

***Murhur N. S.***  
***Moyvane, Listowel, Co. Kerry.***

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## **R.S.E. Policy**

### **School Ethos:**

Murhur National School, Moyvane is a rural, co-educational school in the north of Kerry with a strong Catholic ethos. We have three mainstream teachers with multi-grade classes, one Special Education Teacher and one Special Needs Assistant. We have seventy children in total.

### **Introductory Statement:**

We recognise that the subject of S.P.H.E. is a crucial building block in our children's education. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) within S.P.H.E. It was developed to inform teachers and parents/guardians as to what material is covered in the RSE programme.

This policy was drawn up in January 2020 by staff and parents/guardians and ratified by the Board of Management. It will be reviewed again in 2022 or beforehand if required.

### **School Philosophy:**

Our school philosophy is to assist our children to develop to their full potential spiritually, intellectually, physically, morally and culturally and grow in an environment that is safe, fun and inclusive and continue to mirror this throughout adulthood. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals through respect, tolerance and openness. We recognise parents/guardians as the primary educators and engage in a partnership with them for the eight years of primary school to support their child/children. How we achieve this is by teaching the R.S.E. programme and Stay Safe programme in S.P.H.E. class and to then use it throughout our school day.

## **Definition of R.S.E:**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. We teach R.S.E. in accordance with the Department guidelines from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. It particularly addresses the meaning of sexuality and relationships and how to deal with them socially.

## **Relationship of R.S.E. to S.P.H.E:**

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. The R.S.E. programme is a lifelong process of teaching through a whole school approach. The support of parents and the wider community is also crucial. The programme is very inclusive and adaptable. It is child friendly, hands on for an active learner and reflective also to develop feelings, emotions and each year the programme grows with that child and develops with a spiral approach.

## **School Curriculum:**

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme <sup>[11]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Webwise resources
- Adapted resources for SEN from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)
- Religious Education.

## **Aims of R.S.E:**

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child

- To help the child to 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 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

### **Broad objectives:**

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-worth
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and wider contexts
- Develop an awareness of differing family patterns
- Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction

- Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

### **Policies which support R.S.E. / S.P.H.E.**

- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Health & Safety Statement

### **Guidelines for teaching:**

The DES curriculum will be followed and R.S.E. lessons will be taught from Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. In our school, we will divide up into two class setting for this i.e. Junior and Senior Infants, First and Second Class, Third and Fourth Class and Fifth and Sixth Class.

All R.S.E. teaching resources will adhere to the Catholic ethos of the school and the approved RSE policy.

If parents feel they do not want their child/children to attend these lessons, they will need to make alternative arrangements for them for this time.

Aspects of the SPHE and RSE curriculum may also be integrated with the Aistear Curriculum (Infants), Science Curriculum (Senior Classes) and Stay Safe Programme.

R.S.E. content will be taught developmentally with age appropriate lessons being taught at each class level as per the curriculum guidelines with a spiral approach.

The R.S.E. specific lessons will be timetabled to ensure whole school approach to teaching content and “sensitive lessons” will be taught across all class levels during a nominated week usually early in the last term of school. Parents will be informed in advance of the teaching of the sensitive R.S.E. lesson.

In order to ensure that the content of the R.S.E. lessons can be specific and focussed for 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, children may be taught in smaller groups.

Teacher Opt Out - A teacher's right to opt out from teaching the sensitive areas will be respected. Arrangements for the teaching of the programme in that teacher's class will be made by the principal.

### **RSE Topics/ Lessons - from Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class**

- Keeping Safe
- Bodily changes during growth and birth (birth to 9)
- 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 (Jun/Sen Infants)
- Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd)

### **RSE Topics/Lessons - 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class**

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing Feelings
- Family Relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (4th)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th/6th)
- Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th/6th)
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship(5th/6th).

<b>Overview of content Strand</b>	<b>Infant Classes</b>	<b>1st and 2nd Classes</b>
<b>Strand</b>	<b>Strand Units</b>	
<b>Myself</b>	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
<b>Myself and others</b>	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

<b>Strand</b>	<b>3rd and 4th Classes</b>	<b>5th and 6th Classes</b>
	<b>Strand Units</b>	
<b>Myself</b>	Accepting myself Physical development  Growing and changing	Accepting myself Physical development  Becoming an adult

	<p>Birth and new life</p> <p>Feelings and emotions</p> <p>Personal Hygiene</p> <p>Personal Safety</p> <p>Making decisions</p>	<p>Parenthood</p> <p>Feelings and emotions</p> <p>Personal Hygiene</p> <p>Personal Safety</p> <p>Making decisions</p>
<b>Myself and others</b>	<p>Roles and responsibilities in families</p> <p>Portrayal of sexuality and relationships</p> <p>Roles of males and females in society</p> <p>Relating to others</p>	<p>Changing relationships in families and friendships</p> <p>Group affiliation and loyalty</p> <p>Portrayal of sexuality and relationships</p> <p>Sexual stereotypes</p> <p>Relating to others</p>

### **Parental Involvement:**

- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme at enrolment.
- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level, example of letter see sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE.
- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Following discussion with Principal and Class Teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so.

## **Approaches and Methodologies:**

The RSE curriculum will be taught through:

- Stories and poems
- Drama
- Written activities
- Whole class discussion
- Paired/group work
- Games
- ICT
- Art
- Reflection time
- Circle time
- Guest speaker

(The class teacher will stay in the room at all times in accordance with Circular.)

## **Differentiation:**

- Group work and discussion
- Higher and lower order questioning in groups
- Moderated whole class discussions through use of a Question Box

## **Children with additional needs:**

- Children may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work
- Children may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material
- Any different or specific objectives related to the pupils own learning needs should be detailed in their (Classroom/School) Support Plan in consultation with parents/guardians.

## **Language:**

Teachers should promote an open classroom where questions are encouraged and dealt with in an appropriate manner. A “Question Box” can be utilised if needed. The language should

be taught at the age appropriate level in the hope that in future the children will be mindful in choosing the correct vocabulary to suit the situation e.g. anatomical terms.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Language Taught</b>
<b>Junior Infants</b>	<p>“Womb”</p> <p>“Penis”, “vulva” and “urethra”-taught as obvious physical differences between boy/girl</p> <p>“Breast-feeding” may be used in conversations as a means of feeding a baby.</p>
<b>Senior Infants</b>	As for Junior Infants
<b>First Class</b>	<p>“penis” and *urethra” taught in terms of passing urine (See DES Resource Materials p 70-71)</p>
<b>Second Class</b>	As for First class
<b>Third Class</b>	<p>Revision of terms listed above.</p> <p>“Developing foetus”</p>
<b>Fourth Class</b>	<p>“Developing foetus”</p> <p>“Umbilical cord”</p> <p>“Navel”</p>
<b>Fifth Class</b>	<p>“Growth spurt”</p> <p>“menstruation”</p>

	<p>“development of breasts”</p> <p>“ovaries”</p> <p>“fallopian tubes”</p> <p>“sperm production”</p> <p>“erection”</p> <p>“sexual intercourse”</p> <p>“conception”</p> <p>“puberty”, “human reproduction” and “sexual intercourse” in the context of a loving family.</p> <p>(See DES RSE resource materials for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>)</p>
<p><b>Sixth Class</b></p>	<p>As in 5<sup>th</sup> class</p> <p>“pregnancy”</p> <p>Development of baby in womb</p> <p>Contractions</p> <p>Birth of baby</p>

**Assessment:**

The teacher can choose his/her own preference for assessment such as:

- Observation and questions to assess the children’s engagement and interest
- Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games or
- Use of reflection or learning log.

## **Confidentiality:**

The school follows Children First Act 2015 and Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017. If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues, we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what happened.

## **Resources:**

Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials (DES) - Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it in online / pdf format. Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:

- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls and Story books
- Busy Bodies DVD and Booklet. This online resource and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class component of RSE within the context of SPHE.
- Picture books across the 9 grounds of equality
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster
- RESPECT guidelines for teachers

## **Provision of ongoing support:**

- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials
- Support from a PDST Advisor
- Promotion and communication of resources available from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie).

**Implementation:**

This policy will be implemented from February 2020.

**Ratification:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

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

**Review:**

This will be reviewed in 2022.