



Scoil Naomh Lorcán O'Tuathail

(St. Laurence O'Toole's National School)

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Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction and Rationale

The RSE Programme is an aspect of the broader Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE). The material for the programme is taken from the Relationships and Sexuality Manuals devised by the Department of Education & Skills. Themes for inclusion in the programme were selected by the teaching staff and organised into sections for each class level (Junior Infants to 6th Class inclusive). Each section of the RSE programme will be taught every year to cater for dual classes. The programme will be taught in March/ April of the school year to tie in with the new life of springtime found in nature. A HOME-SCHOOL LINKS letter (one per theme) will be sent home to inform parents/guardians about the lessons.

"It is important that the children learn appropriate vocabulary for discussing aspects of life related to sexuality, growing up and their bodies' physical changes so they can communicate confidently about themselves. The use of proper terms for parts of the body and bodily functions should be encouraged from the earliest age, so that these terms are given a status and acceptability. As children get older and become comfortable with these words, they can discuss aspects of their growth and development with greater ease. They are less likely to resort to inappropriate or vulgar language when referring to the body or bodily functions. "Going Forward Together" – RSE booklet for Parents pp. 17-18.

Aims

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing 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.
- To develop an understanding of and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
- To develop a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- To enable a child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others.
- To enable children to become familiar with biological terms for the body in an age appropriate and progressive way throughout their school years
- Foster home/school links in relation to the teaching of RSE and specifically the topic of Growing and Changing within the school context
- Ensure all aspects of the RSE programme are covered within the SPHE curriculum for each class

Policies which Support RSE

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy

Parental Involvement

The teaching of RSE is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and community. As parents have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children, their involvement is encouraged. The school will support parents in their RSE education of their children in the following ways:

- Parents will have access to the school SPHE and RSE policies at enrolment. Parents will be made aware that a copy of the RSE Policy is available on www.roundwoodns.ie
- Every year, parents will be informed when the sensitive areas of the Growing and Changing Strand of the SPHE curriculum is being taught.
- Parents will have an opportunity to meet with the relevant class teachers if they so wish to inform themselves of the programme content or discuss concerns they may have.
- We acknowledge the right of parents/ guardians to withdraw their child from the programme. Withdrawal must be made by parent / guardian in writing to the Principal. Parents/guardians have the option to opt out when filling out enrolment forms initially.
- 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 – e.g. what they might hear on yard.

RSE Organisation and Planning

RSE is a continual process. It will be revisited at different stages throughout a child's time in school. There will be opportunities to build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity.

RSE is divided into two main parts:

1. The general programme which contains content covered through the SPHE strands:

Friendship
Self Identity
Family
Self-esteem
Growing up

2. The sensitive/specific content covered through RSE strands

Topics up to 2 nd class	Topics from 3 rd to 6 th class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping safe • Bodily changes from birth (birth to 9) • Making appropriate choices • Appreciating the variety of family types and family life that exists in our school and community. • Recognising and expressing feelings • Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep • Expressing opinions and listening to others • Naming parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms (infants) and identify some of their functions (1st & 2nd class). <p><i>Teachers can refer to <u>Making the Links and Beyond</u> PDST publication guide for how content objectives from SPHE curriculum can be addressed through the use of lessons from Walk Tall, RSE and Stay Safe. Page numbers of manuals for specific lessons included in the guide.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping safe • Bodily changes • Expressing feelings • Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise • Appreciating the variety of family types and family life that exists in our school and community and how these relationships shape us • Making healthy and responsible decisions • Forming friendships • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (3rd & 4th class) • Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd - 6th class) • Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty • Reproductive system of male and female adults (5th & 6th class) • Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th & 6th class)

- The topic of Growing and Changing will be taught throughout the whole school in March/April of Year 2 (see SPHE plan)
- Boys and girls will not be split up for sensitive lessons. This has been decided by teachers in an effort to normalise the content of the lessons for all children. This may be somewhat at teacher discretion depending on classroom dynamics in any given year.
- The class teacher has overall responsibility for the teaching of the Growing and Changing strand from the SPHE curriculum within a school context. Team teaching may be used in Senior Classes for sensitive lessons if needed, to ensure all staff are comfortable. Class teachers will be present in the classroom during all RSE lessons.
- The Busy Bodies Programme will be used as the primary resource for the teaching of RSE from 3rd class to 6th class. Parents/guardians will be informed early in 3rd class of the content of this programme and will be directed to the Busy Bodies online resources at: https://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy_bodies.

- We are mindful to show respect for all types of families, genders, sexual orientations, whether in the language we use or our attitudes as teachers and also in the variety of books/resources available to our class for RSE lessons

Differentiation and Children with Special Educational Needs

We are aware that there are children with differing needs in our school who may need a differentiated curriculum in relation to teaching of RSE. Care will be taken to include all children in lessons with due regard to their needs and abilities and adaptations to teaching content will be made, where necessary. Teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the children in his/her class. The continuum of support process and the compilation of a child's Student Support Plan may help teachers to organise an appropriate learning programme for children with specific needs. Consultation with parents/guardians in advance to anticipate the child's needs in relation to RSE may be required to make the learning meaningful for some children.

Language in RSE and Terminology used in the Programme

Language

Language can significantly contribute to building positive self-esteem. If used in a negative manner it can hurt and demean. The language that is promoted in the school will be one that nurtures both children and adults as unique and valuable human beings. It will respect cultural differences between people and be used in a way to encourage inclusiveness. Children will be taught to become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationships and interactions.

Terminology

Teachers will be guided by the specific content objectives of the Growing and Changing strands of the SPHE curriculum within their particular classes when considering what terminology is appropriate for each class level.

Through consultation, the following terminology has been selected by staff to teach for each class level:

Class Level	Language
Junior/Senior Infants	Pregnant, womb, breast feeding Penis, vulva
First Second Class	<i>Revise all previous language</i> Breasts, nipples Urethra, urine
Third/Fourth Class	Revise all previous language

	Language used in Sections 1, 2, 3 of Busy Bodies Programme: Section 1 – Puberty Section 2 – What happens to girls Section 3 – What happens to boys
Fifth/Sixth Class	Revise all previous language Language used in Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Busy Bodies Programme: Section 1 – Puberty Section 2 – What happens to girls Section 3 – What happens to boys Section 4 – Making Babies Section 5 – Enjoying Growing Up

Dealing with Questions

In senior classes class teachers may, at their discretion, have a question box where children can ask specific questions related to RSE. These questions may be answered as part of RSE lessons. We have decided as a staff to be guided by the content objectives for Growing and Changing when deciding what to answer. We will also be guided by our school's Catholic Ethos. Children may not ask personal questions of teachers.

Resources

- Making the Links (PDST) – for individual and whole school planning
- RSE teacher manuals
- Busy Body booklets and DVD
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk tall Programme
- Anatomical models and story books

Ratified by the Board of Management on 2nd June 2020



Jamie Fitzmaurice (Chairperson)