



*Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál
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RSE POLICY

Introduction.

One of the subjects of the revised curriculum is SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education). This includes a module on Relationships and Sexuality Education for all mainstream classes in Primary school which must be delivered on an annual basis. Our school aims to develop a policy on RSE which reflects our ethos and vision and is in accordance with the National Curriculum and Guidelines for RSE as prepared by the NCCA.

School Ethos

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál is a vertical Catholic primary school. We aim to foster the values of respect, honesty, courtesy, responsibility, tolerance, and consideration for others. We cherish each child as an individual and we strive to develop their spiritual, intellectual, artistic, physical, emotional and social potential. We hope each pupil can live life as a child and we aim to equip them to live a responsible life as an adult. We have a committed staff that strive to create an atmosphere where cultural and religious diversity is respected. We recognise parents as the first and most important educators of their own child. We encourage communication and parental involvement, based on mutual trust and understanding. We aim to enable children to work together in a supportive, respectful partnership within an inclusive school environment, to respect themselves and others and to become an active citizen in society.

Definition of RSE

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information for their age-group.

RSE in the context of our SPHE programme

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 are included on this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE 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.

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.

School Policies and Curricular Plans which support our RSE:

Traditionally we are a child centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our curricular planning and policy making processes.

Included in the school curriculum in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is Religious Education.

- Grow in Love
- SPHE Curriculum
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Policies which support SPHE/RSE.
- School's Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- Healthy Eating Policy.
- Anti –Bullying Policy.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Enrolment Policy.
- Mobile Phone Policy Statement.
- Internet Safety Policy.
- Administration of Medicine Policy.

We also are engaging with the Roots of Empathy initiative when available to us.

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies we informally support many of the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for staff 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 well- being of all the members of the school community.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál:

- **R.S.E. is taught as an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education.** 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.
- Our RSE policy is available for parents to view on our website.
- The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account.
- Appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used.
- Some aspects of RSE will be taught through discrete lessons with the remainder being taught in a cross curricular manner. Teachers will have to identify the appropriate links with other subject areas to ensure that children receive a broad based approach to RSE.
- Discrete lessons with regard to sensitive and areas of RSE (physical changes at puberty, menstruation, intercourse, conception for senior classes) will be timetabled for the end of 2nd term/beginning of 3rd term.
- 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.

Withdrawal of a child from the lessons with sensitive topics

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 is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. The onus will be on the parent to inform the school in writing of this decision. If a child is withdrawn from the lesson, 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 lessons.

Confidentiality

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow our Child Protection Policy. The Principal is our Designated Liaison Person.

Ongoing support, development and review

The Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál supports the implementation of the RSE programme. We recognise that our school has a supportive role to that of the home and we have a commitment to ensuring that our teachers have access to in-career development opportunities and access to relevant teaching materials.

Teaching Methodologies/Approaches:

- Integration with other curricular areas, SPHE, SESE, Art, Religion and Drama.
- Direct Teaching for the discrete, sensitive areas of the programme.
- Discussion, group work, role play, circle time, video education.
- The age and development of the pupils are considered and arrangements made as necessary.
- Most topics are addressed to the whole class but it may be deemed more suitable at times to teach certain topics separately.

Children with Special Needs

- Children with Special Needs will need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up.
- They may also need more help with learning what sorts of behaviour are/are not acceptable.
- See Down Syndrome Ireland for resources on RSE and NCCA.ie

Teaching RSE to Children with Autism

General Principles

Consulting with Parents: Given the sensitivity of some of the topics in RSE it is advisable to talk to parents if there are specific issues, if the teacher is unsure about anything or if a child is behaving in ways that are inappropriate.

Small Group Work. Children with learning difficulties, including children with autism, can benefit from small group work. This allows for repetition and re-enforcement and also facilitates development of social skills.

Development of Social Skills. This is an important aspect of the RSE programme for children with autism. A useful resource for this is 'Social Skills Training for Children and Adolescents with Asperger's Syndrome and Social and Communication Problems'.

Resources:

- RSE Interim Curriculum Guidelines for Primary Schools (NCCA).
- Relationship and Sexuality Education. Department of Education and Skills.

Evaluation:

- Teacher Observation
- Pupils Behaviour.
- Pupils/Parents Feedback.

Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The School's RSE programme only acts as a support to parents.

Implementation

This revised policy will be implemented from 2018 and will be reviewed again in 2022.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 4/10/18

Signed: *Breda Hickey*

Date: 4/10/18

Breda Hickey, Chairperson, B.O.M.

Appendix 1

Overview of content Strand	Infant Classes	1st and 2nd Classes
Strand	Strand Units	
Myself	I am unique My Body As I grow I change New Life Feeling Safe Feelings and emotions Making decisions	I am unique My Body As I grow I change New Life Feeling Safe Feelings and emotions Making decisions
Myself and others	Myself and my family Myself and my friends Special people in my life Relating to others	Myself and my family Myself and my friends Other people Relating to others

Strand	3rd and 4th Classes	5th and 6th Classes
	Strand Units	
Myself	Accepting myself Physical development Growing and changing Birth and new life Feelings and	Accepting myself Physical development Becoming an adult Parenthood Feelings and

	<p>emotions</p> <p>Personal Hygiene</p> <p>Personal Safety</p> <p>Making decisions</p>	<p>emotions</p> <p>Personal Hygiene</p> <p>Personal Safety</p> <p>Making decisions</p>
<p>Myself and others</p>	<p>Roles and responsibilities in families</p> <p>Portrayal of sexuality and relationships</p> <p>Roles of males and females in society</p> <p>Relating to others</p>	<p>Changing relationships in families and friendships</p> <p>Group affiliation and loyalty</p> <p>Portrayal of sexuality and relationships</p> <p>Sexual stereotypes</p> <p>Relating to others</p>

Appendix 2

Class	Language Taught
Junior Infants & Senior Infants	<p>“Womb”</p> <p>“Penis”, “vagina” and “urethra”-taught as obvious physical differences between boy/girl</p> <p>“Breast-feeding” may be used in conversations as a means of feeding a baby.</p>
First Class & Second Class	<p>“penis” and *urethra” taught in terms of passing urine (See DES Resource Materials p 70-71)</p>
Third Class	<p>Revision of terms listed above.</p> <p>“Developing foetus”</p>
Fourth Class	<p>“Developing foetus”</p> <p>“Umbilical cord”</p> <p>“Navel</p>
Fifth Class	<p>“Growth spurt”</p> <p>“menstruation”</p> <p>“development of breasts”</p> <p>“ovaries”</p> <p>“fallopian tubes”</p> <p>“sperm production”</p> <p>“erection”</p> <p>“sexual intercourse”</p> <p>“conception”</p> <p>“puberty”, “human reproduction” and “sexual intercourse” in the context of a loving family.</p> <p>(See DES RSE resource materials for 5th and 6th)</p>
Sixth Class	<p>As in 5th class</p> <p>“pregnancy”</p> <p>Development of baby in womb</p> <p>Contractions</p> <p>Birth of baby</p>