

Policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

St Brigid's National School is a rural mixed national school situated in Drumcong. The school has a catholic ethos. There are seven classrooms four of which have multi-grade classes. The current enrolment is 171 students.

Introductory Statement.

Our school has formulated this policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including the sensitive aspects. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was originally developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE and to ensure it is delivered in a consistent and agreed way.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the school.

The Board of Management and staff of St Brigid's school recognize that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom. Our school values the uniqueness all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that respect, tolerance and openness through the lived experience of the children and school community is valued. We recognize that parents have a primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children and their involvement will be encouraged. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting the children to develop into healthy young adults.

Current provision for RSE included in the School Curriculum:

- SPHE Lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- Use of *RSE Manuals* and *Busy Body* resources
- Revised *Stay Safe Programme*
- Revised *Walk Tall Programme*
- *Webwise* resources
- Adapted resources for SEN from www.pdst.ie
- Religious Education

Aims

To enable the child to:

- To enhance the personal development, self - esteem and wellbeing of the child
- To help the child to 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 acquire an understanding of and respect for human love, sexual intimacy and reproduction

St. Brigid's National School, Drumcong

- 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

We support the aims of RSE. In our school we encourage open communication, understanding, tolerance of differences and respect for self and others. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the wellbeing of all the members of the school community

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti - Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy

Content of Policy:

Junior & Senior Infants.

Strand.

Strand Unit.

Taking care of my body.

The child should be enabled to:

Knowing about my body.

name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms.

Growing and changing.

The child should be enabled to:

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.

The baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born.

Safety and Protection.

The child should be enabled to:

Personal Safety.

identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk.

Feeling unsafe with people, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes him/her feel uncomfortable)

First and Second Class.

Strand.

Strand Unit.

Taking care of my body.

The child should be enabled to:

Knowing about my body.

name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions.

Growing and changing.

The child should be enabled to:

New life.

begin to understand that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle.

Safety and Protection.

The child should be enabled to:

Personal Safety.

identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk.

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)

Third and Fourth Class.

Strand.

Strand Unit.

Taking care of my body.

The child should be enabled to:

Knowing about my body.

understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body.

growing height and weight and increasing strength.

growing from boy to man, from girl to woman.

Growing and changing.

The child should be enabled to:

Birth and New life.

discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth.

identify the care that needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born.

develop an appreciation of the wonder of a new-born baby.

Safety and Protection.

The child should be enabled to:

Personal Safety.

identify people, places and situations that may threaten personal safety.

being touched inappropriately.

being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes him/her feel uncomfortable)

Fifth and Sixth Class.

Strand.

Strand Unit.

Taking care of my body.

The child should be enabled to:

Knowing about my body.

identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everybody.

Female.

hormonal changes, changing body shape, development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, onset of menstruation.

Male.

hormonal changes, physical growth, enlargement of testicles and penis, appearance of pubic hair, underarm and facial hair, breaking of voice, beginning of sperm reproduction, onset of nocturnal emissions(wet dreams).

understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults.

Growing and changing.

The child should be enabled to:

Birth and New life.

understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship.

discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent.

Safety and Protection.

The child should be enabled to:

Personal Safety.

identify places and situations that may threaten personal safety.

*being asked to keep a "difficult secret"
recognising inappropriate or unsafe touches, being with people who make me feel unsafe.*

Organisation and Management of the Programme.

- Parents are in law and in fact, the primary educators and the school has a supporting role to play in complementing the work of parents.
- Parents are informed, from enrolment that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme.
- The strand units *Taking Care of My Body* and *Growing and Changing* are covered in year 1 in accordance with the SPHE Policy. The *Stay safe Programme* is covered in year 2.
- An outline of the lessons will be made available to parents before the commencement of the programme.
- A parent's decision to withdraw a pupil from the process will be honoured. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of this decision in writing. However if a child has been withdrawn, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from these lessons e.g what they may hear in the yard.
- Suitable guest speakers may be invited in to deliver the contents of the programme to fifth and sixth class. All information delivered will be within the programme and the class teacher will be present at all times.
- The curriculum is taught from Junior Infants to sixth class. It is taught through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals). All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave sixth class.
- Should a pupil require information that is not in line with the curriculum content and considered not to be age appropriate for the general body of pupils, the school will acknowledge the child's request but will direct the child to address this question at home. (For example questions relating to masturbation, abortion and oral sex.)
- For older children a *question box* is used as part of the structured RSE lessons. Teachers will follow up the on the written questions at a later date to give time to prepare suitable answers or consult with colleagues.
- A separate policy dealing with the guidelines for reporting cases of child abuse has been drawn up.

(See *Child Protection Policy*)

Methodologies

The RSE programme is taught through:

- Stories and poems
- Classroom discussion
- Group work

- Games
- Art activities
- Reflection
- Circle time
- Guest speaker (in presence of teacher: *circular 22/2010*)

Differentiation:

Teachers use assessment and professional judgement to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class.

Pupils with Additional Educational Needs:

Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered is made for children with additional educational needs. Consultation with parents/guardians in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

- Children may be pre - taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work
- Children may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material.
- Any different or specific objectives related to pupils own learning needs will be detailed in student support plans in consultation with parents / guardians

Assessment:

The teacher uses assessment to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group:

- Observation and questions to assess the children's engagement and interest
- Use of teacher designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games.
- Use of reflection or learning log.

Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

It replaces the existing policy and is implemented forthwith.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Review: September/ October 2019

Communication: This policy is available on the school's website. It is also available on request from the Principal / Secretary.