

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education ( RSE) Policy**

**St Oliver's Primary School , Ballycasheen , Killarney , Co. Kerry.**

**Date of Policy Review – March 2023**

### **1.Introduction**

All Schools are required to have an RSE policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including sensitive language. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within Social , Personal and Health Education (SPHE ) both formally and informally. The first RSE policy was developed in 2004 with a committee, revised in 2008, 2013 and now once again in March 2023 by O. Mc Carthy, L. O' Brien and E. O' Donoghue.

### **2.School Philosophy and Ethos**

St. Oliver's Primary School is a mixed Catholic school serving an urban area under the trusteeship of the Bishop of Kerry. Our school is a place where we are respected and treat others with respect, a place where we feel happy and safe and a place where self-confidence and self-esteem can flourish. Our school is a place where effective teaching and learning takes place. We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The curriculum also encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and the wider community. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that we value respect, tolerance and openness through the lived experience of the children and school community. Parents have the primary role in the Social, Personal and Health Education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting our school and children to develop into healthy young adults.

### **3. Definition of RSE**

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social frame work. It is an integral part of our Social, Personal and Health Education programme and is taught in this context. 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 age-appropriate information.

### **4. RSE in the context of our SPHE programme**

SPHE is a subject on the school curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to learn personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while also nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others. It is taught from Junior Infants up to 6<sup>th</sup> class. RSE forms part of this programme. It is a spiral curriculum which ensures that topics are taught in a developmental 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 content of the school's SPHE programme covers a wide range of topics such as healthy eating, alcohol and drug awareness, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

### **5. Including RSE in the Curriculum**

RSE is facilitated in the following ways

- in the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere
- in the context of an effective code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy
- as part of religious education
- as part of timetabled SPHE
- on an integrated cross curricular basis

## **6. Aims of our RSE programme**

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child.
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable the 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.

## **7.Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our school:**

We recognise that the 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 and Skills in the SPHE Curriculum.

- RSE will be taught in all mainstream classes and offered to all students in our school .  
Important Note : all RSE Lessons are taught annually for each class level.  
All Stay Safe lessons will be taught bi-annually eg Term two 2023  
Term two 2025 , Term two 2027 etc .
- The SPHE/RSE curriculum will be of a spiral nature and all content objectives will be covered by the time children leave 6th class.
- 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 the recommended school programmes.
- RSE sensitive language lessons will be delivered to the 4<sup>th</sup> , 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class boys and girls (separately) by staff members .
- All Parents / guardians will be informed of when our RSE and Stay Safe lessons are being taught in the school and all resources /content of

lessons will be made available to parents either through our school office or online .

- For the vocabulary to be taught across the class levels for the sensitive language lessons please see Grid – Appendix 1 .
- When implementing the RSE programme, staff at St Oliver’s National School endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times. The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.

### **8.School Policies and Curricular Plans which support our RSE**

Traditionally, we are a child-centred school. The educational and emotional needs of the children in our care are central to our curricular planning and policy making processes.

- Grow in Love
- SPHE Curriculum
- Stay Safe Programme
- School’s Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Anti –Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Administration of Medicine Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- GDPR 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 staff 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 the members of the school community.

## **9.Timetabling**

One half hour period per week is currently timetabled for each class for SPHE. RSE will be included in the programme taught during this time. It is envisaged that some aspects of RSE (including the sensitive issues, will be taught through a number of core periods and may be taught eg over a full morning or afternoon. Some material may of course be taught in a cross curricular manner.

The Sensitive Language Lessons of RSE will be taught in each classroom during the Second Term and will be specifically listed on our school monthly calendar to remind staff in advance .

## **10.Language**

**(please pay particular attention to 10. Language & 11. Questions/ The Question box )**

SPHE curriculum provides a context in which children are given opportunities to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to SPHE. Children should become aware of the power and influence of language. When used positively, language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner can hurt, diminish and demean. Children need to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationship and their everyday interactions. Language is a powerful tool and should be used with respect and integrity for the dignity of each person. There are two areas where the use of language is applied in RSE lessons;

- The formal use and teaching of language generally throughout the school
- The use of language in discussion through your formal RSE lessons.

Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching

- Relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. The use of slang will be discouraged.
- Anatomical terms and language introduced is consistent with RSE Materials/ Books as listed on our Sensitive Language Grid (see Appendix 1)

### **11. Questions and The Question Box**

We use some simple principles when fostering discussion and questioning

- No personal questions of the teacher
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions and ensure that they will only cover / answer questions relating to topics as listed for that class level .
- Questions do not have to be answered straight away.

Sample responses;

- 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 about 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.
- Somebody asked a question and the language they used was slang language, what they meant to ask was ...
- A question was asked and we cannot talk about that particular topic but I think that question was about.

### **The Question Box**

For older children a “question box” is recommended as part of a structured RSE Lesson. Teachers can follow up on the written questions at a later date, thus allowing time to prepare suitable answers, consult with colleagues, etc. During the delivery of each session of the sensitive language lessons, children will be encouraged to place their questions into a box in the classroom. These

questions will then be monitored and screened with the teacher answering the questions in due course taking into account the following;

- 1) Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner.
- 2) The class teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the particular curriculum objectives for a class.
- 3) Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the programme and they will be advised to talk with their parents.
- 4) Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is very inappropriate or needs to be communicated with home because of other reasons.
- 5) No personal questions will be answered and children will be reminded not to share personal information about their families or others- but can share with teacher after the lessons.

If issues arise which might be seen to contravene Children's First Guidelines, the teacher will notify the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in the School. The DLP for St Oliver's School is our principal Mr. Colm Ó Súilleabháin. The designated Liaison deputy is Ms. Sandra Chute .

## **12. Parental Involvement**

RSE is an ongoing process throughout life. Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school work in partnership with them in a supportive role. Each year prior to implementation of the RSE & Stay Safe programme parents will be informed when the teacher will begin to teach the programme. The curriculum books and resource materials are available online on [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) and the specific links are sent to parents through our Alladdin School App ( *RSE in Primary School Parent Tips & Stay Safe Parents Guide* ). Parents are also welcome to view resources in the school office if desired.

### **13. Withdrawal from RSE**

Since RSE is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education and Skills 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 of their decision to withdraw the child from the classes based on sensitive issues. The school cannot be responsible for any information which a child may receive outside the direct teaching of RSE lessons.

### **14. Differentiation / Pupils with Additional Educational Needs**

Teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class.

Some techniques used-

- Ensuring that objectives are realistic for the students
- Ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups and spending more time on tasks
- Organising the learning task into small stages and ensuring that the language used is pitched at the student's level of understanding
- Understanding of the activity using task analysis, outlining the steps to be learned/completed in any given task, posing key questions to guide students through the different stages/processes and to assist in self-direction and correction.
- The use of concrete materials & resources/ pictures & diagrams on the IWB
- Age appropriate worksheets & information to foster home/ school links. Adaptions to the way in which the content is delivered may be necessary for children with Additional Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/guardians in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.
- Children may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work.

- Children may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material ( child's SNA present to assist as necessary )
- Any different or specific objectives related to the pupils own learning needs should be detailed in their Student Support File in consultation with parents/guardians
- A variety of teaching methodologies may be required for some children.
- The National Council for Special Education ( NCSE) provide inclusive resources to support children with SEN as they begin to become aware of puberty. These are called Van Der Bilt Healthy Bodies for boys /girls and are available on pdst.ie.

### **15.Assessment**

Assessment in RSE is important to enable the teacher to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group.

The teacher uses;

- 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 log
- Pupil's Book – Mindful Matters

### **16.Confidentiality and Child Protection**

If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues , we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what was taught.

Where there may be a disclosure by a child of abuse, the school will follow the Department of Education and Skills child protection guidelines and the guidelines as set out in "Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 ". . The DLP for St Oliver's School is our principal Mr. Colm Ó Súilleabháin. The designated Liaison deputy is Ms. Sandra Chute

### **17.Resources**

- Stay Safe Programme
- RSE Manuals
- Busy Bodies Programme
- Mindful Matters School Programme
- Correct Anatomical Dolls
- Walk Tall Programme
- Roots of Empathy Programme
- St. Oliver’s RSE School Packs for all class levels
- The National Council for Special Education ( NCSE) –  
“Van Der Bilt Healthy Bodies for boys /girls” is a parents guide on  
puberty for children with additional needs and are available on  
pdst.ie.
- Other resource materials listed on Sensitive Language Grid (Appendix 1)

## **18.Provision for Ongoing Support**

### For Parents/Guardians

- Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and all resource materials being used if they wish either online or in the school office .
- There will be contact with all parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving "sensitive language " . Information letters will be sent through our St. Oliver’s Alladdin App. Pupils in 4<sup>th</sup> , 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes will also be given an RSE information letter to take home.
- Copies of the ‘Busy Bodies’ booklets will be available to parents of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes to collect from office.

### For Teachers

- The Board of Management will support in-career development in the area of SPHE/RSE as opportunities arise through our Education Centre.
- Our learning communities and post holder meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials and content
- Support from a PDST advisor if necessary.
- Promotion and communication of resources available from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

### **19.Implementation**

This policy is currently being implemented in our school .

### **20. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner should a need arise based on changes to the Curriculum. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

### **21.Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 28/3/23

**Signed: Sheila Casey - Chairperson of Board of Management**

**Signed: Colm Ó Súilleabháin - Principal**

## RSE Sensitive Lessons Overview – St. Oliver’s N.S.

Class	Sensitive Curricular Objectives	Language	Sensitive Lessons	Overview of lessons
Junior Infants	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become aware of new life and birth in the word</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of human birth</li> </ul> <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms</li> </ul>	<p>Womb Breastfeeding Penis Vulva</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk Tall Unit 1 Lesson 4: A New Baby</li> <li>• RSE Theme 7: New Life</li> <li>• Use of anatomically correct dolls to teach the words penis and vulva.- Identifying the obvious physical differences between the dolls/ boys and girls.</li> </ul>	<p>Signs of spring Caring for baby Optional visit of baby to class Picture books of new baby Anatomically correct dolls</p>
Senior Infants	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become aware of new life and birth in the word</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of human birth</li> </ul> <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms</li> </ul> <p><b>(Note - The story booklet, <i>Tom's Power Flower- a gentle explanation of how babies are made</i>, is part of the Making the 'Big Talk' many small talks: 4-7 years resource. The resource was developed by the HSE. and is available on pdst.ie. It is available as an additional resource if needed)</b></p>	<p>Womb breastfeeding Chest/breast penis Vulva Vagina buttocks Urethra</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSE Theme 6: Caring for New Life</li> <li>• RSE Theme 7: My Body</li> <li>• Mindful Matters :Unit 17: New life on the farm</li> <li>• Mindful Matters :Unit 18 A New Baby</li> <li>• Tom’s Flower Power (see note)</li> <li>• Walk Tall: Unit 4- Lesson2:Our Amazing Bodies (Walk Tall available as an extra resource if needed for these lessons )</li> </ul>	<p>Revision of Junior Infant content Learn body parts through lesson about keeping clean / bathing an anatomically correct doll New life amongst animals &amp; humans</p>

<p>First Class</p>	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles</li> </ul> <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions</li> </ul> <p><b>(Note - The story booklet, Tom's Power Flower- a gentle explanation of how babies are made , is part of the Making the 'Big Talk' many small talks: 4-7 years resource. The resource was developed by the HSE. and is available on pdst.ie . It is available as an additional resource if needed)</b></p>	<p>Penis, vagina, vulva, urethra, navel, nipples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 7: How MyBody Works</li> <li>•Mindful Matters: Unit 11: My Body</li> <li>•Walk Tall Unit 2 Lesson 1:All Shiny and New (Walk Tall available as an extra resource if needed for these lessons )</li> <li>• Tom's Flower Power (see note )</li> </ul>	<p>Caring for babies and pets</p> <p>What happens when people and animals get old</p> <p>Life Cycles</p> <p>Anatomically correct dolls (located in infant rooms)</p>
<p>Second Class</p>	<p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions</li> </ul> <p>Growing and Changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to understand that reproduction, life, growth and death are all part a lifecycle.</li> </ul>	<p>Penis, vagina, vulva, urethra, Navel Womb Breast feeding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Walk Tall Unit 2 Lesson 1:Our Amazing Bodies</li> <li>•Mindful Matters: Unit 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>•RSE Theme 7- When my Body Needs Special Care Option 2: How Our Bodies Work.</li> </ul>	<p>Quiz and discussion about body parts</p> <p>Discuss where babies grow and how they can be fed.</p> <p>Revise the names of the external parts of the male and female body and some associated functions.</p> <p>Anatomically correct dolls (located in infant rooms)</p>

<p>Third Class</p>	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•identify the care that needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born</li> <li>•develop an appreciation of the wonder of a new-born baby</li> </ul> <p>Taking Care of my Body- only in Walk Tall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body.</li> <li>• Realise that these changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal.</li> </ul>	<p>umbilical cord, womb, navel, Vagina,breast, puberty hormones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 6: Preparing for New Life</li> <li>•Mindful Matters :Unit 19- Always growing</li> <li>•Walk Tall Unit 7 – Lesson 1: As I grow I change )</li> </ul>	<p>Examine the care needed by a mother when she is expecting a baby</p> <p>Optional visit from parent and baby</p> <p>Body Systems</p> <p>Begin to introduce the changes that occur during puberty</p>
<p>Fourth Class</p>	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body</li> <li>•Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal</li> </ul> <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty</li> <li>•Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby in the womb.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">(** Reproduction is not covered in 4<sup>th</sup> Class)</p>	<p>Revise above.</p> <p>Plus: puberty, pubic hair, facial hair, hormones, Menstruation/ period</p> <p>Menstruation (only for 4<sup>th</sup> class girls)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 6: The Wonder of New Life Option 1</li> <li>•RSE Theme 8: Growing and Changing</li> </ul> <p>•<b>Mindful Matters Teacher Manual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Unit 9- Forever changing &amp; puberty (Teacher Manual pg. 58- 63)</li> <li>-Unit 10- A baby on the way (Teacher manual pg. 64+ 65)</li> </ul> <p>**Menstruation (4<sup>th</sup> class girls only) -MM Teacher Manual pg. 61 + 62)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Worksheets pg. 17 + 18 from Busy Bodies Workbook</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Walk Tall available as an extra resource if needed for these lessons - WalkTall Unit 7 )</li> </ul>	<p>Puberty</p> <p>Growth of baby in womb</p> <p>Body Systems</p>

<p>Fifth Class</p>	<p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and discuss the physical changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone</li> <li>• Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults</li> </ul> <p>(** Videos 1-4 and 6 are used ,<b>not</b> video 5 as reproduction is <b>not</b> taught in 5<sup>th</sup> class )</p>	<p>Revise above.</p> <p>Language from the <i>Busy Bodies Programme</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSE Theme 6: My Body Grows and Changes</li> <li>• RSE Theme 7: The Wonder of New Life</li> <li>• <i>Supplement with Busy Bodies Book/ **videos</i></li> <li>• Busy Bodies Workbook for students – available from pdst.ie</li> <li>• <b>Mindful Matters – Teacher Manual</b> Special Unit: Puberty p149</li> <li>• (Walk Tall available as an extra resource for these lessons - Walk Tall Unit 11: My Amazing Body )</li> </ul>	<p>Puberty</p>
<p>Sixth Class</p>	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship</li> </ul> <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and discuss the physical changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone</li> <li>• Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults</li> </ul>	<p>Revise above plus:</p> <p>Language from Busy Bodies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSE Theme 7: Relationships and New Life</li> <li>• Mindful Matters 5 Teacher Book-Special Unit Reproduction p155- 158</li> <li>• <i>Supplement with Busy Bodies Book/ DVD</i></li> <li>• <i>Busy Bodies Workbook for students</i> – available from pdst.ie</li> <li>• (Walk Tall available as an extra resource if needed for these lessons - WalkTall Unit 3 – Growing and Changing )</li> </ul>	<p>Lessons covering the topics of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Human Anatomy</li> <li>-Puberty</li> <li>-Sexual Intercourse</li> <li>-Conception</li> </ul>