

**Relationship and Sexual
Education Policy
For
Moyderwell Primary**



School Details

Moyderwell Mercy Primary School is a mixed-sex school with sixteen mainstream classes and two special classes. The school has a Catholic Ethos.

Introductory Statement

All schools are required to have an 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 Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally. The last RSE Policy was revised in September 2015. The values inherent in the RSE Programme are consistent with the core values and ethos of Moyderwell Mercy Primary School and with its Policy Statement – namely to promote the holistic development and achievement of full potential of each student in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy.

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE 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. In particular, it addresses the meaning of human sexuality, relationships, growth and development, relevant to personal and social skills.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (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
- Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. RSE education should include an input from all, and collaboration can be fostered through the teaching and delivery of materials
- Is a generic approach. It is not so much about the specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues. The definition of RSE used is from the Interim RSE

Guidelines 1996 and Going Forward Together Parents Information Booklet. *'RSE is an important part of the education of young people; schools provide a safe context within which young people can learn about themselves and the wider world. This makes access to RSE in schools all the more important'* – (Mayock, Kitching and Morgan 2007, p2). RSE 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 approach to SPHE.

- Is based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements and individual school situations
- Is spiral in nature. 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
- Engages children to be involved in activity based learning. RSE should 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 the school community should 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

In an ever changing world, RSE encourages children through consistent messages that are taught in line with SPHE. **The school has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with (SPHE Teacher guidelines, p25).** 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.

Aims of our RSE Programme

Taken from the Interim Guidelines for RSE Education 1996

- 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 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

In the school setting, RSE will be part of a wider programme of Social, Personal and Health Education.

Broad Objectives of our RSE Programme

Taken from the Interim Guidelines for RSE Education 1996. When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should enable the child to (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum)

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- 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

School Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy

Management and Organisation of RSE in Moyderwell Primary School

In May 2022, the staff of Moyderwell Primary School were surveyed about the teaching of SPHE and RSE. **It was agreed that RSE would be taught every alternate year (52% in favour).** See below the two year SPHE plan that was adopted.

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September / October	Self-Identity (Myself)	Myself and my Family (Myself and Others)
November / December	My Friends and Other People (Myself and Others)	Relating to others (Myself and Others)
January / February	Safety and Protection (Myself)	Growing and Changing (Myself)
March /April	Making Decisions * (Myself)	Taking Care of my Body (Myself)
May / June	Media Education (Myself and the Wider World)	Developing Citizenship (Myself and the Wider World)

RSE sensitive topics will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE Curriculum: Year 2 - Myself (Growing and Changing/Taking Care of my Body). The sensitive lessons are covered as part of these broad topics (see appendix 1) and the appropriate language for each year group is stated in this appendix.

RSE relationships topic is covered under the following strands of the SPHE Curriculum:
Myself and Others and Myself and my Family.

Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. 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.

Approaches and Methodologies

Active Learning Methodologies are an integral part of teaching of SPHE and RSE in Moyderwell Mercy Primary School. Any or all of the following techniques will allow the child to play an active part in the learning process:

- Discussion
- Role play
- Interviewing friends, or other school pupils, family members
- Surveys of attitudes
- Analysing and evaluating newspapers and magazines, agony columns, television schedules
- Hosting visitors
- Projects

When implementing the programme, staff at Moyderwell Mercy Primary School will endeavor 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 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
- circle time
- group work
- guest speaker **(The class teacher will stay in the room at all times - Circular 42/2018)**
- games

- art activities
- reflection

RSE is also offered informally to pupils through a caring and supportive school atmosphere. It is fostered in positive relationships among home, school and community. It may also be organized in co-operation with other agencies, such as the local health services.

Differentiation and Special Educational Needs

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

- 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 pupils own learning needs should be detailed in their IEP or IPLP in consultation with parents/guardians.

Parental and Community Involvement

- Parents will be informed that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE programme including sensitive aspects of the programme at enrollment.
- 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 2)**.
- The letter will be issued in advance, giving parents an opportunity to meet with relevant class teachers 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 arrange to speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Following discussion with the Principal and the Class Teacher, **if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons of RSE, it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be kept in the student's file.**

- 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 in the yard.

Confidentiality

During RSE lessons children may wish to connect and disclose personal or related stories and information. It is important to protect children/families and their privacy. **This can be done by ensuring there are ground rules for the sharing of information in relation to the topics covered in RSE. It is appropriate to encourage children to tell you anything private after the lesson rather than during it. It is important to note that disclosures must be dealt with in line with Child Protection Procedures 2017 (dealing with a disclosure - section 3.3 p.20).**

- The school follows the Children First Guidelines 2011 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011
- 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 during the lesson

Questions

We use some simple principles when fostering discussion and questioning

- No personal questions of the teacher
- The Question Box will be availed of by the children
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions
- 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.

For older children a 'question box' will be used 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

Question Box

During the delivery of each section of the sensitive 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 the following week taking into account the following;

- Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner
- The class teacher 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
- 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
- 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 the teacher after the lessons.

If issues arise which might be seen to contravene Children First Guidelines, the teacher will notify the Designated Liaison Person in the school.

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 individual reflection or learning logs

Evaluation and Review

The RSE Programme will be evaluated and reviewed regularly at the following levels:

- Teacher
- SPHE Committee
- Board of Management

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of Moyderwell Mercy School ratified this policy on

Date:_____

Signed:_____

This policy is available to view at the school upon request and is also available on the school website www.moyderwellmercy.ie

RSE Resources	
Resources in Staffroom:	Resources Online:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anatomically Correct Dolls and Bath • Gender Equality Matters • Healthy Bodies (SEN) • Relationships and Sexuality Education • SPHE Teacher Resource Book Minding <p>Me 1, 2, 3 - My Well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay Safe • Taking Care of Myself by Mary Wrobel • Walk Tall 	<p>https://pdst.ie/node/811</p>

Appendix 1

Class	Strand /strand Unit	Content Objectives <i>Consult curriculum for complete objectives in <u>Growing and changing</u> and <u>Taking care of my body</u></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
Third/ Fourth 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"> 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 Taking care of my body <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 	Revise above umbilical cord changes in puberty menstruation	Preparing for new life p69 The wonder of new life p169 As I grow and change p93 Growing and changing p195	As I grow I change p175 (3 rd class book) Changing and Growing p140 (4 th class book) The Wonder of New Life p.150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body Systems Picture books on Growing and Changing
Fifth/ Sixth 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"> Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship Taking care of my body <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 	Revise above wet dreams <u>Busy Bodies language</u> semen sexual intercourse	My body grows and changes p81 The wonder of new life p92 Caring for new life p103 Different kinds of love p141	My Amazing body p345 (5 th class book) Creation p121 (6 th class book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Busy Bodies Power points recap Question Box Puberty Quiz

Appendix 2

Dear...

Relationships and Sexuality education is an integral part of the S.P.H.E programme. The sensitive elements of the Relationships and Sexuality education programme are covered under the Strand Units, 'Growing and Changing' and 'Taking Care of my Body'. We will be completing these Strand Units with all class levels in the forthcoming weeks.

<p>Topics covered up to 2nd include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Safe • Bodily changes from birth (birth-9) • Making age appropriate choices • Appreciating the variety of family types and an 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) The Language at taught at this level will be..... • Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd)) The Language at taught at this level will be..... 	<p>Topics from 3rd to 6th include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily changes • Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise • Keeping Safe • Expressing Feelings • Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how we 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(3rd, 4th class) • Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class) • Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6th Class)) The Language at taught at this level will be..... • Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th and 6th class)) The Language at taught at this level will be..... • Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th class) The Language taught at this level will be.....
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The class teacher will send home appropriate home school links pages from the Relationships and Sexuality manual which outline the material that will be covered in class and encourage further discussion on the topics at home.

If you have any concerns please make an appointment to see the class teacher.

Yours sincerely