

SCOIL SAN EOIN RSE POLICY



INTRODUCTION

This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Scoil San Eoin. It was developed in 2016 by the RSE policy committee which comprised of two teachers, two parents representatives and one representative from the Board of Management. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme, within the SPHE curriculum, and also as to how the teaching of RSE will be implemented in the school with the support of the parents.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY/MISSION STATEMENT

Scoil San Eoin is a co-educational mainstream primary school serving the rural community of Redcross and surrounding areas. The school operates under the patronage of the Archdiocese of Dublin and the ethos of the Catholic Church is reflected in the practises which are carried out in the school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. We instil and nurture a spirit of tolerance, respect and interest in other beliefs and religions.

Scoil San Eoin aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, including his/her relationship with God, other people and the environment. A holistic education is provided in order to develop the child's intellectual, physical, cultural, creative, moral and spiritual understanding and knowledge. Self-esteem and confidence are qualities we seek to instill, in order for each child to put these skills into practise and develop their talents. We aim to prepare the child for further education, lifelong learning and to enable the child to contribute to the good of society.

All staff strive to maintain a safe and positive atmosphere with the school. Close collaboration is maintained between school and home in order to lead the child to achieve success in each stage of their education and growth.

Relationships and Sexuality Education as a component of SPHE, furthers this mission. In Scoil San Eoin, we respect the parents as primary educators and in the area of RSE above all, we support and compliment their work.

DEFINITION OF RSE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through process, which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework (NCCA Curriculum and guidelines for RSE)

RSE is the formal approach to educating children in:

- Relationships with others – parents, siblings, friends and the community in general
- Respect for themselves and others
- Physical Development – bodily functions and changes, and personal hygiene
- Emotional Development – Maturing in Society
- Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships
- Sexuality in Context – Part of a loving relationship

RELATIONSHIP OF RSE TO SPHE

In Scoil San Eoin, RSE is taught in the context of SPHE. SPHE is a subject on the primary school curriculum which contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. SPHE is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth class.

The key characteristics of this programme are that SPHE is a lifelong process and is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. The main strands of the SPHE programme are:

- Myself
- Myself and Others
- Myself and the Wider World

CURRENT PROVISIONS

The SPHE curriculum is being taught in the school with the use of the following programmes:

- Stay Safe Programme – Anti Bullying/Child Protection Programme
- Walk Tall – Self Esteem Programme
- Be Safe – Fire Safety/ Water Safety and Road Safety

CURRENT PROVISIONS

Some policies which support SPHE/RSE are:

- Code of Behaviour and Discipline
- Anti- Bullying
- Healthy Eating
- **Child Safeguarding**
- **Admissions**
- ICT safety
- School Tour

Traditionally in the school the sensitive areas of the RSE programme was covered by an outside instructor on an annual/bi annual basis

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies, we informally support many of 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 the members of the school community.

AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME

1. To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of each child
2. To help children to develop healthy friendships and relationships
3. To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
4. To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
5. To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
6. To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF THE RSE PROGRAMME IN OUR SCHOOL

- Guidelines as laid down by the DES as discussed in this document will be followed. It is recognised that during any year a special pupil/teacher relationship develops within a class. A trust and understanding of each other is acquired and having regard to this special relationship we recognise the need to allow teacher's flexibility/discretion as the need may arise when dealing with certain areas of the curriculum.
- It is envisaged that the programme will be taught in an integrated manner where possible
- Parents are to be informed in advance regarding when the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme e.g. puberty, will be covered in school.
- If a DVD is to be used to compliment the teaching of RSE, if requested, parents will be given the name and publisher of the DVD. They will be informed that a DVD will be used.
- Visiting speakers will be used at a senior level on a bi annual basis to cover certain areas of the programme or, indeed, to reiterate/elaborate on certain aspects already covered. The visiting speaker will be fully versed as regards the school's RSE policy
- **The school will endeavour to pass on an email or phone contact details of a visiting speaker to a parent if requested with the permission of the speaker.**
- Parents have the responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to discuss areas covered in school in RSE/SPHE with their children
- If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from a formal RSE class, they must first discuss this with the teacher involved and the principal and then inform the principal in writing. Due to the lack of extra staff within the school and recognising that the DES do not allow a child to stay away from school while RSE is being taught, the child will be sent to another classroom to be supervised by their parent/guardian. This will all be agreed within a meeting with the Principal and parents/guardian. All parents/guardians have 2 days after being notified of the upcoming topic, to issue their request to the teacher.

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF THE RSE PROGRAMME IN OUR SCHOOL

- Children will be encouraged to discuss the material being covered in class with their parents/guardians. Where possible, handouts, worksheets etc. will be provided to facilitate this e.g. Home/School Link worksheets
- In a class situation, children will be encouraged to recognise that certain information is for them only i.e. that it is inappropriate for them to discuss information received about puberty, intercourse and birth with younger siblings, friends from outside the school, pupils from younger classes in the yard etc. It will be explained that other children will be given this information by their own parents and teachers when they reach the appropriate age. A contract **may** also be drawn up with each class grouping which will contain this directive.
- Children will be also taught to recognise that certain personal disclosures may be inappropriate. They will be informed that these disclosures can be made through a 'Question Box' set up in the classroom. When the teacher reads the question/disclosure, they will choose a suitable time to discuss it with the pupil. Teachers will neither give nor request personal information. A respect for personal information and privacy will be emphasised.
- Parents will be informed if the teacher feels a particular child would benefit from more in-depth discussion, at home, of a topic covered
- If a parent has a particular concern/issue which has arisen as a result of an RSE discussion in school, they will be encouraged to discuss same with the teacher or the Principal
- As always, 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
- Taking into accounts pupils social and emotional development, and pupils with **SEN** needs, instruction will be based on individual needs. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues before they are included in the pupils IEP. Consultation will occur between the class teacher and the **SEN** teacher.
- Sensitive issues may be dealt with in the following class groupings:
 - Puberty – Girls and Boys during Fifth Class
 - Puberty, intercourse and birth with boys and girls during sixth class

To facilitate this, appropriate arrangements will be made for the rest of the classes for the periods concerned. In Scoil San Eoin, RSE will be timetabled during a time which will allow for the SEN teacher available to assist in monitoring younger/older classes while the teacher engages in small group lessons with the remaining classes. In the Junior room, the time when the Junior/Senior Infants are gone home, will be utilised for RSE with the 1st and 2nd classes.

Children's questions will be dealt with, taking into account the following criteria, when relevant:

- By being aware of circumstances in which the question has arisen
- By clarifying what information is required
- By deciding, if the issue is relevant, who it is relevant to
- By giving an age-appropriate answer
- By deferring the question as one which will be answered in the next lesson
- By informing the pupil that this is a question which should be answered at home or one which will be answered more fully in the future

There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils through an anonymous evaluation sheet.

ONGOING SUPPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

Initially after one year, there will be a review of this policy. Then as RSE is established in the school, the policy will be reviewed every two years. The partners (BOM, staff and parents) will be given an opportunity to make comments and suggest amendments as appropriate.

The BOM will ensure access to and support for

- In-career development opportunities for teachers and the policy committee.
- Efforts of parents to provide educational opportunities for other parents
- Updating and purchasing of relevant RSE school resources

Ratification of Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 27/9/2016 and has now been reviewed and ratified on_____

Signed:_____ **(Principal)**

Signed:_____ **(Chairperson)**

Date:_____

Attached Appendices

- **Appendix A – RSE Sensitive Areas**
- **Appendix B – List of Resources**

APPENDIX A

RSE – SENSITIVE AREAS

Junior Infants:

New Life – mention of baby in the womb.

Senior Infants:

My Body – specific names for male and female sex organs – vagina, penis, womb.

First Class:

New Life – New Baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord and breast feeding.

Second Class:

Birth of baby through vagina. Mention umbilical cord and breast feeding.

Third Class:

As for second class, but in more detail.

Fourth Class:

Language around baby's development in the womb, i.e. fertilised egg, cord. Pictures of foetuses (in RSE manual) to be used.

Fifth & Sixth Classes:

Menstruation in the context of hygiene and growth from a girl to a woman.

Boys and girls development – puberty

How does new life begin? (6th class only)

Biological facts as follows: (6th class only)

- What journey does the egg make?
- What journey does the sperm make?
- Where do they meet?
- What happens when they meet?
- Optional videos: Fifth class – Growing
- 6th Class – Busy Bodies