



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Our School Ethos

Our Lady's Boys National School is a Roman Catholic National School catering for boys of 4 years to 13 years inclusive under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. The school also includes a Special Unit catering for boys with autism.

The Board of Management, the Principal and staff will work with parents to empower all the children in our charge, including those with special needs, with the knowledge and skills required to become confident and effective members of a modern, multicultural and technological society.

The school deliberately promotes the partnership in learning between class teachers, learning support teachers, special needs assistants and parents to facilitate the effective implementation of our school policy.

Definition of SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides particular opportunities to foster the personal developments, health and well-being of the individual child, to help him to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. (SPHE Curriculum Statement pg 2).

Definition of RSE

RSE encourages children to examine and explore the various relationships in their lives and to learn how to develop and enjoy friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect. Children build the foundation for developing more intimate relationships in later life. They learn about themselves as sexual human beings, about their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth and about the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood.

Through this RSE programme, appropriate opportunities are provided for children to examine discuss and explore various attitudes, values, beliefs and opinions relating to themselves, their development and their interaction with others.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

All of the RSE programme will be delivered with the context of SPHE which is timetables on our curriculum. It looks at issues such as relationships at home and in school, building self-esteem, learning skills of communication, decision making and expressing feelings in an appropriate way. It also gives clear information on a range of topics including healthy eating, alcohol, drugs, human growth and development, safety and social responsibility and environmental issues. RSE encourages children to examine and explore the various relationships in their lives and to learn how to develop and enjoy friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect. Children build the foundation for developing more intimate relationships in later life. They learn about themselves as sexual human beings, about their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth and about the various changes that occur as they progress to adolescence and adulthood.

The content of the SPHE curriculum is presented in three strands. Myself, Myself and others, Myself and the wider world. The divisions are referred to as strand units.

Strands	Strand Units
Myself	Self-identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Self-awareness</i> ● <i>Developing self confidence</i> ● <i>Making decisions</i> Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Knowing about my body</i> ● <i>Food and nutrition</i> Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>As I grow I change</i> ● <i>New life</i> ● <i>Feelings and emotions</i> Safety and Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Personal Safety</i> ● <i>Safety issues</i>
Myself and others	Myself and my family My friends and other people Relating to others
Myself and the wider world	Developing citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>My school community</i> ● <i>Living in the local community</i> ● <i>Environmental care</i> Media Education

The aims of our RSE Programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- To help the child 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 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

Management and Organisation of RSE in our school

RSE is an integral part of SPHE and will be taught in this context. The curriculum content is revisited and will be delivered developmentally throughout the child's time in our school. Individual teachers will identify the appropriate links with other subject areas to ensure that children experience a broad based approach to RSE.

RSE specific education will be covered in the strand units *Taking Care of My Body* and *Growing and Changing* and *Safety and Protection*.

Multi class situation

If RSE is being delivered in a multi class situation, the younger class may be withdrawn if necessary.

Strategies for answering questions

Only age appropriate questions will be answered at school. The teacher may say "you'll learn about this at a later stage" or "ask your parents". A question box will be used with fifth and sixth class, where pupils place their questions and the teacher will choose which questions will be answered.

Language

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. There is a great deal of power in language and not being familiar with the biological terms for the body can put children at a disadvantage. To give children this vocabulary, the teacher uses everyday situations to include words for the body, and bodily functions, naturally and without undue emphasis. If parents have any concerns about the language used, they are encouraged to speak to their son's class teacher.

Junior Infants

The theme of new-life is dealt with, which relates to nature and family eg. New life in Spring, pets and family. (RSE Teaching Materials pg 68-76)

Vocabulary introduced: born, womb

Senior Infants

Taking care of my body – covering personal hygiene and self-awareness (RSE Teaching Materials p148-156). The work in Junior Infants is revisited and expanded. (RSE Teaching Materials p158-167).

Vocabulary introduced: penis, vulva/vagina, breasts

First Class

The themes covered include 'New Life' and 'How My Body Works' (RSE Teaching Materials p68-75).

Vocabulary introduced: urine, urethra

Second Class

Themes explored include 'The Wonder of New Life', 'When my Body Needs Special Care' (RSE Teaching Materials p162-169)

Vocabulary introduced: vagina, anus

Third Class

Preparing for new life and pregnancy (RSE Teaching Materials p70-79).

Vocabulary introduced: pregnancy, umbilical cord, navel, (belly button)

Fourth Class

Themes include ‘The Wonder of New Life’ and ‘Growing and Changing’ which deal with all stages of pregnancy and birth and encourage children not to take these daily miracles for granted. (RSE Teaching Materials p170-181, p 196-205).

Vocabulary introduced: fertilised egg, scan, hormones, cells, menstruation, periods, pubic areas/pubic hair, perspiration

Fifth Class

Themes developed include ‘My body grows and changes’, ‘The Wonder of New Life’ and ‘A baby is a Miracle’ (RSE Teaching Materials p82-92 p94-101).

Vocabulary introduced: conception, ova, sperm, sexual intercourse

Sixth Class

Themes covered include ‘Growing and Changing’ ‘Relationships and New Life’ and ‘A baby is a Miracle’ (RSE Teaching Materials p184-197 p200-208 p210-219).

Vocabulary introduced: adolescence, responsibilities

Definitions of some terms will be given by the teacher when and if necessary. (See Appendix 1).

The role of Parents/Guardians in RSE

- In this context parents/guardian are acknowledged as primary educators of their children and the school will work in a supportive role.
- On enrolment, parents/guardians will be provided with an overview of the SPHE curriculum including the RSE aspects.
- A parent’s/guardian’s right to withdraw a child from RSE specific lessons will be respected on the understanding that the parent/guardian is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school in writing of this decision. Parents/Guardians will be informed before the RSE programme starts and they will be required to complete Consent Forms and return them to the school.
- If a child is withdrawn, the school cannot guarantee that other children will not inform the child in question of the content of the lesson from which the child was withdrawn or that the children/teacher will not refer incidentally in class to aspects of the lesson during subsequent days or weeks.
- Teachers will only answer questions on the lesson. Children will be asked to talk to their parents about anything else that may come up.

Resources to be used

The school will follow the SPHE Curriculum and the main resources will be the four manuals for the DES Resource Materials for RSE (2000). Further resources will include;

- Anatomically correct dolls
- The Stay Safe Programme
- North Western Health Board Programme
- Bí Folláin
- The Walk Tall Programme

Provision for Ongoing Support and Development

In service training in Relationships and Sexuality Education has been provided for school staff. Staff training needs will be reviewed regularly and support/advice will be sought from the Board of Management and the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (SPHE Cuiditheoirí).

Review

Following ratification of the RSE programme by the Board of Management, it will be reviewed on an on-going basis. All parents will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review. RSE resources will be kept up to date. Ongoing support and training will be provided to all members of the school staff.

Signed _____
Principal

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

Date _____

Appendix 1 **Definitions for fifth and sixth class**

Contraception

Prevention of conception

Homosexual

Person sexually attracted to members of the same sex

Abortion

Operation to end pregnancy in its early stages

Masturbation

Produce sexual pleasure by touching your own sexual parts

AIDS

A disease caused by the HIV virus that destroys the body's ability to fight infection. It is transmitted through blood and body fluids, especially by sexual contact and contaminated needles.