



## **Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Scoil an Chlochair Kilbeggan. It was initially developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE and was ratified by the BOM in 2012. This policy was reviewed between May and June 2021 following DES guidelines.

### **School Philosophy**

We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to each other in a positive way. The curriculum also encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and the wider community. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that we value respect, tolerance and openness through the lived experience of the children and school community.

Parents have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting our school and children to develop into healthy young adults.

### **Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education**

The following definition was taken from the DES Guidelines:

*“Relationships and Sexuality Education seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework”.*

### **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. As the children progress through the SPHE Programme they will encounter a wide range of issues including relationships and sexuality. The programme ensures that these issues are not explored in isolation; rather the emphasis is on building a foundation of skills, values, attitudes and understanding relevant to all these issues, with specific information provided where necessary.

### **Child Protection**

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

### **Aims and Objectives of RSE Programme**

- To foster self-confidence and a positive sense of self-esteem in children.
- 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.
- Develop a sense of personal responsibility and come to understand his/her sexuality and the process of growth, development and reproduction.
- Create and maintain supportive relationships both now and in the future.
- Develop an understanding of healthy living.
- Develop a sense of safety and an ability to protect himself/ herself from danger and abuse.
- Become aware of and discerning about the various influences on choices and decisions.

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- Develop some of the skills and abilities necessary for participating fully in groups and in society.
- Promote the values of a just and caring society in an age appropriate manner and understanding the importance of seeking truth and peace.

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.

### **What the School Provides/ Content**

All of the Relationship and Sexuality content will be taught in the context of our SPHE curriculum, particularly in the units **Taking care of the body** and **Growing and Changing**, as outlined below:

#### **Junior and Senior Infants**

##### **Strand:**

Taking Care of My Body

Growing and Changing

Safety and Protection

##### **Strand Unit:**

*Knowing about my Body*

*Name the parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms*

*New Life*

*become aware of new life and birth in the world.  
new growth in the springtime baby animals being born*

*develop an awareness of human birth*

*that the baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born*

*Personal Safety*

*Identify situations and places that are safe. Those where personal safety might be at risk.*

*feeling unsafe with people, being asked to keep a*

*difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes*

*him/her feel uncomfortable).*

#### **First and Second Class**

##### **Strand:**

Taking Care of my Body

##### **Strand Unit:**

*Knowing about my body*

*Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions.*

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Growing and Changing

New Life

Safety and Protection

Begin to understand that reproduction, both life growth and death are all part of the life cycle.  
Personal Safety *recognise and explore situations where children feel safe and those where safety might be at risk*  
*Being with people who make me feel unsafe*  
Inappropriate or unsafe touches, being asked to keep a difficult secret

**Third and Fourth Class**

**Strand:**

Taking Care of my Body

**Strand Unit:**

Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body

Growing and Changing

Growing height and weight and increasing strength

Growing from a boy to a man, a girl to a woman

Birth and new life

Discuss the changes and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth

Identify the care needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born

Develop an appreciation of the wonder of new born baby

Safety and Protection

Personal Safety

Identify people, places and situations that may threaten personal safety

Being touched inappropriately

Being asked to keep difficult secrets

**Fifth and Sixth Class**

**Strand:**

Taking Care of my Body

**Strand Unit:**

Knowing about my body

Identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these changes take place at different rates for everybody

Female: hormonal changes changing body shape, development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, underarm hair

Male: breaking of the voice, beginning of sperm production, onset of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams), appearance of pubic and underarm hair, facial hair

Understand the reproductive system of both the male and female adults

Growing and Changing

Birth and new life

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Safety and Protection	Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed relationship such as marriage
	Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent
	Personal Safety
	Identify situations and places that may threaten personal safety
	Being asked to keep a difficult secret
	Recognising inappropriate or unsafe touches
	Being with people that make me feel unsafe

### **7. Sensitive Areas**

The current teaching staff of the school views the following aspects of the S.P.H.E. Curriculum to be of a **sensitive** nature: -

Junior/Senior Class	name parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms
First/Second Class	name parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions
Third/Fourth Class	discuss the stage and sequence of the development of the human baby in the womb
Fifth/Sixth Class	changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty. Reproductive system of male/female adults, understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship, such as marriage

It will be left to the discretion of the principal and class teachers to modify the above content to meet the needs of pupils with special educational requirements.

### **Organisation & Management of the R.S.E. Policy in the School**

1. Parents are the primary educators and the school has a role to play in supporting and complementing the work of the home.
2. A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of this decision in writing.
3. Teacher's right to opt out of teaching sensitive issues will be honoured.
4. If no member of staff is available to teach sensitive issues, it is left to the discretion of the principal and class teacher to arrange for the education to be made available. A suitable guest speaker may be invited in to deliver the contents of the programme to

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- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class. All information delivered will be within the S.P.H.E. Curriculum (programme as set down by the NCCA. And DES guidelines.)
5. All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave 6<sup>th</sup> class.
  6. Should a pupil require information that is not in line with the curriculum content and considered not to be age appropriate for the general body of pupils the school will acknowledge the child's request but will direct the child to address this question at home.
  7. An outline of the lessons will be made available to the parents before the commencement of the programme and the parents will be informed beforehand when these issues will be dealt with.
  8. In relations to reporting child abuse the Child Protection Guidelines will be followed.
  9. Where an outside speaker is used, the class teacher will remain in the classroom, as per circular 22/2010. The speaker will be made aware of the school's RSE policy.
  10. The Stay Safe programme will be implemented throughout the school.
  11. The class teachers will coordinate the teaching of Stay Safe during the school year
  12. Parents have a responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE. Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.
  12. In the class situation children will be encouraged to recognise that certain information is for them only and it would be inappropriate to discuss this with younger siblings/children for example.
  13. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom.
  14. If a Teacher has concerns about teaching the sensitive elements in RSE they should consult with the Principal. Any teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive elements of RSE. It is the responsibility of the B.O.M. to ensure content is covered by another teacher or an outside speaker.
  15. Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

### **Dealing with Questions**

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE. All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics are **not** in the primary RSE/SPHE programme and will not be discussed i.e.: abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception etc.

Questions to the teacher/ external facilitator may be oral or written within the group setting and answered within boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. If any questions asked by children are deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher/ external facilitator will refer the child to their parents/guardians, or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum, or in post-primary school. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the

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school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom outside of the RSE lesson.

The following considerations will be made when responding to children's questions:

- Awareness of circumstances in which the question has arisen
- Clarification of what information is required
- Determination of whether the question is appropriate or relevant/who it is relevant to
- Provision of an age appropriate answer
- Deferral of the question to be answered at home or in the future

### **8.3 Parental Involvement**

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and resources if they wish.
- Regular contact will be made with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving the 'sensitive elements' of the RSE programme, in the form of the RSE manual home/school links pages or contact by letter etc.
- 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. (*Letter in appendix*)
- 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.

### **8.4 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

### **8.5 Policies which support SPHE/ RSE**

Child Safeguarding Policy Statement and Risk Assessment

Code of Behaviour

Anti-Bullying Policy

Admission Policy

Healthy Eating Policy

ICT and Acceptable Use Policy

### **9. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner should the need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

### **10. Resources**

- Relationships and Sexuality Education Manuals (DES). Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual. ([www.psdtd.ie](http://www.psdtd.ie))
- Stay Safe programme ([www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie))

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- Stay Safe programme ([www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie))
- Walk Tall Programme.
- Busy Bodies DVD and booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class component of RSE within the context of SPHE. It is available for download at [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)
- All resources are available for parents/guardians to view if they so request prior to the delivery of the lesson.

#### 10. 1 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. Application for in-school support from PDST will be sought when necessary. Staff meetings will be utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials.

Meeting for Parents

Resources such as books and DVD/ Video and the following websites: -

[www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

[www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)

#### 10. 2 Agreed language to be used at each class

Class Level	Language
Junior and Senior Infants	Penis/Vagina or Vulva Naming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms
First and Second	As above: introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra. Naming as above and identify some of the functions.
Third and Fourth	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.
Fifth and Sixth	Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty. Reproductive system of male/female adults. Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a committed relationship

  
Geraldine Tennell  
Chairperson B.O.M.

09-07-21

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27-05-2019

Dear Parent,

In our class we have been working on the Stay Safe Programme over the last 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.

Our class has now arrived at the sensitive lessons regarding **Touches and Secrets and Telling**. In these lessons your child will be learning the correct anatomical names for parts of the body – i.e. penis, vagina and breast which are taught from infant level upwards in the revised Stay Safe Programme. Additionally the lessons describe situations in which a child might find himself or herself and how they should handle such a situation.

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). Additionally you can follow the links to all of the lessons at our school website [www.kilbeggannationalschool.com](http://www.kilbeggannationalschool.com).

Parents/guardians have the right to opt their child/children out of any of the sensitive aspects of the SPHE programme, including Stay Safe, if you so wish. Please contact the school by phone if you wish to do this or discuss the programme further.

The lesson for \_\_\_\_\_ class will take place at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Thank you for your co-operation,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Class Teacher

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