

Our Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme

Bunscoil Mhuire
Youghal

- **The aims of Our Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme are:**

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being 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 enable the child to acquire an understanding of and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
- 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 his/her sexuality and of others while growing and developing.

- **All topics will be taught at the appropriate age.**

The Management and Organization of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Our School

• RSE will be taught to all classes at the appropriate level throughout the school year. In certain instances, it may be considered appropriate to invite specialists into the school to participate in the programme. The programme will be taught according to the syllabus supplied by the Department of Education and Science.

• Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and will be taught in this context (see school SPHE Plan). The curriculum is spiral in nature (i.e. similar content is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time at school) and all content will be delivered developmentally throughout the child's time in the primary school.

RSE-specific education (or core RSE education) will be covered in the strand units Taking Care of My Body, Growing & Changing and Safety & Protection.

• Parents shall have the right to withdraw their children from RSE classes.

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Not being familiar with the biological terms for the body can put children at a disadvantage.

Therefore we will give children the correct and appropriate language as outlined in RSE Resource Materials as follows

- **Jnr/Snr Infants**

- Term "womb" will be taught.
- Terms "penis" and "vagina" (urethra) will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy/girl.
- Term "breast feeding" may be used in conversation as a means of feeding a baby.

- **First/Second**

- "penis, urethra vagina, vulva, womb, breast feeding" will be taught/revised in their context of their biological functions
- Teachers will teach that baby is in womb for 9 months and may be breast fed.

- **Third/Fourth**

- Developing foetus and menstruation “umbilical cord” and “navel” taught/revised.

- **Fifth/Sixth**

- Puberty, human reproduction and sexual intercourse in the context of a committed loving relationship will be taught using the language outlined in DES RSE Resource Materials for 5th / 6th classes.

- **Co-educational**

Certain aspects of our sexuality element of the RSE Programme in the context of a loving relationship may be taught gender separately at the teachers’ discretion.

- Girls Menstruation
 - Boys Puberty
 - Sexual intercourse in the context of a loving relationship.
 - Development of a human foetus.
 - 5th and 6th class teacher may offer the children an opportunity to write questions they wish to ask on a sheet of paper. The teacher may then answer a selection of the relevant questions within the confines of the SPHD curriculum.
 - We acknowledge that parents are the primary educators of their children and the school will work in a supportive role.
 - On request, parents will be provided with an overview of the SPHE curriculum including the RSE programme.
 - Parents will be informed that they are welcome to view RSE materials at the school and will be notified of the RSE element prior to beginning it within the classroom.
- Should a parent wish to withdraw their child, we have an understanding that the parent provide an alternative in this area of education. In this case, it is understood that parents will sign the standard withdrawal letter.
- If a child is withdrawn, the school cannot guarantee that other children will not inform the child in question of the content of the lesson from which the child was withdrawn or that the children will not refer incidentally in class to aspects of the lesson during subsequent days/weeks.
 - All content objectives within the RSE will be covered by the end of 6th class.
- Teachers will teach only the topics laid down for the class and curriculum content for the year. Teachers will then at their own discretion introduce the Question Box to ensure that age appropriate questions are answered only as defined within the curriculum.

- **Provide for ongoing support, development and re-view**

With a view to supporting teacher, pupils, parents and Board of management in RSE at policy and programme level, teachers will be afforded the opportunity to upskill through PDST courses and seminars. Up to date and relevant publications will be made available to teachers.

It will be the duty of the Board of Management to ensure that there will be periodic review of the Policy Statement and that any amendments as a result of such review will be undertaken.