

**S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. Policy**

**2016+**

**Board of Management Scoil Bhríde Nurney**

**2016+**



**Scoil Bhríde**

**S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. Policy**

**Introductory Statement:**

This document is a statement of the aims and objectives, principles and strategies for implementing the SPHE programme in Scoil Bhríde Nurney. The policy was formulated by the school staff and informed by curriculum statements, guidelines and CPD/courses/training days. SPHE is a gradual process that begins in the home, is age related and in accordance with best practice is tailored to child’s requirements and is seen as a continuum in the school setting. In this space each child is encouraged to reach his/her full potential on a holistic level. Close consultation with the family and relevant agencies within the community is of the utmost importance. Scoil Bhríde prides itself on its environment that is warm, friendly, safe, supportive, inclusive and inviting. We strive to maintain this positive climate for the entire school community.

**Rationale:**

* To foster the personal development, health and well-being of all the children in our care.
* To help pupils to create and maintain positive and supportive relationships.
* To help pupils to become active and responsible members of society.
* To help pupils develop a framework of values, attitudes and skills; which will enable them to make informed and responsible choices, now and in the future.
* To inform the teaching and learning experiences of the S.P.H.E Curriculum.
* To conform to the principles of learning outlined in the Primary School Curriculum.

**Vision:**

Scoil Bhríde values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. We recognize that SPHE is intrinsic in the learning and teaching that occurs both formally and informally in the school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme we wish to assist children develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The programme encourages children to be aware of their rights as individuals while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and the wider 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.

**Aims:**

We endorse the aims of **Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum for Primary Schools:**

* To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
* To foster, in the child, a sense of care and respect (for himself/herself) and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
* To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
* To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
* To develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
* To enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

**Objectives:**

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the SPHE curriculum should enable the child to:

* Be self-confident and have a positive sense of self.
* Develop and enhance the social skills of communication, co-operation and conflict resolution.
* Create and maintain supportive relationships both now and in the future.
* Develop an understanding of healthy living, an ability to implement healthy behaviour and a willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health.
* Make decisions, solve problems and take appropriate actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
* Develop a sense of personal responsibility and come to understand his/her sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction.
* Develop a sense of safety and ability to protect himself/herself from danger and abuse.
* Become aware of, and discerning about, the various influences on choices and decisions.
* Begin to identify, review and evaluate the values and attitudes that are held by individuals and society and to recognise that these affect thoughts and actions.
* Respect the environment and develop a sense of responsibility for its long-term care.
* Develop some of the skills and abilities necessary for participating fully in groups and in society.
* Become aware of some of the individual and community rights and responsibilities that come from living in a democracy.
* Begin to understand the concepts of personal, local, national, European and global identity.
* Appreciate and respect the diversity that exists in society and the positive contributions of various cultural, religious and social groups.
* Promote the values of a just and caring society in an age-appropriate manner and understand the importance of seeking truth and peace.

**Curriculum Planning**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **1.  Strands and Strand Units:**

SPHE is planned so that children receive a comprehensive programme over 4 two-year cycles. Teachers have allocated strand units from each of the strands to each class. This ensures that the strand units not covered in Year One are included in the programme of work for the following year. In some cases it may be necessary to revise specific objectives from the previous year. The content objectives for the sensitive areas of the RSE will be addressed in discrete time in both classes at a particular level, year two serving to revise the content covered in Year One.Since SPHE is spiral in nature we will cover the following content at each level throughout the school over a two-year period. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**SPHE is taught in all classes on \_\_\_\_day at the following time \_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Strand Units (Year 1 – Odd Year)***[Beginning September 2017]* | **Strand units (Year 2 – Even Year)***[Beginning September 2018]* |
| **September** **&** **October**  | * Self-Identity

*(strand: myself)* | * Myself and my family *(strand: myself and others)*
 |
| **November** **&** **December** | * My friends and other people

*(strand: myself and others)* | * Relating to others *(strand: myself and others)*
 |
| **January** **&** **February** | **ALL CLASSES DO THE STAY SAFE PROGRAMME HERE NOW!***\*Send letter (on pg.14) to parents before starting the ‘Stay Safe’ program with your class!!\*** Safety and Protection *(strand: myself)*
 | *\*Send letter (available from Principal) to parents before starting the ‘RSE’ program with your class!!\*** Taking care of my body

*(strand: myself)* |
| **March** **&****April****&** **May**  | * Making decisions

(3rd to 6th class) *(strand: myself)* | * Growing and changing *(strand: myself)*
 |
| **May** **&** **June** | * Media education *(strand: myself and the wider world)*
 | * Developing citizenship *(strand: myself and the wider world)*
 |
| **Term 2/3** | * Growing and changing *(strand: myself)*

**\*Puberty will be taught every year to 4th class (see RSE Policy)****\*\*Intercourse will be taught every year to sixth class (see RSE Policy)** | * Growing and changing *(strand: myself)*

**\*Puberty will be taught every year to 4th class (see RSE Policy)****\*\*Intercourse will be taught every year to sixth class (see RSE Policy)** |
| *Teachers please refer to the SPHE document “Making the Links” for the page numbers of the relevant lessons in (i) the RSE teacher books (ii) the STAY SAFE teacher books and (iii) the WALK TALL teacher books…relevant to each of the strand units above* |

All Whole School and Teachers planning will be guided by the Primary Curriculum, the SPHE document “Making the Links”, the RSE teacher books, the STAY SAFE teacher books and the WALK TALL teacher books.

All of these publications are available in the school in hard copy, on the school website and the PDST website.

1. **2.  Contexts for SPHE**

SPHE will be taught through a combination of contexts:

* Positive School Climate and Atmosphere.
* Discrete Time.
* Integration with other subject areas.

**Positive School Climate and Atmosphere:**

At the first staff meeting of the year all members of the school community are reminded of the importance of promoting a positive school climate. These key messages dealing with school climate and atmosphere are also referred to, as appropriate, during the year through newsletters, meetings with parents, at assembly and on a regular basis in classes.

Our key messages are:

* We cater for the individual needs of the children. Individual needs may be social, emotional, spiritual, physical or intellectual. Through assessment, observation and discussion with parents we strive to identify and meet individual needs.
* We provide opportunities to enhance the self-esteem of all members of the school-community.
* The staff is aware that their role in helping children to develop their self-esteem is to create an environment within the school that is as positive as possible for all concerned. The five building blocks of self-esteem, as outlined in the curriculum, have been adopted as our approach to self-esteem development. They are:
* A sense of identity.
* A sense of belonging
* A sense of security.
* A sense of purpose.
* A sense of competence.
* We aim to actively value diversity and to prioritise inclusive and respectful language. We will prioritise both racial and gender equality and respect for those with special needs. We believe that children learn to respect themselves and others through experiencing respect in their own lives and through witnessing respect being shown to others.
* We work to develop an effective communication system within the school and between the school and home. Attention will be paid to encouraging everyone to express opinions and concerns and to respond to the opinions and concerns of others as a dimension of classroom work and general school life.
* We promote a safe and healthy physical environment. Through our Health and Safety Policy and the Health Education section of our PE programme we have set out how we promote health and safety awareness and how we intend to deal with unsatisfactory aspects of our environment. Emphasis on healthy lunches, healthy lifestyle, road, water, farm safety and regular fire drills are some of the areas promoted. Taking responsibility and pride in the school environment is encouraged through our litter prevention programme, our involvement in the Green Schools programme and through constant review and promotion of behaviour and habits required for maintaining a clean environment. Playground markings for yard time activities, children’s work on display throughout school and the school garden also promote a healthy physical environment.
* We promote democratic processes in all levels of school life while balancing roles, rights and responsibilities. Children experience and practice the democratic process by:
* Negotiating the class rules at the start of the year.
* Sharing responsibility.
* Valuing the opinions of others.
* Experiencing a sense of belonging to their own class group and the wider school community.
* Develop a sense of commitment to common goals.
* We have agreed that we will prioritise care in our own behaviour as adults and in our expectations of children. We will help children to learn to care for each other through actively building relationships within and across classes. We will seek to build identity, security and belonging, competence and purpose through:
* Discussion, promotion of and valuing difference.
* Agreeing ground rules for responsible behavior and clarifying values on an ongoing basis.
* Learning self management skills in the classroom in order to be able to apply them on the playground and at home; self-regulation exercises from the Prim-Ed manuals that children could learn and be referred to in times of anger/anxiety.
* Caring for and promoting inclusion of others and learning that it’s OK to be different.
* Promoting inclusive and respectful language.
* Promoting support and co-operation.
* Respecting individual strengths.
* Supporting individual needs through teacher and peer (where appropriate) support.
* Supporting individual needs of children in times of family or individual personal crises (children who suffer serious illness and need to be in hospital or out of school for long periods; children who suffer bereavement, especially bereavement in the immediate family; engaging exterior services e.g. NEPs, CAMHS, Barnardos, Rainbows to assist in this difficult area).
* Creating meaningful differentiated learning opportunities.
* Celebrating the wide range of children’s strengths at assemblies.
* Communicating regularly about learning and general development with the home.

**Discrete Time:**

SPHE may be timetabled for 30 mins per week, one hour per fortnight or blocks of 1-2 hours per month where feasible or appropriate. Children who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching must not be withdrawn during dedicated SPHE teaching time. This dedicated time is used to develop and practise particular skills, deal with sensitive issues or explore issues that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum. It has been agreed that content objectives dealing with RSE and Child Protection are addressed during this dedicated time.

**Integration:**

At each class level, teachers should seek to integrate SPHE with other curricular areas. Many aspects of SPHE can be dealt with in the context of English, Gaeilge, SESE, Visual Areas and Drama. Teachers have identified the objectives that can be acquired through cross-curricular work. In order to ensure that these are being adequately covered, teachers will make specific provision in their short-term planning and will use the cuntas míosúil as a form of self-assessment for these and other objectives.

1. **3.  Approaches and Methodologies:**

Teachers are in agreement that active learning is the principal learning and teaching approach used in the SPHE programme. The following active learning strategies are promoted for SPHE:

* Drama activities.
* Co-operative games.
* Pictures, photographs and visual images.
* Discussion: in pairs, small groups, with whole class.
* Written activities: surveys, questionnaires, lists, check-lists, projects, worksheets.
* Media Studies.
* Use of external speakers/visitors who are specialists in their own fields:
* e.g. nutritionist (helping children understand food-labels)
* Qualified expert to teach relaxation methods and mindfulness
* Skincare expert to talk to children about common problems like skin acne in older pupils—how to cleanse skin; eating healthy non-oily foods; coping skills for dealing with acne when it does appear despite following all good habits
* Dental nurse visits to classroom to discuss healthy eating, healthy drinking, cleaning teeth and regular visits to the dentist.
* Local Garda to talk to pupils about safe use of the internet and social media
* Engaging experts for both pupils and parents talks on safety on internet and prevention of cyber-bullying
* Information and communication technologies.
* Looking at children’s work: portfolios, projects …
* Other strategies as devised by the class teacher.

1. **4.  Assessment**

 Children’s progress in SPHE is assessed mainly through:

 **Teacher observation:**

* The ability of the child to co-operate and work in groups or to work independently
* The informal interactions between the child and adults and between the child and other children
* Physical and emotional maturity
* The quality of presentation of work
* The participation and interest of the child in a variety of activities.

**Teacher-designed tests and tasks:**

SPHE includes areas of knowledge and understanding that will need to be assessed at regular intervals. Specific tasks can be used to ascertain a child’s ability to apply particular skills in different situations.

**Portfolios and Projects:**

Teachers may decide that children will keep personal folders of their work.

**Self-Assessment by Children:**

Children are encouraged to engage in assessing their own progress in SPHE and to reflect on their learning.

1. **5.  Children with different needs:**

The SPHE programme aims to meet the needs of all children in the school. This will be achieved by teachers varying the pace, content and methodologies to ensure learning for all pupils. Evidence of this differentiated approach will be recorded in teacher’s planning documentation. The requirements of children with special needs will be taken into consideration when planning class lessons and related activities. Members of the Learning Support Team and Resource Teachers will positively support the work of the class teacher. The SNA supports particular children or groups as directed by the class teacher. Children who experience bereavement or loss, serious illness or other major personal situations are supported and consideration is given to meeting their individual needs in the most appropriate manner.

1. **6.  Equality of Participation and Access:**

We view the SPHE programme as playing a key role in ensuring equality of opportunities for all children. The programme at each class level will be flexible so that the learning requirements of all children may be addressed. We provide an equal educational experience for both boys and girls as we recognise that stereotyped expectations of gender roles can inhibit children’s educational achievements. Children with special needs will be included in all activities. Diversity within our school community will be recognized by valuing and promoting the needs, interests, skills and talents of members of the Travelling Community, children with special needs and international children.

1. **7.  Policies and Programmes that support SPHE:**

**Policies/ Programmes**

Scoil Bhríde’s SPHE programme is supported by the following policies/programmes - Substance Use (Walk Tall), Stay Safe, Child Protection, Enrolment, Attendance, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Peer Mediation, Health and Safety and Healthy Eating (not exhaustive). Teachers are expected to be familiar with these policies and ensure that the school’s agreed policy is followed when addressing these issues.

1. 7. (a)**WALK TALL Programme**

The aim of this programme is the welfare, care and protection of every member of the school community in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Our Aims for each child:

* To provide a safe and healthy environment
* To promote positive health behaviours
* To increase knowledge about health
* To promote the self-esteem and self-awareness of students
* To work in partnership with parents and pupils

1. 7. (b)  **Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme (RSE):**

***[See also our Relationships and Sexuality Education School 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 Religion programme used by the school or 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.

**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. Primary schools do not need permission from parents to teach the RSE programme, however parents will be informed by letter when doing so.

Topics covered up to 2nd class include:

* Keeping Safe
* Bodily changes during growth and birth
* Making age appropriate choices
* Appreciating family life
* 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)* ***[\*See Appendix 1 for details]***
* *Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/ 2nd )* ***[\*See Appendix 1 for details]***

Topics covered up to sixth class include:

* Bodily changes
* Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
* Keeping Safe
* Expressing feelings
* Family relationships- Same Love/ Different Families (INTO Resource)
* Making healthy and responsible decisions
* Forming friendships
* *Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (Fourth class)*
* *Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (Fourth class)*
* *Reproductive system of male/female adults (Fifth & Sixth Class)* ***[\*See Appendix 1 for details]***
* *Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving, committed relationship. (Sixth Class)* ***[\*See Appendix 1 for details]***
1. 7. (c)**STAY SAFE Programme**

**The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme for primary schools. It aims to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying. It helps to develop children’s ability to recognize, resist and report situations of risk or abusive encounters. In line with circular 0065/2011, the teaching of the Stay Safe programme is mandatory in all primary schools. Parents are informed by letter before the programme begins.**

**The objectives of the programme are:**

* To help children to identify an express safe and unsafe feelings.
* To teach children safety skills for dealing with common unsafe situations such as getting lost.
* To encourage children to value friendships and to teach them skills for making and keeping friends.
* To teach children safety strategies for dealing with bullying.
* To teach children that it is not acceptable to bully others.
* To encourage children to value and enjoy normal affection.
* To teach children how to deal with an unsafe or inappropriate touch.
* To teach the rule:  ‘Never keep secrets about touching’.
* To help children recognise the difference between a good secret and a bad secret.
* To help children identify the adults they could tell about a bad secret and to give them the opportunity to practice telling.
* To clarify for the children who strangers are.
* To give the children safety strategies for dealing appropriately with strangers.

**Content:**

The lessons cover the following topics:

* Feeling Safe and Unsafe
* Friendship and Bullying
* Touches
* Secrets and Telling
* Strangers

Children participating in this programme will learn:

* To distinguish between safe and unsafe feelings
* What to do if lost
* What to do if the phone or doorbell rings when they are alone in the house
* The importance of friends in children’s lives
* What to do if bullied
* Stay Safe Rules: Say No/ Get Away/ Tell
* Why not to bully others
* Appreciating normal, appropriate touches
* That unsafe touches should never be kept secret
* How to respond to inappropriate touches (Stay Safe Rules)
* Good and bad secrets
* That some secrets should not be kept
* Who and how to tell if in trouble
* About strangers and safety strategies

In Scoil Bhríde the Stay Safe Programme is taught annually (where applicable) in all classes. Children are not segregated for Stay Safe lessons. All topics are addressed on a whole-class-basis.

 **Parental Concerns:**

If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the Stay Safe programme, they are welcome to visit the school to view the curriculum and discuss their concerns with the Principal.

A teacher who is concerned about teaching a particular topic within the Stay Safe programme should talk to the principal about his/her concerns. Such concerns will be handled discreetly. The Principal will endeavour to accommodate such teachers. Resources outside the school profession will be availed of if considered appropriate.

***Child Protection:***

Scoil Bhríde follows the DES Child Protection Procedures, which are based on Children First Procedures for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The Principal is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principal is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person.  Each teacher has a copy of our recently updated policy on Child Protection and a copy is available to parents, through the school website.

**Homework:**

Children are encouraged to discuss work done in school at home with their parents. Worksheets begun at school are often finished as homework to enable parents to engage with the topics covered. Homework will reflect the active learning approach as prescribed in the curriculum and in our school policy.

**Resources** – **Programmes, ICT, DVDs, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials**

Walk Tall, Stay Safe and Relationships and Sexuality manuals are the core programmes to teach SPHE. Other resources to support the provision of SPHE will include the curriculum statement and teacher guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills, text books, DVDs, ICT, the internet, programmes which target specific issues and guest speakers. For additional teaching resources, see **[Appendix 2]**

Criteria for selecting resources include:

* Conformity with the aims and objectives of the class programme in SPHE and the general principle of the SPHE Curriculum.
* Freedom from bias, racial or sexual stereotyping.
* Compliancy with existing school policies.
* Appealing to the pupils and teacher and be reflective of collaborative, active methods of learning.
* Suitability and trustworthiness of guest speakers, notwithstanding the fact that the class teacher is responsible for his/her class and should remain with the class at all times for the duration of the visit of the guest speaker as per circular 22/2010.

**Materials purchased with school funds remain the property of the school.**

**General information regarding the SPHE programme in Scoil Bhríde**

1. **Guest Speakers:**

For some topics such as nutrition, oral health care, hygiene, RSE, etc. we may occasionally avail of external personnel to enhance the learning that is ongoing in the classroom. We have engaged the services of a nutritionist, dental hygienist, Accord counsellors and Internet specialist to assist in the delivery of those sections of the SPHE programme in Scoil Bhríde. Before the visit the teacher must agree with the visitor the aims and objectives of the lesson(s) to be covered and a detailed discussion of the content to be delivered will also take place. In the case of the RSE programme with senior classes who avail of assistance of “Accord”, a detailed outline of the programme to be covered will be sent to the parents of the pupils prior to gaining consent for the workshops.

Following the workshops a note will be sent to all parents to let them know these have taken place and to give parents the opportunity to discuss the issues with their children while it is still fresh in the children’s minds.

The class teacher is responsible for his/her class and should remain with them at all times as per circular 22/2010. The class teacher has ultimate responsibility for the class during these visits and make the speaker aware of this school plan and attached policies. Parents will be made aware of these speakers through the homework journal, school text system or preparatory work done by the teacher beforehand.

1. **Individual Teachers Planning and Reporting:**

The SPHE Curriculum Documents will inform the planning of content, approaches and methodologies employed by individual teachers. Coverage of the strand units each year will be as outlined in this plan. The recording in the Cuntais Mhíosúla of work done will help to monitor progress and assist in future planning.

1. **Staff Development:**

Staff development will be encouraged by:

* The promotion of in-service training, summer courses, conferences and seminars
* Sharing and exchanging skills, expertise and experience.
* Increasing our stock of resources.
* Allocating time at staff meetings in order to discuss issues relevant to SPHE.
* Familiarising members of the Learning Support Team, Resource Teachers, Special Needs Assistants and ancillary staff with the content and vision enshrined in policies relevant to SPHE.
1. **Parental Involvement:**

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implement SPHE as Scoil Bhríde believes that SPHE is a shared responsibility. This plan is available for parents on our school website to inform them of the programme for SPHE. Parents will be informed (using the relevant template letters provided in the SPHE programmes **[See Appendix 3 and 4]**) before commencement of a specific SPHE related programme (e.g. RSE, Stay Safe, Friends for Life) in the school to allow for any questions/ queries to be answered.

1. **Community Links:**

We value the contribution which members of the local community can make towards furthering the aims and objectives of SPHE in our school. The community Garda, medical persons, people of other cultures and backgrounds, members of local community groups and the media have much to offer in supporting the SPHE programme. We will avail of the services of statutory bodies such as the HSE and An Garda Síochana, as required.

1. **Success Criteria:**

Indications of success will come through positive feedback from the main stakeholders in our school community- teachers, parents, pupils and the local community and from the second-level schools attended by our past pupils. However, in many situations, success can only be measured in the medium and long-term by the way in which children mature and live their lives.

1. **Implementation:**

This plan will be supported, developed and implemented with the support of the Board of Management, parents and school staff. The SPHE Post Holder will co-ordinate its progression with the assistance of the school principal (DLP) and deputy principal (Deputy DLP).

1. **Review:**

In order to ensure optimal implementation of the SPHE Programme in our school this plan will be reviewed on a tri-annual basis. Those involved in the review will include teachers and the Board of Management. The Principal, SPHE Post Holder and the staff will be responsible for the co-ordination of this review.

**Scoil Bhríde**

**Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

**Introductory Statement:**

This policy, in accordance with the provisions of the Child Care Act (1991), Education Act (1998), Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the revised ‘Primary School Curriculum Guidelines’ (1999), details the aims and the content of the agreed programme for the provision and the delivery of ‘*Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)* in Scoil Bhríde. We trust that by detailing these procedures, it will assist all parties in relation to the content of this important subject area. The Chairperson / Principal will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this policy, should it be required.

**School Ethos**

Scoil Bhríde Nurney is a Catholic school which aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of our pupils: intellectual, physical, emotional, cultural, moral and spiritual including a living relationship with God and with other people.

Scoil Bhríde promotes a philosophy of life based on a belief in God and Jesus Christ. Scoil Bhríde provides religious education for our pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of pupils in the Catholic faith.

While we embrace the Catholic faith, we welcome and embrace the children of all creeds.

**Definition of RSE**

RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information. RSE also aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

**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.

Current Provision

* SPHE curriculum followed as per DES recommendations.
* Use of RSE Manuals, Busy Bodies DVD and Busy Bodies booklets
* Religious Education taught through the Alive O programme/ Grow in Love
* Currently, the teachers cover all aspects of RSE with their classes on an annual basis.

Aims of our RSE programme

* To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
* To foster an understanding of and healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
* To promote knowledge of and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
* To understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty
* To promote a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
* To enable the child to feel comfortable with his/her sexuality and that of others

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

[1] *Organisational Matters*

* Guidelines as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills and as discussed in this document will be followed.
* It is envisaged that the programme will be taught in an integrated manner where possible.
* The teacher’s right to choose is enshrined in the policy and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the programme or require additional resources, a suitable speaker will be employed by the BoM.  The teacher may need to plan the specific material to be covered and should be present during the talk as per circular 22/2010
* Where the services of “Accord” are used the cost will be borne by the Board of Management.

[2] *Parents*

* Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters.  The school R.S.E. programme acts as a support to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes which deal with the more sensitive issues.  Parents must put this request in writing (*for future records*) giving (i) an explanation why and (ii) a statement that they as parents will accept responsibility for teaching the RSE programme themselves to their child.
* The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils within a moral and spiritual framework.  Teachers are present at all times when guest speakers are visiting a class.
* Parents are to be informed in advance of the programme content. ***[See Appendix 4 for sample letter]*** They will also be informed in advance of the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme eg. Puberty, sexual intercourse.
* Parents will be offered a chance to view any DVDs being used in the teaching of RSE eg. Busy Bodies
* Parents have the responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content, to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and to discuss areas covered in school in RSE/ SPHE with their children.
* If a parent has a particular concern/ issue in relation to the teachings of the RSE programme, they are encouraged to discuss same with the teacher or the principal.
* As always, parents are requested to inform teachers of special family situations. These will be dealt with in confidence. It is the experience of the teachers that it is to everyone’s benefit if they are kept informed.

[3] *Curriculum Matters*

* The Curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published and will be taught in Infants to 6th class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level.
* Children will be encouraged to discuss material being covered in class with their parents or guardians. Where possible handouts, worksheets etc. will be provided to facilitate this; eg. Home-School Links pages of the RSE manuals.
* In a class situation, children will be encouraged to recognise that certain information is for them only i.e. that it is inappropriate for them to discuss information received about puberty, intercourse and birth with younger siblings, friends from outside school et. It will be explained that other children will be given this information by their own parents and teachers when it is developmentally appropriate for them to receive it. However, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed on the yard.
* A respect for personal privacy and information will be emphasised. Teachers will neither give nor request personal information. Children will also be taught to recognise that certain personal disclosures are inappropriate within a group setting.

Topics covered up to 2nd class include:

* Keeping Safe
* Bodily changes during growth and birth
* Making age appropriate choices
* Appreciating family life
* 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)* ***[\*See Appendix 1 for details]***
* *Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/ 2nd )* ***[\*See Appendix 1 for details]***

Topics covered up to sixth class include:

* Bodily changes
* Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
* Keeping Safe
* Expressing feelings
* Family relationships- Same Love/ Different Families (INTO Resource)
* Making healthy and responsible decisions
* Forming friendships
* *Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (Fourth class)*
* *Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (Fourth class)*
* *Reproductive system of male/female adults (Fifth & Sixth Class)* ***[\*See Appendix 1 for details]***
* *Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving, committed relationship. (Sixth Class)* ***[\*See Appendix 1 for details]***
* Sensitive issues (in italic above) may be dealt with in the following class groupings;

**Puberty:**

Boys and girls mixed together in fourth class for main lessons.

Mini separate lessons for girls and the boys in the following days to allow them additional time to answer more specific questions / concerns

**Puberty, Intercourse & Birth:**

Boys and girls mixed in sixth class

[4] *Dealing with Questions*

* A question box may be used throughout lessons where appropriate
* Teachers will previously decide upon specific language and concepts for each class level in line with the SPHE curriculum and school ethos. **[*\*See Appendix 1 for details]***
* Children’s questions will be dealt with, taking into account the following criteria when relevant

-By being aware of circumstances in which the question has arisen

-By clarifying what information is required

-By deciding, if the issue is relevant, who is it relevant to

-By giving a developmentally or age- appropriate answer

-By deferring the question as one which will be answered in the next lesson, one which should be answered at home or one which will be answered more fully in the future

* Students with SEN: Taking into account student’s cognitive, social and emotional development and their class level (4th, 5th & 6th Class), instruction on the sensitive aspects of RSE, will be based on individual needs and decided together by parents and teachers during the child’s IEP meeting. Careful consideration will be given to the NCCA Guidelines for Moderate and Severe and Profound General Learning Disabilities for RSE provision.
* There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils.
* Please refer to ***[Appendix 5]*** for **PDST best practice guidelines regarding Answering questions**

**Provision of Ongoing Support**

* Parents welcome to view the curriculum and resource materials if they so wish.
* Regular contact with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving “sensitive issues” in the form of the home/school link page accompanying such lessons in the RSE Resource Books. Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters.  The school R.S.E. programme acts as a support to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes which deal with the more sensitive issues.  Parents must put this request in writing (*for future records*) giving (i) an explanation why and (ii) a statement that they as parents will accept responsibility for teaching the RSE programme themselves to their child.

**Links to other Policy Areas**

* Child Protection Policy
* SPHE Policy

**Child Protection**

The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a child protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure, the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Child First.

**The staff has availed of training in:**

* Stay Safe
* Relationships and Sexuality Programme (RSE)
* Walk Tall Programme
* Children First
* Internet Safety and Social Media Awareness
* Friends for life

The whole school plan is available in the principal’s office.  Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short term planning, comprising of a yearly and fortnightly scheme of work.  A Cuntas Míosúil is retained in the Principal’s Office.

**Review**

In order to ensure optimal implementation of the RSE Programme in our school this plan will be reviewed on a tri-annual basis. Those involved in the review will include teachers and the Board of Management. The Principal, SPHE Post Holder and the staff will be responsible for the co-ordination of this review.

**Evaluation:**

* Teacher observation
* Inventory of what needs to be changed
* Ensuring all strands are covered
* Teacher designed tasks and tests and self-evaluation
* Feedback from pupils’ parents
* Community feedback

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

The school community of BoM, staff, pupils and parents play a key role in the formulation and implementation of the plan.

**[APPENDIX 1]**

|  |
| --- |
| Lesson Content – Sensitive Issues |
| Class | Lesson | Strand Unit | Language | Date | Home/School  |
| **J.I.****S.I.** | **Theme 6**Caring for new life p.137**Theme 7**My Body p.147 | Growing and changingTaking care of my body | Penis/Vagina or VulvaNaming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms | Term 2 every second year | S.I. RSE Manual p. 145S.I. RSE Manual p. 156 |
| **1st****2nd** | **Theme 6**The wonder of new life p.59/p.151**Theme 7**How my body works p67When my body needs special care p.161**Theme 8**Growing means changing p. 77/p.171 | Growing and changingTaking care of my body | As above: introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra.Naming as above and identify some of the functions. | Term 2 every second year | RSE Manual p. 65, 160, 169 |
| **3rd****4th** | **Theme 6**Preparing for new life p.69**Theme 6 from 4th class**The wonder of new life p.169**Theme 8**As I grow I change p.93**Theme 8 (girls only in 4th class)**Growing and changing p.195 | Growing and changing | Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby in the womb. Umbilical cord. Any questions as to how the baby got there cannot be answered by the teacher. | Term 2 or 3 at the discretion of the teacher4th class will cover content **every year** | RSE Manual p. 181 |
| **5th****6th** | **Theme 6**My body grows and changes p.81**Theme 7**The wonder of new life p.93**Theme 8**Caring for new life p.103**Theme 2**Different kinds of love p.141 | Growing and changingTaking care of my body | Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty.Reproductive system of male/female adults.Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a loving, committed relationship. | Term 2 or 3 at the discretion of the teacher6th class will cover content **every year** | RSE Manual p. 92,101,112,149Busy Body Booklets and DVDS |

**[APPENDIX 2]**

**Teaching Resources for SPHE**

* SPHE Curriculum & Teacher Guidelines
* Making the Links
* Walk Tall
* Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Manuals
* Stay Safe Programme
* What is a drug? DVD (6th class) available from info@pdst.ie
* Webwise
* Friends for Life
* Be Safe (Activity- resource pack on road, fire and water safety) available from education@rsa.ie
* Busy Bodies (for teaching RSE to 4th-6th classes) available from [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)
* Food dudes [www.fooddudes.ie](http://www.fooddudes.ie)
* Taste Buds [www.safefoods.eu](http://www.safefoods.eu)
* School Work’s – Resource on Right to Education, Child labour, Fair-trade info@into.ie
* What do you say? – Resource on Children’s Rights, available from Ombudsman for Children Office, Millennium House, Strand Street Great, Dublin 1, 01-8656800
* www. pdst.ie (lots of information and resources on all aspects of SPHE under ‘Health & Wellbeing’ on the website)
* [www.healthinfo.ie](http://www.healthinfo.ie) or [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie) (Busy Bodies DVDs)
* [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)
* [www.agriaware.ie](http://www.agriaware.ie)
* [www.dentalhealth.ie](http://www.dentalhealth.ie)
* [www.ndc.ie](http://www.ndc.ie) (information on dairy produce in Ireland)
* [www.sparky.org](http://www.sparky.org) (covers most aspects of SPHE curricular topics including Internet Safety.
* SPHE notice board and Online school server (–curricular areas- SPHE) contain more information on additional websites and programmes available.

**[APPENDIX 3]**

**“Stay Safe” Letter for all classes**

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We are planning to teach a personal safety education programme called Stay Safe over the next few weeks. The aim of the Stay Safe programme is to teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous. It deals initially with common situations which most children may experience at some stage or other, e.g. getting lost or being bullied. The programme also teaches children the safety skills necessary to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse and emphasises the importance of telling a trusted adult about any problems they have.

The Stay Safe is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential to the success of this programme. It is important that parents are aware of the content of the Stay Safe lessons and that you are able to discuss the lessons with your child. Your child may bring home worksheets which will inform you of the topics being covered in class and how you can reinforce the messages at home.

You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm. Please contact the class teacher if you wish to discuss the programme further.

Thank you for your co-operation,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class Teacher

**[APPENDIX 4]**

**“RSE” Letter for all classes**

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Relationships and Sexuality Education (“**RSE**”) is an integral part of the Social, Personal, and Health Education (S.P.H.E) curriculum as per Department of Education & Skills guidelines. The sensitive elements of the Relationships & Sexuality Education programme that will be covered with your child in the forthcoming weeks are summarised in the box below. It is important that you talk to your son/daughter about these topics so your child will feel prepared for the content of the programme. During all lessons the anatomically correct names for body parts will be used **(please see attached Appendix A)**

**JUNIOR INFANTS TO SECOND CLASS**

|  |
| --- |
| **MYSELF:****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 male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms. **Growing and Changing:** Understanding growth and change, exploring feelings, becoming aware of new life and birth, understanding a baby’s needs. |

**THIRD CLASS TO SIXTH CLASS**

|  |
| --- |
| **Taking Care of My Body**: Understanding health, dangers of substance misuse, personal hygiene, nutrition. For 4th Class: understanding physical changes for boys and girls (puberty). For 5th/6th class children: 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. For 3rd/4th class children: recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty, being able to discuss the development of the human baby during pregnancy, For 6th Class children: understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth in the context of a committed, loving relationship. |

If you have any questions or queries, please feel free to phone or email the school principal if required. Our SPHE/RSE policy is also available on our school website [www.nurneyns.com](http://www.nurneyns.com)

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class Teacher

**[APPENDIX A]**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Class | Lesson | Strand Unit | Language |
| **J.I.****S.I.** | **Theme 6**Caring for new life p.137**Theme 7**My Body p.147 | Growing and changingTaking care of my body | Penis/Vagina or VulvaNaming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms |
| **1st****2nd** | **Theme 6**The wonder of new life p.59/p.151**Theme 7**How my body works p67When my body needs special care p.161**Theme 8**Growing means changing p. 77/p.171 | Growing and changingTaking care of my body | As above: introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra.Naming as above and identify some of the functions. |
| **3rd****4th** | **Theme 6**Preparing for new life p.69**Theme 6 from 4th class**The wonder of new life p.169**Theme 8**As I grow I change p.93**Theme 8 (girls only in 4th class)**Growing and changing p.195 | Growing and changing | Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby in the womb. Umbilical cord. Any questions as to how the baby got there cannot be answered by the teacher. |
| **5th****6th** | **Theme 6**My body grows and changes p.81**Theme 7**The wonder of new life p.93**Theme 8**Caring for new life p.103**Theme 2**Different kinds of love p.141 | Growing and changingTaking care of my body | Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty.Reproductive system of male/female adults.Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a loving, committed relationship. |

**[APPENDIX 5]**

**PDST best practice guidelines regarding Answering questions**

* While it is important to create an environment in which a child feels free to ask questions, it is also important that a safe environment is created for all the children in the class.
* Teachers are advised to set boundaries in the teaching of RSE as they would in any other subject. Ground rules are set as to the seriousness of the issues and children are encouraged to ask responsible questions (e.g. agreeing a contract – for an example please see ***[Appendix 6]***)
* Children anonymously write their questions and those deemed appropriate are dealt with by the class teacher and the RSE guest speaker (if applicable)
* If using a “Question Box” please remember

(i) All children must put a question ‘piece of paper’ into the box…if they have no question they must simply write on their ‘piece of paper’ the following – *“I don’t have a question”*

*(*ii) Do not let children look in the box

* In so far as possible all children’s questions are answered in a factual and age appropriate manner.
* When deciding and filtering whether it is appropriate to answer a question or not (orally or from the “Question Box”) the teacher should consider:
* The age and stage of development of the children
* The ethos the school
* The RSE policy
* The content objectives of the SPHE curriculum guidelines
* Children, whose questions have not been deemed age appropriate and/or within the parameters of the content, are referred to their parents for answers on those issues. The teacher may suggest that the child discuss that particular question with his parent/guardian outside of school
* Suggested ways of setting limits are to say:
* I’ll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them
* Would you be able to talk to your mum or dad about that?
* That’s something you’ll learn about as you get older.
* We agreed in our contract that we wouldn’t ask anyone personal questions.

**[APPENDIX 6]**

**‘Contract’ RSE Ground Rules:**

* Respect For ALL
* Laughter is allowed but No Laughing at Anybody
* No Personal Questions
* We don’t name or talk about anybody during these lessons
* Discuss all content with Mum or Dad, but not with anyone younger or not here today.

**Ratification of S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. Policy**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_