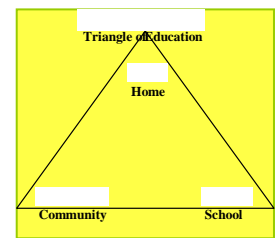


# St. Fintan's National School



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## RSE Policy 2020 (Draft)

### **Introductory Statement:**

RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) is an integral part of the SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) curriculum.

A Parents' Meeting was held and a committee was formed to draft a policy for the mandatory implementation of the programme in our school in 2013.

### **Rationale:**

We wish to emphasise the primary role and responsibility of Parents/Guardians as primary educators in all aspects of their children's education and development, and especially in the area of Relationships and Sexuality Education.

The Education Act 1998 acknowledges the close link between SPHE (of which RSE is an integral part) and the moral and spiritual formation of students. In addition to this, the SPHE Primary School Curriculum 1999 states that "since SPHE has a moral and spiritual dimension, its development and implementation are influenced significantly by the ethos or characteristic spirit of the school".

Our school is a National School under the patronage of the Diocese of Ferns and therefore has a Catholic Ethos. However, our living ethos embraces tolerance and understanding and recognises that our school community contains a diverse population. Many of the families in our school community have different or no religious beliefs. This RSE policy recognises these differences.

The policy also recognises that certain subjects/questions may arise during the RSE lessons or outside the lesson that are not dealt with in the RSE curriculum and could be at variance with the Catholic Ethos of the school/Patron. These subjects require sensitivity and discretion on the part of the teacher. It may be necessary in these cases for the subjects/questions to be followed up at home.

This policy recognises the discretion of the teacher in these situations.

Our school is willing to assist Parents/Guardians in providing appropriate material and resources when required.

Parents can approach class teacher for these materials.

Some resources are also available on the HSE website :

[https://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy\\_bodies](https://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy_bodies)

### **Aims:**

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, all human 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 the child to be comfortable with oneself and others while growing and changing.
- To encourage a sense of self-respect and respect for others.

### **Definition of RSE:**

RSE will be timetabled as part of the SPHE curriculum. It will be taught every year.

The lessons are divided into the following strands according to NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) guidelines.

Sensitive lessons are marked. Information and materials for these lessons will be sent home in advance. This will give parents/guardians the opportunity to discuss the content of the lesson with their child.

Myself: Self-identity, growing and changing, safety and protection.

Myself and Others: Myself and family, friends and relating to other people.

Taking Care of my Body: Naming parts of the body using appropriate terminology, identifying physical changes, understanding puberty and the reproductive system.

Growing and Changing: The stages of development of a baby from conception to birth. Understanding sexual relations within the context of a committed loving relationship.

The strands will be divided into these topics:

Topics covered up to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class:

- Keeping Safe
- Changes during growth and development
- Making and keeping friends
- 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 body parts using correct terminology (Senior Infants, sensitive lesson)**

Topics covered from 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Classes

All the above topics as well as:

- **The Wonder of New Life (3<sup>rd</sup> Class, sensitive lesson)**
- Healthy Eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing Feelings
- Family Relationships

- Making responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- **Bodily Changes (4<sup>th</sup> Class sensitive lesson - this involves the teaching of menstruation and will be taught in consultation with parents.)**
- **Reproduction, conception (6<sup>th</sup> Class sensitive lessons - this will be taught in a block at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> Class and will be taught in consultation with parents)**  
**The sensitive lesson will be sent home beforehand and resources will be made available to parents if needed.**

### **Methodologies**

All pupils will be encouraged to discuss content of lessons with parents. For sensitive topics, it will be stressed to pupils that they are to treat all topics with maturity and respect.

Strategies to be used: story-telling, discussion, circle time and photos/pictures.

### **Resources**

- Home-links sheets, in the same style as the Stay-Safe booklet will be sent home. There will be a small task set on this page for children and parents to do together. This sheet is to be signed by the parent and returned every week. Teachers will monitor this homework and ensure that it is signed.

Sensitive lessons will not be in this booklet but will be sent home separately.

- The RSE Resource Pack for schools published by the department and available on the Department of education website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)
- Resource Pack for Teachers from Drumcondra Education Centre.

### **Management**

St Fintan's NS is a mainstream school with multigrade classes.

Using a "Year 1, Year 2" system for all non - sensitive lessons, all topics will be covered by the end of 6<sup>th</sup> Class.

Sensitive topics will be covered in separate class groupings. During these lessons, another teacher will cover a different SPHE topic with the rest of the group in a different room.

In 6<sup>th</sup> Class, special provision will be made by the principal and 6<sup>th</sup> Class teacher to spend a longer period of time on the sensitive topics as a group. If a visiting speaker/facilitator is in the class, the teacher will remain present.

Sensitive lessons will be sent home in advance and parents are expected to go over the content with their children.

*(Parents and Guardians have primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. Our school RSE programme acts as a support to parents and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from the sensitive lessons. These children will be supervised in another room by a member of staff.)*

### **Teacher/staff Development**

The teacher retains the right to choose to teach/not teach specific aspects of the programme. Arrangements will be made within the school in this case.

The staff will continue to receive training in RSE.

### **Evaluation**

- Teacher Observation - teachers will observe the children and evaluate lesson accordingly.

This policy will be reviewed after 2 year's implementation and evaluated by the Parents' Committee and teachers.

Ratified By BoM on

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_(Chairperson)

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