



St. Oliver's N.S. R.S.E Policy 2023



Principal – Catherine Tiernan Bell.

Deputy Principal Yvette Kellett: Roll No: 20349H

Our School Philosophy

We, at St. Oliver's N.S., are committed to providing each individual child with a holistic education within a safe, calm and caring learning environment.

Central to the creation of this environment is a commitment to Christian values and the recognition of the worth of each child.

We aim to develop a community wherein each child is encouraged to fulfil their intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, aesthetic and emotional potential; where pupils, parents, teachers and support staff enjoy a sense of belonging, tolerance and respect.

Definition of R.S.E.

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education 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. (p. 5 NCCA curriculum and guidelines for RSE). RSE is the formal approach to educating children in:

- Relationships with others – parents, siblings, friends and the community in general
- Respect for themselves and others
- Physical development – bodily functions and changes, and personal hygiene
- Emotional development – maturing in society
- Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships
- Sexuality in context – part of a loving relationship.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE and Religion

Social, Personal and Health Education contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development. (p.5 Going Forward Together Parents Information Booklet).

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.

As stated previously, the content of all lessons will be governed by the schools' Catholic ethos as taught in the Grow In Love programme.

Current Provision

Traditionally we are 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.

Included in the school curriculum in St. Oliver's N.S. is:

- Religious Education (Grow In love)
- SPHE
- Stay Safe Programme
- ACCORD: Deliver the relationship and sexuality aspects to the children in 6th class.
- Friends For Life and Fun Friends: Ms Tiernan Bell, Ms Kellett, Mr. Mc Kenna, Miss Kierans and Miss McVeigh are all trained in these programmes.
- Weaving Into Wellbeing
- Rainbows; Bereavement Counselling for children: Miss McVeigh and Ms. O'Toole are trained in this.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Code of behaviour and discipline policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- School Tour Policy
- Digital Strategy Policy
- Administration of Medicines 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.

Aims of our RSE Programme

The aims of social, personal and health education are

- to promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- to foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being
- to promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects
- to enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future
- to develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life
- to enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our school

- Guidelines are laid down by the Department of Education and Science and as discussed in this document will be followed. It is recognised that during any year a special teacher/pupil relationship develops within a class. A trust and understanding of each other is acquired and having regard to this special relationship we recognise the need to allow teachers flexibility/discretion as the need may arise when dealing with certain areas of the curriculum.
- It is envisaged that the programme will be taught in an integrated manner where possible.
- Parents consent in writing to the teaching of R.S.E when they enrol their child in the school.
- Parents are also to be informed in advance, regarding when the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme e.g. puberty, will be covered in school. (6-8 weeks) Notes are sent home requesting parental permission when ACCORD visit the school.
- If a DVD is to be used to complement the teaching of RSE parents are to offer opportunity to view same.
- Visiting speakers may be used at a senior level to cover certain areas of the programme or, indeed, to reiterate/elaborate on certain aspects already covered. The visiting speaker will be fully versed as regards the school's RSE policy.
- Parents may have the opportunity to meet with the visiting speaker in advance (not the night before) of their visit to the school.
- Parents have responsibilities 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 wishes their child to be withdrawn from a formal RSE class they must first discuss this with the teacher involved and the principal and then inform the principal in writing. Every effort will be made to withdraw the child with the minimum of fuss. Recognising that the Department of Education and Science do not allow a child to stay away from school while RSE is being taught the child will be sent to another classroom to work.
- Children will be encouraged to discuss the material being covered in the class with their parents, guardians or older siblings. 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, etc. It will be explained that other children will be

given this information by their own parents and teachers when they reach an appropriate age.

- Children will also be taught to recognise that certain personal disclosures are inappropriate. Teachers will neither give nor request personal information. A respect for personal privacy will be emphasised.
- Parents will be informed if the teacher feels a particular child would benefit from more in-depth discussion, at home, of a topic covered.
- If a parent has a particular concern/issue which has arisen as a result of an RSE discussion in school they would be encouraged to discuss same 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. It is the experience of the teachers that it is to everyone's benefit if they are kept informed.
- Students with GLD – Taking into account students' social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues before they are included in the student's SSP.
- Sensitive issues may be dealt with in the following class groupings
Puberty – Girls at end of fourth class
Puberty – Boys at the beginning of fifth class
Puberty, intercourse and birth with boys and girls during sixth class. To facilitate this, appropriate arrangements will be made for the rest of the classes for the periods concerned.
- 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 deciding, if the issue is relevant, who is it relevant to.
 - by giving 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 should be answered more fully in the future.
- There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils.
- After two years there will be a review of this policy. The partners will be given an opportunity to make comments and suggest amendments as appropriate.

Changes in Puberty Boys	Changes in Puberty Girls
Growth, Height, Shoulders, Muscles	Growth – Arms, Feet, Legs
Emotional Change	Emotional Change
Voice “breaks”	Waist more marked
Awareness of opposite sex	Awareness of opposite sex
Hair – Facial, Underarm, Pubic	Hips & Thighs rounder
Wet Dreams	Peer Influence
Peer Influences	Face Changes
Penis & Testicles Bigger	Hair – Underarm, Pubic
Heightened awareness of Body	Breasts Bigger
Scrotum lower and looser	Nipples bigger and darker
	Heighten awareness of body
	Eggs Produced
	Periods Begin
Sexual Intercourse	
Relationship, information, language, conception, maturity, responsibilities	

Social, Personal and Health Education “provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the child and to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society”. (SPHE Teacher Guidelines p. 2) **Relationships and Sexuality Education** is an important part of S.P.H.E. Relationships and Sexuality Education aims to help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships and to promote an understanding of and a healthy attitude towards human sexuality and relationships. The themes relating specifically to sexuality are only a small part of the S.P.H.E. programme. Perhaps some of the language used in these lessons may be of concern to some parents. To alleviate any fears you may have, we have compiled a list of specific vocabulary which is used in each of the classes and the objectives they relate to in the SPHE curriculum. We expect that this factual information is delivered to the children in a sensitive, healthy and relaxed manner, with the view to awaken in each child a sense of wonder of themselves and others.

Junior Infants	The theme of new-life is dealt with, which relates to nature and family e.g. New life in Spring, pets and family (RSE Teaching Materials p. 68-76) Vocabulary Introduced: born, womb
Senior Infants	Taking Care of My Body – covers personal hygiene and self-awareness (RSE Teaching Materials p. 148-156) Vocabulary Introduced: Penis vulva/vagina breasts As SPHE is spiral in nature, the work in Junior Infants is revisited re: New Life and expanded (RSE Teaching Materials p. 158-167) Vocabulary Introduced: breastfed little seed – 9 nine months in womb . Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum: The child should be enabled to develop an awareness of

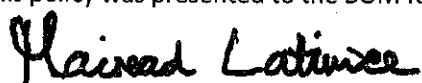
	<p>human birth that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born (SPHE Curriculum – Infants – p. 18)</p> <p>name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms (SPHE Curriculum – Infants – p. 17)</p>
First & Second Class	<p>The themes covered include "New Life" and "How my body works" (RSE Teaching Materials p. 68-75) Vocabulary Introduced: urine and urethra Second Class: Themes explored include "The Wonder of New Life", "When My Body Needs Special Care" (RSE Teaching Materials p. 162-169) Vocabulary Introduced: vagina and anus Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum: The child should be enabled to name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions (SPHE Curriculum – 1 st & 2nd Class – p. 27) appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for newborn babies in both the animal and human world (SPHE Curriculum – 1 st & 2nd Class – p. 28)</p>
Third and Fourth Class	<p>Third Class: Preparing for New Life (RSE Teaching Materials p.70-79) Vocabulary Introduced: Pregnancy umbilical cord navel (belly button) Fourth Class: Themes include "The Wonder of New Life" and "Growing and Changing" which deal with all stages of pregnancy and birth and encourages children not to take these daily miracles for granted (respect). (RSE Teaching Materials p.170-181 & 196-205) Vocabulary Introduced: Fertilised egg scan hormones cells menstruation Periods Pubic areas Pubic Hair Perspiration Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum: The child should be enabled to discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth (SPHE Curriculum – 3 rd & 4th Class – p. 41) understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body growing height and weight, increasing strength growing from boy to man, growing from girl to woman (SPHE Curriculum – 3 rd & 4th Class – p. 39)</p>
Fifth and Sixth Class Fifth Class	<p>Themes developed include "My Body Grows and Changes", "The Wonder of New Life" and "Caring for New Life" (RSE Teaching Materials p. 82-92 & 94-101) Vocabulary Introduced: ovaries ,fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, testicles,</p>

	<p>scrotum, sperm production, erection, wet dreams ,conception. Sixth Class: Themes covered include "Growing and Changing", "Relationships and New Life" and "A Baby is a miracle" (RSE Teaching Materials p. 184-197 & 200-208 & 210-219) Vocabulary Introduced: Adolescence responsibilities Relevant Objectives from SPHE Curriculum: The child should be enabled to 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 female hormonal changes, changing body shape development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, onset of menstruation (periods) male hormonal changes, physical growth enlargement of testicles and penis appearance of pubic, underarm and facial hair breaking of the voice, beginning of sperm production onset of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams) to understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults (SPHE Curriculum – 5 th & 6th Class – p. 56) understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship to discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent preparing for the birth of the baby taking care of offspring from birth onwards emotional, psychological and practical provisions.</p>
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Review/Ratification

This policy will be reviewed when required under new legislation or when requested by the Department of Education.

This policy was presented to the BOM for discussion and ratification in May 2023.



Chairperson of BOM



Principal

Date: 8th May 2023

Policy to be reviewed in May 2024