

# St. Joseph's National School

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## R.S.E. Policy

### Mission Statement

St. Joseph's National School is a Catholic School under the patronage of the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise and is committed to providing a holistic education in an atmosphere which respects individual rights. Each child will be encouraged to achieve his/her full potential in partnership with parents, community and the environment.

### Rationale

The plan is a record of whole school decisions in relation to RSE in line with the Primary Curriculum 1999. Its purpose is to guide the teachers in adopting a consistent and coherent approach to the teaching and learning of RSE in our school. It is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for RSE to ensure appropriate coverage of all aspects of the RSE curriculum from Infants to Sixth Class.

### Our School vision

Our school cherishes all pupils equally and endeavours to help them in achieving their true potential. With regard to RSE programme we are therefore keen to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the child. We want to ensure that they are prepared for the changes and challenges that come with growing up and moving on in society.

### Aims:

The children of St. Joseph's NS should be enabled to achieve the aims outlined in the SPHE curriculum, which include:

- 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.

In partnership with the home our aims are:

- To provide opportunities for our pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality, imparted in a loving and caring way, within a wholesome environment.
- To help them think and act in a moral caring and responsible way
- To learn about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others.

The development of relationships is an integral part of all curriculum subjects. Aspects of RSE are taught during SPHE, Religion, Science, implementation of the Code of Behaviour etc. An integrative approach towards RSE ensures that the children encounter RSE in a holistic manner rather than in isolation.

### **Content**

RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. In a school situation RSE, provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and to establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework, appropriate to their age. RSE will be taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the Philosophy framework of the school. Teachers will not teach any content outside the Religion programme used by the school or the DES curriculum. The teaching methods used in the school are child centred and reflect the age and stage of development of each child. Sensitive issues will be dealt with appropriately.

### **The Management and Organisation of R.S.E. in Our School**

- It is intended that the Department's Guidelines would be adhered to in so far as is possible and that some of the Department's resource materials will be used.
- We as a staff have agreed that the lessons relating to sexual differences, the conception and development of the baby in the womb and other sensitive issues would be taught in fifth and sixth classes.
- It will be pointed out to the parent(s) that it is the policy of the school to provide R.S.E. to the pupils in accordance with the Department of Education's Guidelines.
- In the event that a parent seeks to absent their child from specific R.S.E. lessons that parent(s) must give a commitment in writing that they themselves will provide their child(ren) with this information.
- As the teaching of these lessons a very sensitive issue, parents will be provided with the lesson content, Busy Bodies Books and specific dates of lessons at the beginning of March
- It will be left to the discretion of the principal, class teacher and resource teacher to modify the content to meet the needs of pupils with special needs.
- All children will be given equal access to R.S.E. within the S.P.H.E. Curriculum.
- Teachers may opt out of teaching R.S.E. if they wish to do so but must discuss with the principal.

**Resources:**

- RSE teaching materials
- Busybodies DVD

**Responsibility for Review**

The responsibility for the review will lie with the principal, teachers, B.O.M. and parents of children attending the school at the time of review.

**Ratification & Communication**

This policy will be presented to the B.O.M. for ratification. The policy thereafter will be available on request from the principal for inspection by any relevant interested parties.

**Roles & Responsibilities**

The policy will be implemented by the principal and staff of St. Joseph's N.S. and will be supported by the B.O.M., local G.P. and other emergency services.

**Ratification of Policy**

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 20/10/2016

Signed: Renee Geary  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Mrs. Orla Egan  
Principal

Date: 20/10/2016

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# Appendix B : Lesson Content – Sensitive Issues

Class	Lesson	Strand Unit	Language	Date	Home/School
J.I. S.I.	<b>Theme 6</b> Caring for new life p.137 <b>Theme 7</b> My Body p.147	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	Penis/Vagina or Vulva Naming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms	Term 2 every second year	S.I. RSE Manual p. 145 S.I. RSE Manual p. 156
1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Theme 6</b> The wonder of new life p.59/p.151 <b>Theme 7</b> How my body works p67 When my body needs special care p.161 <b>Theme 8</b> Growing means changing p. 77/p.171	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	As above: introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra. Naming as above and identify some of the functions.	Term 2 every second year	RSE Manual p. 65, 160, 169
3 <sup>rd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Theme 6</b> Preparing for new life p.69 <b>Theme 6 from 4<sup>th</sup> class</b> The wonder of new life p.169 <b>Theme 8</b> As I grow I change p.93 <b>Theme 8 (girls only in 4<sup>th</sup> class)</b> Growing and changing p.195	Growing and changing	Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby in the womb. Umbilical cord. Any questions as to how the baby got there cannot be answered by the teacher.	Term 2 every second year Girls in 4 <sup>th</sup> class only <b>every year</b> , an introduction to changes with a particular focus on menstruation.	RSE Manual p. 181
5 <sup>th</sup> 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Theme 6</b> My body grows and changes p.81 <b>Theme 7</b> The wonder of new life p.93 <b>Theme 8</b> Caring for new life p.103 <b>Theme 2</b> Different kinds of love p.141	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty. Reproductive system of male/female adults. Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a committed relationship.	Term 2 every second year	RSE Manual p. 92,101,112,149 Busy Body Booklets and DVDS

## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION – ADVICE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

### **GENERAL POINTS**

- Schools can foster a culture that is accepting of difference. This can be expressed where appropriate, rather than making the assumption that everyone understands it.
- An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others; this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm.
- The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 provide protection against discrimination on nine grounds, one of which is sexual orientation. The Acts oblige those who manage schools to protect students and staff from discrimination or sexual harassment.
- If children are using the word ‘gay’ in a negative fashion it is better not to ignore it in the hope that it will go away. The same advice would apply for any instance of bullying.
- Schools are advised to develop a strategy for responding to children who have questions about sexual orientation or who are taunting others about being gay. This should be done in the context of the school’s ethos and RSE policy and with the awareness that primary school children are probably too young to engage in any detailed discussion of sexual identity.

### **PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS**

- Depending on the context and the age group of the children, the teacher could ask a child or a class group what they mean by the word ‘gay’
- A school could decide on a response to this question, such as ‘The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being homosexual or gay.’
- To give factual information like this in an open and straightforward way may help to remove the secrecy which is necessary for any bullying to flourish.
- Homophobic insults should be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults – the teacher can calmly explain to the child that such insults are hurtful to the other person and are not acceptable.