



TYRRELSTOWN

Educate Together National School

RSE School Plan

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Policy¹

Procedure²

Status	Approved ▾
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¹ A policy is that which has been approved directly by the Board of Management.

² A procedure is that which approval of has been delegated to the Principal and staff by the Board of Management.

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims	3
3. Why do we need RSE?	3
4. Curriculum Planning for RSE	4
4.1 Possible sensitive issues	4
5. Rights and Responsibilities of Parents & Teachers	6
6. Children with Additional Needs	7
7. Assessment	7
8. Review	7
8.1 Roles and responsibilities	7



1. Introduction

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 (Relationship and Sexuality Education) 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. This programme will be presented in conjunction with and supplemented by the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Walk Tall programme, the Stay Safe programme and the ET Learn Together programme. SPHE permeates all aspects of school life, and its development and implementation are significantly influenced by our multi denominational, child-centred, democratically run and co-educational ethos.

2. Aims

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of the child.
- To help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude towards human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- To enable children to be comfortable with, and understand their own growth and development
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.

3. Why do we need RSE?

The Department of Education has released the following viewpoints:

Research indicates that children and young people benefit from learning about relationships and sexuality as part of a carefully-planned curriculum in an age- and developmentally-appropriate manner. Quality RSE acts as a protective factor because it provides a space where appropriate information can be shared, negative social norms can be addressed, and children can be supported in making healthy choices based on values of respect and care. Technology is omni-present in the modern world and can be a source of information, and misinformation, about relationships and sexuality. As children and young people are exposed to more and more information, learning about relationships, sexual health and sexual expression within a safe classroom setting has never been more important. In developing the curriculum, significant work goes into ensuring that learning is age-appropriate for the child at any given stage of their learning.

4. Curriculum Planning for RSE

Tyrrelstown Educate Together National School will teach aspects of all three strands of the SPHE Curriculum each year, and strand units will be chosen in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE over a two year period. Tyrrelstown Educate Together National School have created this timetable to reflect this approach:

Strand	Strand Unit (Even years e.g 2024)	Strand Unit (Odd years e.g 2025)
Myself	Safety & Protection- Stay Safe (every year)	
	Self-identity	Making decisions *This strand is for 3rd-6th only.
	Growing & Changing (every year)	
	Taking Care of my Body	
Myself & Others	Myself and My Family	My Friends and Other People
		Relating to Others
Myself & the Wider World	Developing Citizenship	Media Education

The Stay Safe and RSE components of SPHE will be taught annually. This decision was made collaboratively by staff for two key reasons:

- The significance of these topics in ensuring student well-being and safety.
- The transient nature of our pupil population, which necessitates regular reinforcement of essential learning.

4.1 Possible sensitive issues

Many aspects of RSE are common to other school programmes. For example, ‘the family’ might be central to oral language work in English or Gaelige, or a life-story project in history. The RSE programme also includes a number of possible sensitive issues, listed below. It is school policy to deal with these issues through structured lessons, as naturally as possible and without undue emphasis. Listing the issues here, along with the classes in which they are first taught, enables parents to prepare their children in advance for a particular topic, if they so wish.

Learning Objective	Class	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become aware of new life & birth in the world Develop an awareness of human birth 	Junior Infants	Womb, breast-feeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms 	Senior Infants	Penis, vulva (the vulva is external and is the correct term for the opening of the vagina which is internal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles 	1st Class	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions 	2nd Class	<p>Penis, vulva, vagina (the vulva is external and is the correct term for the opening of the vagina which is internal)</p> <p>Urethra- tube where the urine passes through</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the care that needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born 	3rd Class	Umbilical cord naval
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body 	4th Class	<p>growing height and weight, increasing strength growing from boy to man, growing from girl to woman</p> <p>Menstruation (taught to fourth class girls only)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone 	5th Class	<p>Female hormonal changes, changing body shape development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, onset of menstruation (periods)</p> <p>Male hormonal changes, physical growth enlargement of testicles and penis</p>

		appearance of pubic, underarm and facial hair breaking of the voice, beginning of sperm production onset of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship • understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults • become aware of some communicable diseases and explore how diseases and infections are spread 	6th Class	some communicable diseases chickenpox, rubella, HIV infection, hepatitis infections are spread through air, body fluids, direct contact

5. Rights and Responsibilities of Parents & Teachers

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school, therefore, is seen as one of support for the work of the home in this area.

Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme. An email will be sent in advance, giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant teachers if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children. This also gives parents an opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas.

Following discussion with the 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 and this will be centrally filed. If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons. e.g. what they may hear on yard.

Each class teacher will teach the SPHE programme including the sensitive issues unless they opt out. A teacher's right to 'opt out' from teaching the sensitive issues will be honoured. Should a teacher not wish to teach sensitive areas of the curriculum, the SPHE coordinator will endeavour to make arrangements to accommodate this wish.

6. Children with Additional Needs

Teachers will ensure that pupils with additional needs receive tailored support in SPHE, especially in the teaching of RSE, to ensure that key messages are fully understood. This support may include:

- Visual Supports: Using visual aids, social stories, and diagrams to reinforce key concepts.
- Simplified Language and Repetition: Reinforcing concepts with clear, accessible language and regular review.
- Translation Technology: Leveraging technology to support language needs where relevant.
- One-to-One or Small Group Support: Utilising SET (Special Education Teacher) support to provide focused guidance, pre-teaching of language and reinforcement of RSE concepts.

7. Assessment

Assessment in RSE is important to enable the teacher to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group.

The teacher may use

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

8. Review

8.1 Roles and responsibilities

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE Curriculum in TETNS. Those involved in the review may include- teachers, pupils, parents, postholders, Board of Management and others.