



SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

JUNE 2019

(Currently Under Review)

School Mission

Our mission is to establish a strong community in which the uniqueness of each individual is appreciated. We seek to instil respect, responsibility, courtesy, care and consideration in all members of the school community. We endeavour to develop a love of learning in our students and we encourage them to work hard and strive for success in both their academic studies and extra-curricular activities. We try to create an atmosphere which is conducive to learning, in which we can help students to reach their potential. As students proceed through the school, we expect them to take on more responsibility for their own future prospects through self-motivation. This is to prepare them for further education, their working lives and participation in society.

St. Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School aims to:

1. Educate our students and give them the personal and academic skills to become responsible and well-rounded adults.
2. Teach our students the value and importance of their role in society and of their capacity to have a positive effect upon their environment and society in which they live.
3. Identify the personal strengths of each individual and help them strive to fulfill their potential.

Policy Context and Rationale

This policy is informed by:

- The Child Protection Guidelines & Child Safeguarding Statement.
- DES Circulars 37/2010 and M20/96
- The Mission Statement of St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School.
- The SPHE Policy.
- The Code of Behaviour.
- The Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- The Special Educational Needs Policy (draft)
- The Guidance Plan (draft)

Definition of R.S.E

RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

R.S.E & S.P.H.E

The *Draft Guidelines for RSE* (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that SPHE is “spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology”. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

Aims of our R.S.E Programme

- To help pupils understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and relationship with others
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- To enable pupils to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy of the school
- To provide opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal.

Informing and Involving Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children and their role in education and their contribution and involvement will be vital to the effective implementation of the RSE programme. This policy is available on the school's website and has been designed in consultation with Parents' Association representatives and the views expressed by parents/guardians will be taken into account when reviewing the policy. Parents/guardians will be kept fully informed of the development and presentation of the RSE programme. Parent teacher meetings are held once a year for each year group and regular contact will be made with parents/guardians via the school journal, information booklets and letters, where necessary.

While all partners in the school community – teachers, parents/guardians and management – are agreed on the programme, we recognize, nevertheless, the right of any parent to withdraw their child from any part of the programme being taught. Before the commencement of the academic year a letter (Appendix 1) will be sent to parents/guardians outlining the RSE programme and they will be made aware of the deadline by which they can exercise their right to withdraw their child.

Withdrawing Pupils from the RSE Programme:

Parents/guardians are entitled to withdraw their child from RSE lessons. They do not have to give reasons for withdrawal but we respectfully invite them to do so. If such a request is made it must be complied with until revoked by the parent. (See Appendix 2)

Offering Advice

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. Teachers may provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. their doctor or other suitable agencies. Advice offered should not be directive and should be appropriate to the age of the pupil.

Explicit Questions

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the SPHE Co-ordinator or the Principal/DLP. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

Confidentiality

All school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.

It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the DLP. In line with the statutory role as DLP, the Principal will decide whether to inform the parents/guardians and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling.

The following is also school policy:

- teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality; pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal and possibly to parents/guardians if the Principal decides that it is in the best interests of the pupil to notify parents/guardians.
- teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information;
- teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.

Guest Speakers

It is school policy that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. Guest speakers can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of RSE.

All guest speakers will be made aware of and requested to comply with the Ethos, SPHE and RSE policies of the school. Using Digitary the guest speakers Garda Vetting must be emailed to the Principal in advance of their visit to the school.

Homosexuality

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that homosexuality will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning homosexuality is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussion of homosexuality should be appropriate to the age of the pupils.

Contraception

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way.

SEN Students

Students with special educational needs may need extra support in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. They may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable and appropriate and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.

Ongoing Support and Development

The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field. All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. The skills acquired in general teaching apply also to health education. Furthermore, some teachers have training in related areas such as counselling and others have expert training in the specific areas of health, relationships and sexuality education.

Resources:

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.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the RSE Programme:

Here in St. Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School 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.

Therefore, this RSE policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Appendix 1

Form 1

26th August 2019

Dear Parent/ Guardian

As part of our Junior Cycle SPHE Programme in first year we will be teaching the module on Relationships and Sexuality (RSE). RSE is much wider than the physical aspects and incorporates the moral, spiritual, social and psychological elements of each person. In first year RSE the topics that will be covered are as follows:

Module: Relationships & Sexuality

- Me as unique and different
- Friendship
- Changes at adolescence (physical & emotional)
- The reproductive system
- Images of male & female
- Respecting myself and others

Your child may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have.

If you would like to discuss this further, or if you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the SPHE teacher or Co-ordinator.

Please notify the SPHE Co-ordinator in writing by 6th September 2019 if you wish to withdraw your child from RSE lessons. These lessons will be taught between throughout the academic year 2019/2020. April and May 2019.

The school's SPHE and RSE policies are available upon request.

Yours Sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator.

Form 2

12th June 2019

Dear Parent/ Guardian

As part of our Junior Cycle SPHE Programme in second year we will be teaching the module on Relationships and Sexuality (RSE). RSE is much wider than the physical aspects and incorporates the moral, spiritual, social and psychological elements of each person. In second year RSE the topics that will be covered are as follows:

Module: Relationships & Sexuality

- From conception to birth
- Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions
- Peer pressure and other influences
- Managing relationships
- Making responsible decisions
- Health and personal safety
- Sexually transmitted infections

Your child may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have.

If you would like to discuss this further, or if you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the SPHE teacher or Co-ordinator.

Please notify the SPHE Co-ordinator in writing by 6th September 2019 if you wish to withdraw your child from RSE lessons. These lessons will be taught throughout the academic year 2019/2020.

The school's SPHE and RSE policies are available on the school website.

Yours Sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator.

Form 3

12th June 2019

Dear Parent/ Guardian

As part of our Junior Cycle SPHE Programme in third year we will be teaching the module on Relationships and Sexuality (RSE). RSE is much wider than the physical aspects and incorporates the moral, spiritual, social and psychological elements of each person. In third year RSE the topics that will be covered are as follows:

Module: Relationships & Sexuality

- Body image
- Where I am now
- Relationships – what is important
- Sexual orientation
- The 3 Rs – respect, rights and responsibilities
- Conflict in relationships
- Contraception

Your child may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have.

If you would like to discuss this further, or if you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the SPHE teacher or Co-ordinator.

Please notify the SPHE Co-ordinator in writing by 6th September 2019 if you wish to withdraw your child from RSE lessons. These lessons will be taught throughout the academic year 2019/2020

The school's SPHE and RSE policies are available on the school website.

Yours Sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator.

Transition Year

12th June 2019

Dear Parent/ Guardian

As part of our Senior Cycle Programme in Transition Year we will be teaching the module on Relationships and Sexuality (RSE). RSE is much wider than the physical aspects of relationships and sexuality and incorporates the moral, spiritual, social and psychological elements of each person. In Transition Year RSE the topics that will be covered are as follows:

Module: Relationships & Sexuality

- Positive communication – how to be assertive
- Decision making
- Dealing with emotions
- Implications of sexual activity
- Discrimination
- Challenging Roles – what it means to be male/female in modern society

Your child may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have.

If you would like to discuss this further, or if you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the SPHE teacher or Co-ordinator.

Please notify the SPHE Co-ordinator in writing by 6th September 2019 if you wish to withdraw your child from RSE lessons. These lessons will be taught throughout the academic year 2019/2020.

The school's SPHE and RSE policies are available on the school website.

Yours Sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator.

Form 5

12th June 2019

Dear Parent/ Guardian

As part of our Senior Cycle Programme in fifth year we will be teaching the module on Relationships and Sexuality (RSE). RSE is much wider than the physical aspects of relationships and sexuality and incorporates the moral, spiritual, social and psychological elements of each person. In fifth year RSE the topics that will be covered are as follows:

Module: Relationships & Sexuality

- Managing myself – dealing with conflict
- Human sexuality / accepting sexual orientation
- Implications of sexual activity
- Loving relationships / marriage
- Decision making / planning for the future
- Informed consent

Your child may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have.

If you would like to discuss this further, or if you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the SPHE teacher or Co-ordinator.

Please notify the SPHE Co-ordinator in writing by 6th September 2019 if you wish to withdraw your child from RSE lessons. These lessons will be taught throughout the academic year 2019/2020.

The school's SPHE and RSE policies are available on the school website.

Yours Sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator.

Form 6

12th June 2019

Dear Parent/ Guardian

Next term as part of our Senior Cycle Programme in sixth year we will be teaching the module on Relationships and Sexuality (RSE). RSE is much wider than the physical aspects and incorporates the moral, spiritual, social and psychological elements of each person. In sixth year RSE the topics that will be covered are as follows:

Module: Relationships & Sexuality

- Managing myself – dealing with conflict
- Human sexuality / sexual orientation
- Implications of sexual activity
- Decision making – what's next
- Informed consent
- Sexual harassment / discrimination

Your child may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have. This module will begin during the week of 29th April 2019

If you would like to discuss this further, or if you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the SPHE teacher or Co-ordinator.

Please notify the SPHE Co-ordinator in writing by 9th April 2019 if you wish to withdraw your child from RSE lessons. These lessons will be taught throughout the academic year 2019/2020.

The school's SPHE and RSE policies are available on the school website.

Yours Sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator.

Appendix 2

If a request for withdrawal from the RSE programme is made by a parent:

- we discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent and, if appropriate, attempt to reassure them (initially such discussion takes place at a meeting with the SPHE Co-ordinator and SPHE teacher, the Principal may become involved if necessary)
- we consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents/guardians - care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the RSE programme and the entitlement of the other pupils, e.g. it may be appropriate and desirable to have single sex classes for some sections of the RSE programme;
- we attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education,
- we also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers;
- we offer the parents/guardians access to appropriate information and resources.