

RSE Policy

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle
2019

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name: Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle

Address: Headford, Co. Galway

Category: Mixed Vertical, 3 Mainstream Class Teachers, 2 SET Teaching Posts
(One post shared)

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

All schools are required to have an RSE 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 developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle is a mixed primary school with 76 pupils and is located in a small west of Ireland town. The catchment area also encompasses a rural hinterland. Within a system of Christian values the school aims to serve the needs of its community by its commitment to preparing its pupils for life. This is achieved by educating them in the fullest sense so that each one matures spiritually, morally, emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially, creatively and culturally. The school strives to provide a happy, secure and supportive atmosphere where each child is accepted and respected and encouraged to learn; where the dignity of each person is developed and their talents recognised and fostered. Communication is encouraged and a sense of tolerance and fair play are strongly promoted. Within this atmosphere it is hoped to develop good character in the children with a correct attitude towards freedom and responsibility.

DEFINITION OF RSE

The school acknowledges that the parents are the primary educators of their children and in Relationships and Sexuality Education [RSE] we aim to develop the information and values which the children have already acquired from their parents in the home. It is also acknowledged that the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and the development of values about sexuality and relationships is a lifelong one. In school RSE will be an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education [SPHE] and will be taught in this context. It aims to help the children to learn about their own physical development and their relationships with others. This work will be based on developing self-esteem, thereby promoting respect for themselves and others and by providing them with information appropriate to their age and individual maturity.

RELATIONSHIP OF RSE TO SPHE

RSE is taught in the context of SPHE. The SPHE programme contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well being of the children. SPHE looks at issues such as relationships at home and in school, building self-esteem and learning skills of communication, decision making and expressing feelings in an appropriate way. This programme will include a wide range of topics such as healthy eating, alcohol, smoking, drugs, hygiene, exercise, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility, as well as RSE.

WHAT THE SCHOOL CURRENTLY PROVIDES

At present Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle provides Social, Personal and Health Education within the following:

- SPHE Curriculum
- Grow In Love
- Stay Safe Programme
- Bi Follain
- Walk Tall Programme
- P .E. [Health and hygiene issues]
- Webwise Resources
- Safety Issues -safe cross code, swimming safety, fire safety etc.
- Informally on a day to day basis as various situations arise.
- Busy Bodies DVD & Booklet
- Online Resources

THE AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle hopes through the RSE programme to achieve the following:

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of the child.
- To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of healthy attitudes 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 enable the child to acquire an understanding of and a respect for loving human relationships.
- To enable the child to become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of

their self-identity.

- To acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.

BROAD OBJECTIVES

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should enable the child to (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum)

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-worth
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and 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 and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

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.

POLICIES WHICH SUPPORT SPHE/RSE

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF RSE IN OUR SCHOOL

The sensitive areas of RSE will be covered under the strand units Taking Care of My Body & Growing and Changing. These strand units will be taught every two years in accordance with the SPHE School Plan.

It is a spiral curriculum, meaning that similar topics will be built on every two years. The topics will be developed to suit the age and maturity of the children. In the case of the multiclass situation, the teacher will follow the senior programme of the class grouping. Arrangements will be made to group the classes according to the divide outlined below. Parents will be notified when sensitive issues are being dealt with. They will receive the home/school links page from RSE manuals or teacher designed letter before the lessons are taught. If available, parents will also receive A5 Busy Bodies Booklet & DVD. When these lessons are being covered, parents will have the right to withdraw their child or children if they so wish. With regard to these children, arrangements will be made for their supervision in the school until the lesson is over and confidentiality will be preserved or parents may collect child/children early from school.

To accommodate any teachers who may not wish to teach the more sensitive areas of the programme arrangements can be made to invite a suitable visiting speaker who would be fully briefed on the content of the school RSE programme and policy(Ref. p32 Curriculum Guidelines). Delivery to pupils would not deviate from this. A member of staff/principal will be present during lesson. Questions from pupils are welcomed but only in relation to content material.

Promoting gender equity will be an essential part of the programme. The principal will make arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme.
- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level, example of letter see Appendix 4+5
- The letter will be issued in advance, giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teacher/principal if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children, it also gives parents an opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE.
- Parents will be given a copy of the Busy Bodies Booklet & DVD (if available) or

information on where to access the material online.

- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher/principal if they have any concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Following discussion with Principal and Class Teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be kept in the child's central file.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons.eg.What they may hear on yard.

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 is covered every two years under our SPHE plan (see below).RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

Myself
Growing and changing
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 will deal with any sensitive / specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units, The sensitive aspects are in bold.

<p><u>Topics covered up to 2nd include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping safe • Bodily changes from birth (birth-9) • Making age-appropriate choices • Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community • 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 appropriate 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) 	<p><u>Topics from 3rd to 6th include:</u></p> <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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making healthy and responsible decisions • Forming friendships • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb(3rd, 4th class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to puberty and changes (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 and 6th class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th class).
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SPHE PLANNING GRID

Strand	Strand Units (Year 1) 2019/2020	Strand Units (Year 2) 2020/2021
Myself	<i>Self-identity (Sept.–Oct.)</i>	
	<i>Safety and Protection (Jan-Feb)-Stay Safe</i>	<i>Taking care of my body (Jan-Feb)</i>
	<i>Making Decisions (March-April)</i> <i>*This strand unit is for third to sixth only. Infants to second complete the Safety Issues section of Safety and Protection</i>	<i>Growing and Changing (March-April)</i>
Myself and others	<i>My friends and other people (Nov-Dec)</i>	<i>Myself and My Family (Sept-Oct)</i>
		<i>Relating to others (Nov-Dec)</i>
Myself and the wider world	<i>Developing Citizenship (May-June)</i>	<i>Media Education (May-June)</i>

APPROACHES & METHODOLOGIES

When implementing the programme, we will endeavour to display respect for 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 (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals). The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.

DIFFERENTIATION

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

Sometimes the stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching

- group work and discussion
- higher and lower order questioning in groups
- moderated whole class discussions through use of a Question Box.

PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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

LANGUAGE

SPHE curriculum provides a context in which children are given opportunities to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to SPHE. Children should become aware of the power and influence of language. When used positively, language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner can hurt, diminish and demean. Children need to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationship and their everyday interactions. Language is a powerful tool and should be used with respect and integrity for the dignity of each person.

There are two areas where the use of language is applied in RSE lessons;

- The formal use and teaching of language generally throughout the school
- The use of language in discussion through your formal RSE lessons
- **Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching** relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used, the use of slang will be discouraged
- Anatomical terms and language introduced is consistent with RSE Materials Books.

QUESTIONS

We use some simple principles when fostering discussion and questioning

- No personal questions of the teacher
- The Question Box will be availed of by the children
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions
- Questions do not have to be answered straight away

Sample responses;

- I'll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them
- That's something you'll learn about as you get older
- Is that something you could talk to your parents / guardians / family about?
- We agreed in our contract that we wouldn't ask anyone personal questions
- Somebody asked a question and the language they used was slang language, what they meant to ask was....
- A question was asked, and we cannot talk about that particular topic but I think that question was about.

For older children a 'question box' may be used as part of a structured RSE lesson. Teachers can follow up on the written questions at a later date, thus allowing time to prepare suitable answers, consult with colleagues, etc.

Question Box

During the delivery of each section of the sensitive lessons– children will be encouraged to place their questions into a box in the classroom. These questions will then be monitored and screened with the teacher answering the questions the following week taking into account the following;

- 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
- Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is very inappropriate or needs to be communicated with home because of other reasons
- No personal questions will be answered and children will be reminded not to share personal information about their families or others – but can share with teacher after the lessons.

If issues arise which might be seen to contravene Children First Guidelines, the teacher will notify the Designated Liaison Person in the school.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment in RSE is important to enable the teacher to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group.

The teacher uses;

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

- The school follows Children First Guidelines 2011 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017
- If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues, we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what happened.

RESOURCES

- Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials (DES) - Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it in online / pdf format. Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:
 - Stay Safe programme
 - Walk Tall Programme
 - Anatomical Dolls and Story books
 - Busy Bodies DVD and Booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class component of RSE within the context of SPHE.

PROVISION FOR ONGOING SUPPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

The school will provide ongoing support for teachers, pupils, parents and board members in the following ways

- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials
- Support from a PDST Advisor
- Promotion and communication of resources available from www.pdst.ie.

REVIEW

- This plan was created following a whole school review of RSE. The draft was then published on our school website and parental feedback welcomed & encouraged.

Following consultation with all partners the final draft of the policy was completed & sanctioned by the Board of Management on October 7th 2019
It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request.

- The policy will be reviewed after 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 Board of Management at a meeting.

Appendix 1: Updated language grid (2019) from PDST RSE Guidelines

Appendix 2: Sample Letter for all classes

Appendix 3: Specific Letter for Juniors-Fourth

Appendix 4: Specific Letter for Fifth & Sixth

Appendix 5, Home school link letters from RSE Manuals

Appendix 6, Busy Bodies Booklet

Signature of Chairperson Jean Connolly
Date October 7ⁿ 2019

Class	Strand /strand Unit	Content Objectives Consult curriculum for complete objectives in Growing and changing and Taking care of my body	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book	Home/School links	Supplementary resources
Junior/Senior Infants	Myself • Growing and changing • Taking care of my body	Growing and changing • Become aware of new life and birth in the world • Develop an awareness of human birth Taking care of my body • Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms	Womb Breastfeeding Penis vulva	New Life p68 My Body p147 Caring for new life p137 At the beach or swimming pool p.153	Home/school links P75 P145 P156 P167	Anatomically correct dolls • Picture books of new baby
1 st /2 nd Class	Myself • Growing and changing • Taking care of my body	Growing and changing • Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles Taking care of my body • Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions	penis vulva vagina womb breastfeeding urethra	The Wonder of new life p59 /151 How my body works p67/ 161 Growing means changing p77/171 A Visit to the Doctor p.164	P65 P75 P85 P160 P169 P179	• Picture books of going to the doctors • Tom's Power Flower • Books / activities on Life cycles • Birth and new life in nature
3 rd /4 th Class	Myself • Growing and changing • Taking care of my body	Growing and changing • Understand that physical changes take place in both the male and female body Taking care of my body • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth	Revise above umbilical cord	Preparing for new life p69 As I grow and change p93 The wonder of new life p169	P77 P78 P79 P101 P181	
5 th /6 th Class	Myself • Growing and changing • Taking care of my body	Growing and changing • Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship Taking care of my body • 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	Revise above wet dreams Busy Bodies language semen sexual intercourse Menstruation Changes in puberty	Busy Bodies presentation (My body grows and changes p81 The wonder of new life p92 Caring for new life p103 Different kinds of love p141)	P92 P101 P112 P149 P197 P208 P219	• Busy Bodies • Power points recap • Question Box • Puberty Quiz

Appendix 1

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle

Dear Parent,

Relationships and Sexuality education is an integral part of the S.P.H.E programme. The sensitive elements of the Relationships and Sexuality education programme are covered under the Strand Units, 'Growing and Changing' and 'Taking Care of my Body'. We will be completing these Strand Units with all class levels in the forthcoming weeks.

The class teacher will send home appropriate home school links pages from the Relationships and Sexuality manual which outline the material that will be covered in class and encourage further discussion on the topics at home. If you have any questions, please make an appointment to see the class teacher/Principal.

<p><u>Topics covered up to 2nd include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping safe• Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)• Making age-appropriate choices• Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community• 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 appropriate 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)	<p><u>Topics from 3rd to 6th include:</u></p> <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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making healthy and responsible decisions• Forming friendships• Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb(3rd, 4th class)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to puberty and changes (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 and 6th class)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th class).
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Yours sincerely,



Tel. (093) 35377

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle
Headford, Co. Galway.

Date:

Re: Fifth and Sixth Class

Dear Parents,

As part of the school's SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education) programme, there is a section, RSE (Relationships & Sexuality Education), which deals with the areas of growing and changing - puberty, intercourse, conception, pregnancy, relationships, nutrition, exercise and hygiene. A short animated DVD presentation will also be shown which explains these issues in a very simple and sensitive way, when this content has been covered in school the children will be given a booklet on growing & changing.

All materials that will be covered in class can be viewed online at this address www.pdst.ie/node/811 The "Busy Bodies" DVD can be viewed online and a PDF of the booklet is available too. This animated presentation that will be shown in class is the one you can find on the website entitled "Busy Bodies".

Please find attached the home school links page which gives you further information about the topics that will be covered in class.

The DVD lesson will be shown on _____

It is always most desirable if children receive this information from their parent/s in the home environment and I would hope that the lessons in school would actually only be a support to your input as parents in these important matters, rather than a replacement. We encourage you to sit with your child and review the booklet that they have received at school.

Your consent is not required in order for your child to participate in these lessons (incl. DVD). However, you have every right to opt out on your child's behalf, if that is your wish, you must provide the school with a letter.

The full RSE programme and policy can be seen at the school.

These lessons will only be taught every two years, so, please consider that if you opt out for a child in 5th class this material will not be covered again when your child is in 6th.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for all your support in the work of the school. If you wish for your child not to participate in lessons please inform the school in writing.

Yours Sincerely,

Mary McNelis
Class Teacher and Principal



Tel. (093) 35377

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle
Headford, Co. Galway.

Date:

Re: Junior Infants – Fourth Class

Dear Parents,

As part of the school's SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education) programme, there is a section, RSE (Relationships & Sexuality Education), which deals with the areas of growing and changing. In the junior classes children will learn the correct names for the private body parts & functions and that babies come from Mammy's womb. They will also discuss the care of a new born baby including breastfeeding.

(Please find attached the home school links page which gives you further information covered in class.)

For 3rd & 4th the lessons discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb, naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions.

(Please find attached the home school links page which gives you further information).

All materials that will be covered in class can be viewed online at this address

www.pdst.ie/node/811

Lessons will take place on _____

It is always most desirable if children receive this information from their parent/s in the home environment and I would hope that the lessons in school would actually only be a support to your input as parents in these important matters, rather than a replacement.

Your consent is not required in order for your child to participate in these lessons.

However, you have every right to opt out on your child's behalf, if that is your wish, you must provide the school with a letter.

Please read the enclosed synopsis of the lesson content.

The full RSE programme and policy can be seen at the school.

These lessons will only be taught every two years, so, please consider that if you opt out for your child this material will not be covered the following year.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for all your support for the work of the school.

Yours Sincerely,

Mary McNelis
Class Teacher and Principal

