

## **Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy**

The initial policy statement for RSE in Scoil Naomh Cualán was drawn up by Staff, Board of Management and Parent Representatives following on the amalgamation of St. Theresa's NS and St. Patrick's BNS and draws on the pre-existing policies in both of these schools.

### **To whom does this policy apply?**

This policy applies to all staff, parents and any visiting speakers to our school.

### **School Ethos and Philosophy**

The ethos of the school informs the planning and teaching of the R.S.E. programme. We are a mixed gender Primary School in Borrisoleigh parish with a Catholic ethos and will promote the values and beliefs which this implies. As an inclusive school we respect and value the views of parents, pupils and staff. A welcoming and friendly school environment encourages the expression of these views and provides a forum for open and active communication.

We intend that all pupils be valued and feel valued. Individual needs and differences are addressed so that each child can develop appropriately across a wide range of abilities and activities. We also have a number of pupils of differing faiths and beliefs. It is our intention to value this difference also.

Every opportunity is taken to nurture self esteem and respect for self and others. In this we are preparing children, individually and socially for positive roles in family, community and society.

### **Definition of R.S.E.**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy. It deals with specific issues such as human growth and development, human sexuality, parenting, personal and social skills and relationships.

### **Aims**

The aims of R.S.E. are situated within the broader aims of S.P.H.E.

We aim:

1. To enhance the personal development, self esteem and well being of the child.
2. To enable the child to develop healthy relationships and friendships.
3. To foster an understanding of, and develop a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
4. To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for human love and reproduction.
5. To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and

new life.

6. To enable the child to be comfortable with his/her own sexuality and that of others while growing and developing.

These are the overall aims of the programme to be met in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children.

### **Education Programme**

All of the R.S.E. programme, which is now obligatory for all schools, will be delivered within the context of S.P.H.E and will include elements of R.S.E., Stay Safe, Busy Bodies, Walk Tall and Alive-O / Grow in Love programmes.

Sexually Sensitive issues, those issues/areas of R.S.E. that deal with understanding sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction will be covered within the strand units " Taking care of my body" and " Growing and changing".

These issues will furthermore be delivered within the context of a moral and spiritual framework consistent with the values and ethos of our school.

Within this framework pupils begin to clarify their own value systems and develop their moral reasoning ability.

Continuity of language and content will be maintained throughout the school.

### **Planning / Implementation**

In planning and implementing the R.S.E. programme we will have regard to the following;

- a) The child's entitlement to appropriate R.S.E.
- b) The rights and responsibilities of parents.  
(Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children. The school works in a supportive role.)
- c) That materials, information and speakers used as part of the programme conform with policy and ethos.
- d) The professional judgement and expertise of teachers.

### **Implementation**

All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave 6th class.

One half hour period per week is timetabled in each class for S.P.H.E, R.S.E. will be included as part of the SPHE programme.

Teachers will be encouraged and supported to teach the sensitive issues to their own class. Where in-service training is available for teachers they will be encouraged and supported to avail of this.

Should a teacher not wish to teach sensitive areas of the curriculum, the SPHE coordinator (*where such a post is ratified by DES*) will endeavour to make arrangements to accommodate

this wish.

A suitable speaker e.g. from Accord or other such organisation, may be invited to deliver the contents of the programme to 5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> classes. In this event all material taught will be in accordance with prescribed S.P.H.E. programme and school ethos in the presence of a teacher.

Appendix A includes an explanatory letter in relation to the sensitive issues of RSE and an outline of the content for each class level for parents.

### **Provision for support/ development and review**

There is a need for ongoing support, development and review of R.S.E. policy and programme. This will include:

In-service training for staff. All offers of staff training will be posted on staff notice board and may be discussed at Staff Meetings. The Board of Management may agree to pay subvention towards cost of suitable courses from its training budget.

Review at staff meetings and teacher/ parent meetings.

This policy will be due for review in 2018.

All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review.

Parents will be informed about the policy via the school website.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 25/05/2015.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Appendix A: Explanatory letter for parents:

*Scoil Naomh Cualan, Borrisoleigh. 20451V*

Dear Parents,

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) has been included in the Primary School Curriculum since 1999. The following is a brief outline of the subject:

*Social, personal and health education provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the child and to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. Through an SPHE programme children can develop a framework of values, attitudes,*

*understanding and skills that will inform their actions and decisions in these areas of their lives both now and in the future*

## ***Rationale***

*SPHE aims to foster self-worth and self-confidence and places a particular emphasis on developing a sense of personal responsibility for one's own behaviour and actions. SPHE promotes self-awareness and understanding by helping children to name and manage their own feelings, to recognise and appreciate individual abilities, and to cope with change of various kinds. They can learn how to manage their own behaviour and to set and review personal goals within a safe and supportive environment. Such intrapersonal development will increase the child's sense of self-efficacy and help him/her to be more in control of his/her own life.*

## ***SPHE in the curriculum***

*The curriculum is structured in such a way as to treat the social, personal and health dimensions of the child's life in an integrated manner. It provides for the development of a broad range of values, attitudes, skills and understanding relevant to the child's health and wellbeing, to other people, and to the society in which he/she lives. This foundation will inform the child's actions, behaviour and decisions in the many situations that he/she may encounter and have to deal with as part of everyday life and living.*

*The curriculum is delineated at four levels -- infant classes, first and second classes, third and fourth classes, and fifth and sixth classes -- and is divided into three strands: *Myself*, *Myself and others*, and *Myself and the wider world*. Each of these strands is further subdivided into a number of strand units or topic areas as follows:*

### ***Myself***

- *Self-identity*
- *Taking care of my body*
- *Growing and changing*
- *Safety and protection*

### ***Myself and others***

- *Myself and my family*
- *My friends and other people*
- *Relating to others*
- *Making decisions*

### ***Myself and the wider world***

- *Developing citizenship*
- *Media education*

The entire contents of the SPHE Curriculum are available to view or download at [http://www.curriculumonline.ie/en/Primary School Curriculum](http://www.curriculumonline.ie/en/Primary_School_Curriculum).

As an integral part of the SPHE programme the Department of Education and Skills (in conjunction with other relevant professionals) has introduced a number of resources which complement and assist in the delivery of SPHE. Among these are:

### **1. Stay Safe Programme:**

Stay Safe is a personal safety skills programme which aims to:-

- give children the skills necessary to enable them to recognise and resist abuse/victimisation.
- teach children that they should always tell an adult about any situation which they find unsafe, upsetting, threatening, dangerous or abusive.
- develop children's self-esteem, assertiveness and self-protective skills(deals with situations which many children may encounter such as getting lost, bullying etc.)

The Stay Safe programme is a joint initiative between the Departments of Health and Education and has been endorsed by all the partners in Education (including The National Parents' Association). Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential to the success of this programme.

The entire programme is available to view or download at [www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)

### **2. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

This programme has also been endorsed by the partners in Education. Materials are age-appropriate and in line with the Primary School Curriculum. In our previous schools the 'sensitive issues' (which form a very small component of this programme at the senior end of the school) have, on occasion, been dealt with through the provision of an outside speaker. In the past this has been organised for fifth and sixth classes in the latter part of every second year. **Pupils and parents** are invited to attend this meeting together and this arrangement has proven very satisfactory to all concerned.

Alternatively, this component may be taught by a teacher during the school day. In this event, parents will receive an outline of the lessons to be covered in advance and will be notified of the lessons prior to their being taught.

The entire RSE resources are available to download at [www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Primary-/Resource-Material-for-Relationship-and-Sexuality-Education](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Primary-/Resource-Material-for-Relationship-and-Sexuality-Education)

**These programmes are taught in all Irish Primary Schools and are an integral part of our Child Protection Policy which is now legally mandatory for all schools.**

If you have any queries or reservations with regard to either of these programmes or our Child Protection Policy you are very welcome to call to the school to view them or to follow the links given above.

In line with best practice it is recommended that parents/ guardians indicate their consent to and knowledge of participation by their child in both of the above-mentioned programmes. We would appreciate if you would complete the enclosed form and return it to school as soon as possible.

Thank you for your on-going support,

Yours sincerely,

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Kay Ryan & Staff.

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**PARENTAL CONSENT FORM.**

Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that my child will participate in the STAY SAFE programme at his/her appropriate class level.

I acknowledge that my child will participate in the RSE programme at his/her appropriate class level.

Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please write any comments you may wish to make: \_\_\_\_\_

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