

# Scoil Eoin Phóil

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## R.S.E Policy 2021/22

### School Details

Scoil Eoin Phóil is a co-educational school in Leixlip, Co Kildare. It is a vertical school. The school has a Catholic ethos. There are 17 teachers – 12 mainstream classes, 4 SEN teachers and the Principal.

### 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. The first RSE policy was developed in 2003 and has been revised on an ongoing basis.

### School Philosophy

Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, we wish the 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 values 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 children to develop into healthy young adults.

### Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education 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 physical, social and moral development and of relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. It aims to help children to learn, at home and in school about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others.

## **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 being sensitive to the feelings and rights of others.

It is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. RSE forms part of this programme. It is a spiral programme which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout the child's primary school years.

Through SPHE and RSE, the children are 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.

## **Current Provision in the School Curriculum**

- SPHE lessons
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Webwise resources
- Adapted resources for SEN from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)
- Religious Education: Grow in Love Programme

## **Aims of our RSE Programme**

- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing 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
- 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**

The RSE curriculum in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum enables the child to:

- 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 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.

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**

- SPHE Curriculum
- Grow in Love Religion Programme
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Administration of Medicine Policy

## **Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School**

### Curriculum Content

- The curriculum will be taught from infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class.
- One half hour per week is timetabled for SPHE. RSE will be included in this time period.
- Some aspects of RSE including the sensitive areas will be taught through a number of core time periods.
- 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 the content for their class level each year as laid out in the curriculum, and utilising the RSE manuals to complement their teaching.
- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

### Parental Involvement

- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme.
- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, see Appendix 2
- The letter will be issued in advance, **giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teachers or Principal if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children.** It also gives parents an opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare their child/ren for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and to discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE.
- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher / Principal if they have any concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.

### Withdrawal of a child from RSE

**Our RSE programme is inclusive so we actively discourage withdrawal. However, should a parent wish to withdraw their child from RSE lessons, the school will accede to the request on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of the child's education themselves. The onus**

is on the parent to inform the school **in writing** of this decision on an annual basis as it is possible changes may occur in the curriculum over the eight year period. This written document must contain specific reasons why the parent(s)/guardian(s) have withdrawn their child and also specifically highlight which lessons in particular they wish to withdraw for. If a child is withdrawn, the school cannot guarantee that other children will not inform the child in question of the content of the lessons or that the children in the class may not refer incidentally in class to aspects of the lesson during subsequent days/weeks.

### Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the curriculum SPHE and will be taught from infants 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 complements 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**. For more details see Appendix 1

<p><u>Topics covered up to 2<sup>nd</sup> include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping safe</li> <li>• <b>Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)</b></li> <li>• Making age-appropriate choices</li> <li>• Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community</li> <li>• Recognising and expressing feelings</li> </ul>	<p><u>Topics from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bodily changes</b></li> <li>• Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise</li> <li>• Keeping safe</li> <li>• Expressing feelings</li> <li>• Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family relationships shape us</li> <li>• Making healthy and responsible decisions</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep</li> <li>• Expressing opinions and listening to others</li> <li>• <b>Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/ Senior Infants)</b></li> <li>• <b>Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forming friendships</li> <li>• <b>Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb(3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Introduction to puberty and changes (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty ( 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Reproductive system of male/female adults (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> class).</b></li> </ul>
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### **Approaches & Methodologies**

When implementing the programme, staff at Scoil Eoin Phoill will endeavor 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 through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals). 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 22/2010).

### **Differentiation**

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

- group work and discussion
- higher and lower order questioning in groups
- organising the learning task into small stages and ensuring the language is pitched at the child's level of understanding.
- Moderated whole class discussion through the use of a Question Box

### **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Adaptions to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/ guardians 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 classroom support plan/ school support plan / school support plan plus in consultation with S.E.N /parent(s) / guardian(s).

### **Language**

When used positively, language affirms and shows respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner is, hurt, diminishes and demeans. Children are taught to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationship and their everyday interactions. There are 2 areas where the use of language is applied in RSE lessons.

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

#### Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching

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

### **Questions**

## **We will use the following principles when fostering discussion and questioning**

- No personal questions of the teacher
- The Question Box will be availed of by the children
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions
- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age appropriate manner. The teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the curriculum objectives for the class level. Children will be advised to talk to parents in these instances.

## **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 / guardians / 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....
- A question was asked, and we cannot talk about that particular topic but I think that question was about.
- For older children a 'question box' will 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 will 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 a 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 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
- Use of reflection or learning log.

## **Confidentiality**

- Scoil Eoin Phóil follows Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017
- If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues, we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what happened.

## **Resources**

1. Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials (DES) –
2. Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it in online / pdf format. Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:
  - Stay Safe programme
  - Walk Tall Programme
  - Busy Bodies DVD and Booklet. The DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class component of RSE within the context of SPHE.
  - Picture books across the 9 grounds of equality
  - Anatomically correct dolls (4)

See Resources for S.P.H.E: Appendix B

## **Provision of Ongoing Support**

- Opportunities provided by Kildare or West Dublin Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials
- Support from a PDST Advisor
- Promotion and communication of resources available from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie).

### **Review**

The policy will be reviewed after every two years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise.

### **Communication**

This Policy will be on the school website.

The plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on \_\_\_\_\_(date).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

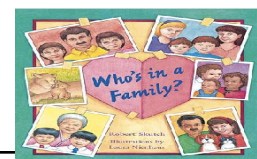
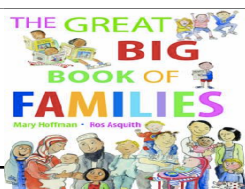
### Appendix 1: Sensitive Language

<b>Class</b>	<b>Strand /Strand Unit</b>	<b><u>Sensitive Content Objectives</u></b> consult curriculum for complete objectives in <b>Growing/ Changing and Taking Care of my Body</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Pages in RSE Manuals for sensitive objectives</b>	<b>Pages in Walk Tall for sensitive objectives</b>	<b>Supplementary resources</b>
Junior /Senior Infants	Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body	<u>Growing and changing</u> Become aware of new life and birth in the womb <u>Taking care of my body</u> Develop an awareness of human birth. Taking care of my body Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms	Womb, Breast Breastfeeding Penis, Vulva?	New Life p68 My Body p147 Caring for New Life p137	Senior Infants Our Amazing Bodies p94	Anatomically correct dolls Picture books of new baby Visit of baby to class
First/ Second Class	Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body	<u>Growing and changing</u> Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles <u>Taking care of my body</u> Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions: lungs, stomach, kidneys	Penis, Vagina, vulva, womb, breast - feeding, Urethra 1st class urine 2nd class urethra girls Penis boys	The Wonder of new Life p59 /151 How my Body Works p67/ 161 Growing Means Changing p77/171	Second Class Our Amazing Bodies p37	Picture books of going to the doctor Books / activities on Life cycles Birth and new life in nature
Third/ Fourth Class	Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body	<u>Growing and changing</u> Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal <u>Taking care of my body</u> Recognize and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty Discuss the stages and sequence of development of	Revise above. Umbilical cord Changes in Puberty Ovaries, eggs, periods, hormones, mood swings. (4th class)	Preparing for New Life p69 The wonder of new life p169 As I Grow and Change p93 Growing and Changing p195	Third Class as I Grow I Change p175 Fourth Class Seven Changing and Growing p140	Body Systems Picture books on Growing and Changing

		human baby from conception to birth				
Fifth/ Sixth Class	Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body	<u>Growing and changing</u> Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship Discuss the stages and sequence of the human baby in the womb: 5 <sup>th</sup> class umbilical cord 6 <sup>th</sup> class A new baby is a miracle: pp 213-215 <u>Taking care of my body</u> Identify and discuss the physical changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults	Revise above <u>Busy Bodies</u> <u>language</u> Semen Sexual intercourse Periods  <u>Language:</u> Puberty:Girls ●Ovaries, ●Ovum, Fallopian tube, Womb/uterus Cervix, Menstruation Puberty:Boys Penis, Testicle, Scrotum, Sperm, Erection, wet dreams (Girls and boys learn these terms)	My Body Grows and Changes p81 The Wonder of New Life p92 Caring for New Life p103 Different Kinds of Love p141	Fifth Class My Amazing Body p345 Sixth Class Creation p121	Busy Bodies PowerPoint recap Question Box Puberty Quizzes Busy Bodies DVDs Power points recap Question Box Puberty Quizzes

## All Families

Strand	Myself and my family
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and name the people who constitute a family and appreciate that all family units are not the same</li> <li>Identify and talk about those who live at home and recognise that homes and families can vary</li> <li>Explore and discuss different kinds of families, recognising that families vary in structure, in the way they communicate and in the way family members spend their time</li> <li>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</li> </ul>
First and Second class	
Third and Fourth class	
Fifth and Sixth class	



- These picture books present a variety of family types in a sensitive and inclusive way
- You can use the picture books as a 'way in' and starting point, to discussions and critical thinking around different family types or the books can be used to make all families visible so they are appreciated and accepted in an informal way
- These picture books can be used to expose children to a variety of families which will help affirm and create respect for difference
- Use of Socratic questioning will help when using these books
- Having some short factual responses prepared will also be useful too.

### **Sample Responses**

A child can't have two mums or two dads! A child can't just a mum or just a dad!

***"Some families have a Mom and a Dad, or just a Mum or just a Dad and some have two moms and two dads, but what is most important is that a family is 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 that all children can discuss their family types
- Represent all family types when doing family trees or examples of families

### **Improper Language**

- Don't let children use words inappropriately either intentionally or innocently especially referring to people or things as gay

### **Asking questions**

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

### **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

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## Stay Safe Programme

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s),

Over the next few weeks, we will continue to teach a personal safety education programme called Stay Safe. As you have been informed, the aim of the Stay Safe programme is to teach children personal safety skills so that they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous. We have already dealt with and discussed common situations which most children will experience at some stage or other, e.g., getting lost or being bullied. The next step of the programme teaches children the safety skills necessary to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse and emphasises the importance of telling a trusted adult about any problems they have.

It is important that parents are aware of the content of the Stay Safe lessons and are able to discuss the lessons with their children. We encourage you to continue discussing these lessons with your child. You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at

[www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm](http://www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm).

Kind regards,

Mr O'Boyle

## Bibliography

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