



## RSE Policy Document Approved by the BOM 6-3-19

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### **College Mission Statement**

“Our college is a vibrant, friendly, learning community where students, teachers and parents are encouraged, supported and challenged in pursuit of the highest standards of achievement and academic excellence. We foster equality, respect and integrity in our college. We embrace diversity and recognise that everyone is unique and has a positive contribution to make”.

### **Definition of RSE**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding around the area of relationships and sexuality while also developing healthy and responsible attitudes, beliefs and values about areas such as sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media (including social media).

Building on the work completed in primary School, RSE at post-primary level seeks to provide opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that will enable them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

### **RSE Aims and Objectives**

#### Aims

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding sexuality
- To promote a positive attitude to one’s own sexuality and in one’s relationship with others
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral and social framework.
- To enable students to make informed choices

With each support, students may be enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and that of others. There is a growing recognition amongst the college community that RSE is an integral aspect of a students holistic education and is as important as any other curricular subject.



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## Objectives

RSE should enable students to;

- explore personal thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings about relationships
- develop an understanding of the different types of relationships, what is important in them and the skills to enhance relationships
- promote empathy with others who have different cultural values, attitudes and beliefs about family, relationships, sex and sexuality
- develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills in support of sexual reproductive health
- develop students' understanding of sexuality and sexual orientation and the importance of an inclusive environment
- develop personal and interpersonal skills which support beginning, maintaining and ending relationships
- develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety

## **Class Organisation and Timetabling**

Circular M11/03

All second level schools must timetable Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of the Junior Cycle Core Curriculum from September 2003. The time allocation recommended is the equivalent of one class period per week.

Circular 0037/201

All second level schools must implement Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) as an element of SPHE at junior cycle and as an RSE programme in senior cycle, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class. The time allocation recommended is six periods of 40minute classes per year.

All junior cycle classes, 1st, 2nd and 3rd year are timetabled one class of SPHE per week. Junior cycle RSE Programme is delivered by teachers over the course of the three years of the programme as part of the four strands in Junior Cycle SPHE. Students also receive a block period of RSE in February to ensure all students are taught the RSE programme.

SPHE is a timetabled class for Senior Cycle students and these students also receive a block course of RSE each year at senior cycle.

Students receive SPHE related teaching in their dedicated class tutor groups. Teachers who are allocated SPHE and at senior cycle RSE teach the class from 1st year until 6th year where possible. All RSE/SPHE teachers where possible have the SPHE/RSE class for another subject due to the importance of the teacher-student relationship.



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## Child Protection

Child Protection Procedures 2.1.6 state “In all cases where a school becomes aware of underage sexual intercourse the school should take appropriate steps to inform the child’s parents”. The age for consent is 17 for boys and girls for heterosexual and homosexual sex. All students of RSE are made aware of the limits to confidentiality that should a teacher become aware that a student is at risk they are obliged to pass this information on to the DLP. However should a student who is not at risk choose to confide in a teacher about something, the teacher should keep this information to him or herself.

## Students with Special Educational Needs

### Three Tier Support Structure

Teachers are aware that there is now a three-tier support structure within the school that ensures there is support for all at classroom level.

For learning activities to be meaningful, relevant and achievable for all students, it is important that the teacher find ways to respond to students diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies. In consultation with the SEN Coordinator the following strategies will be used:

- Ensuring that the objectives are realistic for students and ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- Pre-teaching concepts by the resource teacher where applicable
- Co teaching or withdrawal of students with SEN for pre-teaching/reteaching concepts
- Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups
- Spending more time on tasks and organising the learning task into small stages
- Ensuring that language is pitched at the students level of understanding and does not hinder understanding of the activity
- Using task analysis, outline 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
- Teacher to check for understanding
- Using graphic symbols as reminders to assist students in understanding the sequence/steps in any given task/problem
- Modelling task analysis by talking through the steps of a task as it is being done
- Having short and varied tasks
- Creating a learning environment through the use of concrete and where possible everyday materials
- Displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.



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- Role play would be emphasized here as a learning tool where appropriate for scenarios of acting out situations such as an understanding of 'public' and 'private' and 'safe' and 'unsafe' situations.
- Meet with students individually or in a group to check understanding and unpack any issues that may arise for the student(s).
- Teacher responsible for assessing/monitoring student progress. An example method: gather sample of work and refer to SEN Coordinator for review.

## Content and Teaching Methodologies

Through participation in the RSE/SPHE Programme the student will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of experiences. These issues will be addressed in ten modules, each of which appears in each year of the three-year Junior cycle. The emphasis will be on building skills, understanding, attitudes and values important in all these areas. These areas are further explored in Senior cycle where more in depth discussion and exploration can take place in line with students own level of maturity.

## Themes of RSE at Post-Primary Level:

### 1. Human growth and development

(Fertility/reproductive organs/family planning/pregnancy/development of foetus/STIs)

### 2. Human sexuality

(Gender/sexual orientation/attitudes and values/making choices/sexual harassment and abuse)

### 3. Human Relationships

(Peer Pressure/conflict resolution/loving relationships/marriage and commitment/importance of family life)

## Learning in RSE

RSE will incorporate the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions of the lives of young people.

Using the ASK model to provide students with opportunities to develop their

- Attitudes and values,
- Skills and
- Knowledge

Teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with the emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be student entered and appropriate to the age and development of the student. The class atmosphere must be one



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of respect and privacy of the individual teacher and student hallmarked by sensitivity and care; where the student feels that they are participants in a safe environment. A respectful code of conduct is expected from all participants. Every class group establishes ground rules which are referred to throughout the workshops. Any breach of this may result in the removal of the student from the class. To date this has never been necessary in this school.

## **Teaching Methodologies may include:**

Group work  
Role play  
Brainstorming  
Icebreakers  
Simulation  
Narrative expression  
Walking debates  
Project work  
Art work  
Multi-media materials  
Case studies  
Visiting speakers

Colaiste Pobail Setanta recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of the children lies with their parents. The College is committed to creating a tradition of supporting parents in this role and SPHE is seen as building on this.

## **Cross Curricular Links**

The following subject areas form the cross curricular links with the RSE Programme:

SPHE  
P.E.  
Science  
R.E.  
CSPE  
I.T.  
English

## **Resources and Accommodations**

A limited budget is available for RSE and is used to purchase resources and textbooks and to accommodate workshop facilitators and guest speakers.

*Resources include:*  
[www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)



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RSE Curriculum Guidelines

RSE Policy Booklet

RSE Parent Booklet

Junior Cycle RSE Resource Materials

Senior Cycle Resource Materials

[www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)

You Can Talk To Me

Busy Bodies

The Facts

Leaflets-STIs, Contraception, Pregnancy etc

TRUST

Talking

Relationships

Understanding

Sexuality

Training

## *Supports for Teachers*

Policy

Parents

Resources

Team Approach

Whole School Environment

[www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)

PDST-Health and Wellbeing

DES Syllabus and Guidelines

Growing Up textbook

Healthy Living/Healthy Times/Healthy Choices workbooks

On my Own Two Feet

Before You Decide

Trust

HSE leaflets and DVDs

Growing Up LGBT

Belong to Stand Up

Mental Health Matters

Working Things Out

Body Whys

Up to Us

Marie Keating Cancer Awareness Pack

Teaching about consent at key stages 3 and 4

[www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk) (Consent)



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## Staff Development and Subject Development

The value placed on RSE by the College is evident by the commitment on the part of management to developing a core of trained RSE teachers preferably gender balanced and to appointing an RSE/SPHE coordinator.

In career development is an integral part of this programme. Management is responsible for responding to the relevant expressed and perceived training needs of RSE teachers and whole staff.

The SPHE Coordinators 2018-2019 are: Ms. Cara Doyle & Ms. Krista Dunne

The core RSE team includes Ms. Doyle, Ms. Dunne, Ms Buckley, Ms. Synan, Ms. Nielsen, Ms. O'Brien, Mr. Lowry, Ms. O'Rourke, Ms. Delahunt. It is the aim that all RSE teachers will have undertaken RSE in-service training.

## Confidentiality and Referrals

### Participation

It is a legal requirement of schools to provide RSE to students at Junior and Senior Cycle. Each parent has a right to withdraw their child from some or all RSE classes but parents are encouraged to provide alternative RSE at home. The College will respect this choice as their right. It will be necessary for parents opting out of RSE to make suitable arrangements with the College management for the welfare of their child at these times. Where students are withdrawn for RSE the College cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students. Parents must meet with the Principal/DP in person to discuss their decision to withdraw their child from the RSE module in September of each year. There is a section in the students journal which draws parent attention to the matter.

### Sensitive Issues

Group discussion will be of a general nature, and will not be personally directed at any person, in accordance with the agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by the class teacher, or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The RSE facilitators may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in checking whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. Should a teacher be concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal without identifying the student.

The teacher has the responsibility to set clear boundaries to ensure the classroom is a safe place for everyone, including themselves. While there are no definitive guidelines, the teacher should bear the following in mind when making decisions about where to set limits:



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Age of student  
School ethos  
Schools RSE policy  
RSE Curriculum Guidelines.

## **Referral**

While it is acknowledged that the teachers have a professional obligation to impart the RSE course content, the needs of students will be addressed in a caring and supportive manner. Where it is appropriate, the teacher may refer students to other supportive links within the school. As far as possible this should be done in negotiation with the student. RSE teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal without identifying the student.

## **Confidentiality**

While an atmosphere of trust is a pre-requisite of RSE class, the following limits of confidentiality must be observed. These limits are:

Child abuse-physical, emotional, sexual, neglect  
Intention to harm self or others  
Substance misuse  
Underage sexual intercourse

Any disclosure will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in compliance with the Child Protection Policy.

The Designated Liaison Person in Colaiste Pobail Setanta is the Principal; Mr. Liam Walsh and the Deputy Liaison Person in Colaiste Pobail Setanta is Ms. Gillian Murphy

RSE teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year, remind them at necessary points throughout the year and where possible before making a disclosure.

## **Visitors**

Circular 00123/2010

National and international research has consistently shown that the qualities of the classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and that he/she can have a powerful impact on influencing students attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education.

Research findings indicate that the following teaching approaches have limited effect and are counterproductive to the effective implementation of SPHE:



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- Scare tactics and sensationalist interventions
- Testimonials
- Information only interventions
- Short term/once off interventions

Outside speakers can be a resource when used as part of a schools planned programme for SPHE/RSE. It is imagined that visiting speakers would only be invited should there be a specific need identified.

## **Protocol for inviting Guest Speakers**

Teachers inviting these speakers must:

- Inform the Principal in advance
- Make the speaker aware of the ethos and RSE Policy of the school
- Agree the content of the presentation
- Do preparatory and follow up work where possible
- Remain with the class group during the visit

## **Parents**

The College accepts that it is in the interests of all parents that the child grows up in a healthy and mature fashion. The College will strive to keep parents informed of the contents of the RSE Programme. The RSE Policy is available online at [www.cpsetanta.ie](http://www.cpsetanta.ie) and notifications regarding reviews are also published online.

The involvement of parents at the core of every aspect of RSE gives it extra impetus, depth and validity and from time to time training and/or input and development opportunities will be offered to parents in certain aspects of RSE.

Parents will be afforded the opportunity to remove their children from RSE Education if they feel it clashes with their beliefs and morals. This will be done by a letter to all parents. See appendix 1.

## **Whole Staff**

This policy will be available for all staff in the College by its inclusion with the Policy Documents, which are kept in the Principals office. Copies will be given to each teacher of RSE by the SPHE Coordinator.

The College is also supported by the PDST and the Health and Well-being Team who support the whole staff throughout the year during Croke Park hours.



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## **Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting**

Each student's RSE folder contains worksheets, handouts and a reflective journal that the students complete at the end of each section. At the end of the RSE module, every student completes a review and an anonymous evaluation form for students to submit to the RSE teacher.

Parents may meet with RSE teachers at Parent Teacher meetings.

The RSE team meet periodically throughout the year to review, plan and evaluate and keep up to date with CPD in relation to RSE in the school. Minutes of all meetings are recorded and contained in the SPHE Subject Planning Folder.

## **Whole School Support for RSE and SPHE**

While specific teachers are trained and charged with the responsibility of delivering the programme, we see each other as a teacher of RSE and SPHE in that he/she may from time to time see opportunities to promote healthy lifestyle and encourage responsible and mature decision making. There is generally a whole school approach to key areas of RSE, SPHE and Wellbeing in the school year. Certain topics or issues are covered e.g. Tus Maith programme for first years, Friendship Week, Healthy Eating Week and Mental Health Week.

## **Review and Evaluation**

The RSE course is never static and must be examined and evaluated regularly and adapted to the needs of the students. The RSE programmes and policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the RSE and SPHE team.

The opinions of students will be included and SPHE teachers will communicate with the Student Council. The opinions of parents will also be included and SPHE teachers will communicate with the Parents Association. The opinions of management will be included and the SPHE coordinator will communicate with the Principal and the Board of Management.



## Letter to Parents regarding RSE Appendix 1

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Young people today are presented with many challenges that affect their health and wellbeing. Our college aims to address these challenges by providing Social, Personal and Health Education as a core subject in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year and through our SPHERE programme at Senior Cycle. Through the SPHE class/SPHERE Programme students develop important skills for living a healthy life.

We recognise that parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for the personal development of their children, and it is our wish to compliment that role. With the College and the family working together, these programmes can have greater success. You can support these programmes at home by encouraging and praising the efforts of your child, by communicating with them about their own growth, development, friendships, decisions and health.

As part of our SPHE/SPHERE programmes we will be covering a module entitled 'Relationships and Sexuality Education'. This module is prepared in accordance with the Department of Education guidelines on relationships and sexuality education. If you DO NOT give your son/daughter permission to participate in this module of the course please notify the school in writing.

If you have any questions with regard to this module or you do not wish your son/daughter to participate in any part of our SPHE or SPHERE programmes, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

SPHE Department.