# 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
- 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 heathy 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

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Topics covered up to 2 <sup>nd</sup> include:	Topics from 3 <sup>rd</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> include:				
Keeping safe	Bodily changes				
<ul> <li>Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)</li> </ul>	Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise				
Making age-appropriate choices	Keeping safe				
Appreciating the variety of family types and	Expressing feelings				
the variety of family life that exists in our school and community	Appreciating the variety of family types within our				
	school and community and how these family				
<ul> <li>Recognising and expressing feelings</li> </ul>	relationships shape us				

Making healthy and responsible decisions

- · 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).

- · Forming friendships
- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb(3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> class)
- Introduction to puberty and changes (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Reproductive system of male/female adults
   (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)
- Understanding sexual intercourse,
   conception and birth within the context of a
   committed loving relationship (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> class).

# **Approaches & Methodologies**

When implementing the programme, staff at Scoil Eoin Phoil 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.

# **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 v	will be on the so	hool website.			
The plan wa	s ratified by the	Board of Manager	ment at a meeting	on	(date).
Signature:	Mary	F. Kurned	Chairpers	on.Date:	2022
Signature:	Sein	o' Boyl	Principal.	Date:	2022

# **Appendix 1: Sensitive Language**

Class	Strand	Sensitive Content	Language	Pages in	Pages in Walk Tall for	Supplementary
		Objectives		_	sensitive objectives	resources
	Unit	consult curriculum for		Manuals		
		complete objectives in		for		
		Growing/ Changing and		sensitive		
		Taking Care of my Body		objectives		
		Growing and changing	Womb, Breast		Senior Infants Our	Anatomically
1			Breastfeeding		Amazing Bodies p94	correct dolls
Infants	l	and birth in the womb	Penis, Vulva?			Picture books of
	0	Develop an awareness of	1	p147		new baby
	-	human birth.		Caring for		Visit of baby to
	care of my	Taking care of my body		New Life		class
	body	Name parts of the male and		p137		
		female body using				
		anatomical terms				
i	i				Second Class Our	Picture books of
	_				Amazing Bodies p37	going to the
Class	and	, ,		p59 /151		doctor
	"	and death are all part of new	_	How my		Books / activities
		1 2		Body Works		on Life cycles
			1st class urine	r		Birth and new
		1		Growing		life in nature
		, ,		Means		
		1		Changing		
		terms and identify some of		p77/171		
		their functions: lungs,				
		stomach, kidneys				
i	I -		Revise above.		i	Body Systems
1		1 2			Change p175	Picture books on
Class	i	changes taking place in both	_	_	Fourth Class Seven	Growing and
					Changing and Growing	Changing
			Ovaries, eggs,		p140	
			μ ′	p169		
				As I Grow		
		_	mood swings.	_		
		different is normal		p93		
		Taking care of my body		Growing		
		Recognize and discuss how		and		
	1	feelings and emotions are		Changing		
		affected by the physical		p195		
	1	changes that take place				
		during puberty				
1		Discuss the stages and				
		sequence of development of				

		human baby from conception to birth				
Fifth/	M16	l 1	D:'1	M D - 1	Figh Class May Associate	D D. 1'
	Myself	Growing and changing	Revise above	, , ,	Fifth Class My Amazing	, ,
					1 2 1	PowerPoint
Class	1	intercourse, conception and		Changes	Creation p121	recap
		birth within the context of a	1	μ		Question Box
			intercourse	The Wonder		Puberty Quizzes
		relationship	Periods	of New Life		Busy Bodies
		Discuss the stages and		p92		DVDs
		sequence of the human baby		Caring for		Power points
		in the womb:		New Life		recap
		5 <sup>th</sup> class umbilical cord	Language:	p103		Question Box
		6 <sup>th</sup> class A new baby is a	Puberty:Girls	Different		Puberty Quizzes
		miracle: pp 213-215	Ovaries,	Kinds of		
		Taking care of my body	●Ovum,	Love p141		
			Fallopian			
		physical changes that occur	tube,			
		in boys and girls with the	Womb/uterus			
		onset of puberty and	Cervix,			
			Menstruation			
		place at different rates for	Puberty:Boys			
		Г	Penis,			
		Understand the reproductive				
		system of both male and	Scrotum,			
		female adults	Sperm,			
			Erection, wet			
			dreams			
			(Girls and			
			boys learn			
			these terms)			
			ĺ	]		

# **All Families**

Strand	Myself and my family				
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul> <li>Identify and name the people who constitute a family and appreciate that all family units are not the same</li> </ul>				
First and Second	<ul> <li>Identify and talk about those who live at home and recognise that homes and</li> </ul>				
class	families can vary				
	<ul> <li>Explore and discuss different kinds of families, recognising that families vary in</li> </ul>				
Third and Fourth class	structure, in 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				
Fifth and Sixth class	single-parent, two-parent, step-parents, adoptive parents, foster-parents, group homes, hostels				







- · 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
 reefing to people or things as gay

# Asking questions

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

children to discuss their special

Encourage all 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.

Kind regards,

Mr O'Boyle

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