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Relationships and Sexual Education Policy

Introductory Statement and Rationale

All schools are required to have an RSE policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including the sensitive aspects. It is policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). This policy was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally.

School Philosophy

Glasnevin Educate Together National School recognises 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 build positive relationships with others. 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 wider community.

Our school values and celebrates the individuality and uniqueness of everyone in our school community. We include and encourage everyone, working together to ensure everyone has an equal chance, and a voice.

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 RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral and social framework. In particular, it addresses the

meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant to personal and social skills.

RSE in the context of our SPHE programme

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.

SPHE:

- Is a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and is not confined to once off inputs or lessons.
- Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. RSE education should include an input from all, and collaboration can be fostered through the teaching and delivery of materials.
- Is a generic approach. It is not so much about the specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues.
- Is based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements and individual school situation.
- Is spiral in nature; RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in school, this will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity.
- Engages children to be involved in activity-based learning. RSE should provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one's own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships.

Through SPHE and RSE, members of the school community should be enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through;

- A sense of identity
- A sense of purpose
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of security
- A sense of competence

In an ever-changing world, RSE encourages children through consistent messages that are taught in line with SPHE. The school has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with (SPHE Teacher guidelines, p.25). In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a

sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an intercultural society.

Current Provisions & Resources Included in the School Curriculum:

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Body resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Webwise resources
- Learn Together Programme
- Social programmes: Rainbows, Reading Recovery
- Restorative Practice
- Welcome to Wellbeing/Weaving Wellbeing

Aims of our RSE programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to relationships.
- 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.
- 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.
- That the child be able to identify external parts of the male and female body.
- That the child is able to articulate fluently information about themselves, their thoughts, ideas, feelings and attitudes.
- To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.
- To develop an awareness of differing family patterns.

Broad Objectives

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum, in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum, should enable the child to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others

- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth
- 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 and change, and to understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity.
- Develop personal skills which will help them 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 in the child a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Policies that support SPHE/RSE

- AEN/Inclusion Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- GDPR policy

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School:

Our school follows a two-year plan for SPHE.

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 each year as laid out in the curriculum and utilising the RSE manuals to complement their teaching.

RSE, which largely looks at the development of relationships, is interwoven through all strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum. The more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered under the strand '*Myself*' and strand units '*Growing and changing*' and '*Taking care of my body*'.

Teachers will refer to the *Making the Links* resource to support their planning for the delivery of these strand units.

Management of RSE

- Currently RSE is taught every year in Term 3 in all classes. From September 2024 RSE and the Stay Safe Programme will be taught in alternate years. This is a decision made with the whole staff to allow teachers enough time to cover each topic in depth with pupils. As part of our two-year SPHE planning, the sensitive objectives in RSE will be taught in the opposite year to Safety and protection and the Stay Safe programme.
- This will mean that RSE is taught in Term 2 in Senior Infants, 2nd Class, 4th Class & 6th Class.
- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of the children with AEN 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, where appropriate.

Parental Involvement

- In SPHE and RSE parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school will work in partnership in a supportive role. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme at enrolment (see Appendix 1).
- Parents are welcome to ask teachers for more information about sensitive issues being taught if they so wish.
- Parents must give notice in writing to the school principal that they are withdrawing their child & this will be centrally filed. 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.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons. Eg. What they may hear on yard.

Approaches and Methodologies

When implementing the programme, staff at GETNS will endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times. The curriculum will be

taught from Junior Infants to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum. The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.

The RSE curriculum will be taught through:

- Stories and poems
- Classroom discussion
- Group work
- Games
- Art activities
- Reflection
- Circle time
- Guest speaker (e.g. to deliver an internet safety workshop. The class teacher will stay in the room at all times in accordance with Circular 22/2010)

Differentiation

Teachers use assessment and professional judgement 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 the use of a Question Box

Pupils with Additional Educational Needs

Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with Additional Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/guardians in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

- Teachers will endeavour to:
 - Anticipate the learning needs of children with additional education needs and plan in conjunction with the AET team and parents
 - Consider skill development – support documents available in NCSE
 - Use specialised resources & methodologies eg. PECS, social stories, concrete materials
 - Use additional resources, where deemed appropriate such as
 - [RELATIONSHIPS and SEXUALITY EDUCATION \(RSE\)](#)
 - [SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE LIST](#)
 - [Teaching children with special educational needs about the concepts of 'public' and 'private'](#)
 - [Considerations for teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education to children with special educational needs](#)
- Children may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work
- Children may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material
- Any specific objectives related to the pupils own learning needs should be detailed in their IEP or SSP in consultation with parents/ guardians

Language

SPHE curriculum provides a context in which children are given opportunities to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to SPHE. Children should become aware of the power and influence of language. When used positively, language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner can hurt, diminish and demean. Children need to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationship and their everyday interactions. Language is a powerful tool and should be used with respect and integrity for the dignity of each person. There are two areas where the use of language is applied in RSE lessons;

- The formal use and teaching of language generally throughout the school
- The use of language in discussion through your formal RSE lessons
- Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching
- Relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used, the use of slang will be discouraged
- Anatomical terms and language introduced is consistent with RSE Materials Books.

Questions

Some principles that are used when fostering discussion and questioning:

- No personal questions of the teacher
- The Question Box will be availed of by the children

- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions
- Questions do not have to be answered straight away

During the delivery of each section of the sensitive lessons, a question box may be used in middle/senior classes where appropriate. Children will be encouraged to place their questions in a question box in the classroom. These questions will then be monitored and screened with the teacher answering the questions at a later time taking into account the following;

- Questions arising from the 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 question is very inappropriate or needs to be communicated with home because of other reasons
- No personal questions will be answered and children will be reminded not to share personal information about their families or others- but can share with teacher after the lessons.

If issues arise which might be seen to contravene Children First Guidelines, the teacher will notify the Designated Liaison Person in the school.

Assessment

Assessment in RSE is important to enable the teacher to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group.

The teacher may use;

- Observation and questions to assess the children's engagement and interest
- Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games
- Use of reflection or learning log

Confidentiality

- The school follows Children First Guidelines 2011 and The Child Safeguarding Procedures for Primary Schools
- If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues, we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what happened.

Resources

Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials (DES)- Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it in online/ pdf format. Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:

- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls and story books
- Busy Bodies [booklet, videos](#) and [workbook](#) (5-6th)
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster
- [RESPECT Guidelines](#)
- Learn Together Ethical Education curriculum
- Weaving Well-being programme

Teachers should look at the checklist on p.103 of [SPHE teacher guidelines](#) when choosing appropriate teaching resources

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
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials
- Promotion and communication of resources available from www.pdst.ie

Ratification and 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 policy was ratified by the Board of Management on...

This policy was ratified by the BoM on 17/04/2024



Chairperson to Board of Management



Secretary to Board of Management

Appendix 1 – [online version here](#)

Class	Strand /strand Unit	Content Objectives <i>Consult curriculum for complete objectives in <u>Growing and changing</u> and <u>Taking care of my body</u></i>	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book	Pages in Walk Tall	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 Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms 	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"> Anatomically correct dolls Picture books of new baby Visit of baby to class
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 new life cycles Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.164	Our Amazing Bodies p37 (2 nd class book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picture books of going to the doctors Tom's Power Flower Books / activities on Life cycles Birth and new life in nature
Third/ Fourth 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"> 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 p93 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 Systems Picture books on Growing and Changing
Fifth/ Sixth 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"> Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship 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 	Revise above wet dreams <u>Busy Bodies language</u> 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 (6 th class book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Busy Bodies Power points recap Question Box Puberty Quiz