

Policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education RSE



"Live as free people"

St Peter's Community School

Approved November 2017

Scope

This policy refers to students in St. Peter's and involves parents/guardians, staff, school management and the Board of Management.

Relationships and Sexuality Education refers to a life long process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes and beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy

Relationship to school's mission statement

"St. Peter's is a vibrant dynamic and caring school committed to the academic, personal and spiritual development of all its pupils. It has a Christian ethos within which other traditions are welcomed and respected. We encourage excellence by fostering a love of learning and by promoting a rich and diverse range of educational opportunities. We believe in empowering and equipping our pupils to become well qualified and rounded individuals who can thrive in and contribute to an ever changing world.

In order to realise the aim of a caring school and to ensure the personal development of all pupils it is important to develop and expand on these commitments through our RSE policy.

Rationale

St. Peter's Community School is committed to the education of the whole person.

The Education Act 1998 states "A recognised school shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school."

In this context, the school provides a programme in Relationships and Sex Education / (SPHE). The school recognises parents as the primary educators of their children.

This affords them the right to withdraw their child from this programme. The programme will be offered within the overall framework of the school ethos and will be integrated into the curriculum.

Aims

The overall purpose of RSE in the curriculum is to provide the opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. The specific aims include:

- To provide knowledge and understanding of human sexuality.
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others.
- To enable students to follow the skills to form healthy friendships and relationships.
- To understand human physiology, with particular reference to the reproductive system, human fertility and sexually transmitted diseases.

Policy Content

The RSE programme will be introduced in the context of the school's Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) programme and as an integral part of that programme. Normally, the RSE programme will be allocated the equivalent of six class periods at Junior Cycle and an appropriate time allocation at Senior Cycle to deliver the programme as set out below. External visitors/facilitators are also used to supplement and/or enhance topics on the RSE programme. All those involved in RSE will be supported through the provision of resources, in-career development and information/educational seminars as necessary.

First Year

1. Self Esteem
2. Communication
3. Friendships
4. Body awareness, personal hygiene, body care
5. Puberty
6. Menstruation

Second Year

1. Feelings
2. How I relate to family/friends
3. Human reproduction (female)
4. Human reproduction (male)
5. Fertilisation/conception

Third Year

1. Peer Pressure
2. Self-Awareness, personal values
3. Time to reflect, personal identity
4. Boy-girl relationships
5. Boy-girl relationships continued
6. Teenage pregnancy

Fourth Year

Under Review

Fifth Year

1. Sexual Identity
2. Sexual orientation/homophobic bullying
3. Responsibilities/consequences of close relationships
4. Sexual harassment
5. Sexual Activity and media messages
6. Sexual Health services

Sixth Year

1. Understanding sexual health
2. Contraception
3. Sexual activity - parenthood
4. Sexual activity – STI's/AIDS
5. Sexual abuse

Roles and Responsibilities**Board of Management**

The Board of Management is responsible for the development and review of the RSE policy.

Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of the RSE policy. The Principal will work closely with the RSE / SPHE Co-ordinators and the subject teachers so that relationship and sexuality education is taught in a coherent way.

RSE Co-ordinator

The RSE / SPHE Co-ordinators are responsible for developing the RSE policy, its review and to inform and advise all teachers of programmes, resources, materials and levels of support available. The Co-ordinators will also liaise with the Chaplain and the other relevant teachers in relation to outside visitors/facilitators to ensure that they adhere to agreed guidelines on good practice as set out in the SPHE Handbook.

Subject Teachers (Religion/SPHE)

Subject teachers are responsible for the delivery of the RSE programme as set out in this policy.

Monitoring and Review of RSE Policy

The Principal will monitor the implementation of the policy in conjunction with the staff. The Principal will keep the Board of Management informed of same. This policy will be reviewed by:

- SPHE co-ordinator / RSE co-ordinator and Chaplain annually.

Guidelines for External Visitors/Facilitators to Supplement the SPHE/RSE Programme in St. Peter's Community School

1. All visitors to be aware of the Child Protection Policy, RSE policy and Substance Misuse Policy.
2. Visits are to be carefully planned in advance.
3. Relevant teachers are to liaise with external agencies and inform all staff.
4. Talks and Presentations should be consistent with school ethos and SPHE-RSE programmes.
5. Visitors should be qualified to work with young people and programmes delivered must use appropriate evidence based methodologies with clear educational outcomes.
6. Parents should be consulted if necessary, and made aware of external visitors/presentation.
7. Subject teachers must remain in the classroom with the students during any presentation by and external visitor. Teachers should follow up any issues that may arise as a result of the external input.
8. External programmes/talks/presentations should be evaluated by students and teachers.

Teaching approaches that have limited effect and are counterproductive to effective implementation of SPHE/RSE include:

- Scare tactics
- Sensationalist interventions
- Testimonials
- Information only interventions
- Information that is not age appropriate
- Once-off short term interventions
- Normalising young people's risky behaviour
- Didactic approach