

St. Benedict's National School

Relationships & Sexuality Education

R.S.E Policy



Introductory Statement & Rationale

St Benedict's NS is a Catholic co-educational primary school under the patronage of the catholic archbishop Dublin. It has a varying enrollment of 650-700 pupils. There are 40 teaching staff including an administrative Principal, administrative Deputy Principal as well as a number of special needs assistants and ancillary staff. This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St. Benedict's NS, Ongar. This policy was updated in January 2022 by the SPHE postholder in consultation with staff. This revised policy further informs teachers and parents of (i) the RSE content that will be taught at each class level (ii) outlines the organisation and management of the RSE program across all levels at St. Benedict's. RSE will be taught in accordance with the curriculum guidelines and in the context of the catholic ethos and philosophy of the school.

School Philosophy

St Benedict's NS aims to promote the fullest possible development of each child- socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually so that he or she may lead a full enjoyable life as a child and go on to contribute to society as an adult. We strive to foster an atmosphere that will enable each child to develop his or her full potential in a safe environment. The environment is such that the child is encouraged and stimulated to be confident, appreciative, independent and creative. The RSE program will be implemented within this framework.

Definition of RSE

Relationship and Sexuality education (RSE) aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way (Going Forward Together Parent's Information Booklet, page 4)

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) 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.

Current Provision

Included in the school curriculum in St. Benedict's National School is:

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Body resources
- Stay Safe/ Walk Tall Programmes
- Religious Education (Grow in Love/Flourish resources)

Specifically the RSE program as taught in St Benedict's aims:

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to relationships.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.(5th and 6th)
- To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty.
- 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 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 of the members of the school community.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of behaviour and discipline
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

Child Protection

This policy is cognisant of all aspects of our current Child Protection Policy. The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a child protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principal as the Deputy DLP. Where a child protection concern is raised, the procedures outlined in the schools Child Protection Policy will be followed.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Curriculum Matters:

Curriculum Content

- The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from infants to 6th class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level.
- Where an outside speaker is used, the class teacher will remain in the classroom, as per circular 22/2010. The speaker will be made aware of the school's RSE policy.
- Details of the topics and language can be found in the appendix of this policy.
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Topics covered up to 2nd class include:

- Keeping Safe
- Bodily changes (birth to 9)
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating 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 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)

Topics from 3rd to Sixth include:

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing Feelings
- Family relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (*Fourth class*)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (*Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Class*) · Reproductive system of male/female adults (*Fifth and Sixth Class*) · Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship. (*Sixth Class*)

Organisational Matters:

- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme.

- If children are withdrawn from the lessons pertaining to the sensitive elements of the RSE programme, they must give a notice in writing to the school that they are withdrawing their child. The child will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom in the school. If a pupil is so withdrawn the school cannot guarantee that other pupils will not inform the pupil in question of the content of the lesson(s), or that the teacher or pupils will not refer to or revise aspects of the lesson as necessary during subsequent days/weeks.
- Parents have a responsibility 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 are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.
- In the class situation children will be encouraged to recognise that certain information is for them only and it would be inappropriate to discuss this with younger siblings/children for example.
- With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom.
- If a Teacher has concerns about teaching the sensitive elements in RSE they should consult with the Principal. Any teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive elements of RSE. It is the responsibility of the B.O.M. to ensure content is covered by another teacher or an outside speaker.
- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of 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.

Dealing with Questions:

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE.

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics are not in the primary RSE/SPHE programme and will not be discussed i.e.: abortion, masturbation, contraception.

Questions to the teacher may be oral or written within the group setting and answered within boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. If any questions asked by children are deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents/guardians, or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum, or in post primary school. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom outside of the RSE lesson.

The following considerations will be made when responding to children's questions:

- Awareness of circumstances in which the question has arisen
- Clarification of what information is required
- Determination of whether the question is appropriate or relevant/who it is relevant to
- Provision of an age appropriate answer
- Deferral of the question to be answered at home or in the future

Provision for Ongoing Support

- Parents are welcome to view the SPHE curriculum, the SPHE school plan, and the Relationships and Sexuality Education policy if they wish. Copies of all of these documents are available in the school office.
- Regular contact with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving “sensitive issues” in the form of the home/school link page accompanying such lessons in the RSE Resource Books **OR** Contact will be made with parents prior to the address by the teacher. Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters.
- The school RSE programme acts as a support only to parents. (Parents have the right to withdraw their child with written notice)
- Opportunities provided by the PDST Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members. Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE.
- Application for in-school support from PDST sought when necessary. Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials.

Review :

Ratified by Board of Management on: _____

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: _____(Principal)

Class	Strand /strand Unit	Content Objectives <i>Consult curriculum for complete objectives in Growing and changing and Taking care of my body</i>	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book	Pages in Walk Tall	Supplementary resources
Junior /Senior Infants	Myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body 	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Become aware of new life and birth in the world ▪ Develop an awareness of human birth Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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	Our Amazing Bodies p94 (Senior Infants book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anatomically correct dolls ▪ Picture books of new baby ▪ Visit of baby to class ▪ Flourish
First/ Second Class	Myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body 	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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	Our Amazing Bodies p37 (2 nd class book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Picture books of going to the doctors ▪ Tom's Power Flower ▪ Books / activities on Life cycles ▪ Birth and new life in nature ▪ Flourish
Third/ Fourth Class	Myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body 	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body • Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth 	Revise above umbilical cord changes in puberty menstruation	Preparing for new life p69 The wonder of new life p169 As I grow and change p93 Growing and changing p195	As I grow I change p175 (3 rd class book) Changing and Growing p140 (4 th class book) The Wonder of New Life p.150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Body Systems ▪ Picture books on Growing and Changing ▪ Flourish

<p>Fifth/ Sixth Class</p>	<p>Myself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body 	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	<p>Revise above wet dreams <u>Busy Bodies</u> <u>language</u> semen sexual intercourse</p>	<p>My body grows and changes p81 The wonder of new life p92 Caring for new life p103 Different kinds of love p141</p>	<p>My Amazing body p345 (5th class book)</p> <p>Creation p121 (6th class book)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Busy Bodies ▪ Power points recap ▪ Question Box ▪ Puberty Quiz ▪ Flourish
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