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Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha

Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement

Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha recognises 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 through the lived experience of the children and the school community. 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 school and children to develop into healthy young adults.

Scoil a mBuachaillí, Ardacha is an all-boys primary school under the patronage of the Diocese of Cork and Ross. We strive to proactively nurture and educate each child to his fullest potential and at every stage of his development. We believe in striking balance and we encourage the cultivation of strong relationships within the school and community.

Definition of RSE

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In particular, it addresses the meaning of human relationships, sexuality, growth and development and the personal and social skills relevant to these topics.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

RSE is an integral part of SPHE. SPHE is taught through school atmosphere and culture, integration and discrete teaching time. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for pupils to

learn personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

SPHE:

- Is a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and is not confined to once off lessons.
- Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community.
- Is a generic approach. It is not so much about the specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues.
- Is based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements.
- Is spiral in nature, RSE is revisited at different stages through the child's time in Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha. This will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for topics and issues to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's need, abilities and levels of maturity.
- Engages children to be involved in activity-based learning. RSE should provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one's own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships.

Through SPHE and RSE members of the school community should be enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through

- A sense of identity
- A sense of purpose
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of security
- A sense of competence

Our school has a responsibility have a responsibility to ensure that our curriculum is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with (SPHE Teacher guidelines p25). In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an intercultural society.

Current Provision of RSE (Scoil na mBuachaillí Ardacha SPHE Plan)

YEAR 1

YEAR 2

Months	Content	Months	Content
Sept-Oct	Weaving Wellbeing/Walk Tall	Sept Oct	Weaving Wellbeing/Walk Tall
Nov-Dec	Weaving Wellbeing/Walk Tall	Nov-Dec	Weaving Wellbeing/Walk Tall
Jan-Feb	RSE	Jan-Feb	Stay Safe
March-April	RSE	March-April	Stay Safe
May-June	Walk Tall/Citizenship	May-June	Walk Tall/Citizenship

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September/October	Self-identity (Myself)	Myself and my family (Myself and others)
November/December	My friends and Myself other people (Myself and others)	Relating to others (Myself and others)
January/February	Safety and protection (Myself) Stay Safe	Growing and changing (Myself) RSE
March/April	Making Decisions (Myself)	Taking care of my body (Myself)
May/June	Media education (Myself and the wider world)	Developing citizen ship (Myself and the wider world)

Whole School Approach

We teach RSE as outlined in the 1999 Curriculum:

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Linkage to Stay Safe Programme
- Linkage to Walk Tall Programme
- PDST Website
- RESPECT Guidelines
- Different Families Same Love Poster
- Resources for SEN from www.pdst.ie
- Religious Education (Grow in Love Programmes)
- Weaving Wellbeing (Enrichment programme).

Aims of our RSE programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child
- To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- 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- Fifth and Sixth Class
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty- Senior Classes
- 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.

Broad Objectives

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should enable the child to (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum)

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop an 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 and development of relationships within families, in friendships and wider context
- 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.

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 of the members of the school community.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of behaviour and discipline
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Formal Lessons:

- Informing/Communicating with Parents.
- Special Arrangements (including guest speakers 42/2018, staged teaching of sensitive lessons e.g. menstruation).
- Supporting Children with SEN
- The formal lessons in RSE will follow the 1999 SPHE curriculum.
- Formal RSE lessons are taught to all classes.
- The PDST RSE manuals are the key resource for formal RSE lessons and may be supplemented by resources in line with our school's SPHE Plan and RSE Policy.

Management of RSE:

- The strands Growing and Changing, and Taking Care of my Body are covered in Year One of a 2 year SPHE plan.
- RSE is taught in term two.
- The sensitive lessons are covered as part of these broad topics (as outlined below and see appendix 1).
- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

- Where an outside speaker is used, this practice will be in line with circular 42/2018.

Parental Involvement

We aim to communicate openly with parents about the teaching of RSE. Therefore, parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme at enrolment.

- Parents will be informed in advance on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level, example of letter see Appendix 2.
- **Distribute Parental Booklets from HSE.**
- The letter will be issued in advance of teaching lessons, 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.
- This gives parents an opportunity 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 may view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher by appointment if they have any concerns at any time of the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- 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 filed.
- 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 in the school yard.

Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from 2nd to 6th class. 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 aspects are in **bold**.

<u>Topics covered up to 2nd include:</u>	<u>Topics from 3rd to 6th include:</u>
<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 anatomical terms (Junior/ Senior Infants) • Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily changes • Healthy Eating, personal hygiene and exercise • Keeping safe • Expressing feelings • Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family 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, 4th, 5th and 6th class) • Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6th class) • Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th and 6th class) • Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship (5th and 6th class)

Sensitive content 5th and 6th class

Approaches and Methodologies:

Active Learning Methodologies are an integral part of teaching SPHE and RSE. Any or all of the following techniques will allow the child to play an active part in the learning process:

- Discussion
- Role Play
- Interviewing friends, other school pupils or family members
- Surveys of attitudes
- Analysing and evaluating newspapers and magazines.
- Hosting visitors
- Projects
- Designing advertisements
- Writing captions
- Ranking statements
- Describing photographs
- Viewing and discussing video clips

When implementing the RSE programme we at Scoil na mBuachaillí Ardacha will endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds of our pupils. The curriculum will be taught in an age and developmentally appropriate manner. The curriculum will be taught to all classes. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum. The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.

The RSE Curriculum will be taught through:

- Stories and poems
- Classroom discussion
- Group-work
- Games
- Art activities
- Reflection
- Circle time
- Guest speaker (The class teacher will stay in the room at all times in accordance with Circular 42/2018)

Differentiation:

Teachers use assessment and professional judgement to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class. Some techniques used:

- Ensuring that objectives are realistic for the students
- Ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups and spending more time on tasks.
- Organising the learning task into small stages and ensuring that the language used is pitched at the student's level of understanding
- Understanding of the activity using task analysis, outlining the steps to be learned/ completed in any given task, posing key questions to guide students through the different stages/ processes, and to assist in self-direction and correction.
- Having short and varied tasks creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible every day materials, and by displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.

Something the stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching.

- Group work and discussion
- Higher and lower order questioning in groups
- Moderated whole class discussions through use of a Question Box

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/guardians (and outside agencies if applicable) in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

- Children may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work
- Children may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material.
- Any different or specific objectives related to the pupils own learning needs should be detailed in their support plans.

Language

Language reflects values, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and principles.

It not only helps to express a culture but influences and shapes that culture as well. It is essential that children are enabled to use language in a precise and appropriate manner.

Ways in which language is used in RSE

- 1) The formal use and teaching of language generally throughout the school
- 2) The use of language in discussion through your formal RSE lesson

Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching

- Relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used, the use of slang will be discouraged.
- Anatomical terms and language introduced is consistent with RSE Materials Books

Questions

In teaching RSE, we do not invalidate questions but use limits.

We use some simple principles when fostering discussion and questioning

- No personal questions of the teacher
- A Question Box may be availed of by the children
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any queries
- Questions do not have to be answered straight away

Sample responses:

- I'll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them
- That's something you'll learn about as you get older
- Is that something you could talk to your parents/guardian, family about?
- We agreed in our contract that we wouldn't ask anyone personal questions
- Somebody asked a question and the language they used was slang language, what they meant to ask was.....

For older children a Question Box may be used as part of a structured RSE lesson. Teachers can follow up on the written questions at a later date, thus allowing time to prepare suitable answers, consult with colleagues etc.

Question Box

During the delivery of each section of the sensitive lessons- children may be encouraged to place their questions into a box in the classroom. These questions will then be monitored and screened with the teacher answering the questions the following week taking into account the following:

- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner
- The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for the class
- Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme and they will be advised to talk with their parents
- Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is very inappropriate or needs to be communicated with home because of other reasons
- No personal questions will be answered and children will be reminded not to share personal information about their families or others- but can share with teacher after the lessons.

If issues arise which might be seen to contravene Children First Guidelines, the teacher will notify the Designated Liaison Person (Anne McCarthy) in the school.

Assessment

Assessment in RSE is important to enable the teacher to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group.

The teacher uses:

- Observation and questions to assess the children's engagement and interest
- Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games
- Learning log in the form of an SPHE copy (or folder).

Confidentiality

- The school follows Children First Guidelines 2017, Child Protection Procedures 2017 and Our Child Safeguarding Statement.
- If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues, we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform her about what happened.

Resources

We chose our RSE resources carefully in Scoil na mBuachaillí Ardacha. We are aware that RSE Resources books, Walk Tall and Stay Safe, Busy Bodies and Tom's Power Flower (parent resource) are the resources sanctioned by the Department of Education.

- Relationships and Sexuality Education Manuals (DES). Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it online/pdf format. Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme.
- Anatomical Dolls and Story Books
- Busy Bodies DVD and booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class component of RSE within the context of SPHE. It is available for download at www.healthpromotion.ie
- Picture books across the 9 grounds of equality
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster
- RESPECT guidelines

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 RSE.
- PDST in school support.
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials.
- Promotion and communication of resources available from www.pdst.ie and healthpromotion.ie

Review

The policy will be reviewed in 2025. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on the 17th of October 2022.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____



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Dear parents and guardians,

Relationships and Sexuality education is an integral part of the SPHE programme. The sensitive elements 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 with all class levels in the forthcoming 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 variety of family life that exists in our school and community • Recognising and expressing feelings • Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep • Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior / Senior Infants) <i>The language taught at this level will be Penis Vulva Womb Breast Breastfeeding</i> • Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions(1st/2nd) <i>The language taught at this level will be Penis Vulva Vagina Womb Breast Breastfeeding Urethra</i> 	<p>Topics from 3rd to 6th include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily changes • Healthy eating, personal hygiene • Expressing Feelings • Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family 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) <i>The language taught at this level will be a revision of previously taught language and umbilical cord changes in puberty</i> • Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class) • Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th/6th class) • Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th /6th class) • Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship (5th / 6th class) <i>The language taught at this level will be a revision of above and wet dreams Busy Bodies language Semen Sexual Intercourse Period Menstruation</i>
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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.

Le meas,

Anne McCarthy