

**ST. BRIGID'S BOYS' SCHOOL
MART LANE
FOXROCK**

**RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY
EDUCATION POLICY**

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement

All schools are required to have an RSE Policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including the sensitive aspects. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE Programme within SPHE both formally and informally. This RSE policy was reviewed in 2022.

School Philosophy

St. Brigid's BNS is a Catholic school and therefore all policies developed are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the ethos of the school. We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The curriculum also encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and the wider community. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that we value respect, tolerance and openness. Parents have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting our children to develop into healthy young adults.

Definition of RSE

RSE 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

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education 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 their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development

Current Provision

Current Provision included in the School Curriculum is

- SPHE lessons
- Use of the RSE manuals
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Webwise resources
- All Together Now- Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying lessons
- Religious Education

Aims of R.S.E. programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing 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 awe and wonder at the process of human birth and new life.
- To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

Objectives of the R.S.E. programme:

The R.S.E. Programme should enable the child to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop and appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others
- Develop a positive sense of self- awareness, self- esteem and self-worth
- Understand the nature, growth, development of relationships within families, in friendships and wider contexts
- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self- identity
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse.
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Child Protection
- Substance Use
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti- Bullying
- Admission
- Acceptable Use
- Healthy Eating Practices (in homework journal)

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of R.S.E. in our school.

Curriculum Matters

The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from Infants to 6th class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for S.P.H.E. and the R.S.E policy.

- As we are following the 2 year plan, the strands 'Growing and Changing' and 'Taking Care of my body' are covered in Junior Infants, 1st, 3rd, and 5th classes. The R.S.E. manuals will be used by teachers to complement their teaching.
- The sensitive lessons are covered as part of these broad topics.
- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met.
- Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

Organisational Matters

RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum

Myself - Growing and Changing
- Taking Care of my Body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts

1. The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE.
 - Friendship
 - Self- Identity
 - Family
 - Self- Esteem
 - Growing Up
2. The second section will deal with any sensitive/specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive areas are in **bold**.

<p>Topics covered up to 2nd include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Keeping safe● Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)● Making age appropriate choices● Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of 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 the parts of the male/female body using appropriate terms (Jun, Sen Inf)● Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st, 2nd)	<p>Topics from 3rd- 6th include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bodily Changes● Healthy Eating, personal hygiene and exercise● Keeping Safe● Expressing feelings● Making healthy and responsible decisions● Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these families shape us● Forming friendships● Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (3rd class)● Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th)● Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th, 6th)● Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th, 6th)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th)
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Parental Involvement

- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the R.S.E. strands of the S.P.H.E. programme, including sensitive aspects, at admission.
- Parents will be informed in advance, giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teachers if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children.
- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.
- Following discussion with the Principal and Class teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be centrally filed.
- If a child is withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lesson.

Dealing with Questions

- All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum.
- Certain topics will not be discussed.
- No personal questions will be answered.
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions.
- The question box will be availed of by the teacher.
- Questions arising will be considered in an age appropriate manner.
- The teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class.
- Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme and will refer the child to their parents.
- Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and policy. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature to themselves or discloses personal information.

Language

The SPHE curriculum provides a context in which the children are given opportunities to develop their language skills and increase their vocabulary. When used positively, language can show respect to another human but if used negatively it can hurt and demean. Relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings the use of slang will be discouraged. It is our duty to stop and educate should we hear words being used in a derogatory fashion.

Approaches and Methodologies

When implementing the programme staff at St. Brigid's BNS will endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age- appropriate manner at all times. The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants to 6th Class. It will be taught in a spiral curriculum. The RSE curriculum will be taught through

- stories and poems

- Classroom discussion
- Group work
- Games
- Art activities
- Reflection
- Circle Time
- Guest Speaker
- Question boxes

Assessment

The teacher will use

- Observation
- Teacher- designed tasks

Confidentiality

The school follows Children First Guidelines 2011 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011.

Resources

Each class teacher has access to a copy of the appropriate RSE manual. Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE are

- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster.
- RESPECT guidelines

Provision of Ongoing Support

- Opportunities provided by Blackrock Education Centre will be brought to the attention of the staff.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE
- Support from a PDST advisor
- Staff meetings used as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2024. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

The Board of Management of St. Brigid's B.N.S. ratified this policy on

Signed:

Date: 28th February 2022



Chairperson, Board of Management

APPENDIX 1

Dear Parents,

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of the SPHE programme. The sensitive areas of the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme are covered under the Strand Units, 'Growing and Changing' and 'Taking Care of my Body'. We will be completing these Strand Units in the following weeks

<p>Topics covered up to 2nd include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Keeping safe● Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)● Making age appropriate choices● Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of 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 the parts of the male/female body using appropriate terms (Jun, Sen Inf)● Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st, 2nd)	<p>Topics from 3rd- 6th include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bodily Changes● Healthy Eating, personal hygiene and exercise● Keeping Safe● Expressing feelings● Making healthy and responsible decisions● Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these families shape us● Forming friendships● Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (3rd class)● Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th)● Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th, 6th)● Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th, 6th)● Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th)
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The class teacher will send home appropriate home school links pages from the Relationships and Sexuality manual which outline the material that will be covered in class and encourage further discussion on the topics at home.

If you have any concerns, please make an appointment to see the class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX 2

All Families

Strand	Myself and My Family
Jun/ Sen Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and name people who constitute a family and appreciate that all family units are not the same● Identify and talk about those who live at home and recognise that homes and families can vary● Explore and discuss different kind of families, recognising that families vary in structure, the way they communicate and in the way family members spend their time.● Explore and discuss families and homes and how they can vary in many ways single- parent, two- parent, step-parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, group homes, hostels
1 st /2 nd Class	
3 rd /4 th Class	
5 th /6 th Class	

Sample Responses

A child can't have 2 mums or 2 dads! A child can't just have a mum or just a dad! ***"Some families have a Mum and a Dad, or just a mum or just a Dad and some have 2 mums and 2 dads, but what is important is that a family ia a place where there is love"*** That's weird! ***"Sometimes we think things are weird when they are different, or haven't seen them before, but it's not nice to call families weird"*** That's not a real family! ***"Families come in all shapes and sizes, and what's most important about a family is that children have adults and parents who care and look after them, and that's what makes a family"***

Talking about home

- When asking the children about their homes ensure all children can discuss their family types
- Represent all family types when doing family tree or examples of families

Asking questions

- If children ask questions about all families always talk about what makes families special regardless of who are the parents
- Age appropriate definitions for the terms gay and lesbian can be given from Stay Safe lessons

Lesbian: A woman who wants to have a loving relationship with another woman

Gay: A man who wants to have a loving relationship with another man.

Improper language

-Do not let children use words inappropriately either intentionally or innocently especially referring to people or things as gay.

"If children use the word 'gay' in a pejorative way to call another child a name, for example, 'You're so gay', tell them this is inappropriate. Explain to them that words that people use to describe themselves are acceptable (e.g. gay, lesbian), but it is not acceptable to use these words in a derogatory way to hurt people. Using the word 'gay' in a negative way to mean something is rubbish is also inappropriate. This could be hurtful for gay people who hear it or to those who have a gay relative or friend. Ask them to think of a word that actually means what they intended. Discuss the importance of treating others with respect.

Stay Safe Manual

Special Occasions

-Encourage all children to discuss their special day and be sensitive on days when Mother's Day or Father's Day might mean something different.