



Scoil Tíghearnach Naofa Cullohill N.S.

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Rationale

Education in Scoil Tíghearnach Naofa is characterised by care for the individual. The child's many needs are met in a well-structured environment where he/she can live fully the life of a child. While nourishing the child's young life, we hope to provide him/her with a solid foundation for future growth and development in a Christian tradition. The environment is such that the child is encouraged and stimulated to be confident, appropriate, independent and creative. The Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) programme will be implemented within this framework.

Definition of RSE

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. This work will be based on developing a good image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing them with appropriate information.

RSE in the context of our SPHE programme

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 are included on this programme, at age-appropriate levels. RSE 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.

Aims of our RSE programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each child.
- To help children 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 older 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 the RSE programme

The RSE programme should enable the child:

- To acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self.
- To develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth.
- To develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others.
- To understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts.
- To develop an awareness of and respect for all differing family patterns.
- To come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- To develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- To become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change, and to understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity.
- To develop personal skills which will help them to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- To develop some coping strategies to protect themselves and others from various forms of abuse.
- To acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.
- To develop in the child a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

Two Year Cycle Plan

Year One (beginning in September 2023)

Year One	Year Two
Strand: Myself	Strand : Myself
Self-Identity (Sept - Oct)	
Taking Care of my Body (Jan - Feb)	
Growing and Changing (March - April)	
	Safety and Protection (Jan - Feb)
	Making Decisions (March April)
Strand: Myself and Others	Strand : Myself and Others
Myself and My Family (Nov - Dec)	
	Relating to Others (Sept -Oct)
	My Friends and Other People (May-June)
Strand: Myself and the Wider World	Strand: Myself and the Wider World
Developing Citizenship (May – June)	
	Media Education (Nov-Dec)

The sensitive issues will be covered every second year in 5th and 6th Class.

Ideally the class teacher will teach the sensitive issues of RSE to 5th and 6th. Alternatively, a specialist may be employed to do.

The Class Teacher must stay in the Classroom at all times in accordance with Circular 22/2010.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in Scoil Tighearnach Naofa:

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.

It is envisaged that a letter will be sent home before RSE is taught in each classroom. This is to inform the parents of what will be taught. Appropriate Home School Links pages will be sent home before each lesson is taught.

The topic of periods will be dealt with in 4th Class with the girls only. The relevant pages in the Busy Bodies will be photocopied and sent home to their parents for them to go through with them if they feel it is required at this stage. Periods will be dealt with in the classroom setting in Fifth and Sixth Class.

For Fifth and Sixth Classes, the Busy Bodies Booklet and information regarding the associated support material which can be found on the website www.healthpromotion.ie will be sent home prior to the teaching in Class. Parents are their Child's primary educator and it is encouraged that they will have gone through the book with their child before the topic is broached in school.

The approach in school is child-centred and will always take the age and stage of development of the children into account. Appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used – these can be found in the RSE Resource Materials Book which each teacher has and also can be found online on PDST website. The use of the correct terminology will be encouraged.

Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner. The class teacher or Guest Speaker 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 programme and they will be advised to talk with their parents. In exceptional circumstances where a question has been asked that may raise concern with a teacher, the teacher will refer back to the Child Protection Policy.

It is our policy not to answer personal questions and to explain to the children that if they are upset by any of the content that you are free to discuss this with them after the lesson. A 'communication box' may be used in the classroom for the children to put in any questions or concerns that they may have. This will also be a way of vetting questions that need and can be answered and also questions that may be inappropriate and not relevant to:

- The age and stage of the child
- The curriculum
- The ethos of the school

Our RSE programme is inclusive and so we actively discourage withdrawal. Should a parent seek to have their child withdrawn from the RSE lessons, the parent is welcome to come to view the relevant resource materials such as the curriculum, RSE Resource Materials Book and the Busy Bodies Booklet (5th and 6th class only). If a parent/guardian still wishes to withdraw their child, the school recognises that they are entitled to do so and will require this

decision in writing from the parents as to why they are withdrawing and that they are taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves. This will then be filed.

Resources

In Scoil Tighearnach Naofa the following will be used in the teaching of RSE.

- Books will be in each class which will deal with the topic of all different kinds of families and feelings.
- Different Families, Same Love poster will be used in the classroom to help the children to acknowledge and respect all kinds of families.
- The relevant RSE Resource Materials book will be used in each class.
- Busy Bodies Booklet will be used for 4th Class (Girls only, periods chapter photocopied and sent home), Fifth and Sixth Class in the teaching of the sensitive issues.

Confidentiality

Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, or a teacher has any concerns about a child, the school authorities will follow our Child Protection Policy. Philip O Riain is our Designated Liaison Person and Maura Curran is our Deputy Designated Liaison Person.

Ongoing support, development and review

The Board of Management of Scoil Tighearnach Naofa acknowledges the importance of the teaching of RSE and supports the implementation of the RSE programme. We recognise that our school has a supportive role to that of the home and we have a commitment to ensuring that:

- Our teachers have access to in-career development opportunities.
- Relevant teaching materials are provided.
- The relevant teacher, with the support from Maria O'Driscoll (RSE facilitator), will work with parents to support them in whatever way is necessary.

This Policy was reviewed in September 2024 and ratified by the Board on 24th October 2024.

Signed by:



Date:

