



**Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
Policy**

**Ceann Eitigh National School
Kinnitty National School**

Introductory Statement & Rationale:

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Kinnitty National School. This policy is set out in accordance with the Department of Education and Skill's requirement for National Schools to provide a broad Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme, of which RSE is an integral part. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE

School Philosophy & Ethos:

Kinnitty National School is a co-educational, Catholic primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

Kinnitty National School is a school with a Catholic ethos and has due recognition for all other religions.

Our school endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupil's respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

Kinnitty National School is a Catholic school and is concerned with the development of relationships, the love of God and humanity in general and the education of the whole human being. It is therefore the responsibility of all partners (teachers, parents, management) to ensure that the RSE programme should be consistent with the core moral values and ethos of the school.

SPHE permeates all aspects of school life. It is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom.

The environment is such that the child is encouraged and stimulated to be confident, appreciate, independent and creative. The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme will be implemented within this framework

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.

Definition of RSE:

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an fundamental 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 that help them think and act in a caring and

responsible way. It addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth, and development, relevant to personal and social skills with the hope of developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information for their age-group.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE:

In Kinnitty NS, RSE will be taught in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education. Throughout the school year, SPHE is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to 6th class. SPHE is a subject on the school curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. The content of the schools SPHE programme are broad which covers topics such as healthy eating, alcohol and drug awareness, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as RSE, delivered at an age-appropriate level. As SPHE is a lifelong process, RSE is a continual process and is not confined to one off lessons throughout Primary School. The RSE Programme uses a spiral approach spanning from Junior Infants to Sixth Class which builds on and returns to similar topics each year, appropriate to the age of the children, ensuring that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years.

Current Provisions & Policies which support RSE in the School Curriculum:

- Timetabled SPHE lessons (as per DES Guidelines)
- Use of PDST 'Making the Links' (SPHE planning framework)
- RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Webwise resources
- Adapted resources for SEN from www.pdst.ie
- As part of the Religious Education (Grow in Love Programme)
- On an integrated cross curricular basis
- School's Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Anti -Bullying Policy

Aims of our RSE Programme:

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.

- To help children 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 older 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.
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School:

Content:

The content objectives covered will be taught as laid down by the Department of Education and Science in the SPHE Curriculum 1999.

- RSE will be taught in all classes.
- The SPHE/RSE curriculum will be of a spiral nature and all content objectives will be covered by the time children leave 6th class.
- All resources used in the teaching of the programme will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and in the spirit of this policy.
- For an outline of the RSE programme and the vocabulary to be taught in the sensitive areas - see Appendix 1.
- For the Letter Home to Parents - see Appendix 2

Parents:

Parents are acknowledged as primary educators of their children and the schoolwork in partnership with them on a supportive role.

- Each year prior to implementation of the RSE programme parents are to be informed of the relevant content covered in the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme.
- A home/school link page accompanying the lessons will be sent home and parents will be encouraged to discuss the topic by sharing Resource materials which are available to view online at www.pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/RSE and <https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Talking-to-Your-Young-Child-about-Relationships-Sexuality-and-Growing-Up.pdf> if parents wish to do so.
- Parents have the responsibility to become involved; to inform themselves of the programme content; to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and to discuss areas covered in school in RSE/ SPHE with their children.

- If a parent has a particular concern/ issue in relation to the teachings of the RSE programme, they are encouraged to discuss same with the teacher or the principal.
- Following the above, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from their sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so, which will be centrally filed. They will also be asked to include a sentence stipulating that they will take full responsibility to teach RSE to their child instead.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lesson, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons, for example, what they may hear on yard.

Teachers:

It is envisaged that all aspects of SPHE and RSE will be taught by class teachers to their own classes.

- Teachers will teach only the topics laid down for the class and will answer only those questions related to the topics taught.
- A question box may be used throughout lessons where appropriate.
- Pupils will be informed that questions/issues not on the programme cannot be addressed and they should be discussed with their parents.
- Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is inappropriate.
- When opportunities arise, Teachers may attend Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in the area of RSE, for example, RSE courses offered in local Education centres.

Differentiation:

The very nature of RSE education, and the differing maturity and growth levels of children mean that some children will need more support to understand the concepts and content. Sometimes the stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching.

Usually, some simple approaches can aid the teacher and children such as:

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

Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are met. Considering the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

Learning activities can be made meaningful, relevant and achievable for students, by using differentiated approaches and methodologies such as:

- Consultation with and/or involvement in the Individual Education Planning process
- Teacher observation
- Organising an appropriate learning programme for students with learning difficulties
- The pre-teaching of language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work
- Organising children to work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable materials
- Detailing any different or specific objectives related to the pupils own learning needs in their IEP or IPLP in consultation with parents/guardians

Implementation:

This school policy will be implemented during the 2021/2022 school year.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed in June 2022 after the first year of implementation. It will be reviewed every two years thereafter or sooner should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 26th May 2021

Signed: Leo Minnock (Chairperson, BOM)

date: 20/5/21

Signed: B. Henry (Principal)

date: 20/5/21

Appendix 1: * Note – Refer to ‘Making the Links’ PDST Framework also

Lesson Content – Sensitive Issues					
Class	Lesson	Strand Unit	Language	Date	Home Link
J.I & S.I	Theme 6 Caring for new life p.138 Theme 7 My Body p.148	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	Penis/Vagina or Vulva Naming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms	Term 3 every year	RSE Manual p. 146 RSE Manual p. 157
1st & 2nd	Theme 6 The wonder of new life p.60 (1 st) /p.152 (2 nd) Theme 7 How my body works p68 (1 st) When my body needs special care p.162 (2 nd) Theme 8 Growing means changing p. 78 (1 st)/p.172 (2 nd)	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	As above Introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra Naming as above and identify some of the functions.	Term 3 every year	RSE Manual p. 66, 161, 170
3rd & 4th	Theme 6 Preparing for new life p.54 (3 rd) Theme 6 The wonder of new life p.154 (4 th) Theme 8 As I grow, I change p.78 (3 rd) Theme 8 Growing and changing p.180 (4 th)	Growing and changing	Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby in the womb. Umbilical cord. Any questions as to how the baby got there cannot be answered by the teacher.	Term 3 every year	RSE Manual p. 189
5th & 6th	Theme 6 My body grows and changes p.81 (5 th) Theme 7 The wonder of new life p.90 (5 th) Theme 8 Caring for new life p.99 (5 th) Theme 2 Different kinds of love p.135 (6 th)	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty. Reproductive system of male/female adults. Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a loving, committed relationship.	Term 2 every year or Term 3 at discretion of the teacher	RSE Manual p. 89,98,108,143 Busy Body Booklets and DVDS

Appendix 2:

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

Relationships and Sexuality education is an integral part of the S.P.H.E 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.

Topics covered up to 2nd include:	Topics from 3rd to 6th include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)• Keeping Safe• Making age-appropriate choices• Appreciating the variety of family types and a 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, exercise• Keeping Safe• Expressing Feelings• Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how we 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, 6th class)

Material which will be covered in class can be accessed online at www.pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/RSE by accessing the appropriate class link for your child.

Yours Sincerely
