



## **R.S.E. Policy**

**St Michael's School  
Holy Angels  
Glenmaroon  
Dublin 20**

**June 2021**

# Contents

<b>Section</b>		<b>Page</b>
1	Introduction and Rationale	2
2	Vision Statement	2
3	Definition of RSE, Context,	3
4	Aims	3
5	Objectives	4
6.	Policies which support SPHE/RSE	5
7	Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of the Programme	6
8	Parental Involvement	6
9	Organisation and Curriculum Planning	7
10	Content for RSE Programme	8
11	Child Safeguarding	10
12	Guidelines for Teachers	10
13	Ongoing support, development and review	11

## **Introduction and Rationale:**

St. Michael's School caters for pupils, ages 5-18 years, who, on psychological testing are found to be functioning within the level of mild general learning disability. The school has a responsibility to put in place an RSE policy as part of the wider SPHE curriculum. The RSE programme will take account of the particular needs of the pupils and respond appropriately to sensitive and emotive issues relating to emerging sexuality issues. The plan is based on an awareness of the need to develop positive self-esteem, social and communication skills, appropriate expression of feelings, safety and protection skills, all of which are particularly important as many pupils with mild general learning disabilities and pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder lack confidence. The opportunity to develop these skills will be provided through a structured programme.

## **Vision Statement:**

St Michael's School has a Catholic ethos, whilst respecting and acknowledging the diverse beliefs, religions and ways of life of others. A sensitive balance prevails between the rights, obligations and choices of those parents/guardians who subscribe totally to the ethos, and those who may not do so to the same degree.

The school, in partnership with the parents/guardians, seeks to communicate the Christian vision of human life and human relationships, and endeavours to create a positive attitude towards the gift of relationships and sexuality.

The dignity, privacy, modesty and individuality of each pupil must always be respected.

RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge in relation to self and others. This education seeks to promote the overall development of the pupils, providing them with clear information, building up their self-esteem, teaching them to respect others, to make decisions and apply them to everyday life. Each pupil is made feel valued for himself/herself and facilitated to develop his/her individual gifts and talents in a happy and secure environment.

Ultimately, R.S.E. seeks to enable the pupil to understand and gradually develop attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships and sexuality and to establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

As stated in our Mission Statement, "it is our wish that our pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life-skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and lives which will contribute to the betterment of society."

We want each pupil to leave our school with a strong sense of self-worth and self confidence. Our Mission Statement also calls us to "foster self-esteem, empowering each pupil to reach his/her full potential."

## **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.

This policy has been drawn up with reference to:

- Department of Education Circulars 42/2018, 43/2018 on Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) & Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) – Best Practice Guidelines for Primary and Post Primary Schools
- Circular Number 0018/2021 which details the SPHE/RSE toolkit and resource portal at <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Social,-Personal-and-Health-Education/SPHE-RSE-Toolkit>.

## **Context**

RSE will be delivered within the context of the SPHE curriculum and other curricular areas where relevant. Sensitive issues will be covered within the Strand Units of ‘Taking Care of My Body’, ‘Growing and Changing’ and ‘Safety and Protection’. Current provision included in the school curriculum is

- discrete SPHE lessons
- use of RSE manuals and Busy Body resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Religious Education Programme
- Science
- Home Economics
- Level 2 Learning Programme (Post Primary Level)

## **Aims**

In setting these aims, the ethos of our school, the ages, needs and development of the pupils are the primary influences. Keeping in mind that our pupils vary in their level of understanding, the aims of our R.S.E. Policy are:

1. To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of each pupil.
2. To enable each pupil to develop an understanding of the importance of family life whilst becoming aware of different family patterns.

3. To enable each pupil to be comfortable with themselves, their sexuality, physical development and growth.
4. To enable each pupil to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
5. To enable each pupil to understand the physical changes taking place with the onset of puberty.
6. To develop in each pupil an understanding of and a healthy attitude to relationships and sexuality within a moral, spiritual and social framework.
7. To assist each pupil to acquire and use appropriate and respectful language and terminology to discuss feelings, emotions, growth and development.
8. To enable each pupil to respect birth, new life and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
9. To enable each pupil to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
10. To enable each pupil to develop and sustain relationships based on mutual respect, responsibility and commitment and to understand the importance of trust and honesty in human interaction.
11. To help each pupil to develop strategies, protecting themselves and others from various forms of exploitation and abusive behaviours.

## **Objectives:**

Our broad objectives should enable each pupil 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

We support the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance 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 members of our school community. The school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home.

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

While much of our planning for RSE will be described in this document some of it will also be contained in other related policy documents. The following policies/documents/programmes are relevant and will support our teaching:

- Code of Behaviour document
- Stay Safe Statement
- CAWT Programme
- Safety Statement
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Antibullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Homework Policy
- Policy on substance use
- Policy on the Administering of Medication to pupils
- Policy on acceptable use of the Internet
- Making the Links and Beyond: A Planning aid for the updated and revised programmes
- Active School Flag
- Food Dudes
- Green Flag
- Friends for Life
- PAWS.b

## **Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of the RSE Programme**

- The teaching methods of RSE will be based on the principles as used in other areas of the curriculum. The methods are child-centred and appropriate to the age/stage of development of the pupil and are within a moral and spiritual framework. At all times the teacher will create an atmosphere in the class, which respects the privacy of each pupil, and all will be treated with sensitivity and care.
- All content objectives will be covered by the time the children leave school at age eighteen.
- It is school policy that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However, specialist speaker/team can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of, a planned programme of RSE.
- Some lessons may be delivered by a specialist speaker(s)/team. It is, however, essential that the programme is organised by the school and that the school should be satisfied that contributions from informed guest speakers are an integral part of the whole programme and in harmony with its aims.
- The APII will provide specialist speaker(s)/team with a copy of the RSE policy well in advance of the visit. After gaining approval from the Principal for the visit the organiser will make the specialist speaker(s)/team aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme.
- It is intended that parents will be invited to an Information Meeting with the specialist speaker/team prior to their work with the pupils.
- An outline of the content objectives will be made available to parents before the commencement of the programme each year.

## **Parental Involvement**

- Parents are the primary educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important. Parents will be involved in, and fully informed about the school's programme of RSE and its approach to particularly sensitive issues. The teaching offered by the school will always reinforce and strengthen positive family relationships and the role of parents. A copy of the policy statement will be made available to any parent/guardian on request to the school office and is available on the school website. We will endeavour to make parents aware of publications which will support them in this role.

- An outline of the content of the R.S.E. Programme to be taught in each class will be sent to parents at the beginning of the school year. (Appendix 1)
- Parents will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, and will receive an outline of what will be taught at their child's class level. The letter will be issued in advance, giving parents an opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire. (Appendix 2, 3)
- Following discussion with 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 centrally filed.

## **Organisation and Curriculum Planning**

St Michael's School is committed to providing a Catholic setting in which our pupils can develop attitudes, skills and understanding founded in Gospel values. An understanding of the Catholic faith underpins the whole work of the School. Working within a Catholic ethos will naturally place some critical sexual health messages within belief framework.

RSE forms part of the national Curriculum for SPHE and will be taught at every class level.

### **Strand Units of the SPHE/RSE Primary Curriculum:**

**Myself :** Self identity, Taking care of my body, Growing and changing, Safety and protection

**Myself and others:** Myself and my family, Friends and relating to other people

### **Class groupings**

Junior: St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John & St. Anthony

Middle: St. Peter, St. Louise, St. Gertrude, St. Brendan, St. Therese, St. Catherine  
(Post Primary)

Senior: St. Benedict, St. Bernadette, St. Brigid, St. Francis, St. Patrick, St. Vincent  
(Post Primary)

## **Content for RSE Programme**

**Topics covered in RSE in Junior Classes are based on the content of the RSE Primary School Curriculum. When due consideration has been taken of age/stage of development for Junior Classes, topics may include:**

- Keeping safe
- Naming bodily parts using correct terminology
- Bodily changes during growth and development
- Appreciating family life/family relationships
- Recognizing feelings
- Expressing feelings
- Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship

**Topics covered in Post Primary classes are based on the content of the RSE Primary School Curriculum, the Junior Cycle Curriculum, and Senior Cycle curriculum (where relevant). When due consideration has been taken of age/stage of development of pupils, topics may include:**

- Developing good daily personal care
- Developing healthy eating habits
- Developing a healthy lifestyle
- Being able to manage stress
- Knowing how to stay safe
- Recognising emotions
- Making personal decisions
- RSE Specific Topics:
  - Identify the standard names of the sexual organs
  - Describe the functions of the sexual parts of the body
  - Recognise the physical and emotional changes which occur in boys and girls during adolescence
  - Recognise the difference between appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing feelings
  - Recognise the difference between a friendship and a more intimate relationship
  - Learn to question assumptions (Do I have to have a boyfriend/girlfriend?)
  - Relationships - boy/girl relationships and same sex relationships
  - Develop clear and assertive but appropriate communication skills
  - Become aware of 'healthy and unhealthy relationships'
  - Be aware of the importance of making informed choices in relationships
  - Identify and locate sources of appropriate help with relationships
  - Examine a range of issues which might affect safety in relationships

- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship
- Understanding the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb, birth and taking care of a baby
- Sexual Health
- Develop the ability to make choices that promote emotional well being
- Become aware of organisations that can help with emotional/mental well being

The table below indicates the 2-year plan for SPHE and indicates where the RSE programme will be delivered.

**From the year 2021 – 2022 onwards the Strands will be addressed over a two year cycle as follows in keeping with the revised Making the Links and Beyond document.**

Month	Year 1 (2021 -2022)	Year 2 (2022 – 2023)
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) (Stay Safe Programme)	*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)

**\*STAY SAFE**

**\*Sensitive lessons in RSE**

**\*Making Decisions is only a strand unit from 3<sup>rd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup>. Classes using Juniors-2<sup>nd</sup> 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> to 6<sup>th</sup> class, placing the strand unit Making Decisions after the Safety and Protection in a two year plan will enable the teacher to achieve some of the content objectives of Making Decisions through the Stay Safe programme.**

## *Child Safeguarding*

**This policy is cognisant of all aspects of our current Child Safeguarding Policy. The school follows the DES Child Protection Procedures and has both DLP and DDLP in place. Where a child protection concern is raised the procedures outlined in the schools Child Safeguarding Policy will be followed.**

### **Guidelines for Teachers**

1. Familiarise yourself with the school's RSE policy.
2. If there are areas that you are still unsure about, discuss these with the Principal/designated Post Holder.
3. Teach within the guidelines agreed by the school community, as expressed in the Policy document.
4. Use the Department of Education and Skills resource materials.
5. Additional information can be obtained, if needed, from the Principal/designated APL.
6. Anticipate difficult questions in advance and plan how to answer them.
7. Try to answer as many questions as you can, but don't be afraid to set boundaries: it may not be appropriate to answer all questions in class because of the age or maturity level of the students.
8. While teaching the sensitive issues around RSE be aware if pupils from another class have been dispersed to your class.
9. It is possible to say that you can't answer a question in a pleasant and affirming way by saying, for example "that's something that we might discuss when you're a bit older", or "I won't be able to answer all your questions in class, but maybe you could talk to your parents about that".
10. If you don't know the answer to a question say that you might take some time to think about it
11. Keep a sense of humour.
12. Where distance learning is taking place the sensitive lessons and the teaching of the Stay Safe programme will be deferred until in class teaching begins again.

Additional suggestions for teachers may be found at:

- <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Social,-Personal-and-Health-Education/SPHE-RSE-Toolkit>
- <https://www.sess.ie/about-cat-gld-and-guidelines-use>

It is natural that pupils should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE.

All questions answered will reflect the parameter of the curriculum. Certain topics are not in the RSE/SPHE primary curriculum and will not be discussed at this level (e.g abortion or contraception)

Should a pupil require information that is not in line with the curriculum content and considered not to be age appropriate for the general body of pupils the school will refer the question home to parents and parents can decide if the question should be answered and who would be the best person to answer the question. This is done on an individual basis.

Teachers can state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum or in the Middle/Senior school when they are older.

## **On-going Support, Development and Review**

All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be “experts” on the issues concerned. The School will facilitate teachers to obtain training in this field, bearing in mind the overall budgetary framework and the need for the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the School to continue with as little disturbance as possible.

School staff have availed of training and are encouraged to attend in-service training in:-

- The Child Abuse Prevention Programme (Stay Safe)
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme (RSE)
- Walk Tall Programme
- SPHE/RSE Post Primary Courses

The School will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials which have been identified by Staff as useful and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general School resources allow.

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the RSE programme are;

- pupil feedback,
- Staff review and feedback,
- Parental feedback.

This process of evaluation will be undertaken by informal meetings as well as formal meetings between teachers and other relevant personnel. Such evaluations should take place at appropriate times during the implementation of the programme.

This plan was reviewed in 2004. Following a comprehensive review in June 2021 it was given to staff members and Board of Management. When due account was taken of any amendments, this plan was presented to the Board of Management and ratified on .....

*Sr. Bernadette Carron*

**Signed: Sr Bernadette Carron, D.C.  
Chairperson, Board of Management**

**Dated:** 22.09.2021

# Appendices

## **Appendix 1: Letter to parents/guardians re SPHE/RSE**

### **The Teaching of SPHE/RSE in St Michael's School**

**September 2021**

Dear Parent/Guardian

I wish to share some information with you about the teaching of SPHE/RSE in St Michael's School.

#### **Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)**

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a curriculum subject which all schools are required to implement. It is a fundamental cornerstone of the curriculum for pupils in our school. Through SPHE we seek to promote the personal development, health and well being of our pupils which will reflect the unique ethos of St Michael's School. We are committed to creating a positive school climate and atmosphere to support this plan. As stated in our Mission Statement, "it is our wish that our pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life-skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and lives which will contribute to the betterment of society".

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

**Relationships and Sexuality Education** is an integral part of the SPHE curriculum.

General themes of this programme which are taught through SPHE lessons include:

- Friendship
- Self-identity
- Family
- Self-esteem
- Growing up
- Relationships
- Human Sexuality

#### **Parental Involvement**

In St Michael's School we acknowledge that parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing. We will endeavour to make parents/guardians aware of publications which will support them in this role. The Appendix attached here suggests some resources which may be beneficial to you.

As referred to in our RSE Policy, parents/guardians will be informed in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme, and will receive an outline of what will be taught at their child's class level. The letter will be issued in advance, giving parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss or clarify what is covered. It also provides an opportunity to become involved, to become familiar with the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire.

A copy of the RSE policy will be made available to any parent/guardian on request to the school office and is available on the school website.

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.

**Organisation of SPHE/RSE in St Michael’s School**

The table below indicates how SPHE is taught over a 2 year cycle in our school.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Year 1 (2021 -2022)</b>	<b>Year 2 (2022 – 2023)</b>
<b>September/October</b>	<b>Self Identity</b>	<b>Myself and my family</b>
<b>November/December</b>	<b>My friends and other people</b>	<b>Relating to others</b>
<b>January/February</b>	<b>Safety and protection (Stay Safe Programme)</b>	<b>*Growing and changing</b>
<b>March/April</b>	<b>Making decisions</b>	<b>*Taking care of my body</b>
<b>May/June</b>	<b>Media Education</b>	<b>Developing Citizenship</b>

The sensitive lessons of the RSE programme are covered under ‘Growing and Changing’ and ‘Taking Care of my Body’.

**Content for RSE Programme**

**Topics covered in RSE in Junior Classes are based on the content of the RSE Primary School Curriculum. When due consideration has been taken of age/stage of development for Junior Classes, topics may include:**

- Keeping safe
- Naming body parts using correct terminology
- Body changes during growth and development
- Appreciating family life/family relationships
- Recognizing and expressing feelings
- Expressing feelings
- Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep
- Making healthy and responsible decisions
- Forming friendships
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship

**Topics covered in Post Primary classes are based on the content of the RSE Primary School Curriculum, the Junior Cycle Curriculum, and Senior Cycle curriculum (where relevant). When due consideration has been taken of age/stage of development of pupils, topics may include:**

- Developing good daily personal care
- Developing healthy eating habits

- Developing a healthy lifestyle
- Being able to manage stress
- Knowing how to stay safe
- Recognising emotions
- Making personal decisions
- RSE Specific Topics:
  - Identify the standard names of the sexual organs
  - Describe the functions of the sexual parts of the body
  - Recognise the physical and emotional changes which occur in boys and girls during adolescence
  - Recognise the difference between appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing feelings
  - Recognise the difference between a friendship and a more intimate relationship
  - Learn to question assumptions (Do I have to have a boyfriend/girlfriend?)
  - Relationships - boy/girl relationships and same sex relationships
  - Develop clear and assertive but appropriate communication skills
  - Become aware of ‘healthy and unhealthy relationships’
  - Be aware of the importance of making informed choices in relationships
  - Identify and locate sources of appropriate help with relationships
  - Examine a range of issues which might affect safety in relationships
  - Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship
  - Understanding the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb, birth and taking care of a baby
  - Sexual Health
  - Develop the ability to make choices that promote emotional well being
  - Become aware of organisations that can help with emotional/mental well being

### **School Year 2021 – 2022**

#### **Stay Safe Programme**

In the school year 2021 -2022 your child will follow the personal safety education programme “**Stay Safe**” in the months of January/February. This is a mandatory programme and must be taught in all schools.

Your child’s class teacher will inform you in advance of the details of this programme to enable you to become familiar with it.

### **School Year 2022 – 2023**

In the school year 2022 – 2023 your child will learn about the sensitive issues of the RSE programme through the topics of ‘Growing and Changing’ and ‘Taking care of my Body’ which will be taught from the months of January to April.

Your child’s class teacher will inform you in advance of the details of this programme. Our school ethos affirms and supports close links between school and home. The teaching offered by the school will always reinforce and strengthen positive family relationships and the role of parents. If you have any queries with regard to SPHE/RSE please feel free to contact your child’s class teacher.

Yours sincerely

## Resources for Parents

You may find the following resources useful and they can be accessed through:  
<https://www.pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/RSE>

### RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL - TIPS FOR PARENTS

**WHAT IS RSE?**

Relationships & Sexuality education (RSE) is a key component of the Social Personal & Health Education (S.P.H.E.) curriculum in primary school. RSE provides children with opportunities to develop knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practical skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships with self and others. In addition to learning about relationships, RSE invites children to explore concepts such as physical development and human sexuality. Topics are explored with children in a developmentally appropriate, spiral nature throughout their primary education. Topics addressed in RSE include exploration of feelings, friendships, inclusive families, puberty, pregnancy and conception. If you would like to view the RSE curriculum, teaching documents and resources, please do so on the following link by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) <https://www.pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/RSE>

**WHY TEACH RSE?**

As a parent, you are the primary educator of your child. Just as you help your child to grow and develop in other ways, consciously supporting the development of your child's sexuality education will help them achieve the skills, attitudes and values they need in order to have healthy relationships with themselves and others. Research tells us that sexuality education has a positive impact on young people's sexual health knowledge and their related behaviours. (UNESCO 2018) Recent Irish research would suggest that in general parents feel that RSE is an important topic to discuss with their children at home. However, many parents feel ill equipped to do this effectively. (Conlon 2018) So having accurate and age appropriate conversations with your child can help them develop healthy behaviours in relation to sexuality and sex. This article highlights tips and resources you can use to aid you in this instance.

1- PDST - Guidance for RSE Provision

### Talking to Your Young Child about Relationships, Sexuality and Growing Up

### Tom's Power Flower

A gentle explanation of how babies are made

### Healthy Bodies

for Girls

A Parent's Guide on Puberty for Girls with Disabilities

### Healthy Bodies – Appendix

for Girls

A booklet with information and resources may be downloaded at: [www.vkc.org/HealthyBodies](http://www.vkc.org/HealthyBodies)

A Parent's Guide on Puberty for Girls with Disabilities

### Healthy Bodies

for Boys

A Parent's Guide on Puberty for Boys with Disabilities

### Healthy Bodies – Appendix

for Boys

A booklet with information and resources may be downloaded at: [www.vkc.org/HealthyBodies](http://www.vkc.org/HealthyBodies)

A Parent's Guide on Puberty for Boys with Disabilities

### Busy Bodies

A booklet about puberty and adolescence for you and your parents

### Making the 'Big Talk' many small talks

Encouraging informed conversations between parents and children about relationships, sexuality and growing up.

### You can talk to me

communicating with your child

crisispregnancyagency

## Appendix 2: Second letter to parents/guardians re SPHE &RSE sensitive issues

December 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

Relationships and Sexuality education is an integral part of the SPHE curriculum which is a fundamental cornerstone of the curriculum for children in our school. As you have been made aware in our parent information leaflet which was distributed in September, the sensitive elements of the Relationships and Sexuality education programme are covered under the Strand Units, 'Growing and Changing' and 'Taking care of my Body'.

Our 2 year plan for SPHE indicates that your son/daughter will be learning about these topics from the months of January to April.

The table below indicates the content that will be covered for your son/daughter.

**Class: St X**

Growing and Changing	Taking Care of my Body

We acknowledge that parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing. By providing you in advance with this information it gives an opportunity for you to become involved with the programme and to prepare the children for the information they will acquire.

You may receive samples of work which the pupils have completed in school. This is an opportunity to reinforce all information shared.

If you require any further information please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Class Teacher

### **Appendix 3: Second letter to parents/guardians re Stay Safe**

7<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

We are planning to teach a personal safety education programme during this term. The aim of this programme is to teach pupils personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous. This programme is part of the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum which all schools are required to implement. Elements of this programme will come from the Stay Safe Programme and teachers may choose to use additional relevant age appropriate programmes.

The programme deals initially with common situations which some students may experience e.g being bullied. The programme also teaches 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 may have.

It is important that parents are aware of the content of the Stay Safe lessons and are able to discuss these with their son/daughter. Your son/daughter may bring home worksheets which will inform you on the topics being covered in class and how you can reinforce the messages at home.

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).

Thank you for your cooperation,

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