



Holycross National School

RSE POLICY

Introductory Statement & Rationale

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Holycross National School. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE.

Rationale

Education in Holycross N.S. is characterised by respect and care for each individual. Our school ethos is as a Catholic school. The child's many needs are met in a well-structured environment where she/he can live fully the life of a child and develop as a whole person-academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. While nourishing the child's young life, we strive to foster an atmosphere that will enable each child develop to his/her full potential in a safe environment. The environment is such that the child is encouraged and stimulated to be confident, appreciate, independent and creative. The Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) programme will be implemented within this framework.

Definition of RSE

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information for their age-group.

RSE in the context of our SPHE programme

Throughout the school year, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to 6th class. A wide variety of topics are included on this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE forms a part of this programme; it is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years.

Aims of our RSE programme

- ❖ To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- ❖ To help children develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- ❖ To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

- ❖ To enable the older 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.

School Policies and Curricular Plans which support our RSE:

Traditionally we are a child centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our curricular planning and policy making processes. Included in the school curriculum in Holycross NS is Religious Education.

- ❖ Grow in Love
- ❖ SPHE Curriculum
- ❖ Stay Safe Programme
- ❖ Walk Tall Programme
- ❖ Policies which support SPHE/RSE.
- ❖ School's Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- ❖ Healthy Eating Policy.
- ❖ Anti –Bullying Policy.
- ❖ Child Protection Policy.
- ❖ Enrolment Policy.
- ❖ Mobile Phone Policy Statement.
- ❖ Internet Safety Policy.
- ❖ Administration of Medicine Policy.

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies we informally support many of the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for staff 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 well- being of all the members of the school community.

Overview of Content	Infant Classes	1st & 2nd Classes
Myself	I am Unique My Body As I grow I Change New Life Feeling Safe Feelings and Emotions Making Decision	I am Unique My Body As I grow I Change New Life Feeling Safe Feelings and Emotions Making Decisions
Myself and Others	Myself and my Family Myself and my Friends Special People in my Life Relating to Others	Myself and my Family Myself and my Friends Other People Relating to Others
	3rd & 4th Classes	5th & 6th Classes
Myself	Accepting Myself Physical Development Growing and Changing Birth and New Life Feelings and Emotions Personal Hygiene Personal Safety Making Decisions	Accepting Myself Physical Development Becoming an Adult Parenthood Feelings and Emotions Personal Hygiene Personal Safety Making Decisions
Myself and Others	Roles and Responsibilities in families Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Roles of Males and Females in Society Relating to Others	Changing Relationships in Families and Friendships. Group Affiliation and Loyalty Portrayal of sexuality and relationships Sexual Stereotypes Relating to Others

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in Holycross N.S.:

- ❖ R.S.E. is taught as an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education. We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school, therefore, is seen as one of support for the work of the home in this area.
- ❖ All parents will be provided with a copy of the R.S.E. policy on request. They will also be sent a reminder letter during Term 2 when content will be taught.

- ❖ The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account.
- ❖ Some aspects of RSE will be taught through discrete lessons with the remainder being taught in a cross curricular manner. Teachers will have to identify the appropriate links with other subject areas to ensure that children receive a broad based approach to RSE.
- ❖ Discrete lessons with regard to sensitive and areas of RSE (physical changes at puberty, menstruation, intercourse, conception for senior classes) will be taught in school during Term 2
- ❖ Parents/Guardians will be notified in advance and invited to talk to the teachers if they have any concerns and also may view the contents if they wish.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Arrangements may be made with colleagues by mutual agreement to deliver whatever sections of the programme a teacher may have any difficulty with.
- ❖ Staff members own privacy will be respected and they should not feel obliged to disclose aspects of their own personal life.

Withdrawal of a child from the lessons with sensitive topics

Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the school will take account of parental concerns, and parents' right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be honoured on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. The onus will be on the parent to inform the school in writing of this decision. This letter from the parents will be kept on file. If a child is withdrawn from the lesson, the school cannot guarantee that other children will not inform the child in question of the content of the lessons or that the children in the class may not refer incidentally in class to aspects of the lesson during subsequent days/weeks. (See appendix 3 for Teaching R.S.E. to 5th/6th classes).

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Consultation with parents of pupils with SEN may be required. At the request of parents of pupils with SEN, the school will facilitate the teaching of the lessons on 'sensitive issues' on another occasion individually or in a small group setting. A variety of teaching methodologies may be required for some children.

Confidentiality

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow which is underpinned by the Department of Education & Skills Child Protection Guidelines and the Children First Guidelines. The Principal is our Designated Liaison Person.

Ongoing support, development and review

The Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents of Holycross N.S. supports the implementation of the RSE programme. We recognise that our school has a supportive role to that of the home and we have a commitment to ensuring that our teachers have access to in-career development opportunities and access to relevant teaching materials.

Teaching Methodologies/Approaches:

- ❖ Integration with other curricular areas, SPHE, SESE, Art, Religion and Drama.
- ❖ Direct Teaching for the discrete, sensitive areas of the programme.
- ❖ Discussion, group work, role play, circle time, video education.
- ❖ The age and development of the pupils are considered and arrangements made as necessary.
- ❖ Most topics are addressed to the whole class but it may be deemed more suitable at times to teach certain topics separately—eg. Menstruation for girls

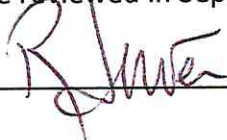
Resources:


- ❖ RSE Interim Curriculum Guidelines for Primary Schools (NCCA).
- ❖ Relationship and Sexuality Education. Department of Education and Skills.
- ❖ Social Stories.
- ❖ Busy Bodies DVD (5th Class).
- ❖ Busy Body Booklet for Parents (5th class).
- ❖ Illustrative Diagrams. (Male, Female).
- ❖ Evaluation
- ❖ Teacher Observation
- ❖ Pupils Behaviour.
- ❖ Pupils/Parents Feedback.

Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The School's RSE programme only acts as a support to parents.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be reviewed in September 2026.

Signed:  Chairperson BOM Date: 2/10/25

Signed:  Principal Date: 2/10/25

