



St. Louis Secondary School
Carrickmacross

Relationships and Sexuality Policy

2019



St Louis Secondary School, Carrickmacross.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) Policy

Mission Statement

The aim of St. Louis Secondary School, Carrickmacross, is to foster a school community where all the members live in a friendly environment, where young people are taught to think for themselves, to be responsible for their actions, to hold in respect the world in which they live, and to recognise the importance of spiritual values in their lives.

Ethos

Our school is a Christian community where all members grow to value their own worth as persons, their loving relationship with God, their links with their family and the interdependence of all people. As such the school strives to be a welcoming place to all irrespective of social, cultural or religious background. Following the legacy of Abbé Bautain we aim to be inclusive, to provide for the education of the whole person in the fullest sense, to be especially mindful of the disadvantaged and those with special needs. Members of our school community co-operate in an educational experience which promotes the formation of young people in a value-based, Christian education in the Catholic tradition. However, we welcome students from other religious traditions and we are aware of and sensitive to their needs.

These Christian values of community must find first expression in the daily life of our school, in management structures founded on consultative decision-making and behaviour management strategies that are just and fair and seek the goal of personal maturity through positive affirmation.

Introduction

Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) as part of the S.P.H.E. Programme supports the personal growth and development, health and wellbeing of our students. Relationship and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. R.S.E. gives an opportunity to students to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner. R.S.E. in the Post Primary School builds on the module which is delivered in Primary School by providing the students with information and skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today, and thus make positive, responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives.

Scope of Policy

(a) R.S.E. policy applies to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality education. R.S.E. is a structured module within the S.P.H.E. programme at Junior Cycle.

(b) In order to be effective, the R.S.E. module in St. Louis Secondary School must be supported in a school climate that is marked by gender equity and a healthy respect for sexuality. These key principles require particular attention in a single sex school such as St. Louis.

(c) Information and discussion regarding R.S.E. can also take place in other classes. The R.S.E. module is supported by the wider curriculum in such areas as Home Economics, Science, Religious Education, Physical Education and Civic, Social, Political Education.

(d) This policy applies to school staff, students, Board of Management, parents/guardians, visiting speakers, external facilitators, outside agencies.

***Rationale**

- The Education Act 1998.
- Section 4 of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for R.S.E. and a suitable R.S.E. Programme in place for all students at Junior Cycle.
- Circular M4/95
- Circular M20/96
- Circular 0027/2008
- Child Protection Guidelines

Relationship to the school's Mission Statement

- St. Louis Secondary School acknowledges the importance of R.S.E. being taught in the context of a whole school climate that is inclusive and respectful.
- The R.S.E. Policy reflects the core values and ethos of our school, as outlined above in the school's vision statement.
- Spiritual, moral and ethical issues will arise when teaching R.S.E. This R.S.E. policy will guide teachers in the treatment of such issues in accordance with the ethos of the school, therefore, teachers must realise that their role is to express the views of the whole school community on these sensitive issues, and not their own personal views.

In this regard, it should be noted that:

- The school is required to deliver all aspects of the R.S.E. curriculum, including those in relation to sexual orientation, contraception, sexually transmitted infections etc. This is done within a context in which teaching of the programme is informed by the school's ethos.
- The school can express its ethos while at the same time facilitating students in discussing a range of views in relation to topics within the R.S.E. Programme.

Aims of the RSE Programme

1. To help young people develop healthy friendships and relationships.
2. To promote an understanding of sexuality.
3. To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others.
4. To promote knowledge of and respect for human reproductions.
5. To enable young people to develop healthy attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a respectful, moral, spiritual and social framework.
6. 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 way.

It is acknowledged that in a course of limited duration these aims are aspirational.

Objectives of RSE Programme

R.S.E. should enable students to:

- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change especially during adolescence and to develop respect for difference between individuals.
- Understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle and human fertility.
- Understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex roles, stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality..
- Value relationships and family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Develop strategies for decisions and actions consistent with personal moral integrity and respectful of the rights and dignity of others.

RSE Module Themes for Junior Cycle

The resource material for R.S.E. for Junior and Senior Cycle as developed by the DES (Department of Education and Science), N.C.C.A (National Council for Curriculum Assessment) will be used and the H.S.E (Health Service Executive). The age, level of maturity and class dynamics will determine what topics are covered and to what level. Other modular materials may be used.

Content.

At Junior Cycle some of these topics are covered each year to varying degrees.

<i>Junior Cycle</i>
Communication
Feelings
Hygiene
Positive Image – self esteem
Changes During Adolescence
Sexual Language
Puberty – Growing & Changing
Reproduction, Conception, Pregnancy and Birth
Relationships – Family, Friends, Boy/Girl
Gender Identity
Sexuality and Sexual Health.
Personal Safety
Responsible Decision Making
Sexual Orientations. LGBT
Media Influences on Relationships and Sexuality.

We aim to cover as many of the following topics as possible in Senior R.E.

<i>Senior Cycle</i>
Feelings
Relationships
Marriage
Human Reproduction
Human Sexuality
Family Planning
Responsible Parenthood
Pregnancy and Parenthood
Reproduction, Conception, Pregnancy and Birth
Implications of Sexual Activity
Sexually Transmitted Diseases

HIV/AIDS
Abortion
Sexual Orientations
Human Sexuality
Gender Roles
Sexual Harassment, Assault, Rape, Abuse

Resources

- Relationships and Sexuality Education – Interim guidelines, Department of Education and Science 1996.
- S.P.H.E. – Resource material for R.S.E., Post-Primary Junior Cycle, Department of Education and Science 1998.
- S.P.H.E. – Resource material for R.S.E. Post-Primary Senior Cycle (Department of Education and Science) 1999.
- Health and Wellbeing SPHE 1 and 2. Edco.
- SPHE 3. Edco.
- Information booklets from the IFPA and the HSE.

Provision of Training and Staff Development

- The school has an appointed co-ordinator for S.P.H.E.
- Teachers are released to attend R.S.E. Training.
- Teachers of S.P.H.E./R.S.E. have access to the S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. resources.
- These resources are stored in the S.P.H.E. resource press.

Implementation of the Policy

- R.S.E. is included in the Junior Cycle S.P.H.E. curriculum and is timetabled in all Junior classes.
- 4th, 5th and 6th year R.S.E. is included in the R.E. curriculum.
- As far as possible, R.S.E. modules will commence in the 3rd or 4th term for each year group at Junior Cycle. A standard letter will be sent prior to this to notify parents that the RSE part of the SPHE course will be delivered in the subsequent weeks.
- A copy of the RSE/SPHE policy is available on the school website.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to have discussed relationships and sexuality with their daughter prior to the commencement of these classes.
- Copies of the R.S.E. programme will be made available for viewing by appointment.

Answering Questions

While it is important to create an environment in S.P.H.E./R.S.E. in which students can discuss issues openly, teachers may not be able to answer all questions asked by students and can set appropriate limits. Students may ask questions about issues which are not included in the curriculum. On this, and on all questions, teachers should use their professional judgement, guided by the age of the students, the R.S.E. Curriculum, the R.S.E. and the Policy and Ethos of the school.

Confidentiality:

While students should not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in S.P.H.E./R.S.E. classes, there may be times when they do talk about their own lives. Confidentiality should be respected but it should be noted that there are times when the teacher cannot promise confidentiality.

The issues surrounding the following cannot be treated as confidential:

- Child abuse: physical, emotional, sexual or neglect.
- Underage sexual intercourse (under 17 years of age).
- Intention to harm self or others.
- Substance misuse.

The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools state in 4.1.1. and 4.2.1.

4.1.1. If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he/she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Designated Liaison Person. The need for confidentiality at all times, as previously referred to in Chapter 1 Paragraph 1.2 of these guidelines, should be borne in mind. The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

4.2.1 If the Designated Liaison Person is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation he/she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.

Role of Parents & Guardians

- The Board of Management and staff of St. Louis Secondary School acknowledge parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children and that the home is a natural environment where relationships and sexuality education should take place.
- The school will work in a supportive role to complement the work of parents/guardians.
- It is expected that parents/guardians will support R.S.E. teaching methodologies and resources used by the school.

- A Parent's/guardian's right to withdraw their daughter from the R.S.E. process will be respected on the understanding that the parent/guardian is taking responsibility for this area of the child's education himself/herself. An explanation in writing will be required from the parent/guardian in such a situation.

Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated by the teachers of the R.S.E. Programme in consultation with the wider school community.

- The evaluation process will take cognisance of changing information, guidelines, legislation, feedback from students, parents/guardians, staff and others in the school community.
- St. Louis Secondary School is committed to monitor and evaluate the efficiency of the R.S.E. Programme, specifically student feedback, staff review and parental feedback. Consultation All partners in the school community i.e. Staff, Student Body, Parents' Council, Board of Management have been consulted in drafting this policy document.

Monitoring and Review

This policy was Reviewed and Ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on _____.

This Policy is operational from _____.

Mr Jim Hand

Chairperson of Board of Management

Ms. Karen Patton.

Principal