

# St Joseph's Secondary School

Newfoundwell, Drogheda, Co. Louth

## RSE (Relationships & Sexuality Education) Policy



**Review Dates:** This policy will be reviewed annually.

Staff	April 2019	Reviewed
Parents' Council	May 2019	Reviewed
Student Council	May 2019	Reviewed
Board Of Management	June 2019	Ratified

## **Mission Statement.**

Our school recognises that each pupil who enrolls in our school is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. It is our wish that our pupils will leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and 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 the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment with a Christian community characterised by care and justice.

## **Philosophy and context of this policy**

As an Edmund Rice School, St Joseph's Secondary School seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

1. Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
2. Promoting partnership in the school community
3. Excelling in teaching and learning
4. Creating a caring school community
5. Inspiring transformational leadership.

## **Policy Context:**

This policy is informed by the following school policies;

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- RSE Policy
- Internet Acceptable Usage Policy for students and staff

## **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 at Junior cycle as part of the wider SPHE and Wellbeing programme with cross curricular links to the Science and RE programmes. At senior cycle RSE is taught during RE in 5<sup>th</sup> year and as part of SPHE in 6<sup>th</sup> year, with cross curricular links to the RE 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 which include 6 lessons of RSE.

Senior Cycle - RSE is taught by the RE teachers in 5<sup>th</sup> year and is part of the SPHE course in 6<sup>th</sup> year.

- TY have a timetabled 1 period of SPHE per week.  
LCA 1 have one period of Pastoral Care with cross curricular links to other modules on the programme. E.g Social studies and Religious Education.  
LCA 2 have two periods of Pastoral Care with cross curricular links to other modules on the programme. E.g Social studies and Religious Education.  
5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students have one period of Pastoral Care with cross curricular links to Religious Education.
- 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 and Wellbeing.
- 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.

Management will facilitate ongoing CPD for teachers of SPHE and RSE.

### **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. However, in these circumstances the school cannot be responsible for information subsequently passed on by participating pupils.
- A letter will be sent out to parents/guardians in advance of the lessons being taught. The letter will outline relevant topics that will be covered in the relevant year group. (See Appendix A.)

### **Training and resources**

- All Junior Certificate students use the book “My Life” by Stephanie Mangan published by Folens. This is the base textbook/workbook. 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 (NCCA)  
SPHE Training in RSE Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle.
- At Senior Cycle, teachers utilise a variety of resources including:  
It’s Your Wellbeing (Fiona Chambers, Anne Jones & 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.)  
Lockers and B in CTRL developed by Webwise.ie

- An itinerary of resources for R.S.E. will be gathered and stored in the SPHE resource room in the Blue Area. The resources can be accessed and shared through the SPHE co-ordinator.

### **Junior Cycle Topics**

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

- 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

Using the above Department of Education and Skills Junior Cycle prescribed resource material as a guide we have decided to cover the following RSE topics:

#### **First Year**

- Friendship
- Being a friend
- Recognising and respecting feelings
- Female reproductive system
- Male reproductive system and conception

#### **Second Year**

- Gender identity and sexual orientation
- Forming relationships
- Managing relationships

- Healthy relationships
- From conception to birth

### **Third Year**

- Body image
- Respect in relationships
- Setting boundaries in relationships
- Sexual health
- Relationship problems
- Responsibilities of pregnancy and parenting

### **Senior Cycle Topics**

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

- 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

Using the above Department of Education and Skills Senior Cycle prescribed resource material as a guide we have decided to cover the following RSE topics:

- Self – awareness and personal skills
- Relationship skills
- Sexual reproductive health
- Sexual identity
- Parenting
- Personal rights and personal safety/Sexual harassment

- Being health literate
- Consent

This policy was ratified on 12/06/2019

Signature: Chairperson of the Board Of Management\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_