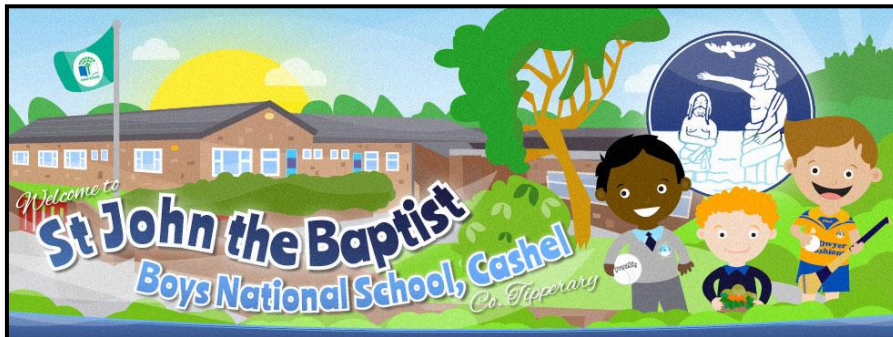


Scoil na mBuachaillí Naomh Eoin Baiste

# Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy



Ratified on 11 January 2018. Subject to review where/when necessary.

### **Introductory Statement & Rationale:**

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St John the Baptist BNS. It was developed by the school's RSE Policy Committee which included two teachers, two representatives of the Board of Management, two parent representatives and the Principal. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE. It was reviewed in January 2018.

### **School Philosophy / Ethos:**

St John the Baptist BNS serves an urban/rural area under the trusteeship of the Archbishop of Cashel & Emly. We are committed to the promotion of high educational social and Christian standards for all entrusted to our care. All policies developed are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the ethos and vision of the school. The ethos and vision of the school are as follows:

#### **Ethos**

A Catholic ethos prevails throughout the school. However, as we live in a pluralist society, we cater for all denominations.

Sound basic moral values acceptable to all democratic societies and creeds are cherished and promoted.

Diversity of culture and beliefs are respected and celebrated.

#### **Vision**

To provide a safe, friendly, effective and stimulating educational environment

To promote the principles of respect, truth and equality

To promote confidence, self-esteem and communication skills

To show consideration and respect for each individual and for others

To affirm in faith and celebrate difference

To help children attain goals and to help each child develop his own potential and talents for future life

### **Definition of RSE:**

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and is 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.

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RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development, about their friendships and relationships with others. This work is based on developing a good self-image and self-esteem and providing them with appropriate information.

### **Relationship of RSE to SPHE:**

In St John the Baptist BNS, RSE will be taught in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education. SPHE is a subject on the school curriculum that 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. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. The content of the schools SPHE programme covers a wide range of topics such as healthy eating, alcohol and drug awareness, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as RSE.

### **Including RSE in the Curriculum:**

#### **RSE is facilitated in the following ways:**

- in the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere
- in the context of an effective code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy
- as part of religious education
- as part of timetabled SPHE
- on an integrated cross curricular basis

#### **Aims of our RSE programme:**

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To enhance the 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 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

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## **Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our school:**

### **Content:**

- The content objectives covered will be taught as laid down by the Department of Education and Science in the SPHE Curriculum 1999.
- RSE will be taught in all classes.
- The SPHE/RSE curriculum will be of a spiral nature and all content objectives will be covered by the time children leave 6th class.
- All resources used in the teaching of the programme will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and in the spirit of this policy.
- For an outline of the RSE programme - see Appendix 1.
- For the vocabulary to be taught in the sensitive areas - see Appendix 2.

### **Timetabling:**

One half hour period per week is timetabled for each class for SPHE. RSE will be included in the programme taught during this time. It is envisaged that some aspects of RSE (including the sensitive will be taught through a number of core periods while some material may be taught in a cross curricular manner. The sensitive RSE material will be taught in each classroom during the Second Term.

### **Parental Involvement:**

RSE is an ongoing process throughout life. Parents are acknowledged as primary educators of their children and the school works in partnership in a supportive role. Each year, prior to implementation of the RSE programme, parents will be informed when the teacher will begin to teach the programme. The curriculum books and resource materials are available in the school and on the website and parents are welcome to view these if desired.

### **Withdrawal from RSE:**

Since RSE is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education and Skills, it should be inclusive. However, a parent's right to withdraw a pupil from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be respected on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education. Parents are obliged to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw the child from the sensitive issues classes. The child must then be collected from class at the appropriate time on the days on which these lessons will be taught. The school cannot be responsible for any information which a child may receive outside the direct teaching of RSE lessons.

### **Teacher Opt Out:**

It is envisaged that all aspects of SPHE and RSE will be taught by class teachers to their own classes. Teachers will teach only the topics laid down for the class and will answer only those questions related to the topics taught. Pupils will be informed that questions/issues not on the programme cannot be addressed and they will be referred back to their parents. Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is inappropriate. A teacher's right to opt out from teaching the sensitive areas will be respected. Arrangements for the teaching of the programme in that teacher's class will be made by the Principal.

### **Questions**

Staff should not invalidate questions but use limits.

The main aim of talk and discussion is to create an atmosphere where children feel comfortable to ask important questions and that the relationship fostered in these sessions is open, controlled and safe for all pupils. While you may not be able to answer all questions, your hope is that children will not be put off seeking answers in the school setting but will talk to their parents and ask the questions again at different stages of schooling or education, and are not put off because they perceived the topics or questions be embarrassing

### **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....
  - A question was asked, and we cannot talk about that particular topic but I think that question was about...

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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.

### **Confidentiality and Child Protection:**

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse or if issues arise which might be seen to contravene Children First Guidelines, the school will follow appropriate procedures.

### **Resources:**

[www.pdst.ie/primary/RSE](http://www.pdst.ie/primary/RSE) - various updated resources including PDF copies of the the manuals and Busy Bodies booklet

Walk Tall Resource Books

Stay Safe Programme

RSE Manuals

Other resource material as deemed appropriate by class teachers in consultation with the Principal

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### **Provision for Ongoing Support:**

For Parents:

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum if they wish (available @ [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)) and on our website (Parent Zone->RSE)
- There will be contact with parents prior to and during the teaching of lessons involving "sensitive issues". A home/school link page accompanying the lessons will be sent home and parents will be encouraged to discuss the topic.
- In consultation with the Parent Association, a guest speaker may be intermittently invited to address the general body of parents.

For Teachers:

- The Board of Management will support in-career development in the area of SPHE/RSE as opportunities arise

### **Implementation:**

This policy will be implemented every school year. Sensitive lessons will be taught in term 2 after the Christmas holidays.

### **Review:**

This policy will be reviewed where and when necessary. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

*The Board of Management ratified this policy on the 11 January 2018*

It is subject for review where necessary.

Signed: **Cian O'Carroll**  
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: **Will Ryan**  
(Principal)

## **RSE Contents - Appendix 1**

### **Junior Infants:**

#### **Themes:**

This is Me  
Who Are You  
We are Friends  
This is My Family  
People Who Teach Us about Keeping Safe.  
We Have Feelings  
New Life  
I Grow  
Making Choices

### **Senior Infants:**

#### **Themes:**

Look what I can do  
These are my friends  
This is my family  
I can be safe  
Other people have feelings too  
Caring for new life  
My Body  
I grow and change  
Making decisions

### **First Class:**

#### **Themes:**

Things I like to do  
My friends  
My family  
Keeping Safe  
Showing our feelings  
The wonder of new life  
How my body works  
Growing means changing  
Decisions and their consequences

### **Second Class:**

#### **Themes:**

Other people are special  
Being friends  
My family



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Keeping safe  
Coping with our feelings  
The wonder of new life  
When my body needs Special Care  
Growing and changing  
Personal Decisions

Third Class:

**Themes:**

Special Gifts  
Sometimes Friends Fight  
My family  
Keeping safe  
Expressing feelings  
Preparing for new Life  
Our Senses  
As I grow I change  
Making Decisions

Fourth Class:

**Themes:**

Myself and others  
Bullying Behaviour  
My family  
Reasons for Rules  
Feelings and emotions  
The Wonder of new life  
Being Clean - Keeping Healthy  
Growing and Changing  
Problem-solving

Fifth Class:

**RSE Themes:**

The person I am  
Different kinds of friends  
My family  
Keeping Safe  
Feelings and Emotions  
My Body grows and changes  
The wonder of new Life  
Caring for new Life  
Making Healthy Decisions

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Sixth Class:

**RSE Themes**

Me and My Aspirations

Different kinds of love

Families

Keeping Safe and Healthy

Feelings and Emotions

Growing and Changing

Relations and New Life

A Baby is a Miracle

Choices and Decision Making

## Appendix 2

### RSE SENSITIVE AREAS LANGUAGE

#### Junior/Senior Infants

**My Body:** Identify external parts of the male and female body. Head, eyes, ears, nose, nipple, breast, skin, hips, navel, private parts, penis, bottom, vagina/vulva/urethra

**New Life:** A baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born.

#### First/Second Classes

**My body:** How my body works. Name and identify external parts of the male and female body and their associated function.

**Navel:** The proper name for the part of the body where a baby was joined to his/her mother before being born.

**Penis:** The proper name for the part of the body of a boy that passes urine.

**Urethra:** The proper name for the part of the body of a girl that passes urine.

**Vagina:** Opening where a baby leaves a mother's womb. Sometimes a mother has to have an operation to have the baby. This is all normal.

**Vulva:** The vulva is external and is the correct name for the opening of the vagina which is internal.

**Breasts:** Breasts produce milk after a mother has had a baby. Sometimes the mother feeds the baby with this milk. It is known as breast-feeding. Some mothers also use powdered milk.

**New Life:** Caring for a new born baby. A baby grows in the mother's womb until ready to be born.

#### Third Class

**My body:** As I grow I change (Ref: pp.95-101 RSE Third Class Resource Materials).

### **New Life:**

Caring for a new baby. Nutrition in the womb and the function of the umbilical cord. Before a baby is born the baby spends nine months in the mother's womb and gets food through a tube called the umbilical cord. (Ref: pp.73-74 RSE Third Class Resource Materials).

### **Fourth Class**

**My body:** Growing and changing-body changes. Hormones. Changes in shape. Increases in body hair. Pubic hair. Menstruation. (Ref: p.199 RSE Fourth Class Resource Materials).

**Birth and New Life:** Stages of growth of a baby from conception to birth. Identify objects which coincide with size of foetus at different stages. Care while waiting for a baby. After nine months the baby is ready to be born. Develop an appreciation of the wonder of the birth of a new baby. (Ref: The Wonder of New Life pp.170-181 RSE Fourth Class Resource Materials).

### **Fifth Class**

#### **Physical Development:**

#### **Puberty**

**Physical changes for boys:** Growth spurts, Testicles, Scrotum, Penis enlarge, Pubic/Facial and other body hair, Voice deepens, Nocturnal emissions-'wet dreams', Perspiration, Oily skin, Pimples.

**Physical changes for girls:** Breasts develop, Menstruation/Periods begin, Growth spurt, Underarm and pubic hair, Hips broaden, Perspiration, Oily skin, Pimples, Male/Female Reproductive Organs. Ovulation/Menstruation. Psychological, Emotional and Social Changes. (Ref: pp.82-92 RSE Fifth Class Resource Materials).

**New Life:** How New Life Begins? Ovum (Ova)/Sperm. Ovaries. Conception. (Ref: p.96 Fifth Class Resource Materials).

### **Sixth Class**

#### **Growing and Changing:**

Responsibility. What age must I be to...?. Rituals. PostPrimary School. Adulthood. (Ref: pp.184-197 Sixth Class RSE Resource Materials).

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**New Life:** Relationships and a context for New Life. Conception. Sexual Intercourse in the context of a committed loving relationship. Respect for Human Life. Development in the womb. (Ref: Chapters 7 and 8 RSE Sixth Class Resource Materials).

**Portrayal of Sexuality and Relationships: Fourth to Sixth Classes**

Body Images male/female in the media/Soaps/Films. Magazines. Relationships in the media How sexuality is defined in the media Sexual images portrayed in advertising (drink/perfume/aftershave) The influences of famous personalities on our understanding of sexuality and relationships Gender Equality in sport and leisure Roles in Society Sexual Stereotyping