Rushall NS

RSE Policy

(Relationship and Sexuality Education)

School Details

Rushall National School is a mixed sex school in Ireland. The school has a Catholic ethos. There are 2 classrooms with multi-grade classes in each.

Introductory Statement

All schools are required to have an RSE policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including the sensitive aspects. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally. The first RSE policy was developed in 2001 with a committee, revised in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015 and again in 2017.

School Philosophy

We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, 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 also 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 the wider community. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that we value respect, tolerance and openness through the lived experience of the children and school community. Parents have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting our school and children to develop into healthy young adults.

Definition of RSE

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.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

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.

SPHE:

• Is a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and is not confined to once off inputs or lessons

• Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community.

RSE education should include an input from all, and collaboration can be fostered through the teaching and delivery of materials

• Is a generic approach. It is not so much about the specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues

• Is spiral in nature. RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in school, this will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity

• Engages children to be involved in activity based learning. RSE should provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one's own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships.

Through SPHE and RSE, members of the school community should be 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.

The school has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with (SPHE Teacher guidelines, p25). In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an intercultural society.

Current Provision Included in the School Curriculum is:

SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)

Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources

Stay Safe Programme

Walk Tall Programme

Webwise resources

RESPECT Guidelines (suggested approaches to teaching about different families)

Adapted resources for SEN from www.pdst.ie

Religious Education

Aims of our RSE Programme

• 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 heathy 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

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

• 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. We support the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the wellbeing of all of the members of the school community.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

Child Protection Policy

Substance Use Policy

Code of Behaviour

Anti-Bullying Policy

Enrolment Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

Healthy Eating Policy

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Curriculum Content –The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from infants to 6th class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level each year as laid out in the curriculum, and utilising the RSE manuals to complement their teaching.

Management of RSE

The strands Growing and Changing, and Taking Care of my Body are covered in Year One of a 2 year SPHE plan.

The sensitive lessons are covered as part of these broad topics (as outlined below and see appendix 1)

Special arrangements exist for the delivery of the sensitive elements from 4th class up (see below)

Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met.

Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

Parental Involvement

Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme at enrollment.

Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level, example of letter see Appendix 2.

The letter will be issued in advance, giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teachers if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children, it also gives parents an opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE.

Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.

Following discussion with Principal and Class Teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so

Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from infants to 6th class. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

Myself Growing and changing Taking care of my body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

1) The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE

- Friendship
- Self-identity
- Family

• Self-esteem

• Growing up

The second section will deal with any sensitive / specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are in **bold.**

Topics covered up to 2nd include:

• Keeping safe

• **Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)**

• Making age-appropriate choices

• Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community

• Recognising and expressing feelings

• Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep

• Expressing opinions and listening to others

• Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/ Senior Infants)

• Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd).

Topics from 3rd to 6th include:

• **Bodily changes**

• Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise

• Keeping safe • Expressing feelings

• Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family relationships shape us

• Making healthy and responsible decisions

• Forming friendships

• **Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb(3rd, 4th class)**

• **Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class)**

• **Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6th Class)**

• **Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th and 6th class)**

• **Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th class).**

Sensitive content 4th – 6th

Sensitive content is taught as per 2 year SPHE plan

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 * (Myself) Taking Care of my Body (Myself) May / June Media Education (Myself and the Wider World) Developing Citizenship (Myself and the Wider World)

A copy of the Busy Bodies videos can be distributed to parents in advance to support the implementation of the sensitive objectives in class

Approaches & Methodologies

When implementing the programme, staff at Rushall National School will endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times. The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals). The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.

The RSE curriculum will be taught through:

stories and poems

classroom discussion

group work

games

art activities

reflection

circle time

Differentiation

Teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class. Some techniques used:

ensuring that objectives are realistic for the students

ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning

providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups and spending more time on tasks

organising the learning task into small stages and ensuring that the language used is pitched at the student's level of understanding

understanding of the activity using task analysis, outlining the steps to be learned/completed in any given task, posing key questions to guide students through the different stages/processes, and to assist in self-direction and correction

having short and varied tasks creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible every day materials, and by displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.

Sometimes the stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching

group work and discussion

higher and lower order questioning in groups

moderated whole class discussions through use of a Question Box.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Adaptions to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/ guardians in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

Children may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work

Children may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material

Any different or specific objectives related to the pupils own learning needs should be detailed in their IEP or IPLP in consultation with parents/guardians.

Language

SPHE curriculum provides a context in which children are given opportunities to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to SPHE. 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 can hurt, diminish and demean. Children need to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationship and their everyday interactions. Language is a powerful tool and should be used with respect and integrity for the dignity of each person. There are two areas where the use of language is applied in RSE lessons;

• The formal use and teaching of language generally throughout the school

• The use of language in discussion through your formal RSE lessons

Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching

• Relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used, the use of slang will be discouraged

• Anatomical terms and language introduced is consistent with RSE Materials Books.

Questions

We use some simple principles when fostering discussion and questioning

No personal questions of the teacher

The Question Box will be availed of by the children

The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions

Questions do not have to be answered straight away

Sample responses;

• I'll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them

• That's something you'll learn about as you get older

• Is that something you could talk to your parents / guardians / family about?

• We agreed in our contract that we wouldn't ask anyone personal questions

• Somebody asked a question and the language they used was slang language, what they meant to ask was….

For older children a 'question box' will be used as part of a structured RSE lesson. Teachers can follow up on the written questions at a later date, thus allowing time to prepare suitable answers, consult with colleagues, etc.

Question Box

During the delivery of each section of the sensitive lessons– children will be encouraged to place their questions into a box in the classroom. These questions will then be monitored and screened with the teacher answering the questions the following week taking into account the following;

Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner § The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class

Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme and they will be advised to talk with their parents

Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is very inappropriate or needs to be communicated with home because of other reasons

No personal questions will be answered and children will be reminded not to share personal information about their families or others – but can share with teacher after the lessons.

Assessment

Assessment in RSE is important to enable the teacher to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group

The teacher uses;

Observation and questions to assess the children's engagement and interest

Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games

Use of reflection or learning log. Assessment is essential to RSE as it is to any other subject. In the development of an RSE policy there should be agreement on the role of assessment in

Confidentiality

The school follows Children First Guidelines 2011 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary

If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues, we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what happened.

Resources

Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials (DES) - Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it in online / pdf format. Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:

Stay Safe programme

Walk Tall Programme

Anatomical Dolls and Story books

Busy Bodies DVD and Booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class component of RSE within the context of SPHE. § Picture books across the 9 grounds of equality

INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster

RESPECT guidelines.

Review

The policy will be reviewed after every two years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise

Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made