Introductory Statement

This policy was reviewed as part of the School Self-Evaluation process by the schools teaching staff in January 2025. This policy is an agreed approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) using most up to date resources from the Department of Education. It was developed to inform teachers and parents/guardians/carers about the provision of RSE in Darley N.S.

School Philosophy

We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school. Through our SPHE/RSE programme we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence, while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The curriculum encourages children to be aware of their rights as an individual, while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and wider community. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos values respect, inclusion and diversity of all members of our school community. Our school acknowledges that parents/guardians/carers have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children and as such, their involvement will be encouraged. SPHE/RSE is a key component in supporting our pupils to develop into healthy young adults.

The following definition of RSE is referenced from the Interim curriculum and guidelines for primary schools (DE 1996, p.5) Definition of RSE "Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and 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."

SPHE/RSE Curriculum

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.

Through SPHE and RSE, see separate policy for SPHE, pupils are enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through:

- A sense of identity.
- A sense of purpose.
- A sense of belonging.
- A sense of security.
- A sense of competence.

SPHE/RSE is:

• A lifelong and continual process throughout primary school and should not be confined to once off inputs or solitary lessons.

• A shared responsibility and collaboration between family, school, health professionals and the community.

• A subject which develops a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues.

• Child centred. RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made to suit individual requirements and individual school situations.

• Spiral in nature. SPHE/RSE formally begins in Junior Infants and is developed throughout the child's time in school. This will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning in developmentally appropriate manner.

• Taught through active learning methodologies. RSE provides a range of learning opportunities that requires children to actively participate in their learning in a wide variety of ways e.g. discussion, circle time, role play.

• Free of bias. Lessons, language and resources selected by the school should reflect this. SPHE/RSE encourages children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live together in an intercultural society. RSE is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). Through SPHE and RSE, pupils are enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through: • A sense of identity • A sense of purpose • A sense of belonging • A sense of security • A sense of competence.

Aims of RSE

• To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child.

• To help the child to 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.

• 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.

Broad Objectives of RSE

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should enable the child (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum) to:

• Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self

• Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others

• Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-worth

• Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and wider contexts

• Develop an awareness of differing family patterns

• Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood

• Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts

• Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity

• Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships

• Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse

• Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction

• Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development

• Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making

Policies that support SPHE/RSE

• Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

• Substance Use Policy

• Code of Behaviour

• Anti-Bullying Policy

• Admissions Policy

• Acceptable Use Policy

• Healthy Eating Policy

• GDPR Policy

- Draft Wellbeing Specification Policy 2024

Curriculum Planning for SPHE/RSE

Our school follows a two-year plan for S.P.H.E. Darley NS will teach aspects of all three major strands each year and strand units will be chosen in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE over a two year period. Darley NS have created this timetable to reflect this approach.

SPHE Scheme Year 1 2022/23, 2024/25, 2026/27, 2028/29, 2030/31

Full teaching of Stay Safe Programme

Month	Strand	Strand Unit	Content/ Stay Safe
September & October	**Myself**	**Self-Identity**	
November & December	Myself & Others	My Friends & Other People	
January/ February	Myself	Safety & Protection	Stay Safe
March & April	Myself	Making Decisions	Stay Safe
May & June	Myself & the Wider World	Media Education	

SPHE Scheme Year 2: 2023/24, 2025/26, 2027/28, 2029/30, 2031/32

Full teaching of RSE Programme

Month	Strand	Strand Unit	Content/ RSE
September & October	Myself & Others	Myself & My Family	
November & December	Myself & Others	Relating to Others	
January/ February	Myself	Taking Care of my Body	RSE
March & April	Myself	Growing & Changing	RSE
May & June	Myself & the Wider World	Developing Citizenship	

RSE, which largely looks at the development of relationships, is interwoven through all strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum. The more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered under the strand 'Myself' and strand units 'Growing and changing' and 'Taking care of my body'. Teachers will refer to the resource Making the Links to support their planning for the delivery of these strand units.

Guidelines for the Implementation of RSE

The SPHE curriculum will underpin all teaching and learning of RSE in Darley N.S. The SPHE curriculum 1999 is allocated 30 minutes of discrete teaching time by the Department of Education. Teachers can use their professional discernment if extra time is required, this can be taken discretionary time. Teachers are encouraged to use an integrated approach for the delivery of SPHE. All resources used will be in keeping with this RSE policy and will take into consideration the sample criteria for choosing resources, as outlined in the SPHE Teacher Guidelines.

• The strands units 'Growing and changing' and 'Taking care of my body' are covered in one year of a 2 year plan

• Lessons containing sensitive material are covered as part of these strand units.

• The sensitive elements of the curriculum will be delivered by school staff.

• An up-to-date list of resources from OIDE are available so that the needs of children with SEN are met. Mainstream teachers liaise with SET teachers before lessons are delivered.

• Taking into account the pupils' social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible.

•Parents will be informed around the teaching and learning of RSE in advance of any lessons taking place.

Pupil Voice

In our school the voice of our pupils is acknowledged, valued and respected. Children are given opportunities to reflect and feedback on SPHE/RSE provision via focus groups and questionnaires. This information will be used to inform school improvement in relation to future RSE provision. This is reflective of the key principles of the SPHE curriculum. The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DE 2019) encourages schools to enhance the voice of children in their school community (DE 2019, p.30). This is reflective of the key principles of the SPHE curriculum. As part of our Student Council, we continuously look for feedback from pupils in terms of activities to enhance wellbeing and this is reflected in our School Improvement Plan 2023-2026 as well as Student Council meeting minutes.

Approaches & Methodologies

Active learning is the principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE. It requires children to actively participate in their learning in a wide variety of ways, thereby increasing the possibility of internalising what they have explored and of being able to use this learning in their everyday lives. Active learning contributes significantly to fostering their self-confidence, self-discipline and self-control in the learner. Active learning methodologies are an integral part of teaching and learning in SPHE and RSE. The PDST have developed a suite of resources to support school to implement active learning methodologies in SPHE which are available on https://www.pdst.ie/SPHE-Approaches-and-Methodologies.

The curriculum will be taught in a developmentally appropriate manner at all times. The teaching materials and methodologies used will reflect the needs of the children.

In Darley N.S., we will use the following approaches and methodologies to teach RSE.

- stories and poems
- classroom discussion
- ICT Activities
- group work
- games
- art activities
- reflection
- circle time
- external facilitator (Circular 0042/2018)
- Designing advertisements
- Writing captions
- Conscience Alley
- Describing photographs
- Viewing and discussing videos
- Projects

The curriculum will be taught in a developmentally-appropriate manner at all times. The teaching materials and methodologies used will reflect the needs of the children.

Resources

When choosing RSE resources, we will consider if the resource is:

- In line with the principles of the SPHE curriculum
- Free of bias
- Demonstrates equality
- Up to date
- Devoid of racial or sexual stereotyping

In Darley N.S. our staff **may** consult any of the following teaching resources when teaching RSE in addition to the DE Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme:

- PDST Health and Wellbeing RSE
- NCCA SPHE/RSE Toolkit
- DE Walk Tall Manuals
- Making the Links and Beyond
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls
- Twinkl
- HSE publications (www.healthpromotion.ie)
- Busy Bodies Booklet/ Videos/ Workbook (PDST)
- Inclusive picture and story books
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Lesson Ideas
- INTO Different Families Same Love Online Presentation JI – 2nd
- INTO Different Families Same Love Online Presentation 3rd – 6th
- RESPECT guidelines
- Gender Equality Matters (GEM)
- All Together Now
- We All Belong
- PDST Identity Based Bullying Information
- RSE related educational websites

Parental Involvement

In Darley N.S. parents/guardians/carers will be informed at enrolment that the school fully implements the RSE strands of the SPHE curriculum. Parents/guardians/carers will be informed in advance of the teaching of the formal RSE lessons. This will offer parents/guardians/carers an opportunity to meet with relevant teachers to discuss/view the material that will be covered and share any personal details they feel the teacher should be aware of prior to their child engaging in RSE lessons. If they wish to withdraw their child from specific formal RSE lessons, this should be provided in writing to the school and kept on file. Alternative arrangements will be considered and agreed upon by the relevant parties.

The school cannot accept responsibility for indirect RSE related information delivered to the child outside of formal RSE lessons i.e. on yard, school bus etc. Parents may be signposted to developmentally appropriate resources to support them in speaking with their child about relationships, sexuality and growing up.

Differentiation

The age and stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies for differentiation can support gradual and appropriate learning. In Darley N.S. teachers use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the curricular objectives and content to best suit the needs of all pupils. Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered will be made for children with special and additional educational needs. Consultation with special class teachers, Hearing Impaired and ASD Class teachers as well as parents/guardians/carers in advance of lessons and the anticipation of the pupil's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful. This may be reflected in the student's support file. The following factors will be taken into account:

objectives are realistic for the students.

• that the learning task builds upon prior learning

• providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups or 1:1.

• organising the learning task into small stages: outlining the steps to be learned/completed in any given task, posing key questions to guide pupils through the different stages/processes, and assisting in self-direction and correction.

• ensuring that the language used is pitched at the pupil's level of understanding. Some children may be pre-taught language or concepts in preparation of whole class work.

• creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible everyday materials, and by displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.

• employing active learning methodologies.

Language

Language reflects values, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and principles and can inform behaviour. It not only helps to express a culture but influences and shapes that culture as well. It is essential that children are enabled to use language in a precise and appropriate manner. The language that is promoted in the school must be one that nurtures both children and adults as unique and valuable human beings. It should respect cultural and other differences and be used in a way that encourages inclusiveness. In the Anti-Bullying Procedures 2013 and the Bī Cineálta Guidelines 2024, schools are asked to put specific strategies in place to prevent identity-based bullying, such as homophobic and transphobic

bullying. This will be covered as part of the Stay Safe lesson material. Specific terms used in the teaching of RSE are attached in Appendix 1 of this document.

Questions

In Darley N.S. teachers may use a variety of methodologies to create a safe, open space where pupils feel comfortable to ask RSE related questions. A 'Question Box' is one methodology that may be used as part of the formal RSE lessons.

During the delivery of each RSE lesson, pupils can be encouraged to place their questions into a box. These questions can be reviewed and the following may be taken into account:

• All pupils are encouraged to write on the question sheet. If they don't have a question, ask them to write something interesting they learned in the lesson, to eliminate pupils identifying those who asked a question.

• Questions arising from lesson content will be answered in an age-appropriate manner

. • The teacher cannot answer questions which do not relate to the curriculum objectives for a class

• Pupils will be informed if a question/issue is not on the curriculum and they will be advised to talk with their parents/guardians/carers.

• Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents if a need arises.

• No personal questions will be answered, and children will be reminded not to share inappropriate personal information about their families or others.

If a perceived child protection matter arises throughout RSE lessons or indeed otherwise, the teacher, as a mandated person, will refer to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 (Revised 2023).

Assessment

Darley N.S. will employ the following methods for assessment in SPHE/RSE:

• Observation and questions to assess the pupils' engagement and interest

• Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games

• Use of reflection or learning log

• Pupil Portfolio

Confidentiality

Darley N.S. follows the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 & 2023. If a child is withdrawn from specific RSE lessons, the school cannot guarantee that the withdrawn child will not hear the information from another source. Parents are invited to share any changes in circumstances with the school as necessary e.g. changes in

family structures etc. For the welfare of some children, this information may be important for a teacher to know prior to engaging in specific topics on family/relationships.

Provision of Ongoing Support

Darley N.S. ensures the provision of ongoing support by the following:

• encouraging teachers to attend RSE CPD

• utilising staff meetings as a platform for discussion and development of RSE

• seeking the support from an OIDE Advisor

• budgeting for the updating and development of RSE materials

• reviewing RSE policy on a regular basis

• ensure special education teachers have adequate training opportunities

• staff will reflect on information gathered from pupil/parent questionnaires and focus groups. This will be used to inform future developments regarding RSE.

• signposting staff to resources available from PDST and other sources

Review

Darley N.S. will review this policy every three years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

Review- Roles and Responsibilities:

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE/RSE curriculum in the school. The principal is responsible for co-ordinating this review. Those involved in the review will include:

- Teachers.
- Pupils.
- Parents.
- Post holders/ SSE plan co-ordinator.
- BoM/DES/Others.

Timeframe:

The plan will be implemented by all staff on a yearly basis. This plan will be reviewed in 2028 unless a need arises that must be addressed.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of Darley NS ratified this plan on _____.

Chairperson: _____ Date: 22nd January 2025

Principal: _____ Date: 22nd January 2025

Appendix 1

Class	Strand /strand Unit	Content Objectives *Consult curriculum for complete objectives in Growing and changing and Taking care of my body*	Language	Pages in RSE Resource Materials Book	Pages in Walk Tall	Supplementary resources
Junior /Senior Infants	**Myself** ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body	**Growing and changing** ▪ Become aware of new life and birth in the world ▪ Develop an awareness of human birth **Taking care of my body** ▪ Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms	womb breastfeeding penis vulva	New Life p68 My Body p147 Caring for new life p137 At the beach or swimming pool p.153	Our Amazing Bodies p94 (Senior Infants book)	▪ Anatomically correct dolls ▪ Picture books of new baby ▪ Visit of baby to class
First/ Second Class	**Myself** ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body	**Growing and changing** ▪ Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles **Taking care of my body** ▪ Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions	penis vulva vagina womb breastfeeding urethra	The Wonder of new life p59 /151 How my body works p67/ 161 Growing means changing p77/171 A Visit to the Doctor p.164	Our Amazing Bodies p37 (2nd class book)	▪ Picture books of going to the doctors ▪ Tom's Power Flower ▪ Books / activities on Life cycles ▪ Birth and new life in nature
Third/ Fourth Class	**Myself** ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body	**Growing and changing** • Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body • Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal **Taking care of my body** • Recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty • Discuss the stages and sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth	Revise above 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	▪ Body Systems ▪ Picture books on Growing and Changing ▪
Fifth/ Sixth Class	**Myself** ▪ Growing and changing ▪ Taking care of my body	**Growing and changing** ▪ Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship **Taking care of my body** ▪ 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 ▪ Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults	Revise above wet dreams Busy Bodies language 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)	▪ Busy Bodies ▪ Power points recap ▪ Question Box ▪ Puberty Quiz