

Scoil Thomáis, Laurel Lodge, Castleknock, Dublin 15

Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) Policy – Revised 2016

Scoil Thomáis is a Catholic co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It is located in the parish of St. Thomas the Apostle, Laurel Lodge, Castleknock, Dublin 15. There are approx 700 pupils from Infants to Sixth Class enrolled in the school. There are 38 teachers on staff including an Administrative Principal, Administrative Deputy Principal as well as a number of special needs assistants and ancillary staff.

Introductory Statement & Rationale

This policy statement is the approved approach to the teaching of RSE in Scoil Thomáis. An RSE policy was initially developed in 1999 to inform the teaching of RSE in the school. The policy was updated in Feb 2015 and further updated in Feb 2016 by the SPHE postholder in consultation with the teaching staff and the RSE Policy Committee. This revised policy further 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 Scoil Thomáis.

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

Scoil Thomáis 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. (Going Forward Together Parent Booklet p.4)

Specifically the RSE programme as taught in Scoil Thomáis 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 Scoil Thomáis

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)

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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 Scoil Thomáis

- 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 usually early in the last term of school.
- 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 separately to boys and girls by the pupil’s class teacher.

RSE Topics/ Lessons - from Infants – 2nd Class

- Keeping Safe
- Bodily changes during growth and birth (birth to 9)
- 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 (Jun/Sen 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 – 6th Class:

- 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)
- Boy/Girl Seaside Picture -(1st/2nd)
- RSE Manuals - (Infants, 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th. 5th/6th)
- 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

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Management of RSE in Scoil Thomáis.

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 so 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 questions 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 or contraception 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. This will be revised in 6th class, with special attention to relationships and caring for babies.

Pupils will be advised that it is inappropriate to discuss information about certain aspects of the RSE programme ie 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.

Scoil Thomáis fully complies with the DES Child Protection Guidelines and has an updated Child Protection Policy. In cases of disclosures from pupils, the DLP/DDLP will follow the procedures as outlined in Children First 2011.

Policy Links: Child Protection Policy, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy 2014, SPHE Policy & Religious Education Policy

The implementation of this policy will be evaluated after 2 years and reviewed thereafter as necessary.

This policy was ratified by Scoil Thomáis Board of Management on 12th February 2015 and updated and ratified by the BOM in March 2016

RSE Policy March 2016 © Scoil Thomáis,

RSE Policy Committee 2015

**Pat Keane & Mary McGarry (BOM),
Cathy Byrne & Sharon Mahon (Parents),
Máire O'Sullivan & Ellen O'Sullivan (Teachers)**

**RSE Policy Committee 2016
Pat Curtin & Mary McGarry (BOM)
Cathy Byrne (Parent)
Maire O'Sullivan (Teacher)**

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The following appropriate language will be taught to the children as part of the specific RSE lessons at each class level

Class level	Strand/Unit	Content objectives	RSE language to teach at class level	Resource	Teaching the Lesson
Junior/Senior Infants	Strand Unit Taking Care of My Body	....name parts of the male and female, using appropriate anatomical terms	Junior & Senior Infants term " <i>chest</i> " to identify upper body in boys and girls terms " <i>penis</i> "& " <i>vagina</i> " will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy and girl	RSE TEACHER BK- SNF Theme 7 - MY BODY Pg 147 – 156 (p150*)	'Bathing the Baby Doll' Using anatomically correct male and female dolls with toy bath and bathing equipment ie water, soap, brush, cloth, suds etc
	Strand Unit Growing & Changing	... develop an awareness of human birth that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born	term ' <i>mammy's tummy</i> ' will be taught as special place where baby grows until born term " <i>breastfeeding</i> " may be used in as a means of feeding the baby	RSE TEACHER BK - SNF Theme 7 - CARING FOR NEW LIFE pg 137 – 145	Story: Conor's New Baby Sister or Arrange Visit of Mother & Baby to Class
First/Second Class	Strand Unit 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 ie lungs, stomach, kidneys etc	1st & 2nd Class: Revise: term " <i>chest</i> " to identify upper body in boys and girls 1st & 2ndClass: Revise: terms " <i>penis</i> "& " <i>vagina</i> " will be taught as the obvious physical difference between boy and girl @1st Class : Introduce term ' <i>urine</i> ' to explain that which is released by the kidneys when going to the toilet (boys and girls) @ 2nd Class: Introduce term ' <i>urethra</i> ' in girls and ' <i>penis</i> ' in boys for passing urine. NOTE: the function of the male and female reproductive system will <u>not</u> be referenced.	RSE TEACHER BK - SNF Theme 7 - MY BODY pg 153 RSE TEACHER BK – 1st Theme 7 – HOW MY BODY WORKS pg 70+71 RSE TEACHER BK – 2nd Theme 7 – WHEN MY BODY NEEDS SPECIAL CARE pg 166+ 167	'At the Seaside Picture' with questions from RSE TEACHER BK P.153 Game - I Spy to Identify Senses + Lesson Food We Eat Lesson: How Our Bodies Work
	Strand unit Growing & Changing	...appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world	1st Class: Introduce term ' <i>womb</i> ' as the special place where baby grows until born @2nd Class: teach that the baby is in the womb <i>for 9 months and may be breast fed or bottle fed when born</i>	RSE TEACHER BK – 1st Theme 6 – THE WONDER OF NEW LIFE pg 61+ 69 RSE TEACHER BK – 2nd Theme 6 – THE WONDER OF NEW LIFE pg 153+154	Visit of pet animal to the class or use pictures of animals 2nd Class: Minding Babies Lesson

RSE-specific lessons to be timetabled to ensure whole school approach to teaching content
Parents will be informed in advance of the teaching of the 'sensitive' RSE lessons each class level.

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Class level	Strand/Unit	Content objectives	RSE language to be taught at class level	Resource	Methodology
Third/Fourth Class	Strand Unit Taking Care of My Body	.....understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body	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	RSE TEACHER BK – 3 rd Theme 8 – As I grow I change pg. 93-101 ----- RSE TEACHER BK – 4 th Theme 8 – Growing and Changing pg. 195- 205	Information Lesson: Growing-Up pg. 97-98 The Growing and Changes I Have Done. Worksheet pg. 95-96 Class Round: Stages of Ages pg.99 ----- RSE TEACHER BK Information Lesson: Growing Up pg. 198-199
	Strand Unit Growing & Changing	....recognise and discuss how feelings 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*	3rd Class: ----- 3rd Class: Revise term 'womb' pg.73. Introduce terms 'umbilical cord' and 'navel/ belly button' pg. 73. ----- 4th Class: Revise term 'womb,' Introduce terms 'egg,' 'lining (womb), 'ready to be born.'	RSE TEACHER BK – 3 rd Theme 6 – PREPARING FOR NEW LIFE pg. 69-79 ----- RSE TEACHER BK – 4 th Theme 6 – The Wonder of New Life pg.170-181 Sequence Activity Cards	RSE TEACHER BK 3 rd Class Information Lesson: Caring for Baby pg. 73 ----- RSE TEACHER BK 4 th Class Information Lesson: Someone Special pg. 171 'A New Life Time-Line' pg. 172-178 (Sequencing Activity)
Fifth/Sixth Class	Strand Unit Taking Care of My Body	identify and discuss the <u>physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty</u> and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults	5th & 6th Class Language to be taught to boys & girls : Puberty , Ovaries – Ovum, Fallopian tube Womb/Uterus, Cervix , Menstruation Puberty, Penis, Testicle, Scrotum, Sperm , Erection, Wet dreams	RSE TEACHER BK – 5 th Theme 6 – My Body Grows and Changes pg 84 – 89 RSE TEACHER BK – 5 th Theme 6 – My Body Grows and Changes pgs 85 – 88	RSE TEACHER BK – 5 th Information Lesson: p.84 My Body Grows and Changes 'Busy Bodies DVD' with questions from RSE TEACHER BK pg. 91 * Scoil Thomáis RSE Folder 'Busy Bodies DVD'
	Strand Unit Growing & Changing	.....understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent	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.	RSE TEACHER BK – 5 th Theme 7 – THE WONDER OF NEW LIFE pg. 95+ 96 RSE TEACHER BK – 5 th Theme 7 – THE WONDER OF NEW LIFE pg. 95, 97-98 RSE TEACHER BK – 6 th Theme 8 – A Baby is a Miracle pg. 212	Information Lesson: The Wonder of New Life RSE TEACHER BK – 5 th pg. 95-96 Story: 'Michael's Birth Day' with questions from RSE TCH BK 5 th pg. 97 RSE TEACHER BK – 6 th 'A Baby is a Miracle' p. 212 * Scoil Thomáis RSE Folder
		Discuss the stages and sequence of the human baby in the womb	5th Class Content ←→ Revise term <i>umbical cord</i> * (p.107)	RSE TEACHER BK – 5 th Theme 8 - Caring for New Life pg. 106-110	RSE TEACHER BK – 5 th * Worksheet p. 106 * Information Lesson: p. 107 Story: 'Michael's First Year' from RSE TEACHER BK pg.109
			6th Class Content ←→	RSE TEACHER BK – 6 th Theme 8 – A Baby is a Miracle pg. 213 - 215	RSE TEACHER BK – 6 th * Let's Talk: Changes a Baby Brings to Parents p. 213-214 * Let's go shopping: Babies' Expenses pg. 215