

# **New Ross Educate Together National School**



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

## Introduction

All schools are required to have an RSE policy to detail how RSE is taught in the school, including the sensitive aspects. This policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE both formally and informally.

## School Philosophy

NRETNS is a place where we are respected and treat others with respect, a place where we feel happy and safe and a place where self-confidence and self-esteem can flourish. We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme and subsequently through RSE, 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 also 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 the wider community. Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Our ethos means that we value respect and openness through the lived experience of the children and school community. Parents have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible. SPHE and RSE are key components in supporting our school and children to develop into healthy young adults.

## 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 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.

### **SPHE:**

- Is a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and is not confined to once off inputs or lessons
- Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. RSE education should include an input from all, and collaboration can be fostered through the teaching and delivery of materials
- Is a generic approach. It is not so much about the specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues
- Is based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements and individual school situations
- Is spiral in nature. RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in school, this will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity
- Engages children to be involved in activity-based learning. RSE should provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one's own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships

Through SPHE and RSE, members of the school community should be 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

In an ever-changing world, RSE encourages children through consistent messages that are taught in line with SPHE. The school has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with (SPHE Teacher guidelines, p25). In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an intercultural society.

**Current Provision in the School Curriculum is:**

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall programme
- Webwise resources
- All Together Now – Homophobic and Transphobic bullying lessons
- RESPECT Guidelines (suggested approaches to teaching about different families)
- Adapted resources for SEN from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

**Aims of our RSE Programme**

- 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.

We support the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered, and attention is paid to the wellbeing of all of the members of the school community.

**Broad Objectives**

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

- 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 which support SPHE/RSE**

- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Use Policy (currently being updated)

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy

### Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from infants to 6th class. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

- Myself
- Growing and changing
- Taking care of my body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

- 1) The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE:
  - Friendship
  - Self-identity
  - Family
  - Self-esteem
  - Growing up
- 2) The second section will deal with any sensitive / specific content. These are outlined in Appendix 1. Some aspects of RSE will be taught through a number of time-tabled core periods, with the remainder being taught in a cross-curricular manner. Teachers will have to identify the appropriate links with other subject areas to ensure that children receive a broad-based approach to RSE.

Sensitive lessons will be taught school-wide during the second term of each year. These lessons are summarised in Appendix 1. We teach all content to boys and girls together; we believe that this promotes understanding and empathy. Each teacher will confirm that these lessons have been taught by completing a checklist. These will be stored centrally by the principal.

If for any reason a class teacher is unable to teach the sensitive lessons, the SPHE coordinator will make alternative arrangements for these lessons to be taught.

### Parental Involvement

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 meet with relevant teachers if they so wish, to discuss or clarify what is covered and to prepare their children. This 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.

Parents are welcome to view the curriculum and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.

Following discussion with the principal and class teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be centrally filed.

If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons. e.g. what they may hear on yard.



### Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from Junior Infants to sixth class. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

#### **Myself**

1. Growing & Changing
2. Taking Care of my Body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

1. The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units compliment the aims and objectives of RSE:
  - o Friendship
  - o Self-identity
  - o Family
  - o Self-esteem
  - o Growing up
2. The second section will deal with any sensitive/specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive topics are in **bold**.

Topics up to 2 <sup>nd</sup> class include:	Topics from 3 <sup>rd</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keeping safe</li><li>• <b>Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)</b></li><li>• Making age appropriate choices</li><li>• Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community</li><li>• Recognising and expressing feelings</li><li>• Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep</li><li>• Expressing opinions and listening to others</li><li>• <b>Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/Senior Infants)</b></li><li>• <b>Naming the parts of the male/female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>)</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Bodily changes</b></li><li>• Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise</li><li>• Keeping safe</li><li>• Expressing feelings</li><li>• Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and community and how these family relationships shape us</li><li>• Making healthy and responsible decisions</li><li>• Forming friendships</li><li>• <b>Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> class)</b></li><li>• <b>Introduction to puberty and changes (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)</b></li><li>• <b>Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)</b></li><li>• <b>Reproductive system of male/female adults (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class)</b></li><li>• <b>Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> class)</b></li></ul>

#### **A Standard Approach to Whole school Teaching of SPHE**

A standard approach to whole school planning for the content in SPHE helps our school develop consistency around the teaching of SPHE. This approach offers a guide to teachers in school around what to teach and when. This standard approach involves:

- Teaching 5 Strand units in year 1
- Teaching 5 Strand units in year 2
- Ensuring each year at least one Strand unit is taught from each of the three strands
- Each Strand unit is allocated two months of teaching time
- The timing of these two month blocks are mapped across each school year

With this standard approach all teachers are covering the same Strand units at the same time. This supports the whole school atmosphere and integration with planned school activities. It also enables the teachers to anticipate what will be covered and when, therefore increasing the scope for planned integration or thematic planning with other curricular areas.

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September / October	Self-identity (Myself)	Myself and my family (Myself and others)
November / December	My friends and other people (Myself and others)	Relating to others (Myself and others)
January / February	Safety and Protection (Myself)	Growing and Changing (Myself)
March / April	Making decisions * (Myself)	Taking Care of my Body (Myself)
May / June	Media education (Myself and the wider world)	Developing citizenship (Myself and the wider world)

\*Making Decisions is only a strand unit from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, Juniors – Second may complete the Safety Issues section of Safety and protection at this time. Due to the increased amount of lessons in the Stay Safe Programme from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class, placing the strand unit *Making Decisions* after the *Safety and Protection* in a standard two-year plan will enable the teacher to achieve some of the content objectives of *Making Decisions* through the Stay Safe programme.

### Approaches & Methodologies

When implementing the programme, staff at NRETNS will endeavour to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times. The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals). The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children. The RSE curriculum will be taught through a selection of the following methodologies:

#### Active Learning Methodologies:

- Discussion
- Role play
- Interviewing friends
- Design advertisements
- Writing captions
- Ranking statements
- Describing photographs

#### Other Methodologies:

- Stories and poems
- Group work
- Games
- Art activities
- Reflection
- Circle time

\* The class teacher will stay in the room at all times in accordance with Circular 42/2018 in the event of any guest speakers being used

### 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
- 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 self-direction and correction
- Having short and varied tasks creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible everyday 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. Examples:

- Group work and discussion
- Higher and lower order questioning in groups
- Moderated whole class discussions through use of a Question Box

### Pupils with Additional Needs

Adaptions to the way in which the content is delivered may be made for children with Additional 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 may be detailed in their IEP in consultation with parents/guardians

### Language

SPHE curriculum provides a context in which children are given opportunities to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to SPHE. Children should become aware of the power and influence of language. When used positively, language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner can hurt, diminish and demean. Children need to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationship and their everyday interactions. The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucially important to enable children to speak confidently about themselves and their relationships. Acquiring the appropriate vocabulary related to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, feeling etc. gives the child the means by which these issues are discussed in an age appropriate way. The RSE programme will encourage the use of the formal terms for body parts from the earliest age so that these terms are given status and acceptability.

Language reflects values, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and principles. 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.

### Questions

We use some simple principles when fostering discussion and questioning

- No personal questions of the teacher
- The Question Box will be availed of by children in older classes
- The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions
- Questions do not have to be answered straight away

During RSE lessons, teachers will aim not to invalidate any questions, but must use limits. Teachers will only answer questions which come within the scope of the agreed programme for each class level.

Sample responses:

- I'll do my best to answer your questions but I may not be able to answer all of them
- That's something you'll learn about as you get older
- Is that something you could talk to your parents / guardians / family about?
- We agreed in our contract that we wouldn't ask anyone personal questions
- Somebody asked a question and the language they used was slang language, what they meant to ask was....

For older children a 'question box' will be used as part of a structured RSE lesson. Teachers can follow up on the written questions at a later date, thus allowing time to prepare suitable answers, consult with colleagues, etc. Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is very inappropriate or needs to be communicated with home because of other reasons.

If issues arise which might be seen to contravene Children First Guidelines, the teacher will notify the Designated Liaison Person in the school.

### Assessment

Assessment in RSE is important to enable the teacher to pitch the lessons correctly to their respective class group. The teacher may use

- Observation and questions to assess the children's engagement and interest
- Use of teacher-designed tasks such as worksheets, quizzes or games
- Use of reflection or learning log

### Confidentiality

The school follows Children First Guidelines 2011 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011.

If a child is withdrawn from the teaching of sensitive issues, we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell or inform him/her about what happened.

### Resources

Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials manual.

Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:

- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls and Story books
- Busy Bodies DVD and Booklet
- Picture books across the 9 grounds of equality
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster
- RESPECT guidelines.
- Learn Together Ethical Education curriculum
- SALT programme
- Weaving Well-being programme

### Provision of Ongoing Support

- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE
- Staff meetings will be utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials
- Support from a PDST Advisor may be sought



- Promotion and communication of resources available from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

### Review

- The policy will be reviewed after every two years
- The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise

### Roles and Responsibilities

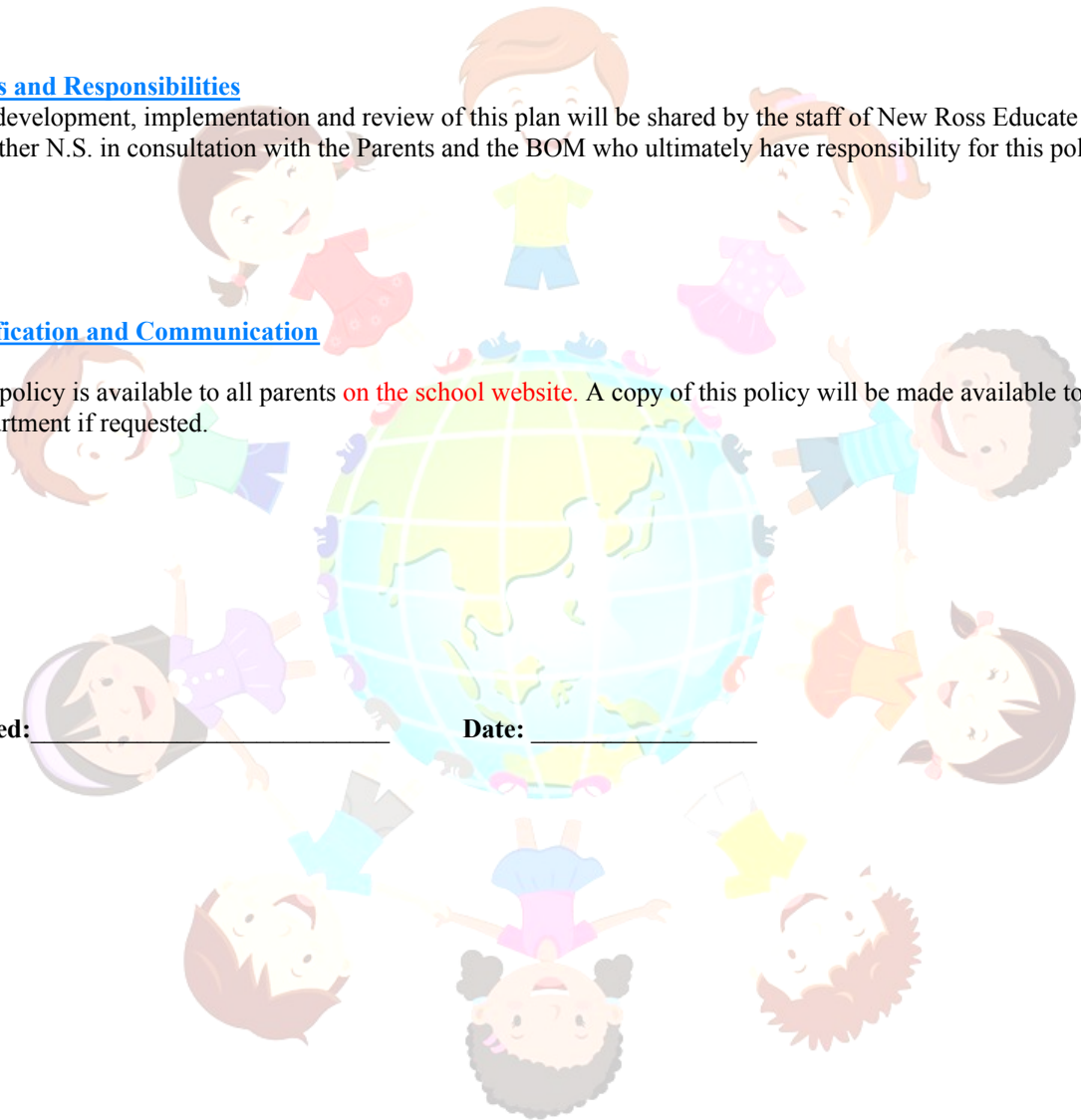
The development, implementation and review of this plan will be shared by the staff of New Ross Educate Together N.S. in consultation with the Parents and the BOM who ultimately have responsibility for this policy.

### Ratification and Communication

This policy is available to all parents **on the school website**. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department if requested.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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





### Appendix 1: Sensitive Curricular Objectives, Language and Lessons

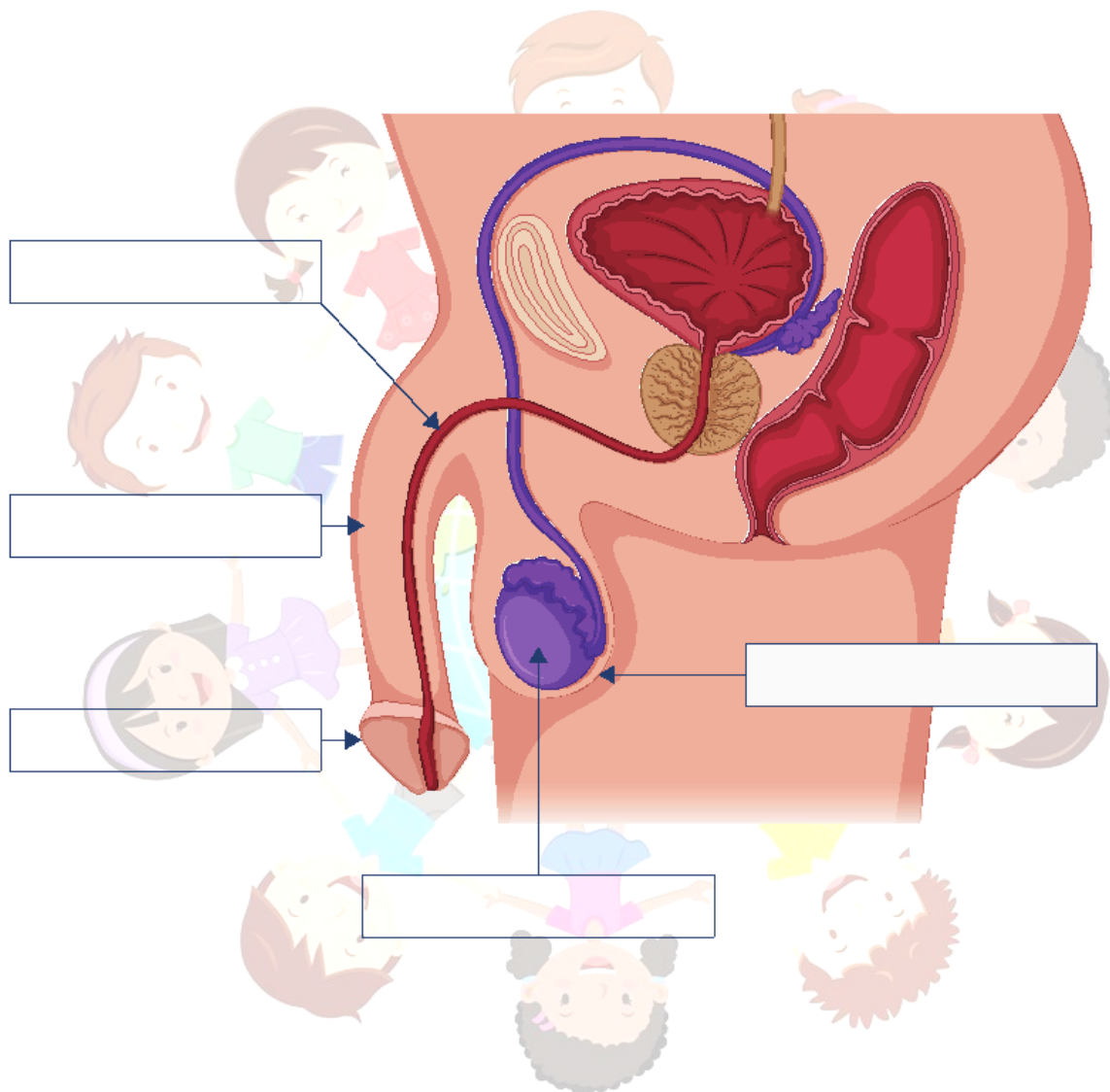
Class	Sensitive Curricular Objectives	Language	Sensitive Lessons	Overview of lessons
Junior Infants	<b>Growing and changing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Become aware of new life and birth in the word</li> <li>•Develop an awareness of human birth</li> </ul> <b>Taking care of my body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms</li> </ul>	Womb, breastfeeding Plus language from senior infants as it arises incidentally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Walk Tall Unit 1 Lesson 4: A New Baby</li> <li>•RSE Theme 7: New Life</li> </ul>	Signs of spring, Baby grows in womb, Care new baby needs
Senior Infants	<b>Growing and changing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Become aware of new life and birth in the word</li> <li>•Develop an awareness of human birth</li> </ul> <b>Taking care of my body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Name parts of the male and female body using anatomical terms</li> </ul>	Womb, breastfeeding, penis, testicles, vagina, vulva, anus, bottom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 6: Caring for New Life</li> <li>•RSE Theme 7: My Body</li> <li>•Walk Tall Unit 4 Lesson 2: Our Amazing Bodies</li> </ul>	Revision of Junior Infant content, Learn body parts through lesson about keeping clean / bathing a doll, Optional visit from parent and baby
First Class	<b>Growing and changing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles</li> </ul> <b>Taking care of my body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions</li> </ul>	Penis, urethra, anus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 7: How My Body Works Option 1</li> <li>•Walk Tall Unit 2 Lesson 1: All Shiny and New</li> </ul>	Caring for babies and pets, What happens when people and animals get old, Digestion of food
Second Class	<b>Taking care of my body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Name the parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions</li> </ul>	Penis, vagina, vulva, urethra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Walk Tall Unit 2 Lesson 1: Our Amazing Bodies</li> </ul>	Quiz and discussion about body parts
Third Class	<b>Growing and changing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identify the care that needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born</li> <li>•Develop an appreciation of the wonder of a new-born baby</li> </ul>	Vagina, vulva, umbilical cord, womb, breasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 6: Preparing for New Life</li> </ul>	Baby growing in womb, Optional

				visit from parent and baby
<b>Fourth Class</b>	<p><b>Growing and changing</b></p> <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> <p><b>Taking care of my body</b></p> <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>	Revise above. Plus: puberty, pubic hair, menstruation, period, facial hair, hormones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 6: The Wonder of New Life Option 1</li> <li>•RSE Theme 8: Growing and Changing</li> <li>•Supplement with Walk Tall Unit 7 (p.148)</li> </ul>	Puberty, Growth of baby in womb
<b>Fifth Class</b>	<p><b>Growing and changing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking care of my body</b></p> <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. Plus: language from Busy Bodies <a href="https://www.healthealthpromotion.ie/hpfiles/docs/HPM00478.pdf">https://www.healthealthpromotion.ie/hpfiles/docs/HPM00478.pdf</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 6: My Body Grows and Changes</li> <li>•RSE Theme 7: The Wonder of New Life</li> <li>•Supplement with Busy Bodies DVD</li> </ul>	Puberty, Conception
<b>Sixth Class</b>	<p><b>Growing and changing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a loving committed relationship</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking care of my body</b></p> <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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•RSE Theme 7: Relationships and New Life</li> <li>•Supplement with Busy Bodies DVD</li> </ul>	Puberty, Conception



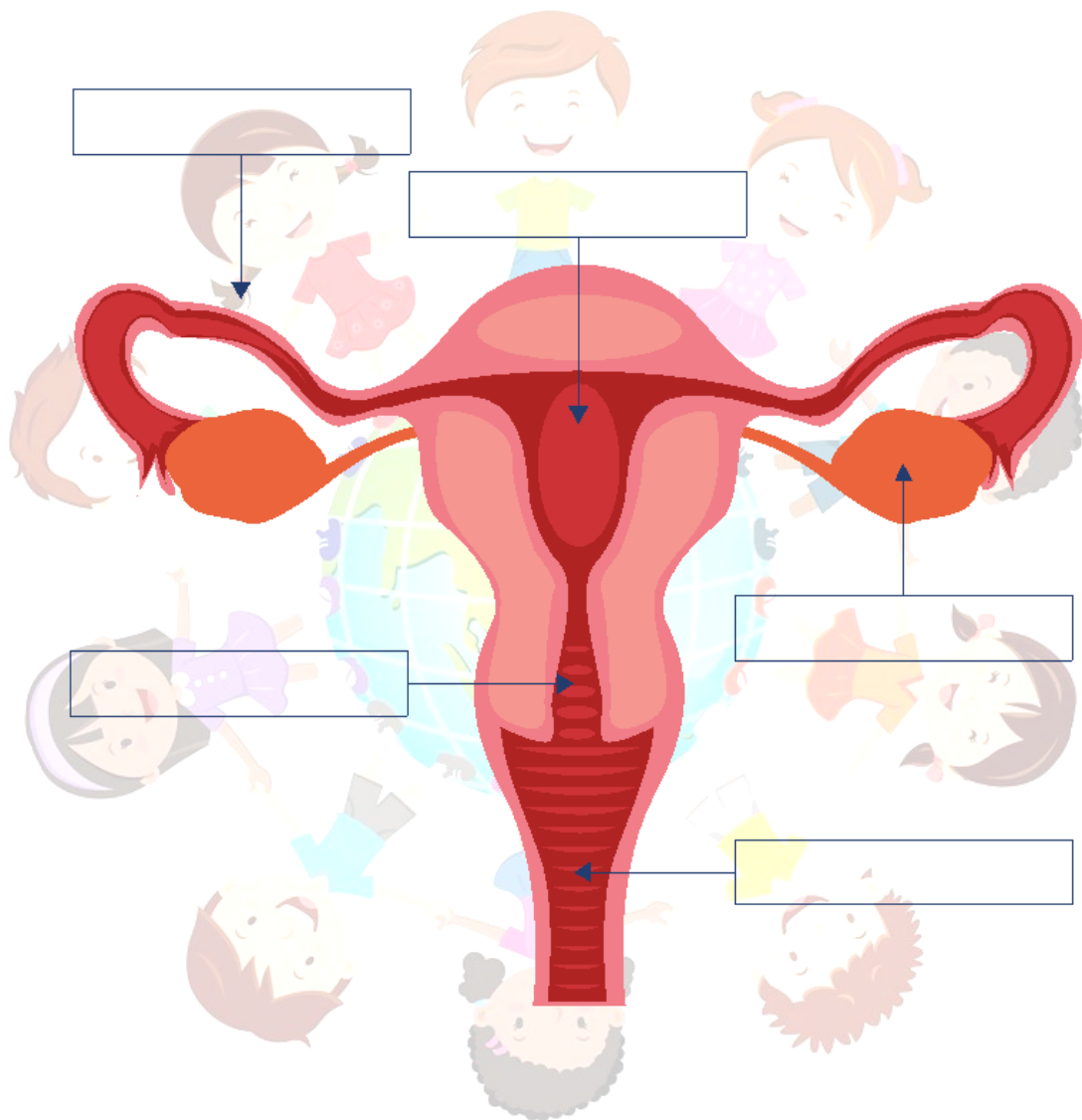


# MALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM



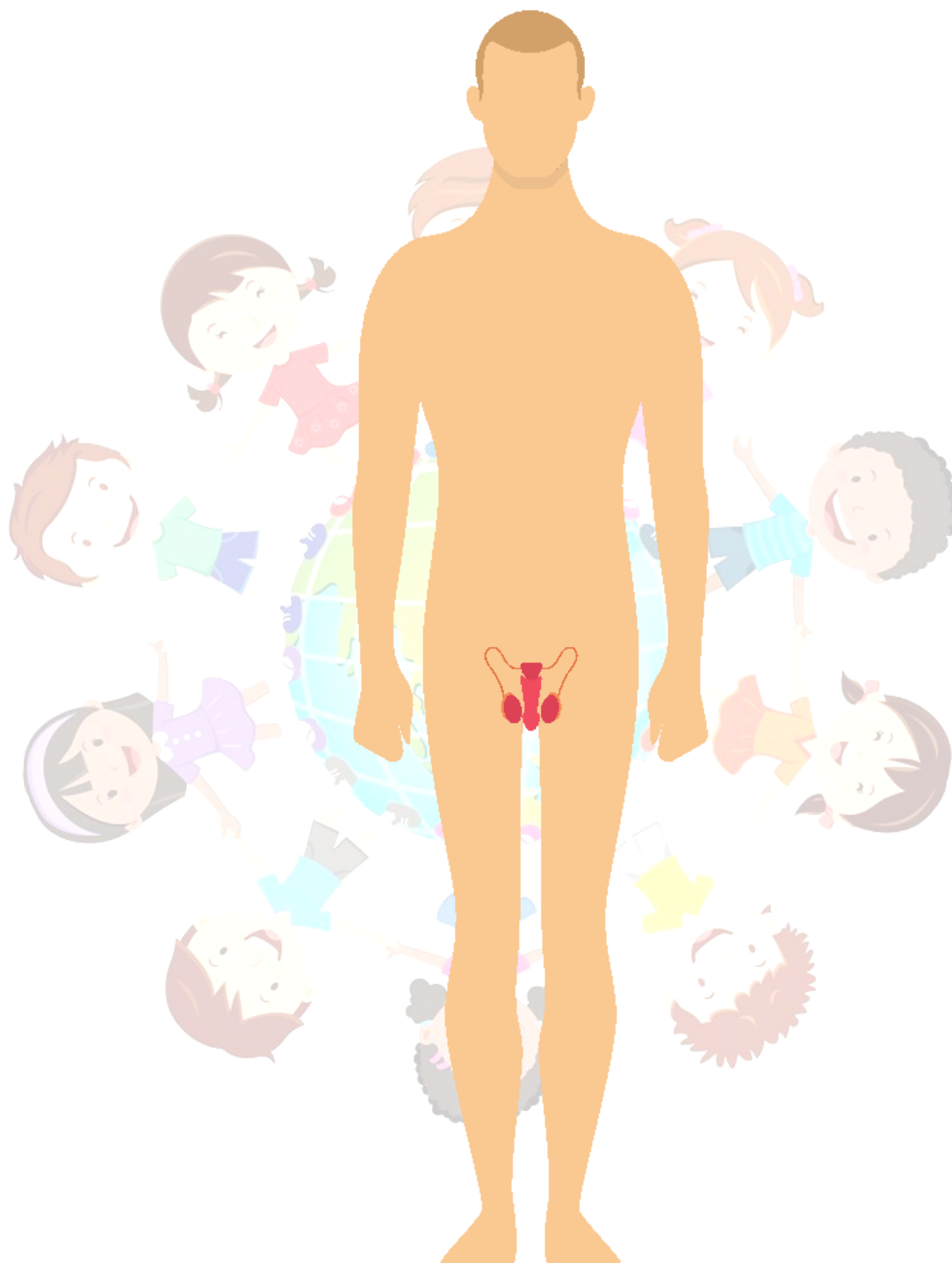
☐ Penis ☐ Scrotum ☐ Testicles ☐ Urethra ☐ Foreskin

# FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM



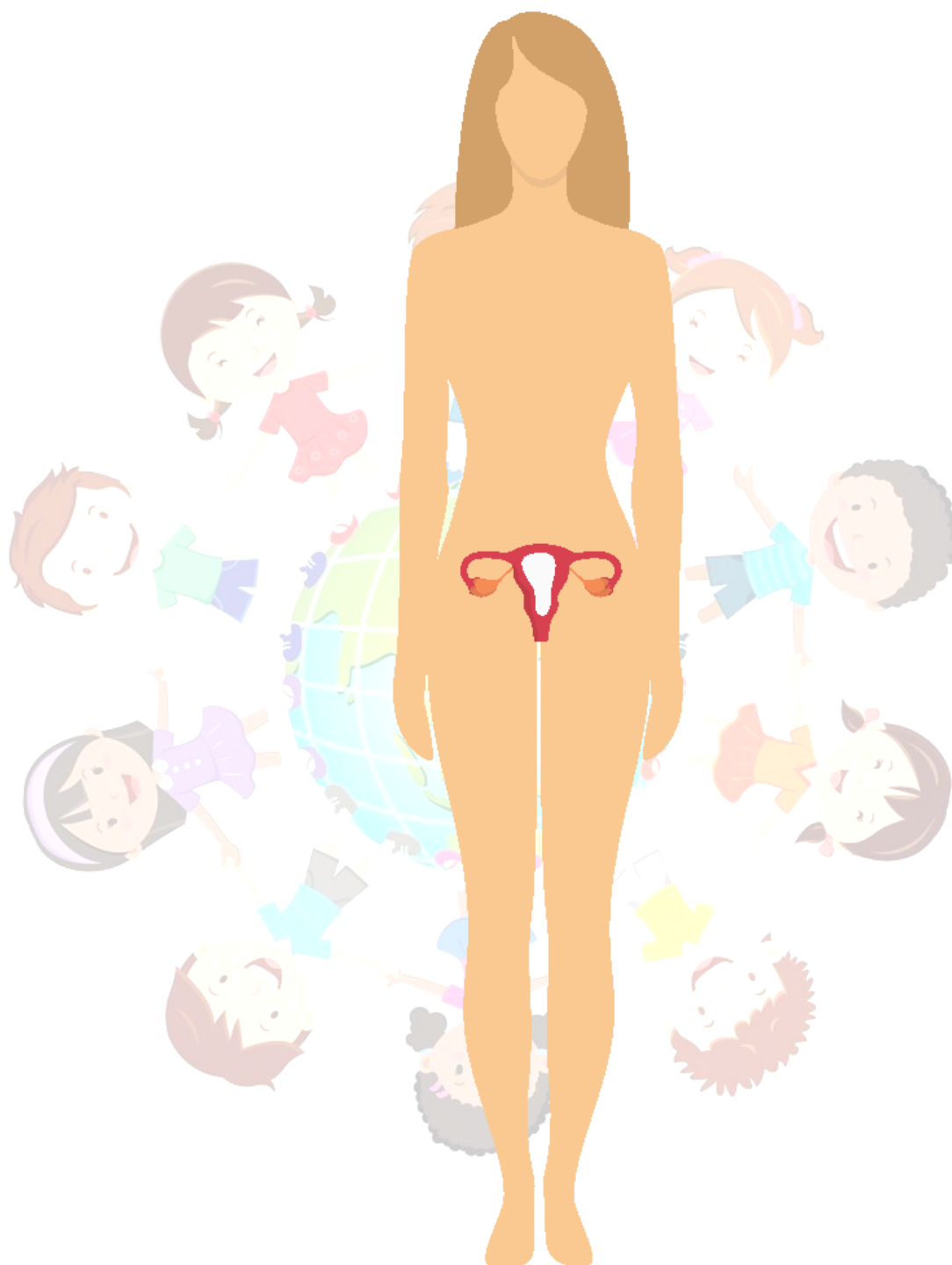
☐ Vagina ☐ Uterus ☐ Cervix ☐ Ovary ☐ Fallopian Tube

# HOW THE BODY CHANGES





# HOW THE BODY CHANGES



## Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD GENERAL LEARNING DISABILITIES

The NCCA 'guidelines for teachers of students with general learning disabilities' ([www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)) contain a wealth of information and material for teaching SPHE to students with general learning disabilities.

RSE is part of the educational entitlement of all students. All young people, whatever their ability, develop physically and emotionally and all need help to understand their bodies and their feelings. RSE helps students with their overall development, confidence and self-esteem. Some students with mild learning disabilities may lack confidence and need opportunities to develop the following skills through a structured SPHE/RSE programme:

- Development of positive self esteem
- Social and communication skills
- Appropriate expression of feelings
- Safety and protection skills
- An understanding of their body and the changes that take place at puberty

### When teaching RSE it is worth remembering that:


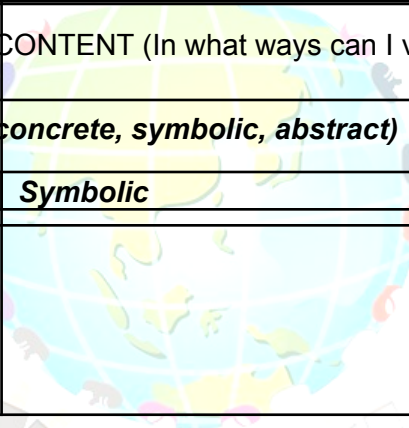
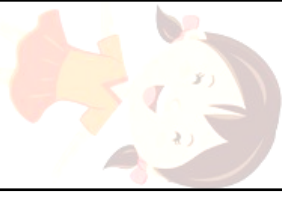
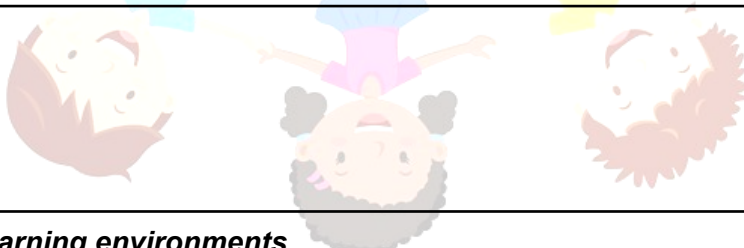
- The development of interpersonal skills and knowledge about one's body is dependent on the development of communication and language skills. This is the most fundamental skill that children need in order to describe themselves, to relate to their peers, and to interact with the outside world.
- The education of the child should be needs led, meaning that the teacher should try to establish what the needs of the student are and also what the child's emotional readiness and level of understanding are. This can be done through consultation with the parents and with the student him/herself.
- Consultation with the parents on sensitive issues is advisable. They may find the subject of sexuality in relation to their child difficult and may need information and support.
- Following consultation with parents and other members of staff, an Individual Education Plan for the student should be developed.
- The child will be better able to learn if the teacher uses key words, diagrams and active learning methodologies. Children with learning difficulties may also need more repetition and reinforcement.
- The resource teacher could consider integrating some of the RSE content into his/her lessons in order to reinforce the learning from the mainstream classroom.
- Children with learning difficulties need to learn in a variety of contexts in order to be able to generalise what they have learned.
- Inappropriate behaviour is not necessarily sexual but may stem from the fact that the child is stressed, bored, lonely or lacks access to other sensory experience. This should be borne in mind when helping a student to understand the boundaries between public and private behaviour.
- Many inappropriate behaviours in children are preventable if school initiates a conversation with parents while their child is in infant classes. This should stress the importance of putting a consistent approach in place which grows with the pupil and which, from the time the child is young, teaches what is appropriate, in what setting, and with whom.

# Differentiation Template

Using the template below, consider these aspects of the lesson given to your students so that all learners can be included in order that they can participate in and benefit from the lesson. This template was provided by the Special

KEY WORDS TO BE TAUGHT / PRE-TAUGHT			

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KEY CONCEPTS IN THE LESSON (OBJECTIVES)		
<i>What students must know or be able to do</i>	<i>What students should know or be able to do</i>	<i>What students could know or be able to do</i>
1. DIFFERENTIATE BY CONTENT (In what ways can I vary what I am teaching?)		
<b>(A) Complexity of content: (concrete, symbolic, abstract)</b>		
<b>Concrete</b>	<b>Symbolic</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
		
<b>(B) Variety of resources</b>		
		
<b>(C) Variety of learning environments</b>		

2. DIFFERENTIATE BY PROCESS (How will I teach the lesson?)

3. DIFFERENTIATE BY OUTCOME / PRODUCT  
(How will the student demonstrate understanding?)

FINALLY - ANY OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR THIS LESSON?



## SEXUAL ORIENTATION – ADVICE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### GENERAL POINTS

- Schools can foster a culture that is accepting of difference. This can be expressed where appropriate, rather than making the assumption that everyone understands it.
- 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, one of which is sexual orientation. The Acts oblige those who manage schools to protect students and staff from discrimination or sexual harassment.
- If children are using the word 'gay' in a negative fashion it is better not to ignore it in the hope that it will go away. The same advice would apply for any instance of bullying.
- Schools are advised to develop a strategy for responding to children who have questions about sexual orientation or who are taunting others about being gay. This should be done in the context of the school's ethos and RSE policy and with the awareness that primary school children are probably too young to engage in any detailed discussion of sexual identity.

### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

- Depending on the context and the age group of the children, the teacher could ask a child or a class group what they mean by the word 'gay'.
- A school could decide on a response to this question, such as 'The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being homosexual or gay.'
- To give factual information like this in an open and straightforward way may help to remove the secrecy which is necessary for any bullying to flourish.
- Homophobic insults should be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults – the teacher can calmly explain to the child that such insults are hurtful to the other person and are not acceptable.