

ST. BRIGID'S G.N.S



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY POLICY

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

School Details

St. Brigid's G.N.S. Killester has a Catholic ethos and is governed by a Board of Management.

Introductory Statement and Rationale

This policy statement is the approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St. Brigid's G.N.S. It has been developed to inform teachers and parents of:

- a) The RSE content that will be taught at each class level.
- b) The organisation and management of the RSE across all class levels in St. Brigid's G.N.S.

SPHE and RSE will be taught in accordance with the curriculum guidelines of the Department of Education and in the context of the Catholic ethos and philosophy of the school.

School Philosophy

St. Brigid's G.N.S. recognises that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The curriculum also encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual while at the same time accepting some of their actions as members of the school and wider community. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that we value respect, tolerance and openness through the lived experience of the children and school community. Parents have the primary role in the SPHE of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting the children to develop into healthy young adults.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of the SPHE programme and will be taught within the context of SPHE for all class levels. RSE aims to help children to learn about growth and development, relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

The SPHE curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

SPHE is a life-long process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and is not confined to once off inputs or lessons. RSE is spiral in nature and will be revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in St. Brigid's G.N.S. so as to provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity.

SPHE is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community and RSE education in St. Brigid's G.N.S. will support the input and collaboration of all partners in education.

Aims of the RSE Programme as taught in St. Brigid's G.N.S.

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child
- To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others
- To help the child 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 develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- To enhance the capacity of the child to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse
- To develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- To acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction (5th & 6th Class)
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty (5th & 6th class)

We support 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 wellbeing of all members of the school community.

Policies and Programmes that support SPHE/RSE:

<i>Policies</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Protection• Anti-Bullying• Relationships and Sexuality Education• Substance Use• Code of Behaviour• Enrolment• Critical Incident• Health and Safety• Healthy Eating• Internet Acceptable Usage• Homework

Management and Organisation of RSE

- The DES curriculum will be followed and RSE lessons will be taught from Infants-6th class by the class teacher. However in 5th class and 6th Class the ‘sensitive lessons,’ will be taught by Accord facilitators in the presence of the class teacher.
- RSE will be taught developmentally with age appropriate lessons being taught as per the curriculum guidelines.
- Teachers will model appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings.
- Teachers will teach the content from their own class level only and will only answer questions relevant to the programme for that class level. Teachers will not give personal information and will not seek personal information from pupils. Respect for personal privacy and for personal information will be emphasised with the pupils. Pupils will be taught to recognise that personal disclosures during the RSE lessons are inappropriate.
- Teachers will inform pupils at the beginning of the RSE ‘sensitive lesson,’ that it may not be possible to answer all questions from pupils. Pupil questions will be dealt with in accordance with the following criteria: circumstance in which the question has arisen; clarification of information sought; relevance of the issue. If the question is outside the scope of the content of the class level, teachers may use the following phrases: *‘I won’t be able to answer all your questions in class,’ ‘that’s something that you will learn when you are older,’ or ‘perhaps you could talk to your parent/s about that.’*
- Teachers will not give information or discuss sexual orientation or contraception during RSE lessons. If questions arise on these topics teachers will respond in accordance with the policy guidelines for questions ‘outside the scope of the lesson.’
- Pupils will be advised that it is inappropriate to discuss information about certain aspects of the RSE programme i.e. puberty, intercourse and birth with younger siblings or friends. Pupils will be encouraged to discuss the learning outcomes with their parents/guardians.

- Aspects of the RSE curriculum may be integrated into other areas of SPHE, Aistear and the Science Curriculum.
- All RSE teaching resources will adhere to the Catholic ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy.
- The Strand units of Growing and Changing and Taking Care of my Body are covered in Year Two of the SPHE plan. The Sensitive issues are covered as part of these broad topics. However aspects of these strand units will also be covered in year one of the SPHE plan.
- Teachers use assessment and professional judgement to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class. Special consideration will be taken to ensure the needs of the children with SEN are met. Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.
- St. Brigid's G.N.S. fully complies with the DES Child Protection Guidelines and updated Child Protection Policy. In cases of disclosure from pupils, the DLP/DDLP will follow the procedures as outlined in Children First 2015.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- St. Brigid's acknowledges parents and guardians as the primary educators of their children and the school works in partnership with parents.
- The SPHE plan and RSE policy are available for parents to see on our school website.
- An outline of the lessons on sensitive issues will be distributed to parents before they are taught, so that they can prepare the child before they are dealt with in school, if they so wish.
- A parent's right to *withdraw* a pupil from the process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education. *It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw and their willingness to cover sensitive issues with their child outside of school hours. The content of the RSE curriculum is available on the Drumcondra Education website.*
- A child who has been withdrawn from class for the duration of a discrete SPHE lesson will be accommodated in another classroom under the supervision of another teacher pending completion of the lesson.
- If a child is withdrawn from the class for the teaching of sensitive issues, the school cannot guarantee that the other children will not inform her about what happened. The teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the issue at another time while the child is present.

Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from Infants to 6th Class. RSE will be covered under the strand of Myself and the strand units Growing and changing and Taking care of my body.

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

- 1) The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE:
 - Friendship
 - Self-Identity
 - Family
 - Self-esteem
 - Growing Up

- 2) The second section of RSE will deal with any specific/sensitive content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are in **bold** and these aspects of the curriculum will be taught primarily through the RSE lessons outlined in the RSE manuals.

<i>RSE Topics from Infants-2nd Class</i>	<i>RSE Topics from 3rd-6th Class</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Safe • Bodily changes from birth to age 9 • Making appropriate choices • Appreciating the variety of family types and variety of family life • Recognising and expressing feelings • Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep • Expressing opinions and listening to others • Naming the parts of the male/female body using anatomical terms (Junior/Senior Infants). • Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily changes • Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise • Keeping safe • Expressing feelings • Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family relationships shape us • Making healthy and responsible decisions • Forming friendships • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (3rd, 4th Class) • Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class) • Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6th class) • Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th & 6th class) • Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th & 6th class)

Approaches and Methodologies

When implementing the RSE programme, staff at St. Brigid's G.N.S. will endeavour to display respect and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times. The curriculum will be taught from junior infants to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral

curriculum whereby key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals. The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children. The RSE curriculum will be taught through:

- stories and poems
- classroom discussion
- group work
- games
- art activities
- reflection
- circle time
- guest speaker

The following appropriate language will be taught to the children as part of the specific sensitive RSE lessons at each class level

Class Level	Strand Unit	Content objectives	RSE language to teach at each level	Resource
Junior/Senior Infants	Taking care of my body	Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms	'chest,' to identify upper body in boys and girls 'penis,' and 'vagina,' will be taught as the obvious physical difference between a boy and girl	RSE Teacher Book Theme 7:My Body pages 147-156
	Growing and changing	Develop an awareness of human birth that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born	'Mammy's tummy,' will be taught as the special place where a baby grows until it is born 'breastfeeding,' may be referred to as a means of feeding the baby	RSE Teacher BK Theme 7:Caring for new life pages 137-145
First/Second Class	Taking care of my body	Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions* *Refers to the function of organs i.e. lungs, kidneys etc. The function of the male and female reproductive system will not be referenced.	1 st Class: Introduce term 'urine,' to explain that which is released by the kidneys when going to the toilet	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 7:How my body works p.70-71
			2 nd Class: Introduce term 'urethra,' in girls and 'penis,' in boys for passing urine.	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 7: When my body needs special care pages 166-167
	Growing and changing	Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the human and animal world	1 st Class: Introduce term 'womb,' as the special place where a baby grows until born	RSE Teacher BK Theme 6:The wonder of new life pages 61-69
			2 nd Class: Teach that the baby is in the womb <i>for 9 months and may be breast fed or bottle fed when born</i>	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 6: The wonder of new life pages 153-158
Third/Fourth Class	Taking care of my body	Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body	3 rd Class: Introduce term 'hormones,' as chemicals which move around your body and cells	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 8: As I grow I change pages 93-101
			4 th Class: Introduce term 'menstruation,' using amended text page 99 NOTE: Menstruation will be explained in detail in 5th class	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 8: Growing and changing pages 195-205

	Growing and changing	Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty	3 rd Class: Introduce terms ' <i>umbilical cord,</i> ' and ' <i>navel/belly button.</i> '	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 6: Preparing for new life pages 69-79
		Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth	4 th Class: Introduce terms ' <i>egg,</i> ' ' <i>lining (womb),</i> ' ' <i>ready to be born,</i> '	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 6: The wonder of new life pages 170-181
Fifth/Sixth Class	Taking care of 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 everyone Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults	5 th & 6 th Class: Language to be taught: Puberty, Ovaries-ovum, fallopian tube, womb/uterus, cervix, menstruation, penis, testicle, scrotum, sperm, erection, wet dreams	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 6: My body grows and changes pages 84-89
	Growing and changing	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 Discuss the stages and sequence of the human baby in the womb	5 th & 6 th Class: Language to be taught: Sexual intercourse, conception, ovum, fallopian tubes, umbilical cord	RSE Teacher Bk Theme 7: The wonder of new life pages 95-98 RSE Teacher Bk Theme 8: Caring for new life pages 106-110 RSE Teacher Bk Theme 8: A Baby is a miracle pages 213-215 (6 th class)

Resources:

<i>Resources</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RSE Teacher manuals• Walk Tall Programme• Stay Safe Programme• Anatomical dolls and story books• Busy Bodies DVD and booklet• INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster• RESPECT guidelines

Provision of Ongoing Support

Opportunities for CPD will be brought to the attention of staff members and teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE. Staff meetings are utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

This plan was ratified by the B.O.M on 16th March 2021.

Signed: Carmel Reid (*Chairperson B.O.M*)