

ST PETERS SCHOOL

RSE POLICY

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St Peters. It was updated in 2024 by the ISL team in response to changes in the school curriculum plans. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum.

Rationale

St Peters school is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Dublin. The school has a Catholic ethos, and this ethos is a guiding principle in the formulation and implementation of this RSE Policy. 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 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 primary lessons will be governed by the schools' Catholic ethos as taught in the Alive-O Religion programme and resources from the Health & Wellbeing Education HSE programme for both primary and secondary levels.

Current Provision

The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our planning and policy making processes.

Included in the school curriculum in St Peters school is:

- Religious Education (Grow in Love)
- SPHE
- Stay Safe Programme
- Busy Bodies

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Code of behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child protection policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Mobile phone policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Acceptable Use 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

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.

Resources

The document Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy Guide for Primary schools (PDST) has informed both the SPHE/RSE plan and this school policy. The lessons plans are available in the Draft SPHE plan (2024) for each class grouping. The Grow in Love programme, the Stay Safe programme, Busy Bodies, RSE resources at HSE.ie and a selection of other appropriate resources will also be used. All resources are available for parents/guardians to view if they so request prior to the delivery of the lesson.

Provision for Ongoing Support

- Parents are welcome to view curriculum if they so wish.
- Funding will be sought for the provision of suitable materials when deemed necessary.
- Opportunities provided by our Education centre will be brought to the attention of staff members. Career development will be sought for staff when required, or as requested .

Review

The staff, under the guidance of the Principal and Management team will review this policy every two years. This policy will also be reviewed should the need arise.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of St Peters School ratified this amended plan on June 2025.



Signed:

Date: 17.06.2025

Mr Eoin Ó Donnagáin

Chairperson to the Board of Management

St Peters School, Rathgar



Signed:

Date: 17.06.2025

Ms Rosemary Fahy

Principal

St Peters School, Rathgar

Date of next review June 2026.

Appendix A

RSE - Sensitive Areas

Junior Infants

New Life – mention of baby in the womb.

Senior Infants

My Body – specific names for male and female sex organs – vagina, penis, womb.

First Class

New Life – New baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord – mention breast feeding.

Second Class

Birth of baby through vagina. Mention umbilical cord and breast feeding.

Third Class

As for second class, but in more detail.

Fourth Class

Language around baby's development in womb, i.e., fertilised egg, cord. Pictures of foetuses (in RSE manual) to be used.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

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

Boys' and girls' development – puberty.

How does new life begin? (6th class only)

Biological facts as follows: (6th class only)

- What journey does the egg make?
- What journey does the sperm make?
- Where do they meet?
- What happens when they meet?
- Optional videos: Fifth class – Growing
- Sixth class – Busy Bodies.