

Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) Policy

A. School Context

Muire na Dea-Chomhairle Infant School is a Catholic co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It is located in the parish of Mourne Road, Drimnagh, Dublin 12.

As we are an Infant School, children may be enrolled for Junior Infants, Senior Infant and First Classes only. There are approx. 193 pupils enrolled in the school. There are 17 teachers in the school including an administrative principal as well as a number of special needs assistants and ancillary staff.

B. Our Ethos and Vision Statement

- **Catholic Values inform our school life**
- **Our School welcomes children of all denominations and nationalities -**
- **We strive to create a caring educational environment for our children where values of respect, tolerance and understanding are promoted.**
- **We seek to develop the individual potential of each child, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially.**
- **We are committed to the integration of children with special educational needs and disabilities.**
- **We actively encourage partnership with parents in the education process.**
- **We promote awareness of and pride in our local area by fostering meaningful links between our school and our community.**
- **Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt í dtimpeallacht na scoile**

Social Personal and Health Education

Social, Personal and Health education (SPHE) provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child, to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. Through an SPHE programme that is planned and consistent throughout the school, children can develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their decisions and actions both now and in the future. Since SPHE has a moral and a spiritual dimension, its development and implementation are influenced significantly by the ethos or characteristic spirit of the school. **The RSE Programme is taught within the context of SPHE.**

What is Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

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. This work will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information. In the school setting, RSE will be part of a wider programme of Social, Personal and Health Education.

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Relationships and Sexuality Education & Social Personal and Health Education

The RSE programme (from Jan 2006) will be taught within the context of SPHE which is timetabled as part of the curriculum for all classes

The aims of Social, Personal and Health Education are

- to promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- to foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being
- to promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects
- to enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future
- to develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life
- to enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

Organisation of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and will be taught in this context (see Plean Scoile: SPHE). The curriculum is spiral in nature (i.e similar content is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in school). Content will be taught developmentally with age appropriate lessons being taught at each class level in primary school. RSE-specific education or core RSE education will be covered in the strand units *Talking Care of My Body* and *Growing and Changing* and *Safety and Protection*.

RSE and 'appropriate language'

It is important that children are taught the appropriate language in RSE to enable them to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships.

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Management of RSE in the Infant School.

- Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school works in partnership with parents in the education process.
- Parents will be provided with an overview of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE policy which will outline the RSE aspects of the curriculum.
- An outline of RSE specific lessons will be available to parents – parents may view the RSE teaching materials.
- Parents have a right to withdraw their child from RSE –specific lessons on the understanding that parents will take full responsibility for this aspect of their child’s education themselves. It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the school in writing of this decision.
- If a child is withdrawn, the school cannot guarantee that other children will not inform the child in question of the content of the lesson(s) or that children will not refer incidentally to aspects of the lesson during subsequent days/weeks.
- Teachers will teach only the content/topics advised for the class level and will answer only questions relevant to the programme for that class level.
- If it is not possible to answer a question or if the question is outside the scope of the content for the class, teacher may use the following phrases *‘that’s something that we might discuss when you’re a bit older’* or *‘I won’t be able to answer all your questions in class, but maybe you could talk to your mother/father about that’*.
- The school will endeavor to accommodate the wish of any teacher who does not wish to teach the RSE aspect of the programme provided that a suitable arrangement can be put in place to ensure that the children are taught the RSE content (ie another teacher from the school).
- The practical arrangements regarding the teaching of the RSE programme and the deployment of teaching staff will be made by the School Principal/Deputy Principal. The BOM will ensure the provision of the necessary resources and will support teacher training to implement this programme.
- Policy Links: This policy must be read in conjunction with all relevant school policies.

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Junior and Senior Infants

Strand: Myself Strand Unit – Taking Care of My Body

the child should be enabled to...

Knowing about my body

- appreciate the need, and understand how to care for his/her own body in order to keep it healthy and well ***regular exercise and activity, adequate sleep and rest, balanced diet, correct posture***
- respect his/her own body and that of others
- **name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms**
- explore and discuss the different things the body can do.....***move, feel, think, grow, heal***
- recognise and practise basic hygiene skills,.....***personal hygiene practices
hygienic eating habits, developing basic skills in dressing himself/herself and caring for clothes
taking proper care of teeth***
- realise that each individual has some responsibility for taking care of himself/herself

Food and nutrition

- ♦ become aware of the importance of food for growth and development
- food provides energy for work and play, food helps to protect against illness, food helps us to grow***
- explore food preferences and their role in a balanced diet
- treats, snacks, fruit, vegetables, foods that are unhealthy for some people and not for others***
- discuss and explore some qualities and categories of food
- fruit, vegetables, foods that can be eaten at breakfast, foods that are grown, food that comes from animals***
- realise the importance of good hygiene when preparing food to eat.

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SPHE Curriculum 17

Strand : Myself

Strand Unit - Growing and Changing

the child should be enabled to....

As I grow I change

- identify some of the factors that promote growth, ***food, love, warmth, exercise, rest, sleep, affirmation,***
- realise that growth and change are part of the process of life and are unique to each individual ***physical, increase in shoe size, need to cut hair and nails frequently social, interacting with others, sharing, arguing, talking, playing together intellectual, drawing, writing, reading, questioning, things I can do for myself spiritual, fostering wonder and imagination through the senses, beginning to reflect, availing of quiet time***
- recognise that the ability to take responsibility for himself/herself and others increases as he/she grows older

New life

- become aware of new life and birth in the world : ***new growth in springtime baby animals being born***
- develop an awareness of human birth: ***that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born***
- identify what babies need to help them to grow and develop: ***love, regular food and water, warmth, nappy changing, careful bathing, medical check-ups***

Feelings and emotions

- name a variety of feelings and talk about situations where these may be experienced: ***Feelings: happiness, love, joy, excitement, surprise, fear, loss, jealousy, pain, loneliness, experiences when it's my birthday, when I try something new, the day I started school***
- explore the variety of ways in which feelings are expressed and coped with: ***hugging or cuddling when expressing affection, becoming red in the face when embarrassed crying when upset or afraid***

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- begin to be sensitive to the feelings of others and to realise that the actions of one individual can affect the feelings of another
- explore and discuss occasions that can promote positive feelings in himself/herself , ***making a new friend, receiving an invitation, being affirmed.***

Strand: Myself Strand Unit: Safety & Protection

- **Personal Safety**

- **Safety Issues**

- explore appropriate safety strategies knowing how and when to seek help, knowing who to ask, people I can trust and tell not wandering off on his/her own knowing when to say 'yes' and 'no' to friends or adults in different situations, e.g. taking lifts knowing own name, address and telephone number identifying local landmarks
- identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk being in a supervised playground, going on an outing with family going into unfamiliar places feeling unsafe with people, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes him/her feel uncomfortable)
- realise how other people can persuade him/her to engage in unsafe behaviour Safety issues
 - identify people who are responsible for safety in the community and learn and practise safety strategies for crossing the road, using the bus or being a pedestrian crossing the road with an adult
 - realise and understand that rules are necessary in order to protect people and keep them safe tidying away own school bag, lining up without running, following school code of hygiene
- explore how accidents might be prevented at home, in school, on the farm, or in the water items in the home or school environment that are unsafe to play with
- realise that many substances used at home or in school are dangerous and that permission should be sought before exploring the contents never touch, taste or smell unknown substances
- identify some of the substances or things that are put onto the body and their associated functions plasters, ointment, cream or lotions
 - explore occasions when medicines, injections or pills are needed and the safety rules that apply when taking medicine.

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First Class

Strand :Myself Strand Unit :Taking care of my body

The child should be enabled to

Knowing about my body

- appreciate the need and understand how to care for the body in order to keep it strong and healthy regular sleep and rest, a balanced diet, regular exercise, quiet time, relaxation, correct posture
- recognise the importance of treating the body with respect and dignity • explore the various things the body can do see, hear, move, breathe, make energy, feel, think
- name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms
- develop and practise basic hygiene skills discussing and exploring the effects of poor personal hygiene practising and learning about hygienic eating habits practising effective dental care
- realise that each individual must take some responsibility for self-care • become aware of how infection spreads easily and the importance of adhering to a code of hygiene
- recognise and examine some of the substances that are taken into the body and the purpose and function of each one

Food and nutrition

- explore the importance of food for promoting growth, keeping healthy and providing energy • appreciate that balance, regularity and moderation are necessary in the diet the food pyramid, the need for a balanced diet, the importance of having an appropriate intake of liquids, food that is unhealthy for some people and not for others
- identify some of the foods that are derived from plant and animal sources • recognise and practise good hygiene when dealing with food.

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Strand : Myself Strand Unit :As I grow I change

The child should be enabled to

- begin to recognise the physical, emotional, social and spiritual factors that promote growth love, food, warmth, shelter, communication, friendship, sleep
- realise that growth takes place in many different ways and is unique to each individual physical growing out of clothes and shoes social making new friends, joining clubs, playing or engaging in sports together, an increasing ability to communicate intellectual improving mental skills and abilities spiritual becoming more reflective, enjoying quiet time for longer periods, experiencing wonder through the senses
- realise that growing up brings increased responsibility for himself/herself and others making own lunch, putting away school clothes, helping to feed a younger child New life
- begin to understand that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle
- appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world love, regular feeding, nappy changing, careful bathing, medical check-ups
- realise the various roles parents and other family members have in providing for newborn babies love, time, energy, talking to baby, money, patience

Feelings and emotions

- name and identify a wide range of feelings and talk about and explore feelings in different situations when I changed classes, when my brother/sister was born, when I got glasses for the first time when I attempted something new when I was excluded
- realise and explore the various ways feelings can be expressed and dealt with and choose which are the most appropriate and acceptable affection shaking hands, hugging anger crying, telling someone that I am angry loss crying, remaining quiet, asking for help hurt isolated, angry, seeking an apology
- identify people with whom he/she can discuss feelings and emotions • become aware of and be able to choose healthy ways of feeling good about himself/herself
- explore the various feelings that change as one grows what made me laugh when I was younger the things I was afraid of when I was younger the things that I find funny or that make me cry now
- recognise that individual actions can affect the feelings of others.

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Strand: Myself Strand Unit: Safety & Protection

- **Personal Safety**

- **Safety Issues** The child should be enabled to

- recognise and explore situations where children feel safe and those where safety might be at risk

getting lost, being left alone coming in contact with unsafe or unknown substances being with people who make me feel unsafe inappropriate or unsafe touches, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes me feel uncomfortable)

- discuss and practise appropriate strategies for dealing with these situations being assertive, telling a trusted person, making a telephone call, asking for help, knowing when to tell a secret, knowing how to seek help, distinguishing between real and imaginary dangers, adhering to rules made by others, recognising local landmarks recognising people who are responsible for keeping him/her safe

- explore how other people can persuade him/her to engage in unsafe behaviour and how this may be counteracted

- identify risky behaviour and examine its positive and negative consequences smoking, trying a new activity or game

Safety issues

- develop and practice strategies for keeping safe when travelling being familiar with the rules for travelling in car or bus, on bicycle crossing the road with an adult obeying those responsible for safety in the community

- become familiar with and understand the need to adhere to safety rules that apply in school, at home, on the farm, in water, for his/her own safety and that of others

- recognise places where it is safe to play and understand the importance of adopting responsible and equitable behaviour when playing

- recognise how accidents might be caused and what can be done in order to prevent accidents happening not playing with dangerous equipment or machinery, wearing protective headgear

- recognise and explore occasions when medicines are needed reasons for taking medicine, feelings experienced before and after taking the medicine, who administered the medicine, the safety rules that apply when taking medicine

- distinguish between substances in the home or school that are safe and those that are dangerous and seek permission before exploring them fertilisers, alcohol, detergents.

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The following appropriate language will be taught to the children

| Class level | Curriculum Strand | Curriculum Content objectives | RSE language to be taught at class level | Resources |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Junior & Senior Infants | Strand Unit Taking Care of My Body |name parts of the male and female, using appropriate anatomical terms | term "chest" to identify upper body in boys and girls terms "penis" & "vagina" will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy and girl | RSE TEACHER BK- SNF Theme 7 - MY BODY Pg 147 – 156 (p150*) RSE TEACHER BK - SNF Theme 7 - CARING FOR NEW LIFE pg 137 – 145 JI:Walk Tall Unit 1 Lesson 4 "A New Baby" 'Bathing the Baby Doll' Using anatomically correct male and female dolls with toy bath and bathing equipment ie water, soap, brush, cloth, suds etc SI:Walk Tall Unit 4 Lesson 2"our Amazing bodies" Note: use agreed terminology |
| | Strand Unit Growing & Changing | ... develop an awareness of human birth that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mothers womb until ready to be born | term" womb" will be taught as special place where baby grows term "breastfeeding" may be used in as a means of feeding the baby | |

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| Class level | Curriculum Strand | Curriculum Content objectives | RSE language to be taught at class level | Resources |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| First & Second Class | Strand Unit Taking Care of My Body |name parts of the male and female, using appropriate anatomical terms (and identify some of the functions) To be taught in Second Class. | term "chest" to identify upper body in boys and girls terms "penis" & "vagina" will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy and girl | Above resources may be adapted for use at First Class level. Story Time "The New Baby" Poetry "Waiting" 'Bathing the Baby Doll' Using anatomically correct male and female dolls with toy bath and bathing equipment ie water, soap, brush, cloth, suds etc |
| | Strand Unit Growing & Changing | appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world | ... teach that the baby is in the womb for 9 months and may be breast fed or bottle fed when born | |

The implementation of this policy will be evaluated after 2 years and reviewed thereafter as necessary. This policy was ratified by the Infant School Board of Management on 26th June 2017.