



Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy

The original document was formulated in 2003, reviewed annually and updated in April 2019.

School Ethos and Philosophy

We in Naul National School are continuing to develop a Social, Personal and Health Education Programme (S.P.H.E), which reflects the Catholic ethos of our school, where the value and Individuality of each child is recognised and nurtured and where the children's confidence and respect for others is always encouraged. We would like to stress that we see our role as being complimentary to that of parents. An important part of this S.P.H.E programme is the Relationship and Sexuality (R.S.E) module. It is a complex subject and extends to many diverse topics, which will be outlined below.

Definition of R.S.E

Relationships and Sexuality Education is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy.

It deals with specific issues such as human growth, and developmental, human sexuality, parenting, personal and social skills and relationships.

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 is 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.

R.S.E aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring, appropriate and responsible way while the programme provides each child with the appropriate information.

We aim:

- To assist parents in their role as primary educators so that we may guide their children's development.
- To create an atmosphere where dignified discussion regarding human sexuality can take place. While regarding and respecting people's right to different beliefs, it is the policy of the school to nurture Catholic values in relation to love, marriage, parenthood and family.
- To provide sufficient educational opportunity to eventually help young people make appropriate decisions in sexual matters based on factual information.
- To help students grow towards the management of emotions leading to responsible behaviour.
- To increase knowledge of anatomy and physiology and explain the basis for the feelings that accompany growing up
- To give information that will protect the child against possible abuse or exploitation.
- To extend their understanding of human nature, human relationships and life itself.
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for human love and reproduction.

These are the overall aims of the programme to be met in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children. Topics will be treated over several years with consultation with staff members to ensure successive development of topics. Topics will be introduced in a developmental way. Effective planning will ensure that in each year the children will study elements from all strand units so that repetition and/or significant gaps will be avoided.

Education Programme

Many aspects of the curriculum are relevant to the S.P.H.E programme. Other subjects can be systematically used to develop awareness in appropriate ways i.e Stay Safe, Walk Tall, S.P.H.E, Religion (Grow in Love programme), Physical Education and also incidents and events that may arise in the school academic year.

S.P.H.E is timetabled for one half hour period per week. R.S.E will be taught with Walk Tall and Stay Safe during this time during the year.

Classroom Strategy

In planning and implementing the R.S.E programme we will have regard to the following:

1. The teacher will give age appropriate information if the question is factual and within the programme as agreed for that age group.
2. If it is felt that any question is genuine, although outside the guidelines for that class, the teacher will advise the child to ask at home and will draw the parent's attention to the query in the homework notebook. Thus, we would hope not to compromise the special bond that exists between parent and child or break the bond of trust between teacher and parent or teacher and child.
3. Information on relationship and sexuality will be given in the context of God's wonderful plan for creation.
4. It will be our policy not to answer personal questions about ourselves, nor to allow questions/discussions about pupil's personal situations.
5. The class teacher may use a suitable outside speaker (Accord in 5th and 6th class) as an additional instructor in some areas, after consultation with the Principal.
6. All teachers will be encouraged and supported to teach the sensitive issues to their own class.
7. Parents should be aware that the class schedules and all relevant materials will be available in the school. All parents/ guardians will be welcome to view them to discuss any issues or worries they may have with the principal and/ or the class teacher.
8. Once the programme is implemented, it will be reviewed periodically and revised if necessary.
9. In selecting content for each class level, consideration will be given to the content that has been complete at earlier levels. In particular, it will be important that all children experiencing the R.S.E programme for the first time, other than Infants, have opportunities to develop the knowledge, concepts and skills included in the earlier sections of the programme, before embarking on the work outlined for the immediate class level.
10. Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the process will be honoured subject to their making suitable supervision arrangements in consultation with the Principal and on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves.

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of this decision.

Parents will be informed a couple of weeks prior to the teaching of 'sensitive issues' which will usually take place in March/April.

Overview and content:

Strand	Infant classes	1st and 2nd classes
	Strand Units	Strand Units
Myself	I am unique My body As I grow I change New Life Feeling Safe Feelings and emotions Making decisions	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
Strand	3rd and 4th classes	5th and 6th classes
	Strand Units	Strand Units
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 Growing and changing 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

Topics covered:

Junior Infants to Second Class

Myself:

-Self Identity: What makes me unique and special, becoming self-reliant, making choices, expressing opinions.

-Taking Care of My Body: Caring for one's body, respect for one's body and that of others, diet, hygiene, being able to name parts of the male and female body using the appropriate anatomical terms (penis and vagina/vulva)

-Growing and Changing: Understanding growth and change, exploring feelings, becoming aware, of new life and birth, understanding a baby's needs.

-Safety and Protection: Identify risks, developing strategies for keeping safe, understanding why there are rules.

Myself & others:

-Myself and My Family: Learning about how families love and take care of each other.

-My Friends and Other People: Appropriate friendship, treating others with dignity and respect, recognising bullying behaviour, understanding it is wrong and knowing what to do about it.

-Relating to Others: Listening to others, practising care and consideration towards others, resolving.

Third to Sixth Class:

Myself

-Self Identity: Self awareness, Self confidence, expressing feelings and opinions, coping with change, becoming more responsible, body image, identify goals and targets.

-Taking Care of My Body: Understanding health, dangers of substance misuse, personal hygiene, nutrition. 3rd/4th class: Understanding physical changes for boys and girls.

(Menstruation is taught in 4th class but girls are given more information than the boys).

5th/6th class: Understanding physical and other changes at puberty. Understanding the male and female reproductive system.

-Growing and changing: Identifying and discussing feelings, having a positive sense of self. 3rd/4th class: Being able to discuss development of the human baby from conception to birth, recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty. 5th/6th class: Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth in the context of a committed, loving relationship.

-Safety and Protection: Identifying threats to safety, knowing how to keep safe, helping others to be safe.

-Making Decisions: Decision making, understanding that decisions have consequences, recognising the role of adults in setting boundaries for young people.

Myself & others

-Myself and My Family: Exploring what it means to belong to a family, identifying behaviour that promotes harmony in families.

-My Friends and Other People: Appreciating the importance of friendship, coping with the loss of friendship, learning how to deal with bullying, recognising the importance of courtesy, good manners and caring for others.

-Relating to Others: Listening and communicating skills, positive strategies for resolving

conflicts.

5th/ 6th Class may receive an appropriate talk by skilled speakers from Accord at the end of the year but teachers will have dealt with sensitive issues throughout the year..

Confidentiality

Where there is a disclosure about a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow our Child Protection Policy. The Principal is our Designated Liaison Officer in Naul National School.

Children with Special Needs

- Children with Special Needs will need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up.
- They may also need more help with learning what sorts of behaviour are/are not acceptable.
- The Resource Teacher can input here.

Teaching RSE to Children with Autism

General Principles

Consulting with Parents: Given the sensitivity of some of the topics in RSE it is advisable to talk to parents if there are specific issues, if the teacher is unsure about anything or if a child is behaving in ways that are inappropriate.

Small Group Work. Children with learning difficulties, including children with autism, can benefit from small group work. This allows for repetition and re-enforcement and also facilitates development of social skills.

Development of Social Skills. This is an important aspect of the RSE programme for children with autism. A useful resource for this is ‘Social Skills Training for Children and Adolescents with Asperger’s Syndrome and Social and Communication Problems’

Ongoing Support, Development and review

The Board of Management of Naul National School supports the implementation of the R.S.E 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.
- Relevant teaching materials are provided.
- All teachers will work with parents to support them in whatever way is necessary.

We will use the Department of Education and Skills R.S.E revised guidelines and resource pack in conjunction with this policy.

**The policy is available to parents on the school website and from the office.
It will be reviewed in Spring 2021.**

Signed: