



# Scoil Íosagáin

# Ballybunion

## Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy

Drafted in June 2011

Reviewed in May 2012

Reviewed February 2017

## **Introductory Statement**

The staff of Scoil Íosagáin were involved in re-drafting this policy in January/February 2017 following the introduction of revised Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme within SPHE.

## **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Scoil Íosagáin Ballybunion operates within the context of the religious and educational philosophy of the Catholic Church, under the patronage of the Bishop of Kerry. All policies designed and implemented in Scoil Íosagáin are in line with our Catholic Ethos. Our pupils are encouraged to attain their full potential in a caring environment. RSE encompasses the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy. This programme will be taught in a manner that reflects our Catholic ethos. The RSE will be taught under the umbrella of the SPHE of which it is an integral part.

## **Definition of RSE**

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way (*Going Forward Together Parent's Information Booklet, page 4*). They will learn

about their own development and about their friendship and relationships with others.

## **Rationale**

While it is recognised that the home should be the primary educator of the children the staff and Board of Management also acknowledge the vital part the school can play in supporting and complimenting parents work in the area of RSE. Through working in partnership the children will be enabled to understand and attain knowledge, beliefs and values for life.

## **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.

## **Current Provision**

Included in the school curriculum is:

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Body resources
- Stay Safe Programme/Walk Tall Programme
- Religious Education

## **Aims**

- To enhance the personal development, self esteem and well being of each child.
- To help children to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral and spiritual framework.
- To enable the child to understand and respect human love, sexuality and reproduction (Fifth and Sixth class)
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty (Senior classes)
- To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and relationships
- To enable the child to be comfortable with his/her own sexuality while growing and developing.
- To deliver the RSE programme within a moral, spiritual and social framework that reflects the Catholic ethos.

We support 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 members of the school community.

## **Policies which support SPHE/RSE**

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour and discipline
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy

- Healthy Eating Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

## **Child Protection**

This policy is cognisant of all aspects of our current Child Protection Policy. The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a child protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principal as the Deputy DLP. Where a child protection concern is raised, the procedures outlines in the schools Child Protection Policy will be followed.

## **Management and Organisation of RSE**

RSE will be facilitated

1. In the context of a positive school climate
2. As part of the SPHE programme in each class
3. On an integrated, cross-curricular basis

Formal lessons will always be age appropriate. If parents need to query any aspect of the programme Mrs Walsh, School Principal, who has specialist training in this area, will be available to clarify this.

## **Curriculum Matters**

- Curriculum Content- the curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. Each class teacher will teach content for their class level.

- Where an outside speaker is used, the class teacher will remain in the classroom, as per circular 22/2010. The speaker will be made aware of the school's RSE policy.
- The RSE programme for senior classes (Busy Bodies) will be implemented on a biennial cycle in the last term every second year on odd years e.g. 2017/2019/2021 etc.
- The Stay Safe programme will be implemented throughout the school. The Stay Safe Programme will be taught during a 6 week block in January/February every second year on even years (2018/2020/2022 etc.) by all class teachers.

## Content

### Stay Safe Programme

Resource materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education (DES 1998 and redrafted 2016)

All the content of the RSE programme will be covered by the time the children leave sixth class. One  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour per week is timetabled for SPHE and RSE will be included in the programme taught then. Class teachers will usually take their own classes for RSE. For sensitive areas a guest speaker may be availed of for the senior classes if class teacher(s) prefer.

### Terminology

In teaching issues related to RSE teachers will use the correct biological terms for parts of the body.

**Topics Covered up to 2<sup>nd</sup> class include:**

- Keeping Safe
- Bodily changes during growth and birth (birth to 9)
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life
- Recognising and expressing feelings
- Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep
- Expressing opinions and listening to others
- Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/Senior Infants)
- Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>)

**Topics from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> 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 (Fourth class)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (Fifth and Sixth Class)
- Reproductive system of male/female adults (Fifth and Sixth Class)
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (Fifth and Sixth class)

**Organisational Matters**

- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme
- If children are withdrawn from lessons pertaining to the sensitive elements of the RSE programme, they must give notice in writing to the school that they are withdrawing their child. Where possible, the child will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom.
- Parents have a responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE. Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns. (Curriculum materials and other resources are available at <http://www.pdst.ie/primary/RSE> )
- In the class situation children will be encouraged to recognise that certain information is for them only and it would be inappropriate to discuss with younger siblings/children for example.
- With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom.
- If a teacher has concerns about teaching the sensitive elements in RSE they should consult with the Principal. Any teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive elements of RSE. It is the responsibility of the B.O.M. to ensure that content is covered by another teacher or outside speaker.

### **Dealing with Questions**

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE.

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum and the school's Catholic ethos. Certain topics are not in the primary RSE/SPHE programme and will not be discussed i.e. abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception.

Questions to the teacher may be oral or written within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. If any questions asked by children are deemed inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to parents/guardians, or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum, or in post-primary school. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information. **With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom outside of the RSE lessons.**

The following considerations will be made when responding to children's questions:

- Awareness of circumstances in which the question has arisen
- Clarification of what information is required
- Determination of whether the question is appropriate or relevant/who it is relevant to
- Provision of an age appropriate answer
- Deferral of the question to be answered at home or in the future

## Parental Involvement

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and resources if they wish (see also <http://www.pdst.ie/primary/RSE>)
- Regular contact will be made with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving 'sensitive elements' of the RSE programme, in the form of the RSE manual home/school links pages or contact by letter etc.
- Parents will be informed in advance when formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme are to be taught and will be asked to discuss these issues with their child prior to the lessons in schools.
- The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme acts as a support to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes.

## Resources

- Relationships and Sexuality Manuals (DES). Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual.
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Busy Bodies DVD and Booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class component of RSE within the context of SPHE. It is available to download at [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)
- All resources are available for parents/guardian to view if they so request prior to the delivery of the programme

## Provision of Ongoing Support

- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members. Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in relation to RSE.
- Application for in-school support from the PDST will be sought when/if necessary
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials.

## Ratification

This policy was reviewed in January/February 2017 and ratified in February 2017. This policy will be reviewed after every two year cycle. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on :

Date: 09/02/2017.

Signed: Joan Murphy.

Chairperson

## Review

This policy will be reviewed in ~~2020~~

*after new  
DoE guidelines*

