

# **SCOIL NAOMH IOSAF (SNI)**

**Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow**

**Roll No: 20039P**



## **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy**

## Introduction

This policy, in accordance with the provisions of the Childcare 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 Naomh Íósaf. 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 Naomh Íósaf as an inclusive primary school, under Patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Kildare and Leighlin, is committed to the education and development of each pupil.

We welcome pupils of all denominations and from every culture and social background.

We strive to foster each child's physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual development. We recognise that every child has a right to equal opportunity in education and have special concern for children in difficult circumstances and with special needs. We promote self-worth, love of learning, personal responsibility and the belief that we can make our world a better place.

As a staff, we relate in a Christian caring way to each other, thus providing an example to our pupils. In valuing the importance of partnership between staff, parents, management and community, we strive to be open welcoming and accepting to all. Our school plays an active part in developing a sense of community in Ennis Town.

Scoil Naomh Íósaf prides itself on being an environment that is warm, friendly, safe, supportive, inclusive and inviting. We strive to maintain this positive climate for the entire school community. In this space the child is encouraged to reach his/her full potential on a holistic level.

## 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 in all classes as per Department of Education recommendations.
- Specific planned lessons for the sensitive aspects of the RSE Programme where Parents are informed in advance of the lessons (fifth and sixth classes).
- The Teaching of the 'Stay Safe Programme'.
- Religious Education taught through the Grow in Love Programme
- The teaching of the 'Friends for Life' Programme in second and third classes.

The teachers will cover all aspects of RSE with their classes every second year. The Mandatory Stay Safe programme is taught in the year that RSE is not being taught. Busy Bodies/an overview of basic sex education will be taught to children in sixth class every year. Parents are informed of the days that this is happening and have the option of asking that their child not attend.

## 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

### Parents

- Parents are to be informed in advance of the programme content – this is available on our school website. They will also be informed in advance of the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme e.g., Puberty, sexual intercourse.
- 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 this 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.

### Curriculum Matters

- The Curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published and will be taught in Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> 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
- 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 outside of the school or 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 (1<sup>st</sup>/ 2<sup>nd</sup> ) \*See Appendix 1 for details

#### Topics covered up to sixth class include:

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing feelings
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- The 5 topics of the Stay Safe programme
- *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

### 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 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 (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Class), instruction on the sensitive aspects of RSE, will be based on individual needs.
- The SEN Team will aid the mainstream teacher with the facilitation of appropriate and agreed RSE provision for the child with SEN. Careful consideration will be given to the NCCA Guidelines for Moderate and Severe and Profound General Learning Disabilities for RSE provision when necessary.
- There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils.

### Provision of Ongoing Support

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and resource materials if they so wish at the following link: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Social,-Personal-and-Health-Education/SPHE-RSE-Toolkit/>. All teachers' manuals for each class can be viewed under the title Relationships and Sexuality Education.

Parents will be informed by text that the RSE programme will be covered in forthcoming weeks and it is important to talk to their son/daughter about these topics. Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes. Should a parent decide to withdraw their child from RSE lessons in school, they will be asked to put this in writing with reasons for doing so. They will also be asked to include a sentence stipulating that they will take full responsibility to teach RSE to their child instead.

### Links to other Policy Areas

Our RSE Policy interlinks with our Wellbeing Policy, SPHE Policy, and Child Safeguarding.

## SUMMARY OF CONTENT

### SEE APPENDIX 1 for Important Information

#### 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. (penis/ vagina)

**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 4<sup>th</sup> Class: understanding physical changes for boys and girls (puberty). For 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> class children: recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty, being able to discuss the development of the human baby during pregnancy, For 6<sup>th</sup> Class children: understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth in the context of a committed, loving relationship.

Appendix 1

Lesson Content – Sensitive Issues

Class	Lesson	Strand Unit	Language	Date	Home/School
J.I. S.I.	<b>Theme 6</b> Caring for new life p.137 <b>Theme 7</b> My Body p.147	Growing and changing  Taking care of my body	Penis/Vagina or Vulva  Naming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms	Term 2 every second year	S.I. RSE Manual p. 145  S.I. RSE Manual p. 156
1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Theme 6</b> The wonder of new life p.59/p.151 <b>Theme 7</b> How my body works p67 When my body needs special care p.161 <b>Theme 8</b> Growing means changing p. 77/p.171	Growing and changing  Taking 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
3 <sup>rd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Theme 6</b> Preparing for new life p.69 <b>Theme 6 from 4<sup>th</sup> class</b> The wonder of new life p.169 <b>Theme 8</b> As I grow I change p.93 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 teacher  4 <sup>th</sup> class will cover content <b>every year</b>	RSE Manual p. 181

5 <sup>th</sup> 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Theme 6</b> My body grows and changes p.81	Growing and changing	Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty.	Term 2 or 3 at the discretion of the teacher	RSE Manual p. 92,101,112,149
	<b>Theme 7</b> The wonder of new life p.93		Reproductive system of male/female adults.		
	<b>Theme 8</b> Caring for new life p.103	Taking care of my body	Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a loving, committed relationship.	6 <sup>th</sup> class will cover content <b>every year</b>	Busy Body Booklets and DVDS
	<b>Theme 2</b> Different kinds of love p.141				



The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Íósaf on April 15<sup>th</sup> 2021

Signed: *Catherine Burke*

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed:

*Mairéad Hennessy*

*Principal*