



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding, and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. In a school situation, RSE provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and to establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework, appropriate to their age. RSE will be taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the philosophy framework of the school. Teachers will not teach any content outside the DES curriculum. The teaching methods used in the school are child centred and reflect the age and stage of development of each child. Sensitive issues will be dealt with appropriately.

The RSE programme (in particular the lessons with sensitive content) will be taught every two years (alternate years to The Stay Safe programme).

OVERVIEW OF RSE PROGRAMME

Aims:

In partnership with the home our aims are:

- To promote self-esteem;
- To promote respect for the rights of others, encouraging tolerance and understanding of differences between people;
- To foster responsibility in decision-making;
- To help children develop healthy friendships and relationships;
- To promote an understanding of sexuality leading to a healthy attitude to it and to relationships;
- To help pupils think and act in a moral caring and responsible way;
- To learn about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others;
- To promote knowledge and respect for human love;

The development of relationships is an integral part of all curricular subjects. Aspects of RSE are taught during SPHE, Religion, Science, implementation of the Code of Behaviour etc. An integrative approach towards RSE ensures that the children encounter RSE in a holistic manner rather than in isolation.

Content to be addressed during discrete time for the sensitive areas of RSE

Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st / 2nd class

- Naming parts of the body including parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms.

3rd / 4th classes

- Sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth.

5th / 6th classes

- Changes in male and female bodies as they grow.
- Puberty.
- Reproductive system of male and female.
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth.

In St David's NS, children will be segregated (i.e. 5th from 6th and boys from girls) for RSE lessons where appropriate.

In St David's NS, we are mindful of the fact that our classrooms contain mixed classes, mixed ages and mixed levels of maturity. When appropriate, content for 4th class is postponed until 5th class to reflect this and also to allow for parental concerns and supervision requirements.

RSE lessons containing sensitive content

Junior and Senior Infants

- New life p67 – Junior Infants (an opportunity to mention the anatomically correct names for the body)
- Caring for New Life p137 – Senior Infants
- My Body p147 – Senior Infants

First and Second Class – RSE lessons with sensitive content

- The wonder of new life p59 and p151 – first and second class
- How my Body works p67 – first class
- When my body needs special care p161 – second class

Third and Fourth Class – RSE lessons with sensitive content

- The wonder of new life p169
- As I grow I change p93
- Growing and Changing p195
- Preparing for new life p69

Fifth and Sixth Class – RSE lessons with sensitive content (in some cases, fifth class lessons need to be repeated/revised in sixth class)

- My Body grows and changes p81
- The wonder of new life p93
- Caring for new life p103
- Different kinds of love p141
- Making healthy decisions p113
- Relationships and new life p199
- A baby is a miracle p209

Dealing with Questions:

Teachers do not cover content outside that of the DES curriculum. At the same time teachers should answer questions sensitively, aware that there are children in our school from many social backgrounds. No child should be made feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when these issues are raised. Ground rules will be set before the lessons are taught. The teacher will tell the class that they will do their best to answer as many questions as possible but may not be able to answer every question. It is reasonable for the teacher to say that the children will learn further information as they get older. Children, who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum taught, should be talked to individually and discretely, as soon as is possible, by the teacher and encouraged to seek answers from their parents. If a child poses such a question the parents will be informed and asked not to ignore it but to deal with it as they see fit.

Parental Concerns:

In line with our SPHE policy, parents/carers will be informed that the Stay Safe Programme and RSE are implemented in the school. If parents wish to opt their children out of any of the sensitive aspects of the SPHE programme they must provide a written statement to inform the school of their decision.

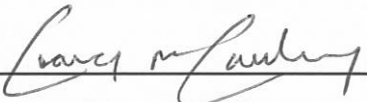
If parents are concerned about any aspect of the school's programme for the RSE elements of SPHE, they should discuss their concerns with the Principal. Arrangements will be made to allow the parents to view and access the RSE programme and every effort will be made to accommodate their concerns. Before teaching the RSE lessons with sensitive content, a detailed outline of the programme to be covered will be available to the parents of the pupils prior to the lessons being taught. There is also an information booklet on RSE published by the HSE – Busy Bodies- which is distributed to parents prior to lessons commencing. The link is also available in a download on school website.


Teachers' Concerns:

If teachers are concerned about any aspect of the school's programme for the RSE elements of SPHE, they should discuss this with the Principal. Every teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive areas of SPHE and in this event it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the sensitive areas of RSE are taught to that particular class. St David's NS regularly engages the services of a trained external facilitator for RSE in 5th and 6th classes – every two years.

RATIFICATION

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on: 1/4/2025

Signed: 
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: 
Principal

Date: 1/4/25

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