



## ***RSE Policy***

Newtown N.S.  
Newtown,  
Ardee,  
Co. Louth.  
Uimhir Rolla: 03275H

### **Introduction:**

Newtown N.S. is a rural co-educational Catholic primary school under the auspices of the Diocese of Meath. It has a staff of four mainstream teachers, two special education teachers, one part-time Special Education Teacher and three Special Needs Assistants. It consists of four mainstream multigrade classrooms, with two grade levels in each classroom, and an ASD Class.

The ethos of the school is founded on Christian principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. It is our intention that every member of the school community feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) section of the curriculum. SPHE is the process which enables pupils to develop an understanding of themselves. It helps them to choose and follow a healthy lifestyle and enables them to play responsible roles as individuals and as members of society.

We in Newtown N.S. aim to provide all the pupils with the information on the R.S.E. programme that is age appropriate. We will do this while keeping within the guidelines laid down by the Department of Education and Science in its RSE programme and while at the same time reflecting the ethos of our school.

The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. To this end parents were encouraged to play a meaningful role in the R.S.E. policy formation and communication at home with children. Parents also have the right to withhold their children from participating in R.S.E classes. The objectives relating to RSE will be taught throughout the school at each class level. However, the units in 5th and 6th class dealing with birth and new life, sexual intercourse and body development and growth will be covered both classes every year. These objectives will be taught in time block – and parents are informed by email when this day will be. The content is supported by other class lessons during the month of June.

### **Definition of RSE in relation to SPHE:**

- RSE is an integral part of SPHE and deals with aspects such as human growth and development, human sexuality, parenting, personal and social skills and relationships. It provides children with opportunities to acquire knowledge

and understanding of these areas through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

**Current RSE provision:**

- The following programmes are already being used in the school in relation to RSE and SPHE:
- Walk Tall
- Stay Safe
- Alive-O
- Earthlink programme
- RSE Programme DES materials

**Aims of the RSE programme:**

- To help our young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To promote a healthy attitude to sexuality and to relationships
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

**Management and Organisation:**

- RSE in schools involves 9 half-hour lessons
- RSE is taught in conjunction with Making the Links and in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class the sensitive areas are taught yearly in June. See Appendix 1.
- As our school is organised in a multigrade system, both classes will be taught the programme simultaneously.
- A teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive issues in RSE. The Board of Management (BOM) has the duty of providing alternative arrangements.
- Each teacher is responsible for his/her long term and short-term planning comprising of a yearly (or termly) and fortnightly scheme of work. A Cúntas Miosúil on the school drive.
- All external speakers will be shown and must abide by the RSE policy and parents will be informed when a visit is organised. A teacher will be present at all times during the visit.
- Teachers will only teach issues that are in the RSE programme as laid out by the DES.
- If a child has questions on issues outside of the RSE programme the teacher will explain that they will learn about that as they get older.
- Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves nor require the child to give information of a personal nature which they do not wish to share

- Pupils with Special Educational Needs Special needs pupils will receive RSE after consultation and negotiation with their parents. These pupils will be taught on a 'need to know' basis and the depth of knowledge given will be dependent on their level of disability.

### **Methodology**

Circle time is used extensively in junior classes to build confidence and address fears. Boys and girls are taught together in all classes. Senior pupils are treated in a mature way and are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with their parents.

### **Parental Involvement, rights and responsibilities in RSE:**

Newtown N.S. recognises the parents as the primary educators of the child and as such has sought to involve parents in the implementation of the RSE programme in the following ways:

- Parents were involved in the initial planning stages in drawing up the initial draft policy-meeting, comments on draft policy (2009).
- The school will inform parents of any courses that may be offered from time to time in the local education centres for parents in relation to RSE.
- A copy of the RSE resource and guidance pack for parents developed by the DES, '*Going Forward Together*' is available to be downloaded online at <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Post-Primary-School-Policies/1997-RSE-Going-Forward-Together-an-Introduction-to-RSE-for-Parents-.pdf> .
- Teachers will send home the relevant 'home-school links' section in relation to each lesson on RSE.
- All children participate in the RSE programme, as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.
- The school can take no responsibility for what may be said by other children in the playground or outside of school.
- Parents have the right to view the teaching materials for RSE on request.
- The DES RSE Programme materials are available to view online for each class level on <http://www.pdst.ie/node/811> .

### **School/Community Links**

The school is involved in:-

- Soccer, GAA and rugby inter-school competitions
- Active Flag
- Choir
- Christmas concert/carol service
- Credit Union quiz
- Swimming modules in Aura, Navan

### **Child Protection**

The school follows the D.E.S. child protection guidelines and has a Child Protection policy and a Designated Liaison Person (DLP). In cases of disclosure, the D.L.P. will follow the most up to date procedures as set out in the Department of Health &

Children's *Children First Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2011 Revised Edition).

The BOM has a duty to satisfy itself that no person assisting in the school in any capacity poses a threat to pupils or staff. To this end all parents assisting with activities, and in particular, swimming, are requested to undergo garda vetting for this school.

### **Language:**

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Not being familiar with the biological terms for the body can put children at a disadvantage. ( DES Resource Materials for Education and Sexuality Education, Junior/Senior Infants, pp. 148-149).

### **Resources:**

- RSE Resource Materials published by DES for each class.
- Busy Bodies dvd
- Walk Tall Programme
- Stay Safe Programme
- Grow in Love Programme
- Values Education programmes
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures (DES)
- Resource Packs, eg, Lil-Lets.
- Curriculum documents

### **Provision for ongoing support, development and review:**

- Where necessary or if opportunities arise the BOM may be requested to fund/support in-service training for teachers.
- This policy and the RSE programme was reviewed in 2011, 2013 and 2015, 2021. All partners will be informed of any amendments where necessary after such a review. RSE resources will also be reviewed periodically to ensure they are kept up to date.

### **Review and Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management in four years, or as and when the need arises.

Policy adopted by the BOM on May 5<sup>th</sup> 2022

Signed: G.emy Bayle  
Chairperson.

Appendix 1

**Overview of Content of the  
Department of Education RSE programme**

<p><u>Content for Junior and Senior Infants:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am unique</li> <li>• My body</li> <li>• As I grow I change</li> <li>• New life</li> <li>• Keeping safe</li> <li>• Feelings and emotions</li> <li>• Making decisions</li> <li>• Myself and my family</li> <li>• Myself and my friends</li> <li>• Special people in my life</li> <li>• Relating to others</li> </ul>	<p><u>Content for First and Second Classes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am unique</li> <li>• My body</li> <li>• As I grow I change</li> <li>• Keeping safe</li> <li>• Feelings and emotions</li> <li>• Making decisions</li> <li>• Myself and my family</li> <li>• Myself and my friends</li> <li>• Other people</li> <li>• Relating to others</li> </ul>
<p><u>Content for Third and Fourth Classes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting myself</li> <li>• Physical development</li> <li>• Growing and changing</li> <li>• Birth and new life</li> <li>• Feelings and emotions</li> <li>• Personal hygiene</li> <li>• Personal safety</li> <li>• Making decisions</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities in families</li> <li>• Friendship</li> <li>• Portrayal of sexuality and relationships</li> <li>• Roles of males and females in society</li> <li>• Relating to others</li> </ul>	<p><u>Content for Fifth and Sixth Classes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting myself</li> <li>• Physical development</li> <li>• Becoming an adult</li> <li>• Parenthood</li> <li>• Feelings and emotions</li> <li>• Personal hygiene</li> <li>• Personal safety</li> <li>• Making decisions</li> <li>• Changing relationships in families and friendships</li> <li>• Group affiliation and loyalty</li> <li>• Portrayal of sexuality and relationships</li> <li>• Sexual stereotypes</li> <li>• Relating to others</li> </ul>

**Outline of Language used:**

- Junior Infants: Womb, breast-feeding.
- Senior Infants: Penis, (perhaps vulva-female's external or vagina)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Class: Urine passes through the penis in boys and the urethra in girls. Baby is in womb for 9 months and may be breast or bottle fed.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Class: Penis and urethra (revised), vagina, navel, breast.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Class: Breast-feeding, umbilical cord, baby is carried in womb, hormones.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Class: Developing foetus, changes in puberty-body shape, menstruation, voice changes, mood changes, skin changes, increases in body hair.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Class: Puberty (revised), physical changes in boys and girls, reproduction.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Class: Sexual intercourse in the context of a loving, committed relationship, such as marriage.

