

SCOIL NAOMH ÁINE

RATHGAROGUE

schooloffice@rathgaroguens.com

www.rathgaroguens.com

Twitter: @rathgaroguens_NS

New Ross, Co. Wexford, Y34 H291

051-424779

Roll No. 16023B

RSE Policy

Scoil Naomh Áine, Rathgarogue is a primary school in Co. Wexford catering for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th class with one Special Class for pupils aged 3 - 5 years with a diagnosis of ASD.

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up initially in 2012 and reviewed by a committee involving staff and parents in January 2024. This policy is an agreed approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was developed to inform teachers and parents/guardians/carers about the provision of RSE in Scoil Naomh Áine, Rathgarogue.

School Philosophy

We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school. Through our SPHE/RSE programme 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 encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual, while at the same time accepting responsibility for 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 values respect, inclusion and diversity of all members of our school community. Our school acknowledges that parents/guardians/carers have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children and as such, their involvement will be encouraged. SPHE/RSE is a key component in supporting our pupils to develop into healthy young adults.

The following definition of RSE is referenced from the Interim curriculum and guidelines for primary schools (DE 1996, p.5)

"Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In particular, it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant to personal and social skills."

SPHE/RSE Curriculum

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.

Through SPHE and RSE, pupils are enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through:

- A sense of identity
- A sense of purpose
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of security
- A sense of competence

SPHE/RSE is

- a lifelong and continual process throughout primary school and should not be confined to once off inputs or solitary lessons
- a shared responsibility and collaboration between family, school, health professionals and the community
- a subject which develops a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues
- child-centered. RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made to suit individual requirements and individual school situations
- spiral in nature. SPHE/RSE formally begins in Junior Infants and is developed throughout the child's time in school. This will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- taught through active learning methodologies. RSE provides a range of learning opportunities that requires children to actively participate in their learning in a wide variety of ways e.g. discussion, circle time, role play.
- free of bias. Lessons, language and resources selected by the school reflect this. SPHE/RSE encourages children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live together in an intercultural society RSE is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

Aims of RSE

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing 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 the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing

Broad Objectives of RSE

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

- 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

Policies that support SPHE/RSE

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- GDPR Policy

Curriculum Planning for SPHE/RSE

There are 3 strands in the SPHE curriculum. There are nine strand units for Junior Infants to Second Class and ten strand units for Third Class onwards.

*Making Decisions strand unit only applies to 3rd - 6th Class.

The Department of Education (DE) advises to follow a 2 year plan when planning for SPHE. Each year schools should teach from each of the three main SPHE strands. Sharing the strand units over a two-year period ensures pupils will have covered the entire content relevant to their class grouping with a balanced offering from the three strands. It also ensures adequate time is allocated to each strand unit. If a teacher has any concern in relation to the teaching of specific content, the teacher should consult with the school principal and Making the Links and Beyond: <https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Compressed.pdf>

Our school follows a two year plan for SPHE

MONTH	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
September - October	Self - Identity (Myself)	Myself and My Family (Myself and Others)
November - December	My Friends and Other People (Myself and Others)	Relating to Others (Myself and Others)
January - February	Safety and Protection (Myself)	Growing and Changing (Myself)
March - April	Making Decisions (3rd-6th) (Myself)	Taking Care of My Body (Myself)
May - June	Media Education (Myself and the Wider World)	Developing Citizenship (Myself & the Wider World)

RSE, which largely looks at the development of relationships, is interwoven through all strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum. The more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered under the strand 'Myself' and strand units 'Growing and changing' and 'Taking care of my body'. Teachers will refer to the resource Making the Links to support their planning for the delivery of these strand units.

Guidelines for the Implementation of RSE

The SPHE curriculum will underpin all teaching and learning of RSE in Scoil Naomh Áine, Rathgarogue. All resources used will be in keeping with this RSE policy and will take into consideration the sample criteria for choosing resources, as outlined in the SPHE Teacher Guidelines p.103.

Wellbeing (New Curriculum)

Wellbeing supports children's social, emotional, and physical development now and into the future. It enables children to develop self awareness and knowledge, build life skills, and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school, their community, and wider society.

To develop these skills and dispositions, it is important for children to develop their own ethical understanding of the world. Values education encourages reflection on choices, exploration of opportunities, and commitment to responsibilities. Children will be encouraged to value what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities, in local and wider contexts. Wellbeing provides structured opportunities for children to be as physically and emotionally well and healthy as they can be. This happens by building their motivation and commitment to physical activity and to inform healthy lifestyle choices. Wellbeing also supports children to value positive and healthy relationships with others, which includes acquiring an understanding of human sexuality that is balanced and connected with the relational and emotional aspects.

Wellbeing includes the teaching of subjects traditionally referred to as SPHE and PE. The Primary Curriculum Framework suggests 3 hours per week is devoted to Wellbeing in 1st - 6th class and 2hrs 30mins is devoted to Wellbeing in the Infant classes. Flexible time may also be used for the teaching of Wellbeing.

- The strands units 'Growing and changing' and 'Taking care of my body' are covered in one year of a 2 year plan
- Lessons containing sensitive material are covered as part of these strand units
- Teachers from Junior Infants - 5th class will deliver the sensitive elements of the RSE lessons to their class. An external speaker may be invited to deliver these sensitive elements to 6th class in line with Circular 0042/2018.

Teachers will differentiate lessons for pupils with SEN where required and the emotional and social development of the pupils will be taken into account.

The principal will send a letter on Aladdin to all parents informing them that the sensitive lessons of the RSE programme will be taught soon. Parents will be encouraged to pre-teach the content to the pupils so they are not hearing the content from a teacher for the first time.

Pupil Voice

In our school the voice of our pupils is acknowledged, valued and respected. Children are given opportunities to reflect and feedback on SPHE/RSE provision via focus groups and questionnaires. This information will be used to inform school improvement in relation to future RSE provision.

Approaches & Methodologies

Active learning is the principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE. It requires children to actively participate in their learning in a wide variety of ways, thereby increasing the possibility of internalising

what they have explored and of being able to use this learning in their everyday lives. Active learning contributes significantly to fostering their self-confidence, self discipline and self-control in the learner. Active learning methodologies are an integral part of teaching and learning in SPHE and RSE. The PDST have developed a suite of resources to support school to implement active learning methodologies in SPHE which are available on <https://www.pdst.ie/SPHE-Approaches-and-Methodologies> .

Any or all of the following techniques may be used in Scoil Naomh Áine, Rathgarogue and will allow the child to play an active part in the learning process:

- Discussion
- Use of Circles/Circle Time
- Role play
- Interviewing friends, or other school pupils, family members
- Surveys of attitudes
- Analysing and evaluating media
- Hosting visitors
- Engagement with Restorative Practices
- Modelling
- Designing advertisements
- Writing captions
- Ranking statements
- Describing photographs
- Viewing and discussing videos
- Projects
- Group Work
- Art
- Time to reflect
- External Facilitator (Circular 0042/2018)

Resources

In Scoil Naomh Áine our staff may consult any of the following teaching resources when teaching RSE in addition to the Department of Education Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme:

- PDST Health and Wellbeing RSE
- NCCA SPHE/RSE Toolkit
- DE Walk Tall Manuals
- Making the Links and Beyond
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls
- HSE publications (www.healthpromotion.ie)
- Busy Bodies Booklet/ Videos/ Workbook (PDST)
- Inclusive picture and story books
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Lesson Ideas
- INTO Different Families Same Love Online Presentation J1 – 2nd
- INTO Different Families Same Love Online Presentation 3rd – 6th
- RESPECT guidelines • Gender Equality Matters (GEM)
- All Together Now • We All Belong

- PDST Education and Transgender Information
- PDST Identity Based Bullying Information
- RSE related educational websites

This list is not exhaustive. Resources will always be chosen by teachers in line with the SPHE Teacher Guidelines Pg. 103. Resources will be in line with the principles of the SPHE curriculum, free of bias, demonstrate equality, up to date and devoid of racial or sexual stereotyping.

Parental Involvement

Going Forward Together (Parents Booklet) states – “As a parent, you are the first teacher of your child. You hand on values and attitudes to each new generation of children”.

As RSE is an integral component of SPHE, parental consent is not required in advance of lesson delivery. However, the Education Act 1998, section 30 subsection 2 (e) shall not require any student to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years. Therefore, parents have the right to withdraw their child out of aspects of the SPHE curriculum, if they so wish.

Where the parent wishes to withdraw their child from certain aspects of the SPHE curriculum, they must inform the school in writing in advance.

In Scoil Naomh Áine, Rathgarogue parents/guardians/carers will be informed at enrolment that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE curriculum. Parents/guardians/carers will be informed in advance of the teaching of the formal RSE lessons. This will offer parents/guardians/carers an opportunity to meet with relevant teachers to discuss/view the material that will be covered and share any personal details they feel the teacher should be aware of prior to their child engaging in RSE lessons. If they wish to withdraw their child from specific formal RSE lessons, this should be provided in writing to the school and kept on file. Alternative arrangements will be considered and agreed upon by the relevant parties. The school cannot accept responsibility for indirect RSE related information delivered to the child outside of formal RSE lessons i.e. on yard, school bus etc.

Differentiation

The age and stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies for differentiation can support gradual and appropriate learning. In Scoil Naomh Áine, Rathgarogue, teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the curricular objectives and content to best suit the needs of all pupils. Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with special and additional educational needs. Both consultation with parents/guardians/carers in advance of lessons and the anticipation of the pupil's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful. This may be reflected in the student's support file.

Useful Resources:

- Middletown Centre for Autism
- PDST RSE
- Stay Safe for Children with SEN

Language

Language is a powerful tool and should be used with respect and integrity for the dignity of each person. 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 it can hurt, diminish and demean.

- Staff will use language to promote a positive, inclusive classroom environment for all
- Staff will become aware of language that implies gender stereotyping
- Staff may refer to the PDST Identity Based Bullying resource and PDST Education and Transgender resource which is useful in creating an awareness about the spectrum of sexualities and genders that exist.

Assessment

Scoil Naomh Áine will employ the following methods for assessment in SPHE/RSE:

- Observation and questions to assess the pupils' engagement and interest
- Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games
- Use of reflection or learning log
- Pupil Portfolio

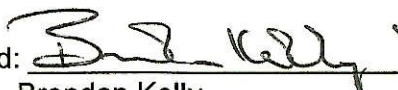
Confidentiality

Scoil Naomh Áine follows the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017.

If a child is withdrawn from specific RSE lessons, the school cannot guarantee that the withdrawn child will not hear the information from another source. Parents are invited to share any changes in circumstances with the school as necessary e.g. changes in family structures etc. For the welfare of some children, this information may be important for a teacher to know prior to engaging in specific topics on family/relationships etc.

This policy was reviewed in ^{FEBRUARY} ~~JANUARY~~ 2024.

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signed: 
Brendan Kelly
Chairperson, Board of Management