

**R.S.E. Policy in Bohermore N.S.
(Relationships and Sexuality Education)**

Introductory Statement & Rationale

This policy was drawn up as recommended by our school inspector after a Whole School Evaluation on 02/05/2019. The principal and BOM were informed that it is mandatory and if not implemented we are non-compliant with C.P. This policy was drawn up in June 2019 by the school principal in consultation with the teaching staff. This policy informs teachers and parents of (i) the RSE content that will be taught at each class level and (ii) outlines the organisation and management of the RSE programme across all class levels in Bohermore N.S.

SPHE and RSE will be taught in accordance with the curriculum guidelines of the Department of Education and in the context of the Catholic ethos and philosophy of the school.

Our School Philosophy

Bohermore N.S. aims to promote the fullest possible development of each child – socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually so that he/she may lead a full, enjoyable life as a child and go on to contribute to society as an adult.

Social Personal and Health Education & Relationships & Sexuality Education:

The SPHE curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem, while nurturing sensitivity to the rights and feelings of others. The Stay Safe Programme is also an aspect of SPHE and is taught under the strand unit 'Personal Safety', this programme teaches personal safety skills and helps children to deal with upsetting, unsafe or frightening situations.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education. The RSE programme will be taught within the context of the SPHE curriculum for all class levels. RSE aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

Specifically the RSE programme as taught in Bohermore N.S. aims

- to enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of the child.
- to help young people 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 (Fifth and Sixth Class)
- to understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty- (Senior Classes)
- to develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- to enhance the capacity of the child to resist sexual exploitation and abuse.

Teaching of RSE in Bohermore N.S.

This policy was formulated under the guidance of the patron, Archbishop Dermot Clifford and the Diocesan Office, St. Senan's. It believes all parents to be responsible for their child's education about relationship and sexuality. Learning about Sexuality and Relationships is a lifelong process. Children learn about relationships and sexuality primarily from their families. The school based RSE programme complements and supports what children are learning at home. The Dept. of Education requires all schools to teach RSE and to have an RSE policy. The school policy will ensure that RSE is taught in a way that reflects the core values and ethos of the school. RSE-specific education or cores RSE education (sensitive lessons) belong to the strand units Taking Care of My Body and Growing and Changing.

RSE and 'Appropriate Language'

"Many children are unable to communicate about themselves, their feelings and bodily functions due to inadequacy of language, acute embarrassment or other factors" "one of the primary objectives of the RSE programme is to provide children with language through which they may seek clarification, ask questions and discuss all aspects of their growth and development" DES Interim RSE Guidelines (1996)

It is important that children are taught the appropriate language in Relationships & Sexuality Education to enable them to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships.

- Factual language is neutral and non-discriminatory
- As children get older they will not be embarrassed to use or hear these words
- Children will be less likely to use crude or abusive language

Organisation of RSE in Bohermore N.S.

- The DES curriculum will be followed and SPHE/RSE lessons will be taught from Infants to 6th class by the class teacher.
- All RSE teaching resources will adhere to the Catholic ethos of the school and the approved RSE policy.
- Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level only.
- Aspects of the SPHE and RSE curriculum may also be integrated with the Aistear Curriculum (Infants), Science Curriculum (Senior Classes) and Stay Safe Programme.
- RSE content will be taught developmentally with age appropriate lessons being taught at each class level as per the curriculum guidelines.
- The RSE 'sensitive' lessons will be taught across all class levels during a nominated week.
- In order to ensure that the content of the RSE lessons can be specific and focussed for 5th & 6th Class pupils - the 'sensitive lessons' will be taught to boys and girls at the same time (following recommendations from PDST) A question box will be used to allow pupils to ask any questions they may have without feeling embarrassed. The school may use outside agencies , cost dependent, to conduct the talk in 5th & 6th class.

RSE Topics/ Lessons - from Infants – 2nd Class

(Health Promotion Resource: Tom's Flower Power, Stay Safe, Parents Resource: Talking to your child about relationships, sexuality and growing up)

- Keeping Safe
- Bodily changes during growth and birth
- Making age appropriate choices
- Appreciating family life
- 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)

RSE Topics/Lessons – 3rd to 6th Class:

(Health Promotion Resource: Busy Bodies (5th and 6th class), Parent's Resource: Talking to your child about relationships, sexuality and growing up)

- Bodily changes
- Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Expressing Feelings
- Family Relationships
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming Friendships
- Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (4th)
- Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th & 6th)
- Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th & 6th)
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship. (5th & 6th)

The following resources will be used when teaching RSE lessons

- Anatomical Boy & Girl Dolls, Bathtub & Accessories - (Infants)

- RSE Manuals - (Infants, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th)
- Health Promotion Booklets: Tom's Flower Power, Busy bodies
- Parents Booklet: Talking to your young child about relationships, sexuality and growing up.
- Male & Female Reproductive System Diagrams - (5th & 6th)
- Stages of Development of Baby in Womb – Worksheet (5th & 6th)
- Busy Bodies DVD - 20 minutes duration (5th & 6th)

Busy Bodies – DVD and booklet Adolescent development video, explains puberty and sexual intercourse. Developed by Health Promotion Department, Southern Health Service Executive. Available from www.healthpromotion.ie

Management of RSE in Bohernmore N.S.

Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school works in partnership with parents in the education process. An information leaflet summarizing the school's RSE policy and content of the 'sensitive lessons' will be provided for parents in advance of the teaching of the lessons. Parents may also request to view the RSE teaching materials and resources. The school will facilitate the provision of further information to parents who may seek to clarify aspects of the RSE content.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from RSE – specific/sensitive lessons on the understanding that parents will take full responsibility for this aspect of their child's education themselves. Each year the school will notify parents in advance of the planned teaching of the RSE 'sensitive lessons'. **It will be the responsibility of the parents to inform the school in writing of a decision to withdraw a pupil.** However, if a pupil is withdrawn, the school cannot guarantee that other pupils will not inform the pupil in question of the content of the lesson(s), or that teachers or pupils will not refer to or revise aspects of the lesson as necessary during subsequent days/weeks. Our RSE policy is inclusive and the withdrawal of pupils for the 'sensitive lessons' will be discouraged. Pupils who are not participating in the RSE 'sensitive lesson' will be placed in another class for supervision for the duration of the lesson.

Teachers will model the appropriate vocabulary relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings. In teaching RSE the approach in the school is child centred and will always take into account the age and stage of development of the pupils.

Teachers will teach only the content/topics advised for the class level and will only answer questions relevant to the programme for that class level. Teachers will not give personal information and will not seek personal information from pupils. Respect for personal privacy and for personal information will be emphasised with the pupils. Pupils will be taught to recognise that personal disclosures during the RSE lessons are inappropriate.

Teachers will inform pupils at the beginning of the RSE 'sensitive lesson' that it may not be possible to answer all questions from pupils. Pupil questions will be dealt with in accordance with the following criteria: circumstance in which the question has arisen; clarification of information sought; relevance of the

issue. If the question is outside the scope of the content for the class level, teacher may use the following phrases: I won't be able to answer all your questions in class, that's something that you will learn about when you are older' or 'perhaps you could talk to your parent/s about that'.

Teachers will be aware of the learning needs of their pupils and will differentiate the RSE lessons as appropriate to ensure that pupils with special needs can learn at their level of understanding.

Teachers will not give information or discuss sexual orientation, contraception, abortion or masturbation during RSE lessons. If questions arise on these topics teacher will respond in accordance with the policy guidance for questions 'outside the scope of the lesson'.

Pupils will be introduced to all aspects of the RSE Programme at an age appropriate level, in accordance with the curriculum guidelines and the school RSE policy. From Junior Infants upwards pupils will be taught to identify and correctly name external parts of the male and female body. In Fifth & Sixth class pupils will learn about growth and bodily functions necessary for understanding and coping with the onset of puberty and information about intercourse and conception will be given.

Pupils will be advised that it is inappropriate to discuss information about certain aspects of the RSE programme i.e. puberty, intercourse and birth with younger siblings or friends. Pupils will be encouraged to discuss the learning outcomes of the RSE lessons with their parents/guardians.

The practical arrangements regarding the teaching of the RSE programme and the deployment of teaching staff will be made by the School Principal/Deputy Principal.

The BOM will ensure the provision of the necessary resources and will support teacher training to implement this programme.

Bohermore N.S. fully complies with the DES Child Protection Guidelines and has an updated Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment. In cases of disclosures from pupils, the DLP/DDLP will follow the procedures as outlined in Children First Act 2015. Policy Links: Child Protection Policy, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, Internet Acceptable Use Policy, SPHE Policy & Religious Education Policy The implementation of this policy will be evaluated after 2 years and reviewed thereafter as necessary.

Appendix 1

Lesson Content – Sensitive Issues

Class	Lesson	Strand Unit	Language	Date	Home/School
J.I. S.I.	Theme 6 Caring for new life p.137 Theme 7 My Body p.147	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	Penis/Vagina or Vulva Naming parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms	Term 2 every second year	S.I. RSE Manual p. 145 S.I. RSE Manual p. 156
1 st 2 nd	Theme 6 The wonder of new life p.59/p.151 Theme 7 How my body works p.67 When my body needs special care p.161 Theme 8 Growing means changing p. 77/p.171	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	As above: introduce womb, breast, breast feeding, urethra. Naming as above and identify some of the functions.	Term 2 every second year	RSE Manual p. 65, 160, 169
3 rd 4 th	Theme 6 Preparing for new life p.69 Theme 6 from 4th class The wonder of new life p.169 Theme 8 As I grow I change p.93 Theme 8 (girls only in 4th class) Growing and changing p.195	Growing and changing	Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby in the womb. Umbilical cord. Any questions as to how the baby got there cannot be answered by the teacher.	Term 2 or 3 at the discretion of the teacher 4 th class will cover content every year	RSE Manual p. 181
5 th 6 th	Theme 6 My body grows and changes p.81 Theme 7 The wonder of new life p.93 Theme 8 Caring for new life p.103 Theme 2 Different kinds of love p.141	Growing and changing Taking care of my body	Changes that occur in boys and girls at the onset of puberty. Reproductive system of male/female adults. Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within context of a loving, committed relationship.	Term 2 or 3 at the discretion of the teacher 6 th class will cover content every year	RSE Manual p. 92,101,112,149 Busy Body Booklets and DVDS 

Provision of Ongoing Support

- Parents welcome to view the curriculum and resource materials if they so wish.
- Regular contact with parents prior to the teaching of lessons involving “sensitive issues” in the form of the home/school link page accompanying such lessons in the RSE Resource Books. Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters.

Links to other Policy Areas

1. Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (Circular 0042/2018)
This supersedes SPHE Best Practice Guidelines 0022/2010
2. Anti- Bullying Procedures 0045/2013
3. Child Protection Procedures 0018/2017

Child Protection: The school follows the DES child protection guidelines and has a child protection policy with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person. In cases of disclosure, the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First. Guidelines and Procedures 2017

Review

- This policy will be reviewed after the initial twelve month period has passed by the staff, and every two years thereafter. This policy will be reviewed should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made to the policy

Class Level	Strand Unit	Content Objectives	RSE Language to teach at class level	Resources
Junior/ Senior Infants	Taking Care of My Body	...name parts of the male and female, using appropriate anatomical terms	Junior & Senior Infants Term “chest” to identify upper body in boys and girls Terms “penis” and “vulva” will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy and girl. (These are the anatomically correct names for external male and female parts) Term “mammy’s womb” will be taught as a special place where a baby grows until born. Term “breastfeeding” may be used as a means of feeding the baby.	
	Growing and Changing	...develop an awareness of human birth that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother’s womb until ready to be born.		
1 st & 2 nd Class	Taking Care of My Body	...name parts of the male and female, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions. *Refer to function of organs i.e. lungs, stomach, kidneys etc.	1st & 2nd Class: Revise: term “chest” to identify upper body in boys and girls. 1st & 2nd Class: Revise: terms “penis” and “vulva” will be taught as the obvious difference between boy and girl. The term ‘vagina’ will be introduced. 1st Class: Introduce term “urine” to explain that which is released by the kidneys when going to the toilet (boys and girls) 2nd Class: Introduce term “urethra” in girls and “penis” in boys for passing urine. *NOTE: the function of the male and female reproductive system will not be referenced.	
	Growing and Changing	...appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new born babies in both the animal and human world.	1st Class: Revise term “womb” as the special place where baby grows until born. 2nd class: teach that the baby is in the womb for 9 months and may be breast fed or bottle fed when born.	
3 rd & 4 th Class	Taking Care of My Body	...understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body.	Revise above 3rd Class: Introduce terms “hormones” chemicals which move around your body and cells pg. 98 4th Class: Introduce term “Menstruation” using amended text pg.199 NOTE: Menstruation will be explained in detail in 5th Class	
	Growing and Changing	...recognise and discuss how feelings	Revise above 3rd Class: Revise term “womb” pg.73	

		and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty* ...discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth*	Introduce terms "umbilical cord" and "navel"/belly button" pg. 73 4th Class: Revise term "womb" Introduce terms "egg" "lining" (womb), "ready to be born"	
5th & 6th Class	Taking Care of My Body	Identify and discuss the physical and other 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.	<i>Revise above</i> 5th & 6th Class Language to be taught to boys & girls: Puberty, Ovaries – Ovum, Fallopian Tube Womb/ uterus, Cervix, Menstruation/Periods Puberty, Penis, Testicle, Scrotum, Sperm, Semen, Erection, Wet Dreams	
	Growing and Changing	...understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth. ...discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent. Discuss the stages and sequence of the human baby in the womb.	<i>Revise above</i> 5th & 6th Class Language to be taught to boys & girls: Sexual Intercourse, Conception, Ovum Fallopian Tubes NOTE: Discussed in the context of a committed and loving relationship. 5th Class Content: Revise term umbilical cord * (p.107) 6th class Content	

Appendix 2

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

Date: _____

Relationships and Sexuality education is an integral part of the Social, Personal, and Health Education (S.P.H.E) curriculum as per Department of Education & Skills guidelines. The sensitive elements of the Relationships & Sexuality education programme that will be covered with your child in the forthcoming weeks are summarised in the box below. It is important that you talk to your son/daughter about these topics so your child will feel prepared for the content of the programme. During all lessons the anatomically correct names for body parts will be used.

JUNIOR INFANTS TO SECOND CLASS

MYSELF:

Taking Care of My Body: Caring for one's body, respect for one's body and that of others, diet, hygiene, being able to name parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms. (penis/ vagina)

Growing and Changing: Understanding growth and change, exploring feelings, becoming aware of new life and birth, understanding a baby's needs.

THIRD CLASS TO SIXTH CLASS

Taking Care of My Body: Understanding health, dangers of substance misuse, personal hygiene, nutrition. For 4th Class: understanding physical changes for boys and girls (puberty). For 5th/6th class children: understanding physical and other changes at puberty, understanding the male and female reproductive system.

Growing and Changing: Identifying and discussing feelings, having a positive sense of self. For 3rd/4th class children: recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty, being able to discuss the development of the human baby during pregnancy, For 6th Class children: understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth in the context of a committed, loving relationship.

If you have any questions/ queries please schedule an appointment with the class teacher who will be happy to meet with you.

Thank you,

Class Teacher

***Please sign this letter to indicate that you read it and return it to the class teacher as soon as possible.
Thank you.**

Signed: _____

Date: _____

This policy was ratified by Bohermore N.S. Board of Management on 11/12/2019.

Signed Rev. James Walton PP.
Fr. James Walton
Chairman

This policy was reviewed on: 05/02/2025

Signed by Chairperson Board of Management

Michael Sheahan
Michael Sheahan