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Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introductory Statement & Rationale

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Scoil Cholmcille. It was reviewed in 2022 to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum.

School Philosophy

Scoil Cholmcille is a mixed Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Raphoe. Our school aims to give the children in our care a sound religious and moral education within the established Catholic ethos of the school and to help them establish a faith in God which will grow and develop. This ethos recognises the value and dignity of each pupil and all those working in the school community, and aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person, including:

- a) relationship with God
- b) relationship with family
- c) relationship with teachers
- d) relationship with self
- e) relationship with others
- f) relationship with the environment.

This ethos also acknowledges the cultural and religious values of all the pupils attending the school. The school recognises that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we support them in that role.

In the area of RSE, above all, the schools' role is subsidiary to that of the parents. We support and compliment their work.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and must be taught in this context. It provides opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and sexuality through processes, which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development, about their friendships and relationships with others. This work is based on developing a good self-image and self-esteem and providing them with appropriate information.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

SPHE is a subject on the school curriculum that 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. It is taught from Junior Infants up to 6th class.

RSE forms part of this programme. It is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a development manner through the child's primary school years. SPHE aims to develop the child's emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development.

The RSE Curriculum

The key characteristics of this programme are that SPHE is a lifelong process and is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. The main strands of the SPHE programme are:

- Myself
- Myself and Others
- Myself and the Wider World

It is clear that the Relationships and Sexuality Programme is correctly defined as being an integral part of the programme outlined above. Sexually sensitive issues will be covered within the strand units:

- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection.

RSE across the Curriculum

RSE is facilitated in the following ways:

- In the context of positive school climate and atmosphere
- In the context of an effective Code of Behaviour and Promoting Friendship Anti-Bullying Policy
- As part of Religious Education
- As part of timetabled SPHE lessons
- On an integrated cross-curricular basis.

Aims of our RSE programme

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

- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in 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, change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity

- Develop personal skills, which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop some coping strategies to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Content

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 of the work of the home in this area. The content objectives covered will be taught as laid down by the Department of Education in the SPHE Curriculum. See Appendix I.

- RSE will be taught in all classes every year.
- RSE will be taught in the Spring term between Mid-Term and Easter.
- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner
- All resources used in the teaching of the programme will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and in the spirit of this policy
- In a multi-class situation, the younger class will be withdrawn when topics being taught are not age-appropriate
- Parents/guardians consent for participation in RSE lessons will be obtained via the school enrolment form
- If parents/guardians request the withdrawal of a child from RSE lessons, provision will be made for them to leave the classroom at that time. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom. Should a child who is withdrawn from the sexually sensitive classes receive inappropriate information from others outside of these classes, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to address the issues
- Any teacher has the right to opt-out from teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is the responsibility of Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be delivered to the children, by another teacher, or an outside speaker
- Parents will be notified two weeks in advance of the commencement of RSE – see content letters Appendix II
- For the vocabulary to be taught about sensitive areas – See Appendix III.

Timetabling

One half hour per week is timetabled for SPHE. RSE will be included in the programme taught during this time, however teachers may block teach RSE over the month it is being covered.

School Policies which support our RSE

Traditionally we have always been a child-centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our planning and policy making processes. We have always, and will always continue to put the welfare of the children first.

- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Promoting Friendship Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Admission Policy
- Digital Devices and Mobile Phone policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- School Tour Policy
- Internet Safety (Acceptable Use) Policy
- Administration of Medications Policy.

In keeping with the sentiment and spirit of these policies, we informally support many of the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the well-being of all of the members of the school community.

Dealing with Questions

It is natural that children should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE. However, this area is treated somewhat differently from other subjects due to its sensitive nature.

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and school policy. If any questions asked by the children are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents, or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature or discloses personal information.

A question box may be used by the class teacher to encourage children to ask questions anonymously. If the question is age appropriate the teacher will then answer in the next lesson or if it needs further consideration, follow up at a later date.

We use some simple principles when fostering discussion and questioning

- No personal questions of the teacher
- The Question Box can be availed of by the children
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions
- Questions do not have to be answered straight away.

Some sample responses which may be used:

- 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 as you get older
- Is that something you could talk to your parents/guardians/family about?
- We agreed in our contract that we wouldn't ask anyone personal questions
- Someone asked a question using slang language, what they meant to ask was....

Parental Involvement

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children and as such the school supports them in this role. Each year prior to the implementation of the RSE programme parents will be informed when the teacher will begin the programme. The curriculum and resource materials are available online at www.pdst.ie and parents are welcome to view these if desired.

Parents/Guardians may access copies of the policy from the school office, or school website.

Withdrawal from RSE

Since RSE is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education it should be inclusive. However, a parent's right to withdraw a pupil from themes pertaining to sensitive issues will be respected on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education. Parents are obliged to inform the school in writing of their decision to withdraw the child from the classes based on sensitive issues. Any withdrawal letter received from parents will be kept in their child's file.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Consultation with parents of pupils with SEN may be required before the commencement of specific lessons. Children may work in smaller groups or in 1:1 on adapted and suitable material with a special education teacher depending on the child's needs and parental wishes.

Child Protection

At all times the school's Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) will be followed. In the event of a disclosure of abuse/harm, the school will follow the agreed steps outlined in the CSS.

Resources

The following resources are used by teachers to deliver the RSE programme:

- Stay Safe Programme - [Stay-Safe-Parent's-Guide-\(Print\).pdf \(staysafe.ie\)](http://staysafe.ie)
- RSE Manuals - [PDST What is RSE.indd](#)
- Busy Bodies - [Relationships and Sexuality Education Resources for Primary School Teachers - HSE.ie](#)
- HSE materials - [Doc. Relationships 2 \(pdst.ie\)](#)
- Tom's Power Flower (HSE) - [Toms Flower Power.pdf \(pdst.ie\)](#)
- Webwise - [Webwise - Internet Safety](#)
- Walk Tall - [Walk Tall | PDST](#)
- Garda Primary Schools Programme – 5th and 6th classes

Assessment

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 logs.

Review

The staff, under the guidance of the Principal and SPHE Coordinator will review this policy as the need arises or every four years.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented during the school year 2023/24.

Ratification

The Board of Management of Scoil Cholmcille ratified this amended plan on **28.03.2023**.

Signed: *Francis Conaghan* Chairperson, BoM

Signed: *Nicola McCarthy* Principal

RSE – Taken from SPHE Curriculum Content - Appendix I

Content for Junior and Senior Infants

STRAND: MYSELF

Strand Units	Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of my body 	<p>The child should be enabled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head, eye, ear, nose, breast, skin, hips, navel, vulva, penis, bottom, knee, leg, foot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and changing 	<p>New Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Become aware of new life and birth in the world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New growth in springtime - Baby animals being born ✓ Develop an awareness of human birth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born

Content for 1st and 2nd Classes

STRAND: MYSELF

Strand Units	Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of my body 	<p>The child should be enabled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penis: passing urine - Urethra: passing urine - Vagina: opening where a baby leaves a mother's womb (2nd)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and changing 	<p>New Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle ✓ Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breasts: feeding a baby

	- Umbilical cord: where a baby was joined to its mother before being born (2 nd)
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Content for 3rd and 4th Classes

STRAND: MYSELF

Strand Units	Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-identity 	<p>Self-awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore the factors that influence his/her self-image <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How I feel about my own body and my abilities, advertising and media images, comments from other people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of my body 	<p>Knowing about my body The child should be enabled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Realise the importance of caring for and treating his/her own body, and that of others, with dignity and respect ✓ Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing height and weight - Increasing strength - Growing from boy to man - Growing from girl to woman ✓ Realise that these changes do not occur at the same rate but are nonetheless predictable and natural ✓ Realise that adequate sleep is important when growing and developing ✓ Recognise and practise good personal hygiene, know how it is maintained and understand its importance in social interaction ✓ Understand and explore the relationship between health and hygiene ✓ Recognise the adverse effects of sexual stereotyping and realise that these effects can become exaggerated at the physical differences between males and females are more apparent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and changing 	<p>As I grow I change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Realise that growing and changing are continuous throughout life ✓ Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty (4th class) <p>Birth and new life</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth ✓ Identify the care that needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diet, rest, love, support of other family members, medical interventions ✓ Develop an appreciation of the wonder of a new-born baby
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Strand: Myself and the wider world

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore and examine some issues that are frequently raised in the media, the way they are portrayed and the accuracy of these presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family life, relationships, school, body images, community life, language, communication - Distinguish between fact and fiction. Recognise various inequalities that may be encountered.
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Content for 5th and 6th Classes

Strand: Myself

Strand Units	Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-identity 	<p>Self-awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Accept his/her own body image and explore some of the factors that affect his/her self-image and beliefs about himself/herself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of my body 	<p>Health and well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Realise that there is personal and communal responsibility for the health and well-being of himself/herself and others <p>Knowing about my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recognise the importance of treating his/her body and that of others with dignity and respect ✓ 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 times for everyone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Female: Hormonal changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing body shape Development of breasts Appearance of pubic hair Onset of menstruation (periods) Beginning of ovulation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Male: Hormonal changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical growth Growth of testicles and penis Appearance of pubic hair, underarm and facial hair Breaking of the voice Beginning of sperm production Onset of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams) ✓ Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults ✓ Realise how increased activity or involvement in physical activities can require increased attention to body care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and changing 	<p>As I grow I change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify and discuss the changes that are experienced in growing from child to adult <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing interests and leisure activities - Developing a wider circle of friends - Increasing personal independence ✓ Explore patterns of development and growth, comparing present development with that at earlier stages: physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual ✓ Appreciate the need for individual space and privacy as he/she is growing and developing <p>Birth and new life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship ✓ Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing for the birth of the baby - Taking care of offspring from birth onwards - Emotional, psychological and practical provisions
	<p>Feelings and emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understand how feelings help in understanding himself/herself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand that moods and emotions are often affected by physical and hormonal changes - Realising that true feelings may often be masked - Being aware that personal feelings can affect others ✓ Discuss the different types of love that exist and explore how love is portrayed and defined in music, films, books, magazines and other media

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify and learn about healthy ways to help him/her feel positive about himself/herself.
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Strand: Myself and Others

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myself and my family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore and discuss families and homes and how they can vary in many ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single-parent, two-parent, step-parent, adoptive parents, foster-parents, group homes, hostels ✓ Explore what belonging to a family means ✓ Examine some factors that can affect family life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The birth of a baby <p><i>When discussing issues such as fostering and adoption, teachers should recognise that some children in the class may have been adopted or fostered.</i></p>
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Sample Letters to Parents before programme commencement

Appendix II

Junior Infants – 2nd Class

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In primary school, the children are taught a programme called Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

One part of this programme is called RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education). The teachers will teach the RSE part of the programme in a few weeks time.

What is RSE?

RSE teaches children about relationships, sexuality and their own growth and development. The lessons give children the opportunity to reflect on their lives and their relationships in a social, moral and spiritual framework.

The RSE programme is built into the SPHE programme under the strands **Myself and Myself and Others**. Each strand is sub-divided into strand units. These are shown below, with a very brief summary of their content.

JUNIOR INFANTS TO SECOND CLASS

MYSELF:

Self-Identity: What makes me unique and special, becoming self-reliant, making choices, expressing opinions.

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.

Safety and Protection: Identifying risks, developing strategies for keeping safe, understanding why there are rules.

MYSELF AND OTHERS:

Myself and My Family: Learning about how families love and take care of each other.

My Friends and Other People: Appreciating friendship, treating others with dignity and respect, recognising bullying behaviour, understanding that it is wrong and knowing what to do about it.

Relating to Others: Listening to others, practicing care and consideration towards others, resolving conflict.

The Parents Booklet, 'Going Forward Together' tells you some more about the RSE programme. You can find it online at [Doc. Relationships 2 \(pdst.ie\)](http://pdst.ie/Doc_Relationships_2)

Kind Regards

Principal

3rd Class

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In primary school, the children are taught a programme called Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

One part of this programme is called RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education). The teachers will teach the RSE part of the programme over the next few weeks.

What is RSE?

RSE teaches children about relationships, sexuality and their own growth and development. The lessons give children the opportunity to reflect on their lives and their relationships in a social, moral and spiritual framework. The RSE programme is built into the SPHE programme under the strands *Myself and Myself and Others*. Each strand is sub-divided into strand units. These are shown below, with a very brief summary of their content.

3rd Class Content

MYSELF

Self-Identity: Self-awareness, self-confidence, expressing feelings and opinions, coping with change, becoming more responsible, body image, identifying goals and targets.

Taking Care of My Body: Understanding health, dangers of substance misuse, personal hygiene, nutrition. For 3rd/4th Class: understanding physical changes for boys and girls.

Growing and Changing: Identifying and discussing feelings, having a positive sense of self. For 3rd/4th/5th Class children: being able to discuss the development of the human baby from conception to birth, recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty.

Safety and Protection: Identifying threats to safety, knowing how to keep safe, helping others to be safe.

Making Decisions: Decision making, understanding that decisions have consequences, recognising the role of adults in setting boundaries for young people.

MYSELF AND OTHERS

Myself and My Family: Exploring what it means to belong to a family, identifying behaviour that promotes harmony in families.

My Friends and Other People: Appreciating the importance of friendship, coping with the loss of friendship, learning how to deal with bullying, recognising the importance of courtesy, good manners and caring for others.

Relating to Others: Listening and communication skills, positive strategies for resolving conflict.

The Parents Booklet, 'Going Forward Together' tells you some more about the RSE programme. You can find it on line at [Doc. Relationships 2 \(pdst.ie\)](https://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Doc_Relationships_2.pdf)

This year for explaining how babies are made the children in Third Class will be reading 'Tom's Power Flower' by the HSE. This is a gentle introduction by comparing growth of flowers to growth of babies. To read the book in full you can read it online at <https://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Toms%20Flower%20Power.pdf> or call to the school office for a copy.

Kind Regards,

Principal

4th Class

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In primary school, the children are taught a programme called Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

One part of this programme is called RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education). The teachers will teach the RSE part of the programme over the next few weeks.

What is RSE?

RSE teaches children about relationships, sexuality and their own growth and development. The lessons give children the opportunity to reflect on their lives and their relationships in a social, moral and spiritual framework. The RSE programme is built into the SPHE programme under the strands Myself and Myself and Others. Each strand is sub-divided into strand units. These are shown below, with a very brief summary of their content.

Fourth Class Content

MYSELF

Self-Identity: Self-awareness, self-confidence, expressing feelings and opinions, coping with change, becoming more responsible, body image, identifying goals and targets.

Taking Care of My Body: Understanding health, dangers of substance misuse, personal hygiene, nutrition. For 3rd/4th Class: understanding physical changes for boys and girls.

Growing and Changing: Identifying and discussing feelings, having a positive sense of self. For 3rd/4th/5th Class children: being able to discuss the development of the human baby from conception to birth, recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty.

Safety and Protection: Identifying threats to safety, knowing how to keep safe, helping others to be safe.

Making Decisions: Decision making, understanding that decisions have consequences, recognising the role of adults in setting boundaries for young people.

MYSELF AND OTHERS

Myself and My Family: Exploring what it means to belong to a family, identifying behaviour that promotes harmony in families.

My Friends and Other People: Appreciating the importance of friendship, coping with the loss of friendship, learning how to deal with bullying, recognising the importance of courtesy, good manners and caring for others.

Relating to Others: Listening and communication skills, positive strategies for resolving conflict.

The Parents Booklet, 'Going Forward Together' tells you some more about the RSE programme. You can find it on line at [Doc. Relationships 2 \(pdst.ie\)](http://pdst.ie/Doc_Relationships_2)
5th Class

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In primary school, the children are taught a programme called Social Personal and Health Education (**SPHE**).

One part of this programme is called **RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education)**.

What is RSE?

RSE teaches children about relationships, sexuality and their own growth and development. The lessons give children the opportunity to reflect on their lives and their relationships in a social, moral and spiritual framework.

The RSE programme is built into the SPHE programme under the strands **Myself** and **Myself and Others**. Each strand is sub-divided into strand units. These are shown below, with a very brief summary of their content.

MYSELF

Self-Identity: Self-awareness, self-confidence, expressing feelings and opinions, coping with change, becoming more responsible, body image, identifying goals and targets.

Taking Care of My Body: Understanding health, dangers of substance misuse, personal hygiene, nutrition. 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 5th Class children: being able to discuss the development of the human baby from conception to birth, recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty.

Safety and Protection: Identifying threats to safety, knowing how to keep safe, helping others to be safe.

Making Decisions: Decision making, understanding that decisions have consequences, recognising the role of adults in setting boundaries for young people.

MYSELF AND OTHERS

Myself and My Family: Exploring what it means to belong to a family, identifying behaviour that promotes harmony in families.

My Friends and Other People: Appreciating the importance of friendship, coping with the loss of friendship, learning how to deal with bullying, recognising the importance of courtesy, good manners and caring for others.

Relating to Others: Listening and communication skills, positive strategies for resolving conflict.

FIFTH CLASS Content

The **Parents Booklet, 'Going Forward Together'** tells you some more about the RSE programme. You can find it on line at [Doc. Relationships 2 \(pdst.ie\)](#).

Specifically, your child in **5th class** will learn about the following through the RSE programme:

- **Growing and changing – including puberty**
- **Periods**
- **The development of the baby in the womb.**

The material to be taught will be the same as that agreed in the school's RSE policy.

What should you do now?

Over the next few weeks, you should take time to discuss with your child the material that the teacher will cover before the Easter break. It is always best if the child hears this information from you first.

If you would like to have a booklet that might help you with your talk, I can give you the book 'Busy Bodies' that is published by the HSE. Please note that I will not give this book to a child, but I will be glad to post a copy to you if you cannot call to the school for one.

Kind Regards,

Principal

6th Class

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In primary school, the children are taught a programme called Social Personal and Health Education (**SPHE**).

One part of this programme is called **RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education)**..

What is RSE?

RSE teaches children about relationships, sexuality and their own growth and development. The lessons give children the opportunity to reflect on their lives and their relationships in a social, moral and spiritual framework.

The RSE programme is built into the SPHE programme under the strands **Myself** and **Myself and Others**. Each strand is sub-divided into strand units. These are shown below, with a very brief summary of their content.

SIXTH CLASS

MYSELF

Self-Identity: Self-awareness, self-confidence, expressing feelings and opinions, coping with change, becoming more responsible, body image, identifying goals and targets.

Taking Care of My Body: Understanding health, dangers of substance misuse, personal hygiene, nutrition. 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 6th Class children: being able to discuss the development of the human baby from conception to birth, recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty, understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth in the context of a committed, loving relationship.

Safety and Protection: Identifying threats to safety, knowing how to keep safe, helping others to be safe.

Making Decisions: Decision making, understanding that decisions have consequences, recognising the role of adults in setting boundaries for young people.

MYSELF AND OTHERS

Myself and My Family: Exploring what it means to belong to a family, identifying behaviour that promotes harmony in families.

My Friends and Other People: Appreciating the importance of friendship, coping with the loss of friendship, learning how to deal with bullying, recognising the importance of courtesy, good manners and caring for others.

Relating to Others: Listening and communication skills, positive strategies for resolving conflict.

The **Parents Booklet, 'Going Forward Together'** tells you some more about the RSE programme. You can find it on line at [Doc. Relationships 2 \(pdst.ie\)](http://www.pdst.ie/Doc_Relationships_2).

Specifically, your child in **6th class** will learn about the following through the RSE programme:

- **Growing and changing – including puberty**
- **Periods**
- **The development of the baby in the womb.**
- **Where do babies come from?**

The material to be taught will be the same as that agreed in the school's RSE policy.

What should you do now?

Over the next few weeks, you should take time to discuss with your child the material that the teacher will cover before the Easter break. It is always best if the child hears this information from you first.

If you would like to have a booklet that might help you with your talk, I can give you the book 'Busy Bodies' that is published by the HSE. Please note that I will not give this book to a child, but I will be glad to post a copy to you if you cannot call to the school for one.

Kind Regards,

Principal

Appendix III

Sensitive Language – covered in RSE/Stay Safe

Junior Infants and Senior Infants

New Life – mention of baby, **breast feeding** as a means of feeding a baby

My Body – **penis, vulva, vagina** – taught as physical differences between boy and girl

First Class

New Life – New baby. Mentions **giving birth**.

Second Class

Birth of baby through **vagina**. Mentions **umbilical cord** and **womb**.

Third Class

As for second class, but in more detail.

Fourth Class

Language around baby's development in womb –

- **Fertilised egg**
- **Growth Spurt**

Fifth Class

Menstruation in the context of hygiene and growth from a girl to a woman.

Boy's and girl's development – puberty.

- **Puberty**
- **Erection**
- **Wet dreams**
- **Menstruation**
- **Development of breasts**
- **Sperm production**
- **Foetus**
- **Navel**
- **Ovaries**
- **Fallopian Tubes**
- **Hormones** – physical development and changes: acne, body hair, facial hair, body image
- Hygiene – sweating
- Differing stages of change and development
- Importance of non-comparison to peers

Sixth Class

How does new life begin?

What does a loving relationship means?

Biological facts as follows:

- What journey does the egg make?
- What journey does the sperm make?
- Where do they meet?
- What happens when they meet?
- Sixth class – Busy Bodies
- Hormones – mood swings, personality changes
- Physical changes – appearance, voice, style
- **Contractions**
- **Pregnancy**
- **Conception**
- **Sexual intercourse**

