



St. Anne's National School

Chapel Road, Tangeragee,
Bailieborough,
Co. Cavan.
A82 DR53

School Roll Number: 18059J

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

This policy was formulated by St. Anne's National School following a consultation process and in accordance with the relevant acts, policy and legislation as set out by the Department of Education and Youth. It was ratified by the Board of Management. It is also available to read on the school's website



Relationships and Sexuality Policy

1. Introduction

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in St. Anne's N.S. It was developed by the whole staff, in consultation with our parent body and Board of Management, to inform teachers and parents/guardians as to our provision for RSE within the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, both formally and informally. Our RSE policy was most recently revised in November 2023.

2. Relationship to Ethos

- 2.1. As a Catholic school, all policies are developed in line with our ethos, while respecting the beliefs of all pupils and families. We strive to provide a caring, inclusive and supportive environment that promotes the holistic development and well-being of every child.
- 2.2. SPHE is central to teaching and learning in our school, both formally and informally. Through SPHE, and in particular RSE, we support children in developing self-confidence, positive relationships and a sense of responsibility. We promote respect, inclusion and an appreciation of diversity within our school community.
- 2.3. We recognise that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children and we aim to support and complement their role. RSE, as part of SPHE, plays an important role in helping our pupils grow into healthy, confident and respectful individuals.

3. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

- 3.1 RSE, as part of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), aims to help children learn at home and in school about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work is based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information.
- 3.2. RSE aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

4. Relationship of RSE to SPHE

- 4.1. All of the RSE will be delivered within the context of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) which is timetabled in the Curriculum. SPHE is spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern.
- 4.2. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to 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.

4.3. RSE specific context will be covered in the Strand Units; taking care of my body, Growing and Changing and safety and protection.

5. Aims of RSE

- To enhance 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 help the child understand and develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, intercourse and reproduction
- To develop and promote in the children a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- To enable the children to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing

Note: The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour or contraception.

6. Parental Involvement

In St. Anne's N.S. parents/guardians will be informed at enrolment that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE curriculum. Parents/guardians will be informed in advance of the teaching of the formal RSE lessons. This will offer parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss content with relevant teachers. It also provides an opportunity to share any personal details they feel the teacher should be aware of prior to their child engaging in RSE lessons.

7. Class Specific Content

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 the correct and appropriate language as outlined in RSE Resource materials (See Appendices).

8. Special Education Needs

The requirements of pupils with additional needs will be taken into consideration when planning class lessons and related activities. Their needs will be ascertained through consultation with the pupil, their parents/guardians and SEN teachers. Consultation with parents/guardians in advance and anticipation of the pupil's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

- Pupils may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work
- Pupils may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material
- Any different or specific objectives related to the pupil's own learning needs should be detailed in their School Support Plan (SSP) in consultation with parents/guardians

9. Student Questions & Classroom Strategy

9.1. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the

RSE policy. Teachers will only answer questions relating to the relevant part of the curriculum for that class level.

- 9.2. On occasion, children may ask questions that are not age appropriate. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time or may suggest that the child ask a trusted adult at home. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the SPHE Co-ordinator or the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
- 9.3. A 'question box' is a methodology that may be used as part of the formal RSE lessons. Teachers can follow up on the written questions at a later time, thus allowing time to prepare suitable answers, consult with colleagues/RSE policy to formulate an appropriate response.
- 9.4. During the delivery of each RSE lesson, pupils may place their anonymous questions into a box. These questions can be reviewed and the following may be taken into account:
 - I. The teacher explains that the amount of information given is part of that year's programme and that more information will be given as part of the following years' programme.
 - II. Questions which may arise with regard to the sensitive content of the programme will be answered by the class teacher provided that they relate to topics covered in the curriculum for that class.
 - III. All pupils are encouraged to write question(s) on a blank sheet. If they don't have a question, children will be asked to write something interesting they learned in the lesson.
 - IV. If topics arise which do not feature in the curriculum, or if questions are asked by children who have been withdrawn from the programme, children will be requested to address the questions to their parents.
 - V. The content of the curriculum will be adhered to at all times. The Principal will communicate to all parents/guardians annually in advance of RSE being taught and direct parents/guardians to this RSE Policy found on the school website.
 - VI. By its nature RSE explores issues, which give rise to different views and sensitivities. The teachers in their professional capacity will use their training and the RSE guidelines in dealing with these issues with due regard for the ethos of St. Anne's.
 - VII. It shall be our policy not to answer personal questions about ourselves.
 - VIII. Pupils will be reminded not to share personal information about their families or others but can share with the teacher after the lesson or place a note in the Worry Box.

10. Confidentiality

- 10.1. It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the DLP. The DLP will decide whether to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling.
- 10.2. The following is also school policy:
 - I. Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality;
 - II. Pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the DLP and possibly to parents if the Principal decides that it is in the best interests of the pupil to notify parents;
 - III. Teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information;

- IV. Teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.
- V. Any action taken would be fully in compliance with our Child Protection Policy.

11. Other Important Points

- 11.1. All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave 6th class.
- 11.2. Teachers will only teach the topics laid down for the class and will answer only those questions on the programme for that year.
- 11.3. In the event of a teacher's discomfort with a particular topic, that teacher should make an arrangement with a colleague to support him/her.
- 11.4. A suitable guest speaker may be invited in to deliver the contents of the programme to 5th/6th class.
- 11.5. All information delivered by such a speaker will be informed by the content objectives of the SPHE curriculum. A teacher will remain in the classroom at all times during the guest speaker's presentation, the speaker does not replace the teacher, they act as a support.
- 11.6. Everyone has a right to privacy. Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature which they do not wish to share.

12. Request for Withdrawal by Parent of Pupil

- 12.1. St. Anne's N.S. recognises that parents are the primary educators of their children and we work with the parents in this important role. A letter will be sent to parents/guardians prior to the commencement of the RSE Programme. St. Anne's recognises the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their child from the RSE programme [Education Act 1998 Section 30 (2e)]. The wishes of the parents will always be respected fully in the matter of RSE and no pupil shall receive or be present at any RSE instruction of which their parents/guardians disapprove.
- 12.2. Parental involvement is encouraged and welcomed and we will engage with parents/guardians with a view to resolving any perceived difficulties. St. Anne's requires parents/guardians to give reasons in writing outlining their request that their child be withdrawn. The Principal may invite the parents/guardians to attend a meeting as sometimes this can resolve any misunderstandings.
- 12.3. Parents will be offered access to appropriate information or resources. If pupils are withdrawn arrangements will be made between parents/guardians and the Principal for their supervision and care while the programme is in progress. Parents will be expected to make their wishes known each year with the new class teacher. The school cannot be held responsible for language used in school life or by other children.

13. Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management will support the teaching of RSE through ensuring the adequate supply of relevant course material and through the provision of sufficient training. Also the BoM are active in developing and reviewing this policy.

14. Review

This policy is continually open to review by the Board of Management or at a minimum of every 3 years.

Ratified and signed on behalf of the Board of Management of St. Anne's National School.

Debbie Clarke
Chairperson of BoM

Paul Corcoran
Principal

Appendix A

SPHE Two Year Programme Whole School Overview

Year 1 (odd years beginning 2023)

Junior and Senior Infants	First and Second class
Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFL-School rules ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Self Identity (MTL pg 12) ○ Myself and my family - Friends and other people (MTL pg 17) 	Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFL-School rules ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Self Identity (MTL pg 23) ○ Myself and my family - Friends and other people (MTL pg 30)
Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe (M.T.L Pg 15) ● Farm/Water/Road Safety ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and the wider world - Developing Citizenship (MTL pg 19/20) 	Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe (M.T.L Pg 28) ● Farm/Water/Road Safety ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and the wider world - Developing Citizenship (MTL pg 32)
Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk Tall Safety Issues section of Safety and protection at this time ● RSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Growing and Changing (MTL pg 14) 	Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk Tall Safety Issues section of Safety and protection at this time. ● RSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Growing and Changing (MTL pg 26)
Third and Fourth class	Fifth and Sixth class
Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFL-School rules ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Self Identity (MTL pg 37) ○ Myself and others - Friends and other people (MTL pg 46) 	Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFL-School rules ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Self Identity (MTL pg 54) ○ Myself and others - Friends and other people (MTL pg 64) ● 6th class - Transition to Secondary School Programme
Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe (M.T.L Pg 42) ● Farm/Water/Road Safety ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and the wider world-Developing Citizenship (MTL pg 48) 	Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe (M.T.L Pg 60) ● Farm/Water/Road Safety ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and the wider world-Developing Citizenship (MTL pg 67)
Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk Tall Myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making decisions (MTL pg 44) ● RSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Growing and Changing (MTL pg 40) 	Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk Tall Myself-Making decisions (MTL pg 62) ● RSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Growing and Changing (MTL pg 58) ● 6th class- Transition to Secondary School Programme (cont.)
Weaving Wellbeing will be taught throughout the school from 2 nd class to 6 th class. As we are working on a two year cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2nd class will work on Character strengths ● 3rd & 4th class will work on Positive Emotions ● 5th & 6th class will work on Positive Relationships 	
Life Skills programme will be covered through the School completion programme. The programme will begin in 4 th class and will go on for 9 weeks and the sessions will be 1 hour long.	

* M.T.L-Making the links programme which clearly states out the lessons for each strand unit is available through this link www.staysafe.ie/PDFs/MakingTheLinks.pdf

**Walk Tall or material at teacher's discretion that meets the lesson objectives

Year 2

(odd years beginning 2023)

Junior and Senior Infants	First and Second class
Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFL-School rules ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and others - Myself and my family (MTL pg 16) ○ Myself and my family - Relating to others (MTL pg 18) 	Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFL-School rules ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and others - Myself and my family (MTL pg 29) ○ Myself and others - Relating to others (MTL pg 31)
Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe (M.T.L Pg 15) ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself - Taking care of my body (MTL pg 130) 	Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe (M.T.L Pg 28) ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself - Taking care of my body (MTL pg 24)
Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and the wider world - Media Education (MTL pg 20) ● RSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Growing and Changing (MTL pg 14) 	Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and the Wider World - Media Education (MTL pg 34) ● RSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Growing and Changing (MTL pg 26)
Third and Fourth class	Fifth and Sixth class
Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFL-School rules ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and others - Myself and my family (MTL pg 46) ○ Myself and my family - Relating to others (MTL pg 47) 	Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFL-School rules ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and others - Myself and my family (MTL pg 46) ○ Myself and my family - Relating to others (MTL pg 65) ● 6th class - Transition to Secondary School Programme
Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe (M.T.L Pg 42) ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself - Taking care of my body (MTL pg 38) 	Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe (M.T.L Pg 60) ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself - Taking care of my body (MTL pg 55)
Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk Tall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself and the wider world - Media Education (MTL pg 51) ● RSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself - Growing and Changing (MTL pg 40) 	Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk Tall Myself and the wider world - Media Education (MTL pg 69) ● RSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Myself-Growing and Changing (MTL pg 58) ● 6th class - Transition to Secondary School Programme (cont.)
Weaving Wellbeing will be taught throughout the school from 2 nd class to 6 th class. As we are working on a two year cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2nd class will work on Character strengths ● 3rd & 4th class will work on Positive Emotions ● 5th & 6th class will work on Positive Relationships <p>6th class will complete the Friends for life programme. Focus will be on understanding our feelings, relaxation techniques, positive and negative thoughts, coping strategies, using the FRIEND skills to help ourselves and others.</p> <p>Life Skills programme will be covered through the School completion programme. The programme will begin in 4th class and will go on for 9 weeks and the sessions will be 1 hour long.</p>	

* M.T.L-Making the links programme which clearly states out the lessons for each strand unit is available through this link www.staysafe.ie/PDFs/MakingTheLinks.pdf

**Walk Tall or material at teacher's discretion that meets the lesson objectives

Appendix B: RSE Lessons/Themes & Content

Strand: Myself

Strand Units: Myself & Changing; Taking Care of My Body

Class	Content Objectives <i>Consult curriculum for complete content objectives in Growing and changing and Taking care of my body</i>	Language	RSE Resource Materials	Walk Talk	Supplementary Resources
Junior / Senior Infants	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become aware of new life and birth in the world Develop an awareness of human birth <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms 	Womb Breastfeeding Penis Vulva	New life p.68 My body p.147 Caring for new life p.137 At the beach or swimming pool p.153	Our amazing bodies p.94 (Senior Infant book)	Anatomically correct dolls Picture books of new baby Visit of baby to class
First / Second Class	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles <p>Taking care of my body</p> <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 	<i>As above</i> Vagina Urethra	The wonder of new life p.59 & p.151 How my body works p.67 & p.161 Growing means changing p.77 & p.171 A visit to the doctor p.164	Our amazing bodies p.37 (2nd class book)	Picture books of going to the doctors Tom's Power Flower Books / activities on life cycles Birth and new life in nature
Third / Fourth Class	<p>Growing and changing</p> <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 <p>Taking care of my body</p> <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 	<i>Revise above</i> Umbilical cord Menstruation (<i>taught to girls only at this point</i>) Changes in puberty	Preparing for new life p.69 The wonder of new life p.169 As I grow and change p.93 Growing and changing p.195	As I grow I change p.175 (3rd class book) Changing and growing p.140 (4th class book) The wonder of new life p.150	Body system labelling activities Puberty sorting game Picture books on growing and changing
Fifth / Sixth Class	<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 	<i>Revise above</i> Semen wetdreams Menstruation Sexual intercourse (<u>6th class only</u>): Refer to Busy Bodies (HSE) for guidance	My body grows and changes p.81 The wonder of new life p.92 Caring for new life p.103 Different kinds of love p.141	My amazing body p.345 (5th class book) Creation p.121 (6th class book)	Busy Bodies Body system labelling activities Puberty sorting games Question box Puberty quiz

