



**Scoil Naisiúnta Rónáin Naofa Cluain Lua**

St. Ronan's N.S., Cloonloo, Boyle, Co. Sligo

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## Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

### Introductory Statement & Rationale

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in St. Ronan's NS. It was developed in 2005-2006 by the school staff and it was reviewed and amended in 2013/2014 school year. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE.

### School Philosophy

St Ronan's N.S. is a Catholic school and all policies developed are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the ethos of the school. The positive ethos of the school is characterised by the following:

- Sensitive to reality of our children's lives in a changing world
- Mutual respect between all partners in education
- Child-centred
- Aims to ensure each child reaches full potential in the holistic sense
- Hopes that children are equipped with high self-esteem to enable them to go to live happy and fulfilled lives
- The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home.

## Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and is taught within this context. It 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 (Going Forward Together Parents Information Booklet p.4).

## 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. (NCCA; Interim Curriculum and Guidelines for RSE; p.4).

## Current Provision

In the school setting, RSE will be taught in the context of SPHE which includes:

- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Use of the RSE Manual and Busy Bodies DVD and Busy Bodies Booklet
- Religious Education through the *Grow in Love* Programme
- An outside speaker may be invited to work with fifth and sixth classes. Prior to the programme for the children, parents may be invited to a session which covers information on the programme as well as input on the area of adolescence and parenting the teenager.
- Restorative Practice
- Special Education Teachers
- Social skills training

## **Aims of our RSE programme**

- 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

## **Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School**

Curriculum Content - The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the policy and will reflect the developmental needs of the child.

When an outside speaker is used, the class teacher is responsible for making them aware of school policy and that teacher will remain in the class during the lesson.

### **Topics from Junior Infants to Senior Infants**

- Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms
- Developing awareness of human birth

### Topics from 1<sup>st</sup> to Second

- Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions
- Developing awareness of human life cycle
- Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new born babies

### Topics from 3<sup>rd</sup> to Sixth include:

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing Feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (*Third and Fourth class*)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (*Fifth/Sixth Class*)
- Reproductive system of male/female adults (*Fifth/Sixth Class*)
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship. (*Fifth/ Sixth Class*)

Ref: Appendix 1 for RSE Sensitive Areas Language and Topics

### **Organisational Matters**

- Parents/guardians will be informed prior to the teaching of the lessons involving "Sensitive issues"
- Parents of children in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class may be given the Busy Bodies booklet prior to the talk on the sensitive areas of the RSE Programme
- In the event of an outside speaker/s being used to deliver "sensitive" areas of the RSE programme to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils, parents/guardians will be notified in advance. Class teacher will remain with the class during the lesson

- Outside speaker/s may meet parents beforehand to inform them of the content of the sensitive areas of the RSE programme
- Where parents wish to take their child out of the lessons on the sensitive issues they must put this in writing to the school principal. The child will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom in the school.
- With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom.
- Any teacher has the right to opt-out from teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is responsibility of Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be taught to the children by another teacher or an outside speaker.
- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.

## Dealing with Questions

- All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Topics such as homosexuality, contraception, abortion, masturbation are not in the primary RSE/SPHE programme, but children may ask questions about these subjects. Teachers should respond to such questions by saying that these are topics which they will learn about as they get older or to give the child a brief age appropriate response.
- When deciding whether it is appropriate to answer a question or not the teacher should consider
  - The age and stage of development of the children
  - The ethos the school
  - The RSE policy
  - The content objectives of the SPHE curriculum guidelines
- Suggested ways of setting limits are to say:
  - I'll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them
  - Would you be able to talk to your mum or dad about that?
  - That's something you'll learn about as you get older.
- The strategy implemented by the school responding to children who have questions about sexual orientation or/and who are being taunted about being gay is as advised by the Professional Development Service for

Teachers (PDST) - Sexual Orientation - Advice for Primary Schools in relation to anti Bullying Policy.

- The strategy is in the context of the school's ethos and RSE policy and with the awareness that primary school children are probably too young to engage in any detailed discussion of sexual identity.
- Homophobic insults are treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults - the teacher can calmly explain to the child that such insults are hurtful to the other person and are not acceptable.
- Depending on the context and the age group of the children, the teacher could ask a child or a class group what they mean by the word 'gay'
- The school response is that 'The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being homosexual or gay.'
- An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others; this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm.
- The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 provide protection against discrimination on nine grounds, one of which is sexual orientation. As such, St Ronan's N.S. is obliged to protect students and staff from discrimination or sexual harassment.
- Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and policy. Should any questions be asked by the children that are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents or will explain that this will be covered at second level school.

## **Provision for Ongoing Support**

- Parents welcome to view curriculum if they wish
- Regular contact with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving "sensitive issues" in the form of the home/school link page accompanying such lessons in the RSE Resource Books OR Contact will be made with parents prior to the address by the outside speaker. 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 classes.

## Links to other policy areas

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- SPHE Policy
- Stay Safe Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a child protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person (DLP). In cases of disclosure, the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

## Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of St. Ronan's N.S. will officially ratify this updated version of the RSE policy at the BOM meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ after which it will be circulated to teachers. It will be made available to parents on request and will be uploaded on the school website.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2021 by school staff, and every two years thereafter otherwise this policy will be reviewed should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made to the policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1

### RSE SENSITIVE AREAS LANGUAGE

#### ***Junior/Senior Infants***

My Body:	Identify external parts of the male and female body. Head, eyes, ears, nose, breast, breastfeeding, skin, hips, navel, private parts, penis, bottom, vulva, womb.
New Life:	A baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born.

#### ***First/Second Classes***

My body:	How my body works. Name and identify external parts of the male and female body and their associated function.
Navel:	The proper name for the part of the body where a baby was joined to his/her mother before being born.
Penis:	The proper name for the part of the body of a boy that passes urine.
Urethra:	The proper name for the part of the body of a girl that passes urine.
Vagina:	Opening where a baby leaves a mother's womb. Sometimes a mother has to have an operation to have the baby. This is all normal.
Vulva:	The vulva is external and is the correct name for the opening of the vagina which is internal.
Breasts:	Breasts produce milk after a mother has had a baby. Sometimes the mother feeds the baby with this milk. It is known as breast-feeding. Some mothers also use powdered milk.
New Life:	Caring for a new born baby. A baby grows in the mother's womb until ready to be born.

### **Third/Fourth Class**

My body:

As I grow I change (Ref: pp.95-101 RSE Third Class Resource Materials).

Growing and changing during puberty - body changes. Hormones. Changes in shape. Increases in body hair. Pubic hair. Menstruation. (Ref: p.199 RSE Fourth Class Resource Materials).

Birth and New Life:

Caring for a new baby. Nutrition in the womb and the function of the umbilical cord. Before a baby is born the baby spends nine months in the mother's womb and gets food through a tube called the umbilical cord. (Ref: pp.73-74 RSE Third Class Resource Materials). Stages of growth of a baby from conception to birth. Identify objects which coincide with size of foetus at different stages. Care while waiting for a baby. After nine months the baby is ready to be born. Develop an appreciation of the wonder of the birth of a new baby. (Ref: The Wonder of New Life pp.170-181 RSE Fourth Class Resource Materials).

### **Fifth/Sixth Class**

Physical Development:

Puberty

**Physical changes for boys:** Growth spurts, Testicles, Scrotum, Penis enlarge, Pubic/Facial and other body hair, Voice deepens, Nocturnal emissions-'wet dreams', Semen, Perspiration, Oily skin, Pimples.

**Physical changes for girls:** Breasts develop, Menstruation/Periods begin, Growth spurt, Underarm and pubic hair, Hips broaden, Perspiration, Oily skin, Pimples, Male/Female Reproductive Organs. Ovulation/Menstruation. Psychological, Emotional and Social Changes. (Ref: pp.82-92 RSE Fifth Class Resource Materials).

Growing and Changing:

Responsibility. What age must I be to...?. Rituals. Post Primary School. Adulthood. (Ref: pp.184-197 Sixth Class RSE Resource Materials).

New Life:

How New Life Begins? Ovum (Ova)/Sperm. Ovaries. Conception. (Ref: p.96 Fifth Class Resource Materials). Relationships and a context for New Life. Conception. Sexual Intercourse in the context of a committed loving relationship. Respect for Human Life. Development in the womb. (Ref: Chapters 7 and 8 RSE Sixth Class Resource Materials).

**Portrayal of Sexuality and Relationships: Fourth to Sixth Classes**

Body Images male/female in the media/Soaps/Films. Magazines.

Relationships in the media

How sexuality is defined in the media

Sexual images portrayed in advertising (drink/perfume/aftershave)

The influences of famous personalities on our understanding of sexuality and relationships

Gender Equality in sport and leisure

Roles in Society

Sexual Stereotyping