

Ballynacally National School Policy

on

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Introductory Statement

Social Personal and Health Education

(SPHE) is a lifelong process and as such begins before the child comes to school. In this school we will provide a foundation that will inform the child's actions and decisions and provide a basis for further development. In this context parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school will work in a supportive role.

Definition of R.S.E.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). It addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant personal and social skills and aspects of parenting.

Relationships and Sexuality Education R.S.E. is a programme to help children to learn at home and at school about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work is based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents, school board members and other interested persons on the provision of effective teaching in our school. It also fulfils our obligations under the Education Act 1998, Dept of Education's Primary School Curriculum 1999 in-service training attended by Staff and most recently – 'Guidelines on Relationships and Sexuality Education', February 2015, as issued by the Diocese of Killaloe /Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference.

The Aims of our RSE Programme

In partnership with the home our aims are:

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- 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.

These are the overall aims of the programme to be met in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children.

Broad Objectives

- To acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- 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 a variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self identity
- Develop some coping strategies to protect self 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 lifestyle and decision making
- To ensure that the child is able to identify external parts of the male and female body by end of Sixth Class.
- To provide the child with age-appropriate information about human love and human sexuality.
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction (6th Class only).
- To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well being of others

Implementation Issues

Student Maturity:

Material will not be taught to students unless they have reached the relevant level of emotional and intellectual maturity.

Answering Questions:

Should a pupil require information that is not in line with the curriculum content and not considered to be age-appropriate for the general body of pupils, the school will refer pupil to his/her parents. In some classes teachers may let a parent know that this question has arisen.

Controversial / Sensitive issues that may arise:

Controversial or sensitive issues that may arise formally or informally will be referred to, or dealt with by parents.

Language

Proper terminology will be used in the school from the onset of the R.S.E. programme throughout the whole school.

Once the use of this language becomes the norm, taboos in relation to correct terminology for body parts should soon be forgotten. If a boy is hit on the penis the boy involved should be comfortable explaining his injury. It is hoped that use of the correct language will heighten children's respect for and awareness of others.

Sexual intercourse

This topic will be presented in a non-judgemental way. It will be introduced at the formal talk delivered by an invited guest speaker to Sixth Class pupils, accompanied by a parent/guardian. Sexual intercourse will be introduced as a loving act between a man and a woman who are in a loving, stable relationship where they are committed to each other and share common views.

Birth

The process of birth will normally be introduced in Third Class but this will depend on the class groupings within the particular classroom.

Facts of Life and Menstruation

These topics will be introduced formally to pupils in Sixth Class. A guest teacher will cover this topic. It is hoped that parents will play the most important role in the introduction of this topic to their children.

Depending on circumstances and our perceived maturity of pupils in 4th class, a female teaching-staff member will have a brief talk with 4th class girls in private about menstruation and how to dispose of sanitary towels when at school. This approach serves to allay any fears female pupils and parents may have around these matters. To support and facilitate this, parents of female pupils entering puberty might inform pupils' class teacher / female member of teaching staff in confidence, if appropriate and desired by parent.

Privacy

Everyone has a right to privacy (see Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child). Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature which they do not wish to share.

Content

Within a school, RSE will form an integral part of a wider programme, covering several core subject areas, which will be encompassed in the SPHE programme as Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of SPHE.

S.P.H.E.

The lessons related to R.S.E. can be found in the following strands and strand units:

Myself - self-identity, taking care of my body, growing and changing, safety and protection.

Myself and others – myself and my family, my friends and other people, relating to others.

Myself and the wider world – Developing citizenship, media education.

It is our policy to adopt a 2 year cycle in regard to:

Year A: The Stay Safe Programme

Year B: Relationships & Sexuality Education

The following is the exact terminology which pupils will be taught in each class during the Year B cycle. It is strongly recommended that parents ensure that their child is familiar with these terms prior to formal instruction in class. This is in line with guiding documents referred to earlier in this policy document. A copy of these terms will be sent to each household by the teacher prior to class work. This is for the purpose of alerting parents to our intentions and will give parents, who have not yet spoken to their child about these matters, time to do so in advance.

R.S.E. Content

Class	SPHE Strand	R.S.E. Resource Material Book	Language
Junior & Senior Infants	Taking care of my Body	My Body pg 48	Penis, vagina, womb informally
First & Second Class	Taking care of my Body	When my Body needs Special Care Theme 7	Penis, vagina and womb informally
Third & Fourth Class	Growing & Changing	Growing and Changing pg 195	Fertilised egg, sac, menstruation, period, breasts, hormones
Fifth & Sixth Class	Taking Care of my Body; Growing and Changing	Feeling and Emotions pg 69 & pg 175; My Body Grows & Changes pg 81 & pg 183 ; The Wonder of Life pg 93; Caring for New Life pg 103; A Baby is a Miracle pg 209; Different Kinds of Love pg 141.	Ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, sperm, bladder, scrotum, testes, testosterone, penis, ejaculation, semen, erect, nocturnal emissions, conception, ova, ovum, sexual intercourse.

For practical purposes, the successful implementation of our programme is more likely if pupils aren't learning terms for the first time at school. This underpins the school's role in supporting parents in their role as the child's primary educator and not the school adopting the role as substitute.

The general consensus is that a parent who neglects to address this aspect of their own child's development in advance of our work may be compromising her / his capacity to interact maturely with this material / information in the school setting with peers.

Parents of pupils in 6th class are invited to attend a meeting with their child where they will receive full instruction on human sexuality, in line with our school's ethos. Typically 6th class pupils and parents from the four schools in this parish attend this talk where pupils receive age-appropriate information and have an opportunity to ask questions in order to eliminate any confusion s/he may be experiencing at this time of change in their young lives. As suggested earlier, parents might ensure before attending, that pupils are not hearing the information for the first time.

To supplement our work in Relationships and Sexuality Education, during the second cycle, Year B, we offer pupils and parents from our own school support with Social Media Skills.

The use of Social Media today can expose pupils to dangerous, inappropriate material and risks which parents do not fully understand and appreciate.

Mr Pat McKenna of Childwatch.ie attends our school every second year to inform us on how to interact safely with Social Media. Please see our policy documents on acceptable use of Social Media at school and Anti-Bullying policy for supporting material / strategies.

Stay Safe Programme:

This programme deals with many of the issues developed upon in the RSE syllabus, namely the development of Self-Esteem, My Body and Self-Protection.

The Stay Safe Programme integrates all strands and most strand units of the SPHE curriculum.

The Stay Safe Programme lists the content objectives that will be addressed in discrete time for the sensitive areas.

The content objectives reflect the ethos of the school

Parents must inform the school, in writing, that they wish to withdraw their child from specific lessons. *Parents are then obliged to teach the content of the lessons to their children.*

Each Stay Safe booklet contains lessons on:-

Safe and unsafe feelings

Bullying

Touches

Secrets and Telling

Strangers

Friendships (Rang a Cúig agus Rang a Sé)

Walk Tall

Naming Feelings

Identifying situations in which feelings are experienced

Exploring how feelings are expressed

Feelings and emotions

Resource Materials for Relationship and Sexuality Education

Curricular Framework:

Many of the strands of SPHE/RSE recommended by the Department of Education and Science are already in place within the school. Much of the RSE programme has cross curricular links. This serves to teach the programme in a holistic manner and re-enforces learning. Named below are a number of subject areas which fall into this category:

Literacy-

Language Development:

Language has a vital role to play in SPHE/RSE. It is important that a child be able to articulate her feelings and this is why Language Development is emphasised from day one.

Development of vocabulary to identify body parts and express feelings.

Develop social skills

Asking questions

Interview visitors

Discuss stories and videos

Describe photographs and videos

Topics of conversation include: Myself, My News, Friends, My Family.

Reading:

Recognising words on worksheets

Reading stories and poems

Written language:

Writing stories and poems

Completing worksheets

Expressing feelings and emotions

Writing captions

Religion:

Several of the lessons in the Alive O are based on the child as a person. Some examples of these include: I Am Unique, My Body, Resolving Conflicts and Growing.

Social and Environmental Studies:

This subject deals with a wide range of issues including:

History:

Links with the History programme include –

Study of local history

Stories from mythology,

Life of the Celts, Greeks and Romans.

Geography:

Links with the Geography programme include

Study of locality,

Animals, crops, products and industry,

Life in other lands,

Human Rights.

Science:

As part of the science curriculum “the identification of the parts of the human body is included at each level of the primary programme” and “children will be helped to develop ideas about the human body, growth, movement and breathing ... the development of children’s ideas about body changes and reproduction should be done in accordance with the school’s policy on SPHE”. (Science Curriculum Teacher Guidelines, Page 10).

Our policy on RSE will inform the teaching of the strand “Living Things” in Science.

How plants grow and breathe

Life cycle of animals and birds

Caring for animals

Five senses

The Circulatory System

The Digestive System

The Respiratory System

Components of Food

Gaeilge:

Baintear úsáid as an Gaeilge, go háirithe Gaeilge neamhfhoirimiúil chun gnéithe éagsúla ón gclár Oideachas Caidrimh agus Gnéasachta a phlé, m. sh. Mo Chorp, Mé Féin, Mo Chlann.

Certain themes within the RSE programme already form part of the Irish curriculum, where familiar topics are discussed informally with the children, for example, My Body, Myself, My Family.

Visual Arts

Through many of the varied Art and Craft activities the children already interpret and display an understanding of some of the information contained in the RSE programme, for example, making a Spring Frieze (introducing new life), Myself, Sense and Touch (My Body), Hand Prints (awareness of physical growth).

Physical Education

Physical Education provides an opportunity for the development awareness of the development of the physical body, bodily growth and change, a sense of belonging, tolerance and respect for others. This may be developed through music, movement, athletics, skill development, songs (Stay Safe Song) games etc.

Music

Self expression is developed through singing and all forms of participation in music lessons. Listening and responding to music gives the pupils opportunities to share personal ideas. Composing and performing helps pupils to develop talents and interests.

Mathematics

Pupils are encouraged to make decisions, record information, share ideas on for example favourite fruit, notice and appreciate individual differences and uniqueness. All of these actions help achieve the aims and objectives of the R.S.E programme.

Drama:

Role play will form an active part in the learning process of the R.S.E programme.

Teaching Approaches

Teaching methods will be child centred and appropriate the age and stage of development of the pupil. The Class teachers will as always endeavour to maintain an atmosphere in the classroom which respects the privacy of each individual pupil and treat all pupils with due sensitivity and care.

Stories / poems/ songs and rhymes

Classroom discussion

Group work

Games

Art activities

Quiet time

Visitors to the classroom

Video

Drama, role play, mime, improvisation

Visualisations

Co-operative games

Circle work

Brain storming

Movement

Resources

We will use Programmes and other resources that are deemed suitable by the Principal in collaboration with Staff.

Resources in Ballynacally N.S. include:

R.S.E. books

Stay Safe Programme

Alive O series

Walk Tall

Making the Links

Personnel - Class Teachers, Invited speakers

We may also invite other visitors such as a mother, father and new baby when teaching certain aspects. The content of the visitor's talk will be discussed and agreed by the class teacher in advance of the visit. These adults may be invited to talk and be questioned by the pupils. The teacher will be present and will oversee the delivery of the visitor's talk at all times.

At present an outside speaker is invited to speak on sensitive issues with the pupils of Sixth Class. Issues such as conception, intercourse and physical changes at puberty are dealt with at this meeting. These pupils and their parents are invited to the information night in the school organised by the class teacher. Each pupil must be accompanied by a parent or guardian

Success Criteria

The school-wide implementation of this plan will result in enhancement of the children's relationships and their physical, mental, spiritual and emotional development and growth. It will be established that the plan has been implemented through:

Teachers' monthly reports.

Consistent following of the procedures outlined in this plan.

The indicators that the plan has achieved its aim will be through:

Feedback from teachers, parents, pupils and the community.

Positive reports from inspectors from the Department of Education and Science.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal and teaching staff believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. We see ourselves supporting the home in this lifelong process and will seek at all times to develop positive relations with all these parties. The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by the Principal and Staff who will co-ordinate the progress of the plan, encourage and accept feedback and report to staff on findings.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Ballynacally N.S. on:

_____.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management by

_____ Chairperson

	Third and Fourth classes	Fifth and Sixth Classes
Strands	Strand Units	Strand Units
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accepting myself <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Self-esteem</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Developing and expressing self-confidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical development ● Growing and changing ● Birth and New life ● Feelings and emotions ● Personal Hygiene ● Personal Safety <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Identifying and assessing risks</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Developing safety strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accepting myself <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Self-esteem</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Developing and expressing self-confidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical development ● Becoming an adult ● Parenthood ● Feelings and emotions ● Personal Hygiene ● Personal Safety <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Identifying and assessing risks</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Developing safety strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making decisions
Myself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Roles and responsibilities in families ● Friendship ● Portrayal of sexuality and relationships ● Roles of males and females in society ● Relating to others <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Communicating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sharing and co-operating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Resolving conflict</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changing relationships in families and friendships ● Group affiliation and loyalty ● Portrayal of sexuality and relationships ● Roles of males and females in society ● Relating to others <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Communicating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sharing and co-operating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Resolving conflict</i></p>

	Infant Classes	First and Second classes
Strands	Strand Units	Strand Units
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am unique <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Self-esteem</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Developing and expressing</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>self-confidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My body • As I grow I change • New life • Keeping safe • Feelings and emotions • Making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am unique <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Self-esteem</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Developing and expressing</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>self-confidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My body • As I grow I change • New life • Keeping safe • Feelings and emotions • Making decisions
Myself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myself and my family • Myself and my friends • Special people in my life • Relating to others <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Communicating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sharing and co-operating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Resolving conflict</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myself and my family • Myself and my friends • Other people • Relating to others <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Communicating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sharing and co-operating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Resolving conflict</i></p>