



**Scoil Náisiúnta an Easpaig Ó Gealbhaín**  
Bishop Galvin National School  
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@bishopgalvin

## ***Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy***

Bishop Galvin National School is a co-educational school in Orwell Park, Templeogue. It operates within the rules of the Department of Education and is under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. It caters for children in the age range of eight to twelve, in the Parish of St. Jude the Apostle, Willington, Templeogue, Dublin 6W. While Bishop Galvin N.S. is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions. Generally, there are 4 or 5 classes per stream, with a total of almost 500 pupils.

### **Introductory Statement and Rationale**

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Bishop Galvin N.S. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme as taught within the SPHE Curriculum. The policy was initially created in 2009, and regularly reviewed on a two yearly basis. It was updated in collaboration with staff and the Board of Management in April 2021, and brought to the attention of staff, and all parents and guardians. An autism class was opened in the school in September 2021. In line with a review on inclusive practice in the school, the policy was updated in November 2023.

### **School Philosophy and Ethos**

Bishop Galvin N.S. is a Catholic school and therefore all policies developed are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the ethos of the school. The ethos of the school is characterised by the following:

- We are sensitive to the reality of our children's lives in a changing world
- There is a mutual respect between all partners in education
- Our programmes are child-centred
- We try to ensure each child reaches his/her full potential in the holistic sense
- Our hope is that children are equipped with high self-esteem to enable them to go and live happy, fulfilled lives

### **Definition of RSE**

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and

understanding of human sexuality, 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.

### **Current Provision**

Included in the school curriculum of BGNS is:

- Religious Education (Grow in Love)
- SPHE Lessons, including *Weaving Well-being* and *Friends for Life* programmes
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- RSE Manuals and *Busy Body* Resources
- Adapted Resources for SEN from pdst.ie
- Webwise Resources
- SPHE Guidelines for Teachers of Students with MILD General Learning Disabilities

### **Overall Aims of our 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

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

Child Safeguarding Statement

Code of Behaviour

Anti-bullying Policy

Enrolment Policy

## **Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in Bishop Galvin NS**

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. Parents retain the right to withdraw their children from the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. The programme is taught within the ethos of the school. Issues and topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils within a moral framework.

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. The letter will be issued in advance, giving parents an opportunity to discuss with relevant class teachers if they so wish, to 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.

### **(A) Curriculum Content**

The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published and will be taught in 4th (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class curriculum) and 6th Class (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class curriculum). It will be taught by the teaching staff of Bishop Galvin NS, which includes the 'sexually sensitive issues' i.e. puberty, stages of baby in the womb, reproductive system, menstruation (Term 2/3, 4th Class) and conception, birth and sexual intercourse (Term 2/3, 6<sup>th</sup> class). All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. (See Appendix A: Resources; Appendix B: Language used and Sensitive Issues)

#### *Inclusion*

BGNS is an inclusive school; in our learning environment, the provision of supports, and access to the curriculum. SPHE (Social and Personal Health Education) provides opportunities for pupils to learn personal and social skills, and supports their personal development, health and well-being. RSE is an integral part of SPHE, where students are taught the skills needed to navigate transition through puberty and adolescence, and to develop their understanding of interpersonal relationships. Differentiation is the process of varying content, activities, teaching, learning, method and resources to take into account the range of interests, needs and experiences of individual children.

Due to differences in social communication and sensory processing, some pupils (e.g. with autism) may face additional challenges in personal development, including

adjustment to physical changes with puberty, and in building and maintaining relationships. In this instance, differentiation, visual approaches e.g. social stories, and RSE resources and materials are developed or adapted for the learning profile, developmental level and changing needs of pupils (see Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools, Resource Box 22, Pg. 205, DE, 2022, SPHE Guidelines for Teachers of Students with MILD General Learning Disabilities). Resources will be shared with parents in advance of teaching lessons. Positive behaviour supports may be needed to prevent or respond to behaviours of concern e.g. touching private parts of their body, using sexualised language, etc.

## **(B) Organisational Matters**

### *Withdrawal*

If children are requested to be withdrawn by parents, this request must be made in writing to the school. Pupils will be accommodated in another classroom.

With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed between the children themselves in the playground or classroom.

### *Teacher Choice*

The teacher's right to choose is enshrined in the policy, and if teachers do not wish to teach specific aspects of the programme, another teacher may teach the particular lessons to a class. Alternatively, teachers may opt for a team teaching approach with the relevant Support Teacher for that stream.

## **(C) Dealing with Questions**

All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics will not be discussed i.e. abortion, homosexuality, masturbation, contraception. Questions to the teacher may be oral or written within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and policy. Any questions asked by the children that are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child asks a question of a personal nature, or discloses personal information.

## **Review**

The policy will be reviewed in November 2025, or earlier if the need arises. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

**Reviewed, updated and ratified by the BOM on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**Signed:**                      *Siobhan Farrell* (Chairperson of BOM)  
                                      *Kathryn Corbett* (Principal)

## **Appendix A: Resources**

**<https://pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/RSE>**

- ❖ RSE Teaching Materials 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Class
- ❖ RSE Teaching Materials 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>
- ❖ Laminated matching Game: Month by month development of a baby in the womb
- ❖ Religious Education (Grow in Love)
- ❖ Stay Safe Programme
- ❖ Walk Tall Programme
- ❖ Adapted Resources for children with Special Educational Needs from pdst.ie
- ❖ Webwise Resources
- ❖ Busy Bodies DVD
- ❖ Busy Bodies Instructional Booklet
- ❖ Busy Bodies Workbook
- ❖ Charts of male and female reproductive system.
- ❖ Visit from a new mother/father in 4th Class

## Appendix B: Language and Sensitive Issues

Class	Strand /strand Unit	Content Objectives Consult curriculum for complete objectives in <u>Growing and changing</u> and <u>Taking care of my body</u>	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book	Pages in Walk Tall	Supplementary resources
Fourth Class	<b>Myself</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing and changing</li> <li>Taking care of my body</li> </ul>	<b>Growing and changing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body</li> <li>Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal</li> </ul> <b>Taking care of my body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty</li> <li>Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth</li> </ul>	womb breastfeeding penis vulva vagina urethra 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 (3rd class book)  Changing and Growing p140 (4th class book)  The Wonder of New Life p.150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Body Systems</li> <li>Picture books on Growing and Changing</li> </ul>
Sixth Class	<b>Myself</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing and changing</li> <li>Taking care of my body</li> </ul>	<b>Growing and changing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship</li> </ul> <b>Taking care of my body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults</li> </ul>	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 (5th class book)  Creation p121 (6th class book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Busy Bodies</li> <li>Power points recap</li> <li>Question Box</li> <li>Puberty Quiz</li> </ul>