



Áit do pháistí
A place for children

SCOIL BHRÍDE, ÁTH GARBHÁIN
ST. BRIGID'S SCHOOL, ATHGARVAN

Áth Garbháin, An Currach, Co. Chill Dara
Athgarvan, The Curragh, Co. Kildare

RSE POLICY

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Scoil Bhríde. It was reviewed in 2021 by Senior Management & The Board of Management. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum.

School Philosophy

Scoil Bhríde is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin. It is managed by an elected Board of Management. The school has a Catholic ethos and this ethos is a guiding principle in the formulation and implementation of this RSE Policy. This ethos recognises the value and dignity of each pupil and all those working in the school community, and aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person, including:

- a) relationship with God
- b) relationship with family
- c) relationship with teachers
- d) relationship with self
- e) relationship with others
- f) relationship with the environment.

This ethos also acknowledges the cultural and religious values of all the pupils attending the school. The school recognises that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we support them in that role.

In the area of RSE, above all, the schools' role is subsidiary to that of the parents. We support and compliment their work.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education 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. (p. 5 NCCA curriculum and guidelines for RSE). RSE is the formal approach to educating children in:

- Relationships with others – parents, siblings, friends and the community in general
- Respect for themselves and others
- Physical development – bodily functions and changes, and personal hygiene
- Emotional development – maturing in society
- Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships



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- Sexuality in context – part of a loving relationship.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE and Religion

Social, Personal and Health Education contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. 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 key characteristics of this programme are that SPHE is a lifelong process and is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. The main strands of the SPHE programme are:

- Myself
- Myself and Others
- Myself and the Wider World

It is clear that the Relationships and Sexuality Programme is correctly defined as being an integral part of the programme outlined above. Sexually sensitive issues will be covered within the strand units:

- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection.

These lessons are in line with the alternate years of teaching the Stay Safe Programme. 5th class take part in Stay Safe and RSE lessons.

Year 1 (including 'Stay Safe'): (S.I., 2nd, 3rd) Year 2: (J.I., 1st, 4th)

Pupils will be taught RSE in both 5th Class and 6th Class

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September	Self-Identity (Myself)	Myself and my Family (Myself and Others)
October/ November	Safety & Protection (Myself)	Growing and Changing (Myself)
December/ January	My Friends and Other People (Myself and Others)	Relating to others (Myself and Others)
February	Self-Identity (Myself)	Myself and my Family (Myself and Others)
March/April	Making Decisions (Myself)	Taking Care of my Body (Myself)
May/ June	Media Education (Myself and the Wider World)	Developing Citizenship (Myself and the Wider World)



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Current Provision

Traditionally, we have been a child-centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our planning and policy making processes. We have always, and will always continue to put the welfare of the children first.

Included in the school curriculum in Scoil Bhríde is:

- Religious Education (Grow in Love)
- SPHE
- Stay Safe Programme

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Administration of Medicines Policy.

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 self 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 of the members of the school community. Aims of our RSE programme when due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum should enable the child to:

- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts
- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow, change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- Develop personal skills, which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal



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- relationships
- Develop some coping strategies to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School Curriculum Matters

- Prior to the teaching of lessons involving “sensitive issues”, parents will be informed by letter with an accompanying outline of the lesson (including vocabulary to be used)
- It is a parent’s/guardian’s right to withdraw a pupil from these lessons. This request for withdrawal must be made in writing.
- If parents/guardians request the withdrawal of a child from RSE lessons, provision will be made for them to leave the classroom at that time. Supervision will be provided. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom. Should a child who is withdrawn from the sexually sensitive classes receive inappropriate information from others outside of these classes, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to address the issues.
- Any teacher has the right to opt-out from teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is responsibility of Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be delivered to the children, by another teacher, or an outside speaker.
- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.

Dealing with Questions

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area or RSE. However, this area is treated somewhat differently from other subjects due to its sensitive nature.

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics will not be discussed i.e. abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception. Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. If any questions asked by the children are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents, or state that this information may be available



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at a later stage of the curriculum. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information.

At all times the child's and teacher's right to privacy will be maintained

Parental Involvement

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children and as such the school supports them in this role. As stated parents/guardians will be given the option of withdrawing their child from a particular lesson if they so wish. The Parents' Association may on occasion arrange for speakers/meetings to help them in the task of communicating with their children on aspects of their development. Parents/Guardians may access copies of the policy from the school office, or school website.

Resources

The Stay safe programme, Walk Tall, RSE and a selection of other appropriate resources are also used. All resources are available for parents/guardians to view if they so request prior to the delivery of the lesson.

Provision for Ongoing Support

- Parents are welcome to view curriculum if they so wish.
- Funding will be sought for the provision of suitable materials when deemed necessary.
- Professional development (CPD) will be sought for staff when required, or as requested.

Other relevant Policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Inclusion Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Anti – Bullying Polic

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde reserves the right, in consultation with the education partners to review and modify the RSE Policy as necessary.

Ratification and Communication

The policy was reviewed and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 7th December 2021.

Marion Sherlock
Principal

Noreen Duggan
Chairperson BOM



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Appendix A

RSE Sensitive Areas

Class	Content Objectives	Language Taught
Junior/Senior Infants	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become aware of new life and birth in the world Develop an awareness of human birth <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms 	<p>“Womb”</p> <p>“Penis” and “vulva” 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/Second Class	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions 	<p>Revise above</p> <p>“urethra”, “vagina”</p>
Third/ Fourth Class	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable 	<p>Revision of terms listed above.</p> <p>“Umbilical cord”</p> <p>Changes in puberty</p> <p>“menstruation”</p>



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	<p>and natural and that being different is normal</p> <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth 	
<p>Fifth/ Sixth Class</p>	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and discuss the physical changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone • Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults 	<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>Birth of a baby</p> <p>(See DES RSE resource materials for 5th and 6th)</p>