

Policy on Relationship and Sexual Education (RSE) Programme in Aughacasla National School

Introductory Statement

The Boards of Management of each Primary School throughout the country has been requested by the Department of Education to develop an RSE programme taking into account the ethos of the school and environment in which it operates.

RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and developing understanding, beliefs and values relating to sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.

Aughacasla NS is a mixed country school. There are 5 classrooms with multigrade classes in some classrooms. Aughacasla NS has a strong Catholic ethos through which it seeks to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships.

Schools Philosophy

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 our school in supporting our children to develop into healthy young adults.

Definition of RSE

“Relationships and Sexuality Education seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework” .

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

RSE is an integral part of SPHE. SPHE is taught through school atmosphere and culture, integration and discrete teaching time. Formal RSE lessons and informal RSE messages must be consistent with the whole school plan

Aims of our RSE Policy

1. To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of each student.
2. To help the student to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
3. To help each student communicate with peers in a mature way.
4. To give students the language to competently express emotions.
5. To foster in each student a healthy attitude towards human sexuality and relationships in a moral and spiritual framework.
6. To respect the dignity, privacy and modesty of each individual student.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

Child Safeguarding Statement

Code of Behaviour

Bí Cinealta Anti-Bullying Policy

Enrolment Policy

Stay Safe Policy

SEN Policy

Parental Involvement

The primary responsibility for the education of young persons in this area rests with parents and guardians. It is the policy of the Board of Management to assist and not replace this responsibility.

It is the right and privilege of parents and guardians to impart private and sensitive information on sexuality to their children at a time they themselves consider appropriate.

It is the policy of the Board of Management to seek openness and transparency in all aspects of the programme. As far as practicable sensitive aspects of the programme will be modularised and parents or guardians will be notified of its content in advance.

The Board of Management will seek that all parties will work together to ensure that any RSE programme is adequate to inform each student, in accordance with that student's age and maturity.

The Board of Management will ensure that parents/guardians who wish to withdraw their student from aspects of the RSE programme will have to inform the school in writing and this letter will be kept in the child's file.

The responsibility for imparting the RSE programme for pupils will rest primarily with the teaching staff of the school. The Board of Management recognises the professionalism and commitment of our teaching staff in drawing up and in administering an RSE programme and will seek consensus on the content and approach of each aspect of the programme.

The content of any RSE programme and the way it is presented to our pupils will not by its nature be static but will evolve over time. The Board of Management will put in place a review system, which will seek to take into account the views of the Parents' Association, the Staff representatives and the submissions of any individuals involved in the process.

Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by 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:

Myself
Growing and changing
Taking care of my body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE

Friendship

Self-identity

Family

Self-esteem

Growing up

The second section will deal with any sensitive / specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are in bold:

<p>Topics covered up to 2nd include:</p> <p>Keeping safe</p> <p>Bodily changes from birth(birth-9)</p> <p>Making age-appropriate choices</p> <p>Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community</p> <p>Recognising and expressing feelings</p> <p>Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep</p> <p>Expressing opinions and listening to others</p> <p>Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/Senior Infants)</p> <p>Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd).</p>	<p>Topics from 3rd to 6th include:</p> <p>Bodily changes</p> <p>Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise</p> <p>Keeping safe</p> <p>Expressing feelings</p> <p>Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family relationships shape us</p> <p>Making healthy and responsible decisions</p> <p>Forming friendships</p> <p>Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb(3rd, 4thclass)</p> <p>Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6thclass)</p> <p>Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6thClass)</p> <p>Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th and 6th Class)</p> <p>Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th Class)</p>
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Please see Appendix 1 at the end of the policy with a Sensitive Language Grid for the correct language that is used from Juniors Infants to Sixth Class.

Current Provision Included in the School Curriculum:

1. The R.S.E. programme offered to pupils in Aughacasla NS will embrace the SPHE Programme for which teachers have undertaken in service. Resources at the disposal of Staff in Aughacasla NS include Stay Safe, Walk Tall and R.S.E. Manuals. Teachers use the resources which they consider most appropriate to their particular needs.
2. **Stay Safe** will be taught every year. **RSE** will be taught every year alternating between class levels.
3. **Sex Education for Senior Pupils:**
 - Parents evening with An Outside Facilitator
 - School Session attended by an Outside Facilitator, class teacher and children
4. R.S.E./Sex Education for pupils with SEN will be presented on an individual basis relevant to their emotional & intellectual needs.

The programme is developmental and suitable input is constantly being considered. It will be continually monitored and reviewed and will be amended accordingly.

Confidentiality

The school follows Children First Guidelines 2017 the Addendum to Children First 2019 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools revised 2023

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.

This policy was drawn up in consultation with Parents, Staff and Board Members and approved by the Board of Management November 2025 and will be reviewed again as needed.

Class	Strand /strand Unit	Content Objectives <i>Consult curriculum for complete objectives in Growing and changing and Taking care of my body</i>	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book	Pages in Walk Tall	Supplementary resources
Junior /Senior Infants	Myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and changing • Taking care of my body 	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of new life and birth in the world • Develop an awareness of human birth Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms 	womb breastfeeding penis vulva	New Life p68 My Body p147 Caring for new life p137 At the beach or swimming pool p.153	Our Amazing Bodies p94 (Senior Infants book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anatomically correct dolls • Picture books of new baby • Visit of baby to class
First/Second Class	Myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and changing • Taking care of my body 	Growing and changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles Taking care of my body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions 	penis vulva vagina womb breastfeeding urethra	The Wonder of new life p59 /151 How my body works p67/161 Growing means changing p77/171 A Visit to the Doctor p.164	Our Amazing Bodies p37 (2 nd class book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture books of going to the doctors • Tom's Power Flower • Books / activities on Life cycles • Birth and new life in nature

<p>Third/ Fourth Class</p>	<p>Myself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body 	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body • Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth 	<p>Revise above umbilical cord changes in puberty menstruation</p>	<p>Preparing for new life p69 The wonder of new life p169 As I grow and change p93 Growing and changing p195</p>	<p>As I grow I change p175 (3rd class book)</p> <p>Changing and Growing p140 (4th class book) The Wonder of New Life p.150</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Body Systems ▪ Picture books on Growing and Changing
<p>Fifth/ Sixth Class</p>	<p>Myself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body 	<p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 ▪ Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults 	<p>Revise above wet dreams <u>Busy Bodies language</u> semen sexual intercourse</p>	<p>My body grows and changes p81</p> <p>The wonder of new life p92</p> <p>Caring for new life p103</p> <p>Different kinds of love p141</p>	<p>My Amazing body p345 (5th class book)</p> <p>Creation p121 (6th class book)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Busy Bodies ▪ Power points recap ▪ Question Box ▪ Puberty Quiz

This RSE Policy was approved by the Board of Management on 9/12/25.

It will be due for review in December 2027

Chairperson: Aine O'Donnell

Date: 9/12/25

Principal: David Doyle

Date: 9/12/25