

## **Scoil Íosagáin Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

Scoil Íosagáin is one of the largest Primary schools in Donegal with a staff of 58 teachers and 38 special needs assistants.

Scoil Íosagáin is a happy school community and it is our privilege to provide an education for the boys and girls entrusted to our care.

Providing a model of integration, all pupils can learn together, play together and grow together in a school community that supports inclusion and celebrates difference.

Ten of our classes cater for pupils with Special Educational Needs including pupils with General Learning Disability and children with Autism. An early intervention (Pre-school) class for children with Autism was established in September 2014. Special Education Teaching and Learning/Language Support is provided for pupils in mainstream classes, on a one-to-one basis, in small group settings and through in-class support or team-teaching.

**During a visit to the school by a team of Inspectors from the Department of Education, Scoil Íosagáin was described as providing “a welcoming, nurturing and inclusive learning environment for its pupils.”**

We will continue to aspire towards the provision of an exemplary education for all pupils entrusted to our care.

### **Introductory Statement**

All schools are required to have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including the sensitive aspects. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of 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. This policy has been revised as part of the School Self Evaluation process of SPHE 2016-2022 (December).

### **School Philosophy**

Our school motto *Mol an Óige* reflects the centrality and importance of the holistic development of the child in the philosophy of the school.

**We recognise that each child is unique with individual needs and our clearly stated aims foster the personal development and fulfilment of every child entrusted to our care.**

**Our mission at Scoil Íosagáin** is to facilitate the right of every child to *access* and to *participate* in the education system, according to their ability. Our pupils will spend most of their compulsory schooling at Scoil Íosagáin and so it is our duty to offer them the best possible education.

We hope to nurture in them a love for learning, a caring attitude, and to arouse in them curiosity in the world around them, which will motivate them to learn in an enjoyable way.

We hope that their experience with us at primary level will encourage them to continue their education beyond the compulsory school attendance age by laying the foundation for life-long learning.

### **Our Aims**

- At Scoil Íosagáin we aim to provide our pupils with a happy and safe environment in which they will learn.
- We cater for all aspects of the child's development by providing a good all-round education, which will meet his/her intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, emotional and cultural needs.
- We foster an interest and pride in our heritage and make use of our rich local environment as an educational resource.
- We encourage a spirit of friendliness and co-operation and work closely with other agencies and organisations involved in child care provision and child centred activities.

- We encourage responsible and caring attitudes towards the poor and deprived locally, nationally and internationally, and encourage respectful and inclusive attitudes towards others regardless of race, gender, religion or sexual orientation.
- We promote a policy of inclusion and integration to allow **all** children regardless of physical or intellectual ability to learn together and play together.
- We recognise the role of parents as the first educators of their children and try to facilitate that role by encouraging active participation in their children's school life.
- Our school is the setting in which our faith is lived and shared with the children. Our Catholic Faith inspires the Primary Education we provide, and Christian values are passed on to the children in prayer, in our programme of Religious Instruction and in our preparation for receiving the Sacraments of Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- The school welcomes children of different religious backgrounds and those of no religion, and promotes an attitude of respect for all families.
- The staff of Scoil Íosagáin is committed to effective teaching in all areas of the Primary School Curriculum and work as professionals in preparing, presenting and executing lessons to the highest of standards.
- As a staff we aspire to provide opportunities for fostering good leadership qualities in staff and pupils.
- In our school we will undertake to develop a good system of communication among the partners in education namely the Principal and Staff, Board of Management, Pupils, Parents, the Department of Education and Skills and its representatives.
- We endeavour to work together as a friendly, supportive and co-operative team for the benefit of the entire school community.

*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 SPHE curriculum also encourages children to be aware of their rights as individuals 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 experiences of the children in the school community. In addition to respect, tolerance and openness, the values that underpin our school ethos, which are reflected in our daily relationships, are:

- Friendship
- Tolerance
- Empathy
- Honesty
- Teamwork
- Inclusion
- Justice
- Kindness
- Forgiveness

***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. We will endeavour to work closely with our parent community so that our children will develop into healthy young adults and that the values that underpin our school ethos will manifest in their daily interaction with others, now and in the future.***

### **Definition of RSE**

“RSE provides children with structured opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs and practical skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships as children and, subsequently, as adults.” (Resource Materials for RSE)

RSE provides structured opportunities in a safe context 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. In particular, it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant to personal and social skills.

### **Relationship of RSE to SPHE**

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). SPHE is taught through school atmosphere and culture, and is often described as being “caught” rather than taught, for the most part through daily interactions and relationships.

However, SPHE is also taught during discrete/specific teaching time and through integration with other areas of the curriculum. (RSE lessons of a sensitive nature will be taught at a specific period, usually in May/June, and parents will be advised of this beforehand.) SPHE provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

### **SPHE is:**

- a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and is not confined to once off inputs or lessons
- a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community
- based on building relationships, teaching children the skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues
- based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE will prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements
- spiral in nature and consequently RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child’s time in school.

This will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity.

- SPHE is suited to activity based learning. RSE will provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one's own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships.

Through SPHE and RSE, members of our school community will be enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through:

- A sense of identity
- A sense of purpose
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of security
- A sense of competence.

Our school has a responsibility to ensure that our teaching and learning is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with. In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an intercultural society.

**Current Provision for SPHE and RSE at Scoil Íosagáin:**

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete/specific curricular time and integration)
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme (an optional resource)
- Webwise resources
- “We all belong” Picture Book resources
- RESPECT Guidelines (suggested approaches to teaching about different families)
- Adapted resources for SEN from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)
- Religious Education
- NCCA curriculum documents for children with Mild, Moderate and Severe/Profound General Learning Disabilities
- Publications and resources for special classes and children with additional complex needs (**See Appendix 1**)
- SPHE Plean Scoile including MindUp Programme, daily use of Gratitude Journal, acknowledgement of acts of kindness
- Annual Wellbeing Week
- **Programmes** including:
  - “Friends”
  - Roots of Empathy

- Tea and Biscuits/TAB (a facilitated conversation circle for children in 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> classes supported by South Inishowen School Completion Programme)
- Check and Connect ( a mentoring intervention for pupils of any age with a member of staff, and also supported by the South Inishowen School Completion programme)
- FUSE, evidence based anti-bullying programme co-ordinated by the Anti-Bullying Centre, DCU.

### **Aims of our RSE Programme**

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual, safe, respectful 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.

### **Broad Objectives**

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE lessons will enable the child to (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum):

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Understand and appreciate their own uniqueness
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-worth



- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and 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 and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity
- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

*Scoil Íosagáin supports 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 wellbeing of all of the members of the school community.*

### **Policies which support SPHE/RSE**

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy.

### **Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School**

The SPHE curriculum by the NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. RSE lessons dealing with sensitive issues will be taught over a four week period in May/June. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. *Every class teacher will teach the RSE content for their class level every year as laid out in the curriculum, and utilising the Resource Materials for RSE published by the Department of Education to complement their teaching. Other resources used will be those outlined in Appendix 1.*

### **Management of RSE**

- The sensitive issues/lessons in RSE are taught every year. (Some other content of the SPHE curriculum is taught over a two year period. See SPHE Planning Grids in **Appendix 2**.)
- The sensitive lessons are covered as part of the broad topics in the “Myself” strand of the SPHE curriculum.

- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with Special Educational Needs are met by providing a range of resources suitable and appropriate to their understanding. This, at times, will also include pre-teaching and revision of topics.
- Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.
- Lessons will be taught **on Wednesdays** between 1pm and 2.40pm

### **Parental Involvement**

*As mentioned above, 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. We endeavour to work closely with our parent community so that our children will develop into healthy young adults and that the values that underpin our school ethos will manifest in their daily interaction with others, now and in the future.*

- Parents will be informed, at the time of enrolment, that the school fully implements the RSE elements of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme
- Parents will be respected as the first teachers of their children and supported in teaching RSE to their children by:
  - providing parents with advice and guidance
  - providing parents with resources
  - maintaining open communication between home and school

- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, with a letter relevant to what will be taught at their child's class level, example of letter see **Appendix 3**.
- The letter will be issued in advance, **giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teachers and/or principal if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children**. It also gives parents an opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE.
- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher/principal if they have any concerns at any time during the year. **The link to the curriculum is:**  
<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Social,-Personal-and-Health-Education/>
- The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Following discussion with the Principal and/or class teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons this should be notified in writing to the Principal stating their reasons for doing so, and this correspondence will be centrally filed.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons. eg. what they may hear on the yard.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons parents may bring them home. Otherwise the school will organise for children to be supervised.

*A copy of the HSE Busy Bodies book will be distributed to parents of children in 6<sup>th</sup> class in advance of RSE lessons on sensitive issues to support the implementation of the sensitive objectives in class. Parents will also be sent links to relevant Busy Body videos. Parents of children in 2<sup>nd</sup> class will be given a copy of the HSE book “Tom’s Power Flower” in advance of RSE lessons on sensitive issues.*

### **Organisation and Curriculum Planning.**

- Teachers are advised and encouraged to seek support from year group colleagues or members of the In-School Management Team (ISMT) if they have any concerns in relation to organisation and planning of RSE.
- Teachers will be guided around timetabling, resources for teaching and learning and the importance of adhering to the school’s RSE policy.
- If the date of an RSE lesson coincides with a class teacher’s short-term absence, RSE lessons will not be taught by a substitute teacher. The class teacher will make arrangements to teach the RSE lessons on return to work. (If a child in the class is being withdrawn from RSE lessons, the teacher will inform parents of the change of arrangements as soon as is practicable.)
- RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and will be taught from infants to 6th class.
- RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

<b>Strand:</b>	Myself
<b>Strand Units:</b>	Growing and changing Taking care of my body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

- 1) The *general programme* which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliments the aims and objectives of RSE:  
Friendship    Self-identity    Family    Self-esteem    Growing up
- 2) The second section which deals with any *sensitive /specific content covered through SPHE strands* and strand units/topics. The sensitive aspects are in **bold** as outlined below:

*Topics covered up to 2<sup>nd</sup> class include:*

- Keeping safe
- **Bodily changes from birth (birth-9 year)**
- Making age-appropriate choices
- Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community
- Recognising and expressing feelings
- Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep
- Expressing opinions and listening to others
- **Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/ Senior Infants)**
- **Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd).**

**Topics from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> include:**

- **Bodily changes**
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise
- Keeping safe
- Expressing feelings
- Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family relationships shape us
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- **Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (4<sup>th</sup> class)**
- **Introduction to puberty and changes (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)**
- **Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty ( 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)**
- **Reproductive system of male/female adults (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)**
- **Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (6<sup>th</sup> class).**

### **Approaches & Methodologies**

Active Learning Methodologies are an integral part of teaching of SPHE and RSE.

Any or all of the following methodologies will allow the child to play an active part in the learning process:

- Discussion
- Role play
- Circle Time
- Interviewing friends, or other school pupils, family members
- Surveys of attitudes
- Analysing and evaluating newspapers and magazines, agony columns, television schedules
- Hosting visitors
- Projects
- Modeling
- Designing advertisements
- Writing captions
- Ranking statements
- Describing photographs
- Viewing and discussing videos
- Storytelling
- Music Therapy

When implementing the programme, staff at Scoil Íosagáin will 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. However, in our classes for children with Special Educational Needs the curriculum will be taught in accordance with the needs, strengths and abilities of the children. The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals). The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.



**The RSE curriculum will be taught through:**

- stories and poems
- classroom discussion
- group work
- games
- art activities
- reflection
- circle time
- restorative practices

**Differentiation**

The very nature of RSE, and the differing maturity and growth levels of children mean that some children will need more support to understand the concepts and content. The teachers will use their assessment techniques/approaches to determine how to manage this. Usually some simple approaches can aid the teacher and children. Often differentiation can include strategies used to teach the same content including pre-teaching, revision and co-teaching.

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

Some techniques/approaches used are as follows:

- 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

- having short and varied tasks creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible, every day materials, and by displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.

Sometimes the stage of development in a class can vary widely and the following strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching:

- group work and discussion
- higher and lower order questioning in groups

### **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/ guardians in advance, and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful. Teachers will consult the child's Support Plan/Individual Education Plan when organising an appropriate learning programme. A variety of teaching strategies will be considered to help pupils fully engage in RSE/SPHE. The following will also be relevant:

- 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

- Any different or specific objectives related to the pupil's own learning needs will be detailed in their IEP/ School Support/School Support Plus Plans in consultation with parents/guardians.

### **Language**

Language reflects values, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and principles. It not only helps to express a culture but influences and shapes that culture as well. It is essential that children are enabled to use language in a precise and appropriate manner.

The language that is promoted in our school is one that nurtures both children and adults as unique and valuable human beings. It respects cultural and other differences between people and is used in a way that encourages inclusiveness. Language can significantly contribute to building positive self-esteem, whereas if used in a negative manner it can cause frustration and hurt.

These messages about language will be communicated to children in our school primarily by the manner in which language is used. The way in which children are addressed in class, the manner in which they are reproached or affirmed and the tone of voice used in exploring issues of a personal nature will all reflect the values that are upheld in Scoil Íosagáin.

The words 'gay' and 'lesbian' are sometimes used to hurt others and the use of such language in a derogatory way diminishes respect for gay and lesbian people. Children will be educated around what language is acceptable and respectful in an effort to tackle prejudice.

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 will learn to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationships 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 formal RSE lessons

### **Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching**

- Vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used. **See Appendix 4.** The use of slang will be unacceptable.
- Anatomical terms and language introduced will be consistent with Resource Materials for RSE manuals.

### **Questions**

The main aim of talk and discussion is to create an atmosphere where children feel comfortable to ask important questions and that the relationship fostered in these sessions is open, controlled and safe for all pupils. While we may not be able to answer all questions, our hope is that children will not be put off seeking answers in the school setting but will talk to their parents and ask the questions again at different stages of schooling or education, and are not put off because they perceived the topics or questions to be embarrassing.

### **We use some simple principles when fostering discussion**

#### **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 that was used was slang language, what they meant to ask was....

### **Question Box**

During the delivery of each section of the sensitive lessons in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes children will be encouraged to ask questions and given the opportunity to write questions down and place their questions into a box in the classroom. These questions will then be monitored and screened with the teacher answering the questions during the following RSE lesson, taking into account the following:

- Children will be given the opportunity to write down questions they may want to ask at the end of each lesson.
- It will be explained to the children that questions should relate to what has been taught in the lesson that day.
- Every child in the class will be given a piece of paper. They will be told that if they haven't got a question, to simply write something down. This is to ensure that no child can be identified as asking/not asking a question.
- It will be explained to the children that there may be questions that the teacher isn't in a position to answer and they will be advised to ask an adult at home.
- Questions will be collected and answered at the beginning of the next RSE lesson.
- Questions asked in the last lesson will be answered at the end of that lesson.
- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner and in accordance with stages of development and levels of understanding among pupils in our Special Classes

- Children will be reminded that no personal questions will be asked of the teacher
- Children will be reminded of the importance of asking questions of their parents
- Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is very inappropriate or if they need to communicate with home because of other reasons.
- Children will be reminded not to share personal information about their families or others during an RSE lesson but will be reminded that they can share with the teacher after the lesson.

**Before lessons commence, children will be reminded of the following:**

- To listen respectfully to each other – no question is a silly question.
- It's OK not to know the answer if the teacher asks a question. If a child feels uncomfortable about answering a question, it's OK for them to say that.
- No comments will be made about other people.
- Children will be reminded not to discuss content with younger children

***NOTE:** If issues arise which may be a cause for concern in the context of the Children First Guidelines, the teacher will notify the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person.*

### **Assessment**

Assessment is essential to RSE as it is to any other subject.

The assessment process should be a positive experience for children and enable the teacher to modify curriculum content according to the needs of the child and so maximise the learning potential of each individual. We will:

- adapt learning and teaching strategies used in the classroom to ensure that they are appropriate to the objectives of the curriculum and the ways in which children learn

- assess the effectiveness of learning through the school climate and atmosphere, in the discrete time and throughout other subjects discover what the child knows, understands and can do
- promote self-assessment in the child, where he/she learns the value of monitoring his/her own progress and develops some responsibility for his/her own learning
- explore how the child transfers learning from one situation to another
- communicate with the child, parents and others regarding the child's abilities, strengths and overall progress in RSE.

The teacher will use:

- Observation and questions to assess the children's engagement and interest
- Teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games. However, only content in the Resource Materials for RSE manuals and the HSE Busy Bodies programme will be used to create worksheets, quizzes or games when assessing the sensitive issues aspect of RSE in mainstream classes.
- Resources outlined in Appendix 1 may be used to create worksheets, quizzes or games for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

### **Confidentiality**

During RSE lessons often children may wish to connect and disclose personal or related stories and information. It is important to protect children and families and their privacy. This will be done by ensuring there are ground rules for the sharing of information in relation to the topics covered in RSE. Children will be reminded that they can talk to the teacher in private after lessons.

It is important to note the following:

- The school follows Children First Guidelines 2017, including the Addendum to Children First (2019) and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017
- 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 happened.

### **Resources**

Careful attention has been brought to the acquisition of resources used to teach RSE, due to its sensitive nature. The Resource Materials for RSE Manuals, Walk Tall Books, Stay Safe and Busy Bodies are the only resources sanctioned by the Department of Education. However, there are numerous other resources available to teach the content of RSE. The following criteria have been used when selecting relevant resources to ensure compliance with the aims and objectives of the SPHE curriculum:

- Free of bias and gender stereotyping
- Demonstrate equality and equity
- Child friendly

### **Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials:**

- Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education Manuals (DES)
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme (optional)
- Anatomical Dolls
- Busy Bodies and Busy Bodies videos



- Picture books in the School Library across the 9 grounds of equality (gender, age, family status, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Travelling Community), and addressing issues including Bullying, Different Families, Friendships, LGBT and Inclusion. See Appendix 5
- INTO Different Families, Same love Poster.
- RESPECT guidelines
- SPHE Curriculum documents
- SPHE Guidelines for teachers of pupils with Mild General Learning Disabilities, Moderate General Learning Disabilities and Severe/Profound General Learning Disabilities.
- Anti-Bullying policy

### **Provision of Ongoing Support**

**Provision of ongoing support is considered of vital importance in terms of ensuring that teaching and learning in our school is always modelled on best practice. To that end the following apply:**

- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE. (APs will attend PDST seminars on an annual basis, related to their duties, when possible.)
- Staff meetings were (and will be) utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials (2021/2022)
- Support from an Advisor from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) is being availed of (2022/2023)

- Members of the In School Management team have attended, and will continue to attend seminars and webinars organised by the PDST where possible
- Scoil Íosagáin has availed of the School Self Evaluation (SSE) process to explore how best to improve teaching and learning in SPHE, including RSE, and have drawn up a School Improvement Plan (SIP) to reflect this
- Promotion and communication about resources, including new resources, will be a priority.
- Opportunities will be availed of to provide whole staff (teachers and SNAs) training/workshops. (Jenny Mosley Wellbeing session December 2022, PDST Delilah Cuddihy, Restorative Practices February 2023)
- Opportunities will be availed of to provide best practice active learning methodologies for pupils (Jenny Mosley Promoting Vibrant Circle Time for All Children December 2022, Kieran McCool Verbal Wellbeing programme February/March 2023)
- Wellbeing Response Plan September 2020-present
- DCU Changemaker Schools: opportunities for Continuous Professional Development and ongoing promotion of the four Changemaker Pillars –Empathy, Leadership, Teamwork and Creativity on a whole school basis.

### **Review**

- This policy will be reviewed every two years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.
- This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023