



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

St. Nathy's College
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon

Roll Number 68067P

Abbreviations

DES	Department of Education and Skills
DLP	Designated Liaison Person
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SSP	Student Support Plan



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Introductory Statement

This policy was developed during the first term of the 2019/2020 school year by Management, Teaching Staff, Parents and Students.

School Information

St. Nathy's College, is a voluntary Catholic secondary school located in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. The school was established by the Priests of the Diocese of Achonry in 1810. The College Trustee is the Bishop of Achonry. St. Nathy's College is a co-educational post-primary school catering for post-primary school age students, together with students with additional needs integrated in mainstream classes.

St Nathy's College Mission Statement

St. Nathy's College was established by the Diocese of Achonry to act as a centre of learning.

We strive to cultivate learning within a Christian environment which provides for the personal, physical, intellectual, moral and faith development of each student.

All of our school endeavours and activities are towards these objectives.

Relationship of RSE to the Mission Statement of the College

The Mission Statement seeks to provide a holistic approach to the educational development of each student. RSE is integral to this development.

According to the Second Vatican Council, *'As they [children and young people] advance in years, they should be given positive and prudent sexual education.'* Education in sexuality includes all dimensions of the topic: moral, spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical.

The content of the RSE Programme is presented in the light of the following value statements:

- each individual is unique in the eyes of God and valuable in his/her own right
- ours is a communal and interdependent nature, therefore our sexuality like our lives is a gift

- making decisions about sexual behaviour is not simply a private and personal matter - there are also social and moral implications

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of RSE in St. Nathy's College are as follows:

Aims

- to help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships to promote an understanding of sexuality
- to promote a positive attitude to one's sexuality and in one's relationship with others
- to promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction as participation in the divine gift of life
- to enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a Christian moral and spiritual framework

Objectives

RSE will enable the students to:

- acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, and the skills for building and maintaining self-esteem
- 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 sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex role stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality
- value 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
- develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety

Scope

This policy will inform all members of the school community (all teaching staff, ancillary staff, parents, students and visitors) of St. Nathy's College. Discussions about

relationships and sexuality also takes place in classes other than SPHE/RSE. It is therefore a whole school activity.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

The Education Act (1998) emphasises that schools are obliged to promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. As part of the SPHE programme students are encouraged to develop their own confidence and build relationships with others. The aim of the SPHE programme is to promote physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. It also encourages the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality.

Relationships and Sexuality are key elements of healthy social and personal development in all our lives but particularly in the life of the adolescent. The RSE programme is designed to specifically deal with human growth and development and human sexuality. The programme will encourage students to embrace their own sexuality and to develop positive and healthy relationships. RSE is one of the ten modules to be taught in SPHE at Junior Cycle. The RSE programme is mandatory and will be taught in six class periods for all year groups from First to Sixth year. The course will be developmental in nature and will be age appropriate.

Key Measures

Notification for the Delivery of the Programme (Appendix 2)

- all parents/guardians will be notified of the schedule of the RSE programme

Provision of Training and Staff Development

- inservice specific to RSE will be available as sanctioned by the DES
- staff will share knowledge and resources to enhance the delivery of the programme

Inclusion of parents/guardians

- this policy will be available to all parents/guardians

Ethical/Moral considerations

Teachers in the delivery of the programme will:

- use age appropriate language
- use age appropriate DES approved resources
- deliver the programme in a manner that is respectful and inclusive of all students

Answering questions

When answering questions, teachers will use their professional judgement, guided by the age of the students, the RSE curriculum and the RSE policy of the College.

Confidentiality

Students should be asked not to disclose personal information in SPHE/RSE class. It is important that students are made aware of the limits of confidentiality. Teachers must not guarantee confidentiality. Pupils must be informed that if a teacher becomes aware that a pupil is at risk of abuse, or in breach of the law, the teacher as a mandated person must make a report and inform the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), in accordance with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.

Sexual Activity

In accordance with the *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017*, the age of consent for sexual activity for both males and females is 17 years of age in the Republic of Ireland. In circumstances where a teacher becomes aware that a pupil is engaging in underage sexual activity, the teacher as a mandated person must report such sexual activity and inform the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). If other members of staff (such as the school caretaker, catering staff, secretary, SNA) become aware that a student is engaging in underage sexual activity they must inform the DLP.

Offering Advice

RSE teachers will provide advice to students within the context of the curriculum. When necessary students will be referred to relevant professional external agencies/services.

Withdrawing students from the RSE programme

St. Nathy's College recognises the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their son/daughter from the RSE programme. [Education Act 1998 Section 30 (2e)] but will engage with parents/guardians with a view to resolving any perceived difficulties. The College requires parents/guardians to give reasons in writing outlining their request that their son/daughter be withdrawn. The Principal may invite the parents/guardians to attend a meeting as sometimes this can resolve any misunderstandings. Parents may be offered access to appropriate information or resources. If students are withdrawn arrangements will be made between parents/guardians and the Principal for their care while the programme is in progress.

Students with Additional Needs

The requirements of students with additional needs will be taken into consideration when planning class lessons and related activities. Their needs will be ascertained through consultation with the student, their parents/guardians, class tutor and SEN teachers.

Consultation with parents/guardians in advance and anticipation of the student's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful. Students may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material. Any different or specific objectives related to the student's own learning needs should be detailed in their *School Support Plan (SSP)* in consultation with parents/guardians.

Visiting Speakers

National and international research has consistently shown that the qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and that s/he can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education. Therefore, in St. Nathy's College, the RSE programme will be delivered by teachers and visiting speakers may occasionally be invited to enhance and supplement the RSE programme in accordance with the guidelines as outlined in DES Circular 43/2018. Visiting Speakers will be made aware of this policy and all associated policies.

Resources

The programme will be delivered using DES sanctioned resources such as

- webwise.ie
- sphe.ie
- b4udecide.ie
- pdst.ie
- Adopted resources for SEN available on pdst.ie

Reference to other Policies

The following policies inform the development of this RSE policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Critical Incident Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Field Trip Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Internet and Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy

Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be measured by:

- student feedback
- parental feedback
- feedback from teachers
- whole school discussion
- feedback from the DES Inspectorate

Implementation and Review

This policy is effective from February 2020. This policy will be reviewed every two years and amended as necessary informed by the success criteria.

The Board of Management may, however, review the policy earlier, if the Department of Education & Skills introduce new regulations, or if the Board of Management receives recommendations on how the plan might be improved. Any amendments will be communicated to the community of St. Nathy's College.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of St. Nathy's College adopted this policy at a meeting of the Board on

Copies of this policy will be circulated and communicated to the College community.

Signed: **Kevin Hennigan**

Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 11-2-2020

Review Date

December 2022

Appendix 1

An overview of the RSE programme

Junior Cycle Overview of RSE

Year One

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

Year Two

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

Year Three

- Body Image
- Where am I now?
- Relationships- what's important
- The three R's: respect, rights and responsibilities
- Conflict

Senior-Cycle Overview of RSE

Human growth and development

- Reproductive organs
- Fertility
- Family planning
- Pregnancy
- STI's

Human Sexuality

- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Attitudes and values regarding sexual behaviour
- Making choices

Human Relationships

- Peer-pressure
- Conflict
- Marriage and commitment
- Loving relationships
- Family life

Appendix 2 Notification for the delivery of the programme



St. Nathy's College
Established 1810

*Chapel Street,
Ballaghaderreen,
Co. Roscommon.
F45V122*

*Tel. (094) 9860010
Email: info@stnathys.com*

DATE

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

I am writing to inform you that the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme (RSE) will be taught to all year groups during the coming weeks.

RSE plays a critical role in supporting and preparing young people for the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

St Nathy's College RSE Policy is available to all parents/guardians. If you have any issues or queries, please contact the school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Declan Dunne.

Principal

Appendix 3 References

Department of Children and Youth Affairs *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, 2017.

Department of Education of Skills Circular 43/2018

Department of Education and Skills, *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017* available at www.education.ie

Education Act (1998) Section 30 (2e)

Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA: 2017.

Relationships and Sexuality Education - Going Forward Together: 1997 available at pdst.ie

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) - Curriculum Framework (Senior Cycle): 2011.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) - Junior Cycle Syllabus: 2000.

Student Support Teams in Post-Primary School, NEPS: 2014.

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018 - 2023, DES: 2018.

Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention, DES, NEPS, Department of Health and HSE: 2013.