

# **Holy Spirit Junior Primary School, Greenhills**

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

### **Introduction**

Holy Spirit Junior Primary School is a co-educational school catering for children from Junior Infants to Second Class. The Department of Education and Skills requires all schools to teach RSE and to have an RSE policy. This policy outlines how Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) will be taught in our school as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.

### **School Philosophy**

Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. We aim to foster respect, tolerance, a sense of responsibility and consideration of others. This policy mirrors the aim of our Mission Statement to nurture the dignity of the child and the child's family in a supportive, caring environment and is in line with the Catholic spirit and ethos of the school.

### **Definition of RSE**

RSE provides children with structured opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships as children and, subsequently, as adults. At primary level RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. RSE focuses on; helping children to develop a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information.

### **Aims/Objectives of RSE**

The RSE Programme aims to enable the child to

- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth
- Develop an awareness of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others

- Appreciate and understand family life
- Develop an awareness of different family patterns
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy relationships
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- Make responsible choices according to age
- Be aware of the different changes taking place in the children's bodies as they grow and develop
- Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development

### **RSE in the context of SPHE**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and is taught in this context. SPHE 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 of others. In Holy Spirit Junior Primary School RSE is taught in the context of the SPHE curriculum. See Appendix 1.

SPHE is taught through

- A positive school climate and atmosphere
- Dedicated SPHE time
- An integrated, cross-curricular approach

Many aspects of the RSE programme are taught through Religious Education, Physical Education, S.E.S.E., the Stay Safe Programme and the Walk Tall Programme.

The RSE programme is incorporated into the strands **Myself** and **Myself and Others** of the SPHE curriculum. Each strand is sub-divided into strand units. These are shown below, with a very brief summary of their content.

## Overview of Content-Junior Infants to Second Class

### MYSELF:

**Self Identity:** What makes me unique and special, becoming self-reliant, making choices, expressing opinions.

**Taking Care of My Body:** Caring for one's body, respect for one's body and that of others, diet, hygiene, being able to name parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms.

**Growing and Changing:** Understanding growth and change, exploring feelings, becoming aware of new life and birth, understanding a baby's needs.

**Safety and Protection:** Identifying risks, developing strategies for keeping safe, understanding why there are rules.

### MYSELF AND OTHERS:

**Myself and My Family:** Learning about how families love and take care of each other.

**My Friends and Other People:** Appreciating friendship, treating others with dignity and respect, recognising bullying behaviour, understanding that it is wrong and knowing what to do about it.

**Relating to Others:** Listening to others, practising care and consideration towards others, resolving conflict.

## **Policies which support SPHE / RSE**

The following policies are relevant to and support the work of R.S.E in our school.

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy (IT)
- Lunch Policy
- Attendance Policy

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

RSE is taught in all classes from Junior Infants to Second Class. RSE content in our school is based on the Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education manuals approved by the Department of Education and Skills. Content will be presented and taught in an age appropriate and sensitive manner. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy.

The RSE programme is a spiral programme. Key topics are revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals. This provides opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. In planning for RSE, we aim to ensure that over a two year period children will study elements from all strand units.

Sensitive objectives of RSE fall within the Taking Care of My Body and Growing and Changing strand units of the SPHE curriculum. Parents are encouraged to inform themselves of the programme content and to talk to their children at home to consolidate what they are learning at school.

Topics covered up to Second Class include

- Keeping safe
- Bodily changes from birth to age nine

- Making age-appropriate decisions
- Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community
- Recognising and expressing feeling
- Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep
- 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 (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>Class)

### **Approaches and Methodologies**

Active learning methodologies are an integral part of teaching SPHE and RSE.

The RSE curriculum may 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**

The very nature of RSE education and the differing maturity and growth levels of the children mean that some children will need more support to understand the concepts and content. Teachers may use assessment and their professional judgement to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class.

## **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with special educational needs are met. Teachers may adapt the way in which the content is delivered for children with special educational needs. Strategies may include

- Pre-teaching language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work
- Working in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted material
- Support from Educational Support Teacher

## **Use of Language**

The SPHE curriculum provides a context in which children are given an opportunity to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to SPHE. Children should become aware of the power and influence of language. When used positively language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner it can hurt and demean. In Holy Spirit Junior Primary School we promote the use of respectful language at all times.

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Not being familiar with the anatomical terms for the body can put children at a disadvantage. Therefore, we will give children the correct and appropriate language as outlined in the Department of Education and Skills Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education, The Stay Safe Programme and the Walk Tall Programme. These materials are available online should parents wish to view them.

## Outline of Anatomical Terms

Class	Sensitive Content Objectives	Language	Supplementary Resources
Junior/Senior Infants	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Become aware of new life and birth in the world</li> <li>Develop an awareness of human birth</li> </ul> <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical names</li> </ul>	<p>Womb</p> <p>Breast-feeding</p> <p>Penis</p> <p>Vagina</p>	<p>Anatomically correct dolls</p> <p>Picture books of new babies</p>
First/Second Class	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles</li> </ul> <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions</li> </ul>	<p>Penis</p> <p>Vagina</p> <p>Vulva</p> <p>Womb</p> <p>Breast-feeding</p> <p>Urethra</p>	<p>Picture books of going to the doctors</p> <p>Books/Activities on life cycles</p> <p>Books on birth and new life in nature</p>

## **Parental Involvement**

RSE is a life-long process. We acknowledge parents as the primary educators of their children. We aim to work in a supportive role with the parents in our school by complementing their role with a school based RSE programme. Parents are encouraged to view resources and become familiar with what is being taught in school. Parents may view teaching manuals in the school if they wish to do so. Occasionally, teachers send home a home-links page or worksheet with the children. This provides an opportunity for parents to discuss topics at home which are being taught at school.

On enrolment, parents are made aware that the SPHE curriculum and, subsequently, RSE is taught in our school. A parent's right to exclude their child from lessons with sensitive content will be honoured on the understanding that parents will take full responsibility for this aspect of their child's education. It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the Principal in writing of this decision. The Principal will keep these letters on file.

If a child is removed from the class while lessons with sensitive content are being taught the school cannot take responsibility for what the child may hear from other children who have participated in the lessons. The teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the topic at another time when the child is present.

## **Questions**

The RSE programme is structured to provide children with age-appropriate information. Teachers only answer questions based on the curriculum objectives for the class. If children ask a question outside of this content they are encouraged to ask this question at home. When deciding whether to answer a question the teacher will consider

- The RSE policy
- The content objectives of the SPHE curriculum
- The ethos of the school

Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves.



## **Assessment**

Assessment is an important aspect of effective teaching and learning in RSE.

Teachers may use the following assessment tools

- Teacher observation
- Questioning
- Teacher assigned/Teacher designed tasks

## **Confidentiality**

All child protection and welfare issues are dealt with in accordance with Children First-National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and as outlined in Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017.

## **Resources**

The main teaching resource for RSE is the Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials sanctioned by the Department of Education and Skills. Other resources that support the teaching of RSE include

- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- SPHE Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities' ([www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie))
- Anatomical Dolls

All resources used are age-appropriate, suitable for the content objectives and in accordance with the ethos of the school.

## **Provision of On-going Support**

Our school facilitates the provision of on-going support to staff in the teaching of RSE in the following ways

- Staff engage in continuous professional development in relation to RSE
- Courses run by Education Centres are brought to the attention of staff
- Communication of resources available at [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)
- RSE is discussed at staff meetings

## **Ratification and Review**

This policy was presented to the teaching staff and discussed at staff meetings. It was presented to the Board of Management for its consideration and input. It will be reviewed formally in 2021.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Signed: .....

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: .....

Appendix 1

<b>Social, Personal and Health Education- Two Year Grid</b>		
<b>Strand</b>	<b>Strand Units (Year 1)</b>	<b>Strand Units (Year 2)</b>
<b>Myself</b>	<p><i>Safety And Protection*</i> (January - February)</p> <p><i>Taking Care Of My Body</i> (March - April)</p> <p><i>Growing And Changing</i> (May - June)</p>	<p><i>Self-Identity</i> (September - October)</p> <p><i>Safety And Protection*</i> (January - February)</p>
<b>Myself and Others</b>	<p><i>Myself And My Family</i> (September - October)</p>	<p><i>My Friends And Other People</i> (November - December)</p> <p><i>Relating To Others</i> (March - April)</p>
<b>Myself and the Wider World</b>	<p><i>Developing Citizenship</i> (November - December)</p>	<p><i>Media Education</i> (May - June)</p>

\* Senior Infants/Second Class - Stay Safe Programme

Junior Infants/First Class - Safety Issues section of Safety and Protection