

St. Joseph's Secondary School, Newfoundwell, Drogheda, Co. Louth.
Relationships and Sexuality Education

St. Joseph's Secondary School Mission Statement:

Our school recognises that each pupil who enrolls is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. It is our wish that our pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and lives which may contribute to the betterment of society.

We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self-image and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential.

We see ourselves as working in partnership with parents to develop these gifts and to meet the needs of all.

We regard our school as a Christian community characterised by care and justice, inspired by the spirit and charism of Blessed Edmund Rice.

Our School is a member of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST)

The Five Key Elements of the Edmund Rice School:

- Nurturing faith, Christian Spirituality and Gospel-based values;
- Promoting partnership in the school community;
- Excelling in teaching and learning;
- Creating a caring school community;
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

"RSE aims to provide opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way". (Going Forward Together, The Department of Education and Science, 1997).

In the school setting, RSE will be taught as part of the wider SPHE programme.

Elements of RSE are also incorporated into the Leaving Certificate Religious Education Programme.

The approach to teaching any of the RSE topics involves the following:

- Giving students clear information.
- Enhancing their self-esteem.
- Helping them to learn to communicate.
- Assisting students to make decisions and express feelings in an appropriate way.

Current in-school provision:

Our school takes a cross-curricular approach to the teaching of RSE.

Junior Cycle - classes receive one period of SPHE per week.

Senior Cycle - classes receive one pastoral care class per week.
- RSE is also incorporated into the Religious Education Programme

- Elements of both SPHE and RSE are dealt with in subjects such as Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Career Guidance, Physical Education, Religious Education and Science syllabi.
- Counselling and Chaplaincy Services, Guest Speakers (e.g. The Samaritans) Personal Development Seminars and Year Heads also focus on issues pertaining to SPHE and RSE.

Aims of St. Joseph's Secondary School - R.S.E. programme

While recognising that the parent(s)/guardian(s) are the primary educators of the child, the school aims to complement this role by formally implementing the RSE course at Junior and Senior Cycle levels.

The aims of our school with regard to teaching RSE are as follows:

- To help students to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of human sexuality.

- To promote a healthy attitude to one's own sexuality and to one's relationships with others.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.
- To enable young people to develop healthy attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our school:

Our aim for the future is to provide a whole-school approach to the development and the delivery of the RSE school programme.

The SPHE co-ordinator, teachers and all the education partners, will endeavour to achieve this goal.

Consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s)

- Our school is committed to working with parent(s)/guardian(s) and acknowledges that parents have, by law, the primary responsibility for the education of their children and that the home is the natural environment in which Relationship and Sexuality Education should take place.
- Parents/ guardians have the right to be fully informed about the programme and to express their views about the programme. Also, parent(s)/guardian(s) may wish to exercise the right to have their child withdrawn from RSE. In such cases, the school must be specifically notified in writing by the parent(s)/guardian(s) if they wish their child to be withdrawn from part or all RSE classes and the parent(s)/guardian(s) must come to the school and supervise their son when these classes are timetabled. However, in these circumstances the school cannot be responsible for information subsequently passed on by participating pupils.

Training and resources

- All Junior Certificate Students are provided with “Grow Up” by Stephanie Mangan published by Folens. This is the base textbook. Teachers utilise a variety of other books and websites e.g. I belong; sphe.ie; hse.ie etc.

The RSE programme will be based on the resource material for Relationships and Sexuality Education set out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (N.C.C.A.)

S.P.H.E. Training in R.S.E. Junior Cycle

- At Senior Cycle, teachers utilise a variety of resources including:
It’s Your Life (Fiona Chambers & Anita Stackpoole – Mentor Publications)
Developing Myself and Others (NWHB)
Resource material for Relationships and Sexuality Education set out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (N.C.C.A.)
Other resources e.g. The Challenge Of God (Niall Boyle) Into the Deep (Tom Gunning) The Inner Place (Tom Gunning) etc.
S.P.H.E. Training in R.S.E. Senior Cycle.

Junior Cycle Topics

(Taken from Prescribed Resource Materials for RSE Post Primary- Junior Cycle
Dept. of Education & Science)

- The Circle of Life
- Communication and Respect
- Feelings and Adolescence
- Saying How I Feel
- Body Awareness-Body Care
- Hygiene Hints!
- Common Senses
- The Image of Me
- The Words we Use
- Puberty
- Human Reproduction
- The Miracle of New Life
- Pregnancy and Birth
- How I Relate
- Family Ties

- You've Got a Friend
- Boy/Girl Relationships
- Don't Box Me In!
- Self-Esteem
- Peer Pressure
- Take Care!
- Time to Reflect
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Respect and Tolerance for Difference

Senior Cycle Topics

(Taken from Prescribed Resource Materials for RSE Post Primary- Senior Cycle
Dept. of Education & Science)

- Communication

- Assertive Communication
- Dealing With Feelings
- Keeping Your Cool!
- Living with Loss
- Human Reproduction
- Human Sexuality
- Planning for the Future
- Responsible Parenthood
- More Than You Bargained For
- Implications of Sexual Activity
- Loving Relationships
- Marriage
- Life Support
- Challenging Roles
- Accepting Sexual Orientations
- Sexual Harassment
- When Sexual Assault Becomes a Reality
- Without Consent
- Sexual Abuse