



Holy Family National School Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement:

The staff of Holy Family National School formulated this school plan for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), in consultation with our Board of Management and our Parents, as we believe that RSE is a shared responsibility and their contributions and involvement will be essential to the effective implementation of the RSE programme in school.

Scope:

This policy reflects the overall ethos of our school:

Holy Family NS is a Roman Catholic School which aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. This school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

Mission Statement

Holy Family aims to create a secure, caring and creative environment for all its children.

Rationale:

The area of RSE is regarded in the school to be a very important issue. RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education:

RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

In the school setting, 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 behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Holy Family National School seeks to enable each child to develop his/her full potential in a supportive school climate where the needs and wellbeing of all members of the school community are considered and respected. We foster an atmosphere where difference is respected and we welcome children of all religions and of none.

Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education:

The Draft Guidelines for RSE (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) is “spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology”. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lesson of RSE, SPHE covers the areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude towards sexuality in oneself and one's relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision-making skills – all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

Aims / Objectives:

- To offer children an opportunity to learn about their own development and about their own friendship and relationships with others.
- To develop positive self-image including a positive sense of self awareness, self esteem and self worth.
- To promote respect for themselves and for others and to develop personal skills and wellbeing which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- To develop strategies that enable pupils to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.

- To help children to think and to act in a moral, caring and responsible way and to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- To enable pupils to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework, whilst keeping within the ethos of the school.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

It is acknowledged that in a course of limited duration these aims may be aspirational.

Policy Content:

All the material regarding RSE will be taught within the context of the SPHE curriculum.

Management / Consent of RSE in Holy Family National School:

It is acknowledged that parents are the primary educators of their children and teachers work in a supportive role. The RSE programme has been devised by an Expert Advisory Group and is considered to be appropriate to the needs of children.

Contact / Ground rules will apply within classes as necessary.

If a teacher feels uncomfortable with teaching the sexual aspects of the programme, he / she must consult with the Principal regarding a possible alternative arrangement.

Parents will be advised in advance by class teachers of the lessons being taught relating to "Growing and Changing" and "Taking Care of my Body".

It is strongly recommended by the school that pupils participate in these lessons as research would indicate benefits as a protective factor to our pupils. Implementation of the Stay Safe Programme is mandatory in primary schools.

In the event of a parent opting to withdraw a child from these aspects of the curriculum, alternative arrangements will be made in consultation with class teacher, parent and principal. It is important for parents to consider

that even if the children are withdrawn during a lesson, they may still have access to information e.g. other children in the playground.

IF PARENTS ARE OPTING TO WITHDRAW THEIR CHILD FROM SENSITIVE PARTS OF THE RSE PROGRAMME THEY MUST INFORM THE CLASS TEACHER EACH YEAR. PARENTS MUST ALSO STATE THE REASON FOR THIS WITHDRAWAL IN WRITING.

Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child from these lessons is asked to first discuss their decision with the class teacher. The school has no responsibility for any information which the pupil may receive outside the direct teaching of these lessons.

Inspection of Manuals:

Parents are welcome at any time to check on the content of any of these programmes in the interest of their child and are informed of their availability upon enrolment and on the school website www.holyfamilyballyshannon.ie The teaching manuals are available at school.

It is at the discretion of the class teacher to answer relevant questions pertaining to the content of the RSE programme in a factual, sensitive and age appropriate manner. It is not considered age appropriate to discuss the following topics in primary school:

- Abortion.
- Contraception
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Masturbation

However, any pupil who asks a question which is not within the content discussed above and not age appropriate for the class, will be referred back to their own parents for an answer.

Children with Additional Needs/Autism Specialist Unit:

It is at the discretion of the class teacher to modify the content of the programme to meet the needs of pupils with additional needs. It is recognised that there may be conflict between chronological age and physical development. Therefore, the RSE programme will be taught on a "need to know" basis. Parents will be consulted individually. This will be included in the child's School Support Plus Plan/IEP with a focus on language.

Resources:

- Walk Tall
- Stay Safe
- Making Links
- RSE
- Busy Bodies DVD
- Fun Friends
- Friends for Life
- The Incredible Years Programme

Implementation:

RSE is part of the weekly SPHE timetable. A yearly plan is distributed to each year group at the beginning of the year and is also available on the school's G-Suite for Education.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed in March 2026.

Signed: *Very Rev. Canon Ramon Munster (Chairperson)*

Sarah-Jane Lewis (Principal)

Date: 25th/5/2021

Sensitive Areas:

CLASS	SUBJECT MATTER	STRAND	STRAND UNIT	RESOURCES
JUNIOR/SENIOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect his/her own body and that of others. • Name parts of the male and female body (penis, vulva). • Explore & discuss the different things the body can do • Recognise and practice basic hygiene skills. • Become aware of new life and birth in the world. • Identify what babies need to help them grow and develop 	MYSELF	<p>Taking care of my body</p> <p>Growing & Changing</p>	
FIRST/SECOND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above. • (penis, vagina, urine, urethra) • Become aware of how infection spreads easily & the importance of adhering to a code of hygiene. • Begin to recognise the physical, emotional, social and spiritual factors that promote growth. 	MYSELF	<p>Taking care of my body</p> <p>Growing & Changing</p>	
THIRD/FOURTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth. 	MYSELF		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the care that needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born. <i>4th Class</i> Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body. Realise that growing and changing are continuous throughout life 		<p>Taking care of my body</p> <p>Growing & Changing</p>	
FIFTH/SIXTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and discuss physical changes that occur in boys and girls with onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone. Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults. <i>5th & 6th Class</i> Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship. 	MYSELF	<p>Taking care of my body</p> <p>Growing & Changing</p>	