RSE Policy

One of the subjects of the revised curriculum is SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education), this includes a module on Relationships and Sexuality Education for all mainstream classes in Primary school which must be delivered on an annual basis or at least once per class level. Our school aims to develop a policy on RSE which reflects our ethos and vision and is in accordance with the National Curriculum and Guidelines for RSE as prepared by the NCCA.

School Ethos, Mission Statement and Vision

Scoil Phádraig Naofa Buachaillí is a Catholic Primary School under the Patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding, and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media.

In school, RSE will provide structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. This approach gives opportunities to our children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner. In St. Patrick's, RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their friendships and relationships with others. This work will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and for others, and providing them with age appropriate information.

Existing Provision for RSE

Previously, St. Patrick's BNS, provided RSE through the following formal and informal activities:

1. The SPHE programme (Walk Tall, Be Safe etc)
2. The promotion of a caring and respectful atmosphere on a daily basis
3. Lessons dealing with enhancement of self-esteem
4. The Stay Safe Programme
5. Health Education lessons
6. The SESE Programme
7. The P.E. programme
8. The Alive-O Programme

The aims of our RSE Programme

1. To assist parents in their role as primary educators so that they may guide their child's development physically, socially and emotionally.
2. To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
3. To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
4. To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, relationships and sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
5. To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.
6. To acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.
7. To understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts
8. To acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction.
9. To develop and promote in the child a sense of understanding of and respect for the process of birth and new life.
10. To develop some coping strategies to protect oneself and others from various forms of abuse.

Curriculum Content for RSE:

Overview of Content:

Junior Infants – Second Class
MYSELF: **Self Identity**: What makes me unique and special, becoming self reliant, making choices, expressing opinions. **Taking Care of My Body**: Caring for one's body, respect for one's body and that of others, diet, hygiene, being able to name parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms. **Growing and Changing:** Understanding growth and change, exploring feelings, becoming aware of new life and birth, understanding a baby's needs. **Safety and Protection:** Identifying risks, developing strategies for keeping safe, understanding why there are rules. **MYSELF AND OTHERS:** **Myself and My Family:** Learning about how families love and take care of each other. **My Friends and Other People:** Appreciating friendship, treating others with dignity and respect, recognising bullying behaviour, understanding that it is wrong and knowing what to do about it.

Relating to Others: Listening to others, practicing care and consideration towards others, resolving conflict.

Third – Sixth Class

MYSELF

Self Identity: Self-awareness, self-confidence, expressing feelings and opinions, coping with change, becoming more responsible, body image, identifying goals and targets.

Taking Care of My Body: Understanding health, dangers of substance misuse, personal hygiene, nutrition. For 3rd/4th Class: understanding physical changes for boys and girls. For 5th/6th Class children: understanding physical and other changes at puberty, understanding the male and female reproductive system.

Growing and Changing: Identifying and discussing feelings, having a positive sense of self. For 3rd/4th Class children: being able to discuss the development of the human baby from conception to birth, recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty. For 5th/6th Class children: understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth in the context of a committed, loving relationship.

Safety and Protection: Identifying threats to safety, knowing how to keep safe, helping others to be safe.

Making Decisions: Decision making, understanding that decisions have consequences, recognising the role of adults in setting boundaries for young people.

MYSELF AND OTHERS

Myself and My Family: Exploring what it means to belong to a family, identifying behaviour that promotes harmony in families.

My Friends and Other People: Appreciating the importance of friendship, coping with the loss of friendship, learning how to deal with bullying, recognising the importance of courtesy, good manners and caring for others.

Relating to Others: Listening and communication skills, positive strategies for resolving conflict.

All the content objectives of the RSE Programme will be covered by the time children leave sixth class. It is school policy that the content objectives are covered with each class level as outlined in the SPHE curriculum statement, within the context of the school's Catholic ethos and without personal slants from the class teacher. One half hour period per week is timetabled in each class for SPHE and RSE will be included in the programme taught during this time. The approach to the teaching of RSE will be kept as normal as possible and will usually be delivered within the child's class by the class teacher. Teachers will be encouraged and supported to teach the sensitive issues to their own class.

Each objective will be presented and taught using an age-appropriate and sensitive approach.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Parents are the primary educators of their child. The school has a role to play in supporting and complementing parents in this work, helping to communicate the Christian visions of human life and relationships through the RSE programme. It is the policy of our school to nurture Catholic values in relation to love, marriage, parenthood and family life.

Sensitive issues

Sensitive issues include lessons on naming the body parts (Senior Infants) and their functions (2nd Class); changes in their bodies as they grow and develop and lessons on conception and birth (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Class).

Language

It is important that children learn the appropriate vocabulary for discussing aspects of life related to sexuality, growing up and their bodies' physical changes so that they can communicate confidently about themselves.

When children begin school, it is not unusual, indeed it is quite normal, for them to have other names for their genitals. However, the use of proper terms for parts of the body and bodily functions should be encouraged from the earliest age, so that these terms are given a status and an acceptability.

As children get older and become comfortable with these words, they can discuss aspects of their growth and development with greater ease. They are also less likely to resort to inappropriate or vulgar language when referring to the body and bodily functions.

(Going Forward Together, Pg. 17-18)

Therefore we will give children the correct and appropriate language as outlined in the Resource Materials for Relationship and Sexuality Education (1998; Department of Education and Science) as follows:

Sensitive Issues to be covered in the RSE Programme

	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 for sensitive objectives**	**Pages in Walk Tall for sensitive objectives**	**Supplementary resources**
Juniors /Seniors	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 ● Identify what babies need to help them to grow and develop Taking care of my body ● Name parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms	Penis Vulva Womb Breast breastfeeding	New Life - p68 My Body - p147 Caring for new life - p137 Giving a doll a bath - p150 At the beach or swimming pool - p153	Our Amazing Bodies - p94 (Senior Infants book)	● Anatomically correct dolls ● Picture books of new baby ● Visit of baby to class

First /Second	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 a life cycle ● Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for newborn babies in both the animal and human world 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 Breast Breastfeeding Urethra	Giving a doll a bath - p150 (Senior Infant Book) The Wonder of new life - p59/151 How my body works - p67/161 Our senses - p70 Growing means changing p77/171	Our Amazing Bodies p37 (2nd class book)	● Anatomically correct dolls ● Picture books of going to the doctors ● Tom's Power Flower ● Books/ activities on life cycles ● Birth and new life in nature
Third /Fourth	Myself ● Growing and chan	Growing and changing ● Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty	Revise above Umbilical cord Changes in puberty	Giving a doll a bath - p150 (Senior Infant	As I grow I change p-175 (3rd class)	● Anatomically correct dolls ● Tom's Power Flower ● Body Systems ● Picture books on growing and changing

	ging ● Taking care of my body	● Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth Taking care of my body ● Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body ● Realize that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal	Menstruation	Book) Preparing for new life p69 The wonder of new life p169 As I grow and change p93 Growing and changing p195	Changing and Growing p-140 (4th class)	
Fifth /Sixth	Myself ● Growing and changing ● Taking care of	Growing and changing ● Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship ● Identify and discuss the changes that are experienced in growing from child to adult ● Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a	Revise above Wet dreams Busy bodies Language Semen Sexual	My body grows and changes p81 The wonder of new life	My amazing body p-345 (5th class book)	Power points recap Question Box Puberty Quiz Busy Bodies book and video

	my body	parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent 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 theses take place at different rates for everyone ● Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults	intercourse Period Menstruation	p92 Caring for new life p103 Different kinds of love p141	Creation p-121 (6th class book)	

Resources to be used:

- Resource Materials for Relationship and Sexuality Education: Junior Infants to Sixth Class (Department of Education).
- Anatomical Dolls
- Busy Bodies DVD
- Busy Bodies Booklets
- Resource Pack for Relationship and sexuality Education in Primary Schools: (RSE Office Drumcondra)

- Tom's Flower Power

Sexual Orientation

In Scoil Phádraig Naofa Buachaillí we aim to foster a culture which is accepting of difference. We aim to respect others. This includes respect for families and individuals who are different. False ideas, assumptions and prejudice need to be addressed and not ignored. It is highly important that discussions are age-appropriate and in the context of the school's R.S.E. policy.

Parental Involvement

Research has consistently shown that parents are supportive of the RSE programme. In Scoil Phádraig Naofa Buachaillí we will endeavour to keep parents informed about RSE. This will be done by some or all of the following:

a) including parents fully in policy development
b) making new parents aware of the RSE policy
c) organising information evenings
d) sending home the home/school links pages at the end of each RSE lesson,
e) making copies of the parent information booklet 'RSE Going Forward Together' available to parents,
f) informing parents that they can look at copies of the RSE resource materials in the school.

Parents are therefore encouraged to support the programme as appropriate.

a) By discussing attitudes, beliefs and values with their children in order to clarify issues and develop relevant general skills in this area.
b) By the encouragement of responsible, informed and age-appropriate decision making and the recognition that decisions have consequences.
c) By encouraging a positive sense of self-worth in their children.
d) By discussing issues involved in bullying, in association with the school.

e) By using the proper names for parts of the body and bodily functions from the earliest appropriate age.
f) By discussing with their children changes in their bodies as they mature and develop, how babies are conceived and born, and other sensitive aspects of the programme. Such discussions should ideally place both before and after such topics are dealt with in school.

The home-school links letters from the DES RSE Resource Books may be sent home upon completion of lessons.

Withdrawing children from the RSE programme

A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the process will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education.
It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw and their willingness to cover sensitive issues with their child outside of school hours. A child who has been withdrawn from class for the duration of a discrete RSE lesson will be accommodated in another classroom under the supervision of another teacher. If a child is withdrawn from the class for the teaching of sensitive issues we cannot guarantee that the other children will not inform him about what has been taught. The teacher may also need to make incidental reference to the issue at another time while that child is present.

Teacher Guidelines
Teachers will teach only the topics laid down for the class and will only answer those questions which are relevant to the programme for that year. Questions arising from curriculum content will be addressed in a sensible, sensitive and age-appropriate manner. Should a pupil require information that is not in line with the curriculum content and not considered to be age-appropriate, the school will not give such information and will refer the question back to the parents. Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature.

Each class teacher will teach the RSE programme including the sensitive issues unless they choose to opt out. A teacher's right to opt out from teaching the sensitive issues will be honoured. In this case, arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme will be made by the Principal.

A trained facilitator may be invited to the school to cover sensitive issues in 6th Class

annually. A teacher will remain in the classroom during this visit. Parents will be invited to an information evening regarding this visit and will be encouraged to use this opportunity to discuss these topics with their children beforehand.
The school holds no responsibility for any information which the pupil may receive outside the direct teaching of the RSE lessons.

Provision for ongoing support and development
Scoil Phádraig Naofa Buachaillí will offer ongoing training for teachers and the policy committee where necessary to help them implement the RSE programme. Information regarding courses or training for parents will be offered and may be organised by the Parents' Association/BOM/school.
Relevant RSE school resources will be sourced, stored and updated on a regular basis.

This policy will be circulated to parents, teachers and the BOM and amended when consensus has been reached by all parties. The final agreed policy will be presented to the BOM, to be ratified and then circulated to all parties involved. It will be implemented in this school in September 2013

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2025 and thereafter as necessary. All partners will be informed of any amendments necessary after such a review. RSE resources will also be reviewed to ensure they are kept up to date.

Success Criteria
The success of this plan will be evaluated through teachers' planning and preparation, and if the procedures outlines in this plan have been consistently followed. We will also deem it to be a success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims as outlined.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 058/05/2024]

Signed: _____ Signed:_____
Chairperson of Board of Management Principal

Date:_____ Date:_____

Date of next review:_____