

St Joseph's Patrician College, Galway. 'THE BISH'



RSE POLICY

Ratification Date: January 2020

Review Date: January 2023

This policy is in keeping with the Child Protection Procedures as adopted by the Board of Management. Teachers are reminded that they are mandated persons and must be familiar with their obligations with reference to the child first: National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Children First Act 2015

St Joseph's Patrician College

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction

The RSE policy is a written statement of the aims of the RSE programme, the relationship of RSE to SPHE, and the organisation and management of RSE within the school. This policy will be implemented after consultation between the staff, the Principal and Deputy Principals, the Board of Management, Parents' Council and the Students' Council.

Our school

St. Joseph's Patrician College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school for boys only in Galway city under the trusteeship of Le Chéile. We aim to provide a holistic and inclusive education in order to create a safe learning environment where Catholic values are promoted and where each student is helped to reach his full potential and to qualify for the career of his choice

School Mission statement

Our Ethos is grounded on the Christian ideal of the dignity of the human person and the requirement of each person to love God and serve others, as expressed in our school motto – 'Pro Deo et Patria' ('For God and Country'). Our mission statement outlines our aim to provide a quality of education to each student which will help him to attain the academic standard necessary to embark on the career of his choice, in accordance with the policies and regulations of the Department of Education & Skills. We seek with the help of all our partners in education– students, parents, teachers, management and trustees, to create a learning environment which will encourage all, to develop the whole person, to be inclusive, fair and balanced, to value truth, honesty, integrity and courage, to enhance each other's sense of dignity and self-worth, to uphold the school's traditions of unity, scholarship and sporting excellence, to examine contemporary

culture and values in the light of Christian beliefs, respond to the moral and spiritual development needs of students and provide for the physical, emotional, social and personal development needs of all students.

Scope of policy

This policy will apply to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality. Discussion about relationships and sexuality also takes place in classes other than RSE / SPHE / Health Education. It is therefore important that all teachers are familiar with the RSE policy. The policy will apply to school staff, students, Board of Management, parents, visiting speakers and external facilitators.

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media.

RSE is a developmental process using learning that is experiential in which students participate to help foster a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, especially in the area of sexuality and relationships. RSE in St. Joseph's Patrician College will provide structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Relationship of RSE to the School's Mission Statement

St. Joseph's Patrician College is committed to providing the best educational formation possible for all our students as evidenced through our Mission statement. We aim to provide an education for all students which will embrace and develop their full human potential: personal, academic, physical, moral and religious. Our RSE programme will

encompasses the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy contributing towards the full human development of the student. As outlined by the Department of Education and Skills in Circular 0037/2010, no aspect of the RSE programme including STIs, contraception, or sexual orientation can be omitted on the grounds of religious ethos. As we seek to promote the overall development of the student, this involves the integration of the RSE programme into the context of our holistic educational ethos.

Guidelines for the Management, Implementation and Organisation of RSE in St. Joseph's Patrician College.

Arrangements for the teaching of the RSE programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal. Teachers will follow the guidelines drawn up by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

RSE at Junior Cycle will be delivered each year as a module within the SPHE curriculum as per the DES guidelines and the SPHE Department plan. RSE at the Senior Cycle will be delivered to all Transition Year and 5th year students as a stand-alone module. In 6th Year, RSE will also be facilitated during the 6th Year R.E. programme on a modular basis.

Relationship of RSE to the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme

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 self confidence and build relationships with others

The Draft Guidelines for RSE (NCCA, June 1995) state that Social Personal and Health Education is “spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology”. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. RSE is addressed within the SPHE programme.

The aims of the SPHE programme

SPHE / Wellbeing provide opportunities for students to develop personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

- The Guidelines for RSE state that SPHE is ‘spiral, developmental in nature and age-appropriate in content and methodology.’ (NCCA, 1995, 1.2). The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern.
- SPHE covers areas such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision-making skills – all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.
- SPHE adds the dimension to education of empowering people to manage their own lives. By providing RSE through an SPHE programme we teach students personal skills to increase their personal effectiveness so that, in the context of their own lives, they are able to make informed divisions in relation to their sexuality and relationships with others.
- Currently, SPHE is part of the Junior Cycle timetable. RSE is timetabled in both Transition Year and Fifth Year and is facilitated by the RE programme in Sixth Year. One period a week (40minutes) is timetabled for Junior and a double period (80 minutes) for all Senior Cycle classes.
- The RSE module is taught to all Junior Cycle classes after the Christmas Holidays in January - February. At Senior Cycle, the Transition and Fifth year classes participate in the RSE module. RSE for Sixth Years is run through the RE Programme.
- There is continued emphasis on health and well-being, responsibility and decision-making throughout the RSE programme.

In St. Joseph's Patrician College, RSE is located within the overall framework of SPHE and Religious Education. The specific aims of the RSE programme are:

- To build on the primary school programme which strives to help young people learn at home and at school about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others.
 - To promote an understanding of sexuality.
 - To promote a positive attitude towards one's own sexuality and one's relationships with others.
 - To enable students to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
 - To promote knowledge of and respect for human reproduction.
 - To provide young people with information and skills to evaluate critically the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today, in order that they will make positive, responsible, moral, caring and responsible decisions about themselves and the way they live their lives, while also respecting the dignity of others.
- The school recognises that parents are the primary educators and home is the natural and primary environment in which RSE should take place.

St Joseph's Patrician College RSE Programme Implementation

The RSE programme as taught in St. Joseph's Patrician College is the programme set out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The programme is student centred and is delivered in a pastoral environment. Formal examples of RSE in action in St. Joseph's Patrician College include the teaching of 'TRUST' - Teaching relationships, understanding sexuality teaching for Senior Cycle, the 'Growing Up Gay and Bisexual in Ireland' programme (SPHE-PDST) and 'Lockers' (SPHE-PDST) *Lockers is a new information and education resource. It assists schools in coping with and preventing the sharing of explicit self-generated images of minors. Intended for use with Junior Cycle SPHE classes, Lockers is supported by a newly developed animation and six lesson plans. Also included in Lockers is an information section for school leaders.* All Junior and Senior classes receive a minimum of six class periods of RSE in each academic year. Some aspects of RSE are approached during

subjects such as Biology, CSPE, Guidance and Counselling, Religious Education and Science. Some are taught informally using a cross curricular approach and support what is taught in Junior Cycle SPHE (see SPHE Policy) [e.g. CSPE / RE – values, rights and responsibilities]. Where there are cross-curricular links with SPHE / RSE the school ethos is respected at all times and informs what is taught. Visits by external speakers enhance the programme on topics such as drugs, alcohol misuse, hygiene and sexual health and therefore form an integral part of the delivery of the RSE programme. The RSE programme is supported by the Management and Staff of the school.

The following is an outline of the topics covered from Junior Cycle up to Senior Cycle.

Junior Cycle

Year 1

- Me as unique and different.
- Friendship.
- Changes at adolescence.
- The Reproductive System.
- Images of Male and Female.
- Respecting myself and others.

YEAR 2

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

YEAR 3

- Body image.
- Where am I now?
- Relationships- what is important?
- The three R's- Respect, Rights and Responsibilities.
- Conflict.

SENIOR CYCLE

Relationships

- What we value in relationships.
- Healthy relationships.
- Self-esteem.
- The influence of self-esteem.
- Understanding boundaries.
- Communicating boundaries.
- Intimacy.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

- Sexuality.
- Sexual orientation.
- Influences and values.
- Decision making.
- Responsible relationships.

SEXUAL HEALTH

- Human reproduction and fertility.

- Contraception.
- Unplanned pregnancy.
- Sexually Transmitted Infections. (STI)
- STI transmission.

The teaching of the RSE programme is age-appropriate as directed by the DES-NCCA RSE Programme and Guidelines.

Some resources used may include: DVDs: 'Busy Bodies.' produced by the Health Promotion Department, Southern Health Service Executive.

'The Human Body', BBC TV series available on DVD.

TRUST programme. 'Growing Up Gay and Bisexual in Ireland' programme (SPHE-PDST). Lockers – (SPHE-PDST).

Books: 'Let's Talk About Sex', Walker Books. RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY POLICY, FEBRUARY 2018 5 'Understanding The Facts of Life', Usborne Books.

This list is not exhaustive.

Key Measures

1. Provision of training & staff development

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the RSE programme and the deployment of staff are made by the Principal.

2. Provision of Support, Training and Staff Development:

- A Co-ordinator of SPHE has been appointed,
- Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to attend RSE and SPHE training,
- Teachers of RSE and SPHE have access to teaching materials and resources,
- Teachers who express an interest in SPHE / RSE will be given consideration.

2. Parental Rights and Responsibilities

It is recognised by the school that parents/guardians are the primary educators for our students and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is considered by the school as very important.

Information will be provided for parents about the content and the timing of the RSE module, in the induction pack for first years or at the start of the academic year. Informing parents/guardians of when these topics are being taught in school will enable them to discuss any further issues at home. The RSE policy will be available to download on the school's website for parents/guardians. (www.bish.ie).

- Parents have a responsibility to inform themselves of the RSE programme content and to prepare their sons for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas covered in RSE.
- Parents of junior students will be notified by text/or email at least one week in advance of the RSE module commencement
- The RSE policy is available to download from www.bish.ie or a copy may be requested by a parent from the school office. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with the policy content.
- While all partners in the school community - teaching staff, students, parents and management - are agreed on the programme, we recognise, nevertheless, the right of any parent who so wishes to request that their son should not participate in the programme.

What we do if a request for withdrawal from the RSE programme is made by a parent:

- I. We discuss the nature of the concerns with the student's parent and, if appropriate, attempt to reassure them (initially such discussion takes place at a meeting with the RSE teacher and the Principal).
- II. We consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents - care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the RSE programme and the entitlement of the other students.
- III. We attempt to ensure that where a student is withdrawn from RSE there is no disruption to other parts of their education.

- IV. We point out that students who have been withdrawn may be vulnerable to teasing - we therefore attempt to cause minimal embarrassment to the student and minimal disruption to the programme.
- V. We also point out that students may sometimes receive inaccurate information from their peers.
- VI. We offer parents access to appropriate information and resources

3. Ethical/Moral considerations

Answering questions:

It is natural that students should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE. While it is important to create an environment in RSE in which students can discuss issues openly, teachers may not be able to answer all questions asked by students and can set appropriate limits. If any questions asked by students are deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the student to their parents or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Principal. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school, the RSE policy and use their professional judgment. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed among students outside of the RSE lesson. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, he/she should seek advice from the DLP.

Confidentiality

Teachers strive to create a safe learning environment for all students. While students should not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in RSE classes, there may be times when they talk about their own lives. It is important that students are made aware of the limits of confidentiality and that teachers do not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality. Confidentiality should be respected unless the teacher feels that the child is at risk or where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a law may be broken. In such a case, the appropriate action should be taken in accordance with the procedures set down in the Child Protection Procedures for Post-

Primary Schools, the school's Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement and the Children First legislation (2017) or the school's Substance Abuse Policy, i.e. the teacher must inform the Designated Liaison Person, and ensure that all reporting procedures are complied with.

Sexual Activity

Students should be made aware that, under the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006, 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 must refer this immediately to the Designated Liaison Person.

Out-of-School Factors

The school also recognises the many out-of-school factors which affect the development of a positive attitude to sexuality during adolescence - the social lives of students, the relationships they form, their behaviour within these relationships, the peer expectations of relationships, the reading material of students, their exposure to sexually explicit material / pornography on video / smart phones, television and through music. The RSE programme will attempt to heighten the students' awareness of the influences of these forces on the development of their values and attitudes and empower them to make informed decisions and choices.

Sensitive Issues e.g. Sexual Activity, Abortion and Contraception

Sensitive topics will be dealt with in an age-appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way, within the context of the school's ethos and DES-NCCA guidelines. RSE teachers give young people information on the age of consent which, following the passage of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2006, is seventeen years of age for both males and females. The post-primary RSE Curriculum Guidelines state that the subject of family planning should be covered within the Senior Cycle RSE programme. There is a lesson on family planning in the RSE Senior Cycle Resource Materials on P77. The RSE programme requires that young people are provided with information about methods of contraception, and this is done within the values and moral framework of the ethos of St. Joseph's Patrician College.

Offering Advice

The aim of the policy is to provide a general education about sexual matters in a manner that is consistent with the school's ethos. It does not seek to provide a forum to offer individual advice or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour. However, teachers may provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom, they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. their doctor. Advice offered should not be directive and should be age appropriate to the student.

Sexual Orientation

The post primary RSE Curriculum Guidelines include the subject of sexual orientation. The Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2011 and the Equality Act 2004 prohibit discrimination across nine grounds, including sexual orientation. The topic is also briefly discussed at Junior Cycle RSE and again at Senior Cycle. Discretion will be used with regard to the age at which students discuss homosexuality and it should be discussed in a clear and open manner, respectful and in a non-directive way. (policy on this being discussed at the moment)

RSE in a single gender school

In an ideal setting RSE would be taught in a mixed gender setting in order to gain an understanding of each other's perspectives. In St. Joseph's Patrician College as a single sex school it may be the case that we arrange activities with other schools in Galway city so that our pupils can meet to discuss topics with girls.

Visiting speakers

Outside speakers are sometimes invited into the RSE class to facilitate learning on specific aspects of the programme. It is school policy that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the students. However, visitors can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of, a planned programme of RSE. The SPHE Co-ordinator / RSE teacher will inform the visitor, well in advance of the visit, of this RSE policy on

the school website, and request that they familiarise themselves with its content. After gaining approval from the Principal for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme.

Guidance for Engaging External Facilitators

When engaging external facilitators, the faculty are advised to consider the following best practice criteria:

- ☐ External facilitators supplement, complement or support an identified component of the school's Wellbeing Promotion Process, RSE or SPHE programme.
- ☐ External facilitators are approved by the principal and board of management in consultation with the relevant teaching staff. All materials proposed for use by the external facilitator must also be agreed in advance by the principal and the board.
- ☐ All external facilitators are compliant with the school's child protection policy and other relevant school policies and procedures.
- ☐ The school authority satisfies itself, having regard to its own legal advice if required, that it has met any vetting obligations that arise under the Vetting Act and in line with Circular 0031/2016, for such external facilitators.
- ☐ Programmes used are delivered by facilitators who are qualified to work within the specific area of content and with the students for whom the programmes are designed.
- ☐ Relevant school staff liaise with facilitators in advance of the delivery
- ☐ External facilitators always work under the guidance and supervision of the relevant classroom teacher who remains in the classroom with the students at all times and retains a central role in the delivery of the subject matter.

☐ Relevant school staff are informed of the details of the programme being provided by external facilitators.

☐ Parents/carers are consulted and made aware in advance of the content of the programmes provided by external facilitators.

☐ External facilitators and programmes are evaluated by students and teachers with regard to the subject matter, messages communicated, methodology and proposed learning outcome. (areas of relevance from directive 0043/2018)
(check list for above provided in Appendix 1)

Check list will be given to Principal/ Deputy Principal.

Students with special needs: Students with special needs may require more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. They may also require more help in learning to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and in being equipped to deal with potentially abusive situations. Extra assistance in the area may be facilitated outside the main class for students with special needs.

Links to other School Policies:

The RSE policy is developed to maintain a consistency and cohesiveness within the school's overall plan. RSE within St. Joseph's Patrician College takes into consideration the following policies:

- Child Protection Procedures.
- School Guidance Plan.
- SPHE
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Substance Abuse Policy.
- ICT Policy.

- Critical Incident Policy.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Code of Responsibility and Behaviour.

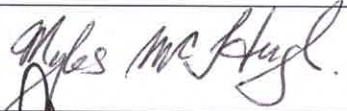
Monitoring of Policy

The implementation of the RSE policy will be monitored by the SPHE/RSE department and where deemed necessary by the Principal or the Board of Management.

Evaluating and Reviewing the RSE Programme

St. Joseph's Patrician College is committed to monitoring and evaluating on a regular basis the effectiveness of this policy. Review of the policy will take place on a bi annual basis and feedback from all stakeholders will be assessed including:

- Pupil feedback (i.e. student council, survey of students, comment box etc.)
- Staff review and feedback.
- Parental/guardian feedback.
- Feedback from representatives from the Parents' Council.
- Feedback from representatives of the Board of Management.

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the:	DATE: 21/1/2020.
	Signed:
Myles McHugh Chairperson	
John Madden Secretary of the BOM	
Date of next review:	September 2020

Appendix 1:

Checklist: Use of Programmes and/or External Facilitators

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<i>Engaging External Facilitators in the School</i>	✓	✗
1. The facilitators have the necessary training/qualifications and expertise to deliver the agreed programme or training		
2. At least one member of the school team is available to facilitate planning, joint delivery and evaluation of the programme or external input		
3. Facilitators are suitably qualified to work with the profile of students in the school		
4. Facilitators delivering the programme or input have a written child protection policy and a safeguarding statement		
5. The school is satisfied that it has met any vetting obligations that arise under the Vetting Act and in line with Circular 0031/2016, for the external facilitators		
<i>When Considering a Programme:</i>	✓	✗
6. A need has been identified through the school's RSE, SPHE and Wellbeing Promotion Process that could be addressed by using a specific programme		
7. The programme is consistent with the school's whole school approach to RSE, SPHE and wellbeing promotion		
8. The Board of Management has approved the delivery of the programme		
9. The chosen programme is informed by research and/or evidence		

10. The programme uses evidence based/informed methodologies and promotes active learning		
11. All relevant staff members have been informed about the proposed programme		
12. The programme is suitable to meet the needs of the targeted cohort of students.		
13. In the selection of programmes, the opinions of parents/carers and students have been ascertained		

14. An evaluation form will be completed by students and staff		
15. The impact of the programme will be monitored		
16. The programme delivery is sustainable over time within the school		

17. Consideration has been given to the possible vulnerabilities of students and the minimising of any potential negative impact of the programme		
18. Supports are available for the students during and after the programme delivery		