this; eg. Home-School Links pages of the RSE manuals/Walk Tall manuals.
- In a class situation, children will be encouraged to recognise that certain information is for them only i.e. that it may be 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 it is developmentally appropriate for them to receive it. However, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed outside of the school or on the yard.
- A respect for personal privacy and information will be emphasised. Teachers will neither give nor request personal information.
- Teachers must inform parents in advance of the programme content. (*See Sample letter in the Walk Tall manual – bring to the office for typing*) They will specifically be informed in advance of the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme eg. Puberty, sexual intercourse.
- School procedure for RSE abstention – child has work to complete and temporarily goes to another class.

Parents

- 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 these classes.
- Parents are to be informed in advance of the programme content. They will specifically be informed in advance of the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme eg. puberty, sexual intercourse.
- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and materials being used in the teaching of RSE.

- Parents have the responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content, to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and to discuss areas covered in school in RSE/ SPHE with their children.
- If a parent has a particular concern/ issue in relation to the teachings of the RSE programme, they are encouraged to discuss same with the teacher or the Principal.
- Parents are requested to inform teachers of special family situations. These will be dealt with in confidence. It is the experience of the teachers that it is to everyone's benefit if they are kept informed.
- Should a parent decide to withdraw their child from RSE lessons in school, they will be asked to put this in writing with reasons for doing so. They will also be asked to include a statement stipulating that they will take full responsibility to teach RSE to their child instead.
- School procedure for RSE abstention – child has work to complete and temporarily goes to another class.

Topics covered up to 2 nd Class include	Topics covered up to 6 th Class include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Safe • Bodily changes during growth and birth • Making age appropriate choices • Appreciating family life • Recognising and expressing feelings • Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep • Expressing opinions and listening to others • <i>Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/ Senior Infants)</i> *See Appendix 1 for details • <i>Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/ 2nd)</i> *See Appendix 1 for details • The 5 topics of the Stay Safe programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily changes • Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise • Keeping Safe • Expressing feelings • Family relationships- Same Love/ Different Families (INTO Resource) • Making healthy and responsible decisions • Forming friendships • The 5 topics of the Stay Safe programme • <i>Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (Fourth class)</i> • <i>Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (Fourth class)</i> • <i>Reproductive system of male/female adults (Fifth & Sixth Class)</i>*See Appendix 1 for details • <i>Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving, committed relationship. (Sixth Class)</i>*See Appendix 1 for details <p>Sensitive issues are in italics above</p>

Dealing with Questions

- Teachers will not ask or answer questions of a sensitive personal nature
- Teachers need to be mindful of their reaction to questions
- A question box may be used throughout lessons where appropriate
- Questions do not have to be answered straight away as a teacher may need to consult further
- Specific language and concepts of sensitive areas for each class level are set in line with the SPHE curriculum and school ethos. *See Appendix 1
- Children's questions will be dealt with, taking into account the following:
 - Awareness of circumstances in which the question has arisen
 - Clarifying what information is required
 - Giving a developmentally or age- appropriate answer
 - Deferring the question as one which will be answered in the next lesson, one which should be answered at home or one which will be answered more fully in the future
 - Teacher may exercise discretion to contact parents following a concern or question raised by the child

Students with SEN

- Taking into account student's cognitive, social and emotional development and their class level, instruction on the sensitive aspects of RSE, will be based on individual needs and decided together by parents, mainstream teachers and support teachers. The support teachers, where necessary, will aid the mainstream teacher with the facilitation of appropriate and agreed RSE provision for the child with SEN. Careful consideration will be given to the NCCA Guidelines for Moderate, Severe and Profound General Learning Disabilities for RSE provision.
- There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils.

Child Protection: The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a Child Safeguarding Statement with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure, the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First Guidelines and Procedures 2017.

Review

This policy will be reviewed as required. Updated policies will be made on the school website and available at reception.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 24th June 2020 .

Signed: Breda Fay

Date: 24/06/2020

Chairperson

Appendix 1: Class	Strand/Strand Unit	Content Objectives (consult curriculum for objectives in Growing and changing and Taking care of my body)	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book for sensitive objectives	Pages in Walk Tall for sensitive objectives	Supplementary Resources
Junior/Senior Infants	Myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and changing • Taking care of my body 	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of new life and birth in the world • Develop an awareness of human birth • Identify what babies need to help them grow and develop Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms 	penis vulva womb breast breastfeeding	New Life pg. 68 My Body pg. 147 Caring for new life pg. 137 Giving a Doll a Bath pg. 150 At the beach or swimming pool pg. 153	Our Amazing Bodies pg. 94 (Senior Infants book)	Anatomically correct dolls Picture books of new baby Visit of baby to class PDST website
First/Second Class	Myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and changing • Taking care of my body 	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of a life cycle • Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for newborn babies in both the animal and human world Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions 	penis vulva womb breast breastfeeding vagina urethra	The Wonder of New Life pg. 59/151 How my body works pg 67/161 Our Senses pg. 70 Growing means changing pg 77/171	Our Amazing Bodies pg. 37 (2 nd class book)	Picture books of going to the doctors Tom's Power Flower Books/activities on Life cycles Birth and new life in nature PDST website

Appendix 1: Class	Strand/ Strand Unit	Content Objectives (consult curriculum for complete objectives in Growing and changing and Taking care of my body)	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book for sensitive objectives	Pages in Walk Tall for sensitive objectives	Supplementary Resources
Third/Fourth Class	Myself Growing and changing	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by 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	Preparing for new life pg. 69 The wonder of new life pg. 169 As I grow I change pg. 93 Growing and changing pg. 195	As I grow I change pg 175 (3 rd class book) Changing and Growing pg. 140 (4 th class book)	Body Systems Picture books on growing and changing PDST website
	Taking care of my body	Taking care of my body <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 	changes in puberty menstruation			
Fifth/Sixth Class	Myself Growing and changing	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a committed, loving relationship • Identify and discuss the changes that are experienced in growing from child to adult • Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent 	Revise above wet dreams	My body grows and changes pg. 81 The wonders of new life pg. 92 Caring for new life pg. 103 Different kinds of love pg. 141	My Amazing Body pg. 345 (5 th class book) Creation pg. 121 (6 th class book)	Powerpoint recaps Question Box Puberty Quiz Busy body book – www.healthpromotion.ie PDST website
	Taking care of my body	Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	Busy Bodies language semem sexual intercourse period			

