

Shanbogh National School

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Shanbogh N.S. RSE Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff and parents in February 2024. This policy is an agreed approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was developed to inform teachers and parents about the provision of RSE in Shanbogh N.S.

School Philosophy

We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school. Through our SPHE/RSE programme we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence, while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The curriculum encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual, while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions. As members of the school and wider community. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos values respect, inclusion and diversity of all members of our school community. Our school acknowledges that parents/guardian/carers have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children and as such, their involvement will be encouraged. SPHE/RSE is a key component in supporting our pupils to develop into healthy young adults.

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. In particular, it addressed the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant to personal and social skills.

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.

SPHE/RSE is:

- A lifelong and continual process throughout primary school and should not be confined to once off inputs or solitary lessons
- A shared responsibility and collaboration between family, school, health professionals and the community
- A subject which develops a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to range of social, personal and health issues

- Child-centred. RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made to suit individual requirements and individual school situations
- Spiral in nature. SPHE/RSE formally begins in Junior Infants and is developed throughout the child's time in school. This will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning in a developmentally appropriate manner
- Taught through active learning methodologies. RSE provides a range of learning opportunities that requires children to actively participate in their learning in a wide variety of ways e.g. discussion, circle time, role play
- Free of bias. Lessons, language and resources selected by the school will reflect this. SPHE/RSE encourages children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live together in an intercultural society.

Aims of RSE

- 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 of RSE

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should enable the child (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum) to:

- 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 that support SPHE/RSE

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- GDPR Policy.

Curriculum Planning for SPHE/RSE

There are 3 strands in the SPHE curriculum. There are nine strand units for Junior Infants to Second Class and ten strand units for Third Class onwards. *Making Decisions strand unit only applies to 3rd – 6th Class.

The Department of Education (ED) advises to follow a two-year plan when planning for SPHE. Each year schools should teach from each of the three main SPHE strands. Sharing the strand units over a two-year period ensure pupils will have covered the entire content relevant to their class grouping with a balanced offering from the three strands. It also ensures adequate time is allocated to each strand unit.

Our School follows a two-year plan for SHPE

MONTH	Year 1	Year 2
September – October	Self – Identity (Myself)	Myself and My Family (Myself and Others)
November - December	My Friends and Other People (Myself and Others)	Relating to Others (Myself and Others)
January – February	Safety and Protection (Myself)	Growing and Changing (Myself)
March - April	Making Decisions (3r-6 th) (Myself)	Taking Care of my Body (Myself)
May June	Media Education (Myself and the Wider World)	Developing Citizenship (Myself and the Wider World)

RSE, which largely looks at the development of relationships, is interwoven through all strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum. The more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered under the strand 'Myself' and strand units 'Growing and changing' and 'Taking care of my body'. Teachers will refer to the resource Making the Links to support their planning for the delivery of these strand units.

The Stay Safe Programme will be taught in its entirety every two years.

Guidelines for the Implementation of RSE

The SPHE curriculum will underpin all teaching and learning of RSE in Shanbogh N.S. The SPHE curriculum 1999 is allocated 30 minutes of discrete teaching time by the Department of Education. Teachers can use their professional discernment if extra time is required, this can be taken discretionary time. Teachers are encouraged to use an integrated approach for the delivery of SPHE.

All resources used will be in keeping with this RSE policy and will take into consideration the sample criteria for choosing resources, as outlined in the SPHE Teacher Guidelines.

- The strands units 'Growing and changing' and 'Taking care of my body' are covered in one year of a two-year plan,
- Lessons that include sensitive material are taught as part of these strand units. In multigrade settings, care is taken to ensure that all pupils receive age-appropriate content. Where required, classes may be withdrawn to facilitate this.
- The Class teacher has the option to opt out of the delivery of the sensitive elements of RSE, the curriculum will then be delivered by another teacher or outside speaker
- The needs of children with SEN will be met through suitably differentiated teaching / content
- Taking into account the pupils' social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible
- Parents/guardians/carers will be informed at enrolment that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE curriculum. Parents/guardians/carers will be informed in advance of the teaching of the formal RSE lessons. (A sample letter is provided in **Appendix 1**). This will offer parents/guardians/carers an opportunity to meet with relevant teachers to discuss/view the material that will be covered and share any personal details they feel the teacher should be aware of prior to their child engaging in RSE lessons. If they wish to withdraw their child from specific formal RSE lessons, this should be provided in writing to the school and will be kept on file. Alternative arrangements will be considered and agreed upon by the relevant parties. The school cannot accept responsibility for indirect RSE related information delivered to the child outside of formal RSE lessons i.e. on yard, way home etc.
- Parents may be signposted to developmentally-appropriate resources to support them in speaking with their child about relationships, sexuality and growing up.

Pupil Voice

In our school, the voice of our pupils is acknowledged, valued and respected. Children are given opportunities to reflect and feedback on SPHE/RSE provision during lessons. Feedback will be used to inform school improvement in relation to future RSE provisions.

Approaches and Methodologies

The curriculum will be taught in a developmentally appropriate manner at all times. The teaching materials and methodologies used will reflect the need of the children.

In Shanbogh N.S. we will use the following approaches and methodologies to teach RSE:

- Stories and poems
- Classroom discussion
- ICT Activities
- Group work
- Games
- Art Activities
- Reflection
- Circle time
- External facilitator

Resources

In Shanbogh NS our staff may consult any of the following teaching resources when teaching RSE in addition to the DE Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme:

- PDST Health and Wellbeing RSE
- NCCA SPHE/RSE Toolkit
- Walk Tall Manuals
- Making the Links and Beyond
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls
- HSE publications (www.healthpromotion.ie)
- Busy Bodies Booklet/Videos/Workbook (PDST)
- Inclusive picture and story books
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Ideas
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Online Presentation J1-2nd
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Online Presentation 3rd- 6th
- RESPECT guidelines
- Gender Equality Matters (GEM)
- All Together Now
- We All Belong
- PDST Education and Transgender Information
- PDST Identity Based Bullying Information.
- RSE related educational websites

When choosing RSE resources, the school will consider the sample criteria outlined in the SPHE Teacher Guidelines p103.

Resources chosen will be:

- In line with the principles of the SPHE curriculum
- Free of bias
- Demonstrate equality
- Up to date
- Devoid of racial or sexual stereotyping

Parental Involvement

Going Forward Together (Parents Booklet) states – *‘As a parent, you are the first teacher of your child. You hand on values and attitudes to each new generation of children.’*

As RSE is an integral component of SPHE, parent consent is not required in advance of lesson delivery. However, the Education Act 1998, section 30 subsection 2(e) *shall not require any student to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years.* Therefore, parents have the right to withdraw their child out of aspects of the SPHE curriculum, if they so wish.

Strategies to foster parental involvement may include:

- Development of a clear, concise RSE policy that is accessible to all members of the school community e.g. policy is available on the school website
- Informing parents/guardians/carers before formal teaching of RSE
- Creating flexible opportunities for teachers to meet with parents/guardians/carers
- Ensuring clarity of language in any form of written or other communication from the school
- Sharing and signposting resources that will support parents to talk to their children about relationships, sexuality and growing up
- Ensuring that home school links pages of relevant programmes are regularly communicated.

Differentiation

The age and stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies for differentiation can support gradual and appropriate learning. In Shanbogh NS, teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the curricular objectives and content to best suit the needs of all pupils.

Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with special and additional educational needs. Both consultation with parents/guardians/carers in advance of lessons and the anticipation of the pupil's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful. This may be reflected in the student's support file.

If learning activities are to be made meaningful, relevant and achievable for all students, it is important that the teacher finds ways to respond to students' diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies.

NCSE Guidelines for teachers of students with Mild, Moderate and Severe and Profound Learning Disabilities is available to download at <https://www.sess.ie/cat-categories>

For SEN Pupils we will consider:

- Who requires differentiation in a class
- How we differentiate for those pupils
- What resources will support us to do this
- What other supports do we have at our disposal.

In teaching the RSE curriculum we will consider:

- That objectives are realistic for the students
- That the learning task builds upon prior learning
- Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups or 1:1
- Organising the learning task into small stages: outlining the steps to be learned/completed in any given task, posing key questions to guide pupils through the different stages/processes and assisting in self-direction and correction
- Ensuring that the language used is pitched at the pupil's level of understanding. Some children may be pre-taught language or concepts in preparation of whole class work

- Creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible, everyday materials and by displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures employing active learning methodologies.

Resources

Middletown Centre for Autism
 PDST RES
 Stay Safe for Children with SEN.

Language

Language reflects values, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and principles and can inform behaviour. It not only helps express a culture, but influences and shapes that culture as well. It is essential that children are enabled to use language in a precise and appropriate manner.

The language that is promoted in the school must be one that nurtures both children and adults as unique and valuable human beings. It should respect cultural and other differences and be used in a way that encourages inclusiveness.

In the BÍ Cineálta policy specific strategies are in place to prevent identity-based bullying, such as homophobic and transphobic bullying. In order for the RSE policy to be fully in line with these procedures, age appropriate definitions of these terms, cited in the Stay Safe programme will be adhered to.

In teaching RSE and throughout the school:

- Factual language will be neutral and non-discriminatory
- Language used in the classroom will promote a positive, inclusive classroom environment for all
- Anatomically correct language will be used in a consistent way across all class levels
- Derogatory language will not be tolerated. Any child using such language will be corrected and helped to understand why this language is inappropriate.

Questions

In Shanbogh NS teachers may use a variety of methodologies to create a safe, open space where pupils feel comfortable to ask RSE related questions. During the delivery of each RSE lesson, pupils can be encouraged to ask the teacher if they have questions.

In answering any questions, the following may be taken into account:

- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner
- The teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class
- Pupils will be informed if a question / issue is not on the curriculum and they will be advised to talk with their parents/guardians/carers
- Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents if a need arises
- No personal questions will be answered and children will be reminded not to share inappropriate personal information about their families or others

Should questions fall outside of the remit of the lesson possible responses may include:

- I'll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them
- That's something you'll learn about as you get older

- Is that something you could talk to your parents/guardians/family about?
- We agreed that we wouldn't ask anyone personal questions...
- Somebody asked a question and the language that was used was slang language. I think what they meant to ask was...

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Shanbogh NS will employ the following methods for assessment in SPHE/RSE:

- Observation and questions to assess the pupils' engagement and interest
- Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games
- Use of reflection or learning log
- Pupil Copy
- Question Box

Confidentiality

Shanbogh NS follows the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025. If a child is withdrawn from specific RSE lessons, the school cannot guarantee that the withdrawn child will not hear the information from another source. Parents are invited to share any changes in circumstances with the school as necessary e.g. changes in family structures etc. For the welfare of some children, this information may be important for a teacher to know prior to engaging in specific topics on family/relationships etc.

Provision of Ongoing Support

Shanbogh NS ensures the provision of ongoing support by the following:

- Encouraging teachers to attend RSE CPD
- Utilising staff meetings as a platform for discussion and development of RSE
- Seeking the support from a PDST Advisor
- Teachers in the school support each other in the area of RSE by sharing expertise
- Budgeting for the updating and development of RSE materials
- Reviewing RSE policy on a regular basis
- Ensure the special education teacher has adequate training opportunities
- Staff will reflect on information gathered from pupil questionnaires and focus groups This will be used to inform future developments regarding RSE
- Signposting staff to resources available from PDST and other sources.

Review

Shanbogh NS will review this policy every three years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

This plan was ratified on :

Eileen Lally

Signed:

22/2/24

Chairperson BOM