



*TYRRELSTOWN EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL*

Phone: 01 - 8272172

Roll No: 20201V

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) *Policy*

Introduction

Throughout the school year, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to 6th class. A wide variety of topics is included on this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE (Relationship and Sexuality Education) forms a part of this programme; it is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years.

This programme will be presented in conjunction with and supplemented by the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Walk Tall programme, the Stay Safe programme and the ET Learn Together programme. SPHE permeates all aspects of school life, and its development and implementation are significantly influenced by our multid denominational, child-centred, democratically run and co-educational ethos.

Aims

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of the child.
- To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude towards human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- To enable children to be comfortable with, and understand their own growth and development
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.

Why do we need RSE?

An Advisory Group established by the Minister for Education in 1994 to advise on the introduction of RSE into schools quoted the following examples from research and common observation:

- “ children receive informal and unsupervised information about relationships and sexuality
- “ such information may be inadequate and inappropriate
- “ young people are already exposed to a variety of sexual practices and attitudes through the media, particularly television, film and magazines

- “ children are maturing physically at even earlier ages
- “ the roles of women and men in society are changing
- “ the nature of family life is changing in a way that places many pressures on children and young people.

For these reasons, and because education is about developing skills for life as well as skills for learning, we concluded that there was a need for a soundly based programme of RSE in schools.

Possible sensitive issues

Many aspects of RSE are common to other school programmes. For example, ‘the family’ might be central to oral language work in English or Gaelic, or a life-story project in history.

The RSE programme also includes a number of possible sensitive issues, listed below. It is school policy to deal with these issues through structured lessons, as naturally as possible and without undue emphasis.

Listing the issues here, along with the classes in which they are first taught, enables parents to prepare their children in advance for a particular topic, if they so wish.

Lesson title/ Theme	Class	Topic or language
Junior Infants	Caring for New Life	Language: baby in womb for 9 months, breast-feeding.
Senior Infants	My Body	Language used: penis, vagina.
1 st Class	How My Body Works	Language: urine passes through the penis in boys and the urethra in girls.
2 nd Class	The Wonder of New Life	Language: baby leaves its mother’s womb through the vagina.
3 rd Class	Preparing for New Life.	Language: umbilical cord, navel.
	My Family	Language: gay, lesbian, heterosexual, homosexual.
4 th Class	The Wonder of New Life.	Topic: the developing foetus.
	Growing and Changing	Topics: emotional changes in

		puberty- Menstruation (taught to fourth class girls only.)
5 th Class	My Body Grows and Changes,	Topics: puberty. The physical changes boys and girls go through.
6 th Class	Relationships and New Life	Topics: sexual intercourse in the context of a committed, loving relationship; reproduction.

Use is made of the Busy Bodies DVD and accompanying booklet in 5th and 6th class. Busybodies was developed by the Health Promotion Department of the HSE. The booklet is available for parents to download from www.crisispregnancy.ie/BusyBodies_eng.pdf

Once the topic has been covered in class the children will be asked to bring their Busy Bodies Handbook home with them. Parents are asked to use this opportunity to ask their child what he/she has learned, review the booklet with them and explore any other aspects they feel comfortable discussing.

Child Protection

The school follows the D.E.S. child protection guidelines and has a Child Protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure; the D.L.P. will follow the procedures as set out in Children First.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school, therefore, is seen as one of support for the work of the home in this area.

Each class teacher will teach the SPHE programme including the sensitive issues unless they opt out. A teacher's right to 'opt out' from teaching the sensitive issues will be honoured. Should a teacher not wish to teach sensitive areas of the

curriculum, the SPHE coordinator (currently Emma O'Malley) will endeavour to make arrangements to accommodate this wish.

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.

It is our policy not to answer personal questions and to discourage disclosure of personal or family information.

Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the school will take account of parental concerns, and parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent/guardian is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves.

Policy reviewed by the Board of Management on 23 September 2014.

Signed: _____

Domenico Procopio (Chairperson).