



## **RSE and Stay Safe Policy Statement Windfield NS**

### **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE**

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE and Stay Safe in Windfield NS.

RSE and the Stay Safe Programme are mandatory at primary level. The content taught is informed by the programme outlined by the Department of Education and Science. The policy was disseminated amongst parents, teachers and members of the Board of Management for feedback and approval. The aim of the policy is to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE and Stay Safe programmes within SPHE and how this material is taught in our school.

Parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children in sexual matters. The school RSE and Stay Safe programmes acts as a support only to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes.

### **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

Windfield NS is a Catholic school and therefore all policies are implemented in ways which are in keeping with the ethos of the school. An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others, this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm. The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 provide protection against discrimination on nine grounds. The inclusive school prevents and combats discrimination. It is one that respects, values and accommodates diversity across all nine grounds in the equality legislation: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. It seeks positive experiences, a sense of belonging and outcomes for all students across the nine grounds. Outcomes include access, participation, personal development and achieving education credentials.

### **The ethos of the school is also characterised by the following:**

- Sensitivity to the reality of our children's lives in a changing world
- Mutual respect between all partners in education
  - Child-centred
  - Aims to ensure each child reaches full potential in the holistic sense
  - Hopes that children are equipped with high self-esteem to enable them to live happy and fulfilled lives
  - Aims to teach the truths of human relationships and sexuality in a way that is child centred and supportive of parents as their child's first teacher.

### **DEFINITION OF RSE**

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

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. (p.5 NCCA interim curriculum and guidelines for RSE)



**DEFINITION OF STAY SAFE PROGRAMME** The Stay Safe Programme is a child abuse prevention programme with 5 themes taught as specific levels in the school. It relates to SPHE through its topics and themes linking it to the strands of the SPHE curriculum.

**CURRENT PROVISION AND RESOURCES** Available to support the SPHE/RSE curriculum:

- ☐ SPHE school plan
- ☐ Use of the RSE Manual and Busy Bodies DVD and booklet
- ☐ Mental Health programme 8-12 years: Weaving Well-Being Tools for Resilience
- ☐ Webwise, Think B4 you Click (6th only) (both are Anti-Cyber Bullying programmes)
- ☐ Stay Safe Programme
- ☐ Religious education through the Alive O programme (5th, 6th) and Grow in Love (Infants to 4th from Sept.
- ☐ Walk Tall
- ☐ Bullying Posters
- ☐ Be Safe: Road, Fire and Water Safety

**AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME**

- To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child
- To promote and 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 6th 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 enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing

**AIMS OF THE STAY SAFE PROGRAMME** The aim of the programme is to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying through the provision of a personal safety education programme for children at primary school level, continuing professional development for teachers, training for Boards of Management and information sessions for parents.

The Stay Safe programme itself is a personal safety skills programme designed for use with primary school children from Junior Infants through to 6th class.



The programme seeks to enhance children's self-protective skills by participation in lessons on safe and unsafe situations, bullying, inappropriate touch, secrets, telling and stranger danger.

The programme aims to give children the skills necessary to enable them to recognise and resist abuse/victimisation and teaches them that they should always tell (an adult that can help) about any situation which they find unsafe, upsetting, threatening, dangerous or abusive.

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF RSE and STAY SAFE IN OUR SCHOOL**

**CURRICULUM MATTERS:** Curriculum content- The curriculum by the NCCA will be followed as published and will be taught from Infants to 6th class.

All resources will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and will also be informed by the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 and the school's Child Protection Policy.

#### **The RSE topics are covered as follows:**

##### **Topics covered up to 2nd Class include:**

- ☐ Keeping safe
- ☐ Bodily changes during growth and birth (from birth to 9 months)
- ☐ 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 identifying some of their functions (1st/2nd)

##### **Topics from 3rd to 6th include:**

- ☐ Bodily changes
- ☐ Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise, sleep
- ☐ Keeping Safe,



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- ☐ Expressing Feelings
- ☐ Family Relationships
- ☐ Making healthy and responsible decisions
- ☐ Forming Friendships
- ☐ Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human body in the womb (4th class)
- ☐ Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6th class)
- ☐ Reproductive system of male and female adults (5th and 6th class)
- ☐ Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship (6th)
- ☐ Inappropriate touches
- ☐ Internet Safety (Stranger Danger)

**THE STAY SAFE PROGRAMME:** Juniors, 1st, 3rd and 5th classes are taught the Stay Safe Programme as outlined above.

The 5 topics of the Stay Safe Programme are:

1. Feeling safe and unsafe
2. Friendship and bullying
3. Touches
4. Secrets and Telling
5. Strangers

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

Some techniques used:

- ☐ ensuring that objectives are realistic for the students
- ☐ ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- ☐ providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups and spending more time on tasks
- ☐ organising the learning task into small stages and ensuring that the language used is pitched at the student's level of understanding of the activity using task analysis, outlining the steps to be learned/completed in any given task, posing key questions to guide students through the different stages/processes, and to assist in selfdirection and correction



- ☐ having short and varied tasks creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible every day materials, and by displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures. Sometimes the stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching
- ☐ group work and discussion
- ☐ higher and lower order questioning in groups
- ☐ moderated whole class discussions through use of a Question Box **AT ALL SENIOR LEVELS IN SEPTEMBER:** Classes from 3rd to 6th should readdress the appropriate internet safety lessons (Webwise, Think b4u Click) for the protection of students online and for cyberbullying awareness.

#### ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS:

- ☐ Children may be withdrawn on request from their parents. Parents must give notice in writing to the school principal that they are withdrawing their child. Parents will be asked to cover the appropriate topics with their children at home. Recognising that the Department of Education and Science does not allow a child to stay away from school while RSE is being taught the child will be accommodated in another teacher's classroom in the school.
- ☐ Any teacher has the right to opt-out of teaching the sexually sensitive issues in RSE. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure that the curriculum will be taught to the children by another teacher.
- ☐ Teachers will be asked to sign at the end of each school year, confirming that they have taught the RSE curriculum to their class or that another teacher has covered the sensitive material on their behalf. ☐ Parents are to be informed in advance, regarding when formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme e.g. puberty, will be covered in school. (see sample letters in Appendix A)
- ☐ Parents are to be informed that the complete RSE/SPHE curriculum is available for them to view online at [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) (link: Primary/ Health and Wellbeing)
- ☐ Parents of children with special needs may be offered an opportunity to view the DVD Busy Bodies at home prior to the topics being covered in class.
- ☐ Parents have the responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content, to prepare their child for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas covered in RSE/SPHE
- ☐ Children will be encouraged to discuss the material being covered in class with their parents, guardians and older siblings. Where possible handouts, worksheets etc. will be provided to facilitate this.



- ☐ Teachers will encourage children to recognise that certain information is for them only i.e. that it is inappropriate for them to discuss information received about puberty, intercourse and birth with younger siblings, friends from outside school etc. It will be explained that other children will be given this information by their own parents and teachers when they reach the appropriate age.
- ☐ Teachers will neither give nor request personal information. A respect for personal privacy will be emphasised. However, regarding accidental/deliberate disclosures of a confidential, private nature, the school cannot take responsibility for these occurrences in class or in the playground.
- ☐ Parents are requested to inform teachers of special family situations. These will be dealt with in confidence
- ☐ Students with General Learning Disabilities: The NCCA “Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities” contains comprehensive guidelines on teaching SPHE to students with mild general learning difficulties at primary and post primary, and to students with moderate and severe and profound general learning disabilities.
- ☐ Boys and girls will be taught RSE together
- ☐ Children’s questions will be dealt with, considering the following criteria, when relevant - All questions will reflect the parameters of the curriculum –

Questions to the teacher may be written or oral within the group setting and answered within the boundaries of the curriculum and school policy - Any questions asked by the children that are judged to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents or will explain that this will be covered at second level - The teacher’s should always be factual and within the parameters of the curriculum \*\*\* There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils. Adaptions 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 made in consultation with parents/guardians. A students whose understanding is such that the general class content is inaccessible should have the material adapted to suit their individual needs (in consultation with parents / guardians).

**PROVISION FOR ONGOING SUPPORT** The Board of Management will continue to facilitate provision of support for teachers and parents in the delivery of the RSE programme. This support may take the form of:

- ☐ Access to in-career development opportunities for teachers
- ☐ Access to educational opportunities organised by parents for parents through the school’s Parents Association



**☐ Access to relevant and up to date school resources for RSE Link to other policy areas:  
Child Safeguarding Statement**

The school follows the DES child protection guidelines, teaches the Stay Safe programme and has a Child protection Policy with the Principal, Róisín Kelly , as Designated Liaison person. In cases of disclosure, the DLP will follow the procedures as set out in Children First. Review: This policy will be reviewed in 12 months and every two years thereafter. This policy will also be reviewed should a need arise.

Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made to this policy.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson BOM \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix A**

### **Letter to parents re Stay Safe programme:**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are planning to teach a personal safety education programme called Stay Safe over the next few weeks.

The aim of the Stay Safe programme is to teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous.

It deals initially with common situations which most children will experience at some stage or other, e.g., getting lost or being bullied.

The programme also teaches children the safety skills necessary to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse and emphasises the importance of telling a trusted adult about any problems they have.

The Stay Safe programme is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential to the success of this programme. It is important that parents are aware of the content of the Stay Safe lessons and are able to discuss the lessons with their children. Your child may bring home worksheets which will inform you on the topics being covered in class and how you can reinforce the messages at home.



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You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at [www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm](http://www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm).

Please contact the school if you wish to discuss the programme further.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Class Teacher

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