



COLÁISTE NA SCEILGE

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BORD OIDEACHAIS
AGUS OILÚNA CHIARRAÍ

KERRY EDUCATION
AND TRAINING BOARD

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy Statement

This policy was ratified by the Coláiste na Sceilge Board of Management on 20 May 2015

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In this policy document all references to gender are taken to be inclusive and the term 'parent' is taken to include 'guardian'.

A. School

The school is a co-educational, academically non-selective day school, with an enrolment of 500 students.

B. Our School Philosophy

- 1 Colaiste na Sceilge encourages its pupils to consider and assess different viewpoints in relation to issues of morality before reaching their own informed decisions. The experience gained through the working out of this policy and through respecting the needs of minority groups and individuals enriches the whole life of the school.
- 2 The school aims to give its students the opportunity to explore all areas of the academic curriculum, in addition to providing religious, moral and spiritual guidance

in order to fulfil its mission statement. We strive to support all our students in achieving their full academic and personal potential and to prepare them for participation in civic society and working life

- 3 Colaiste na Sceilge is committed to creating a community in which everyone is respected, where everyone has an opportunity to develop in a challenging, caring and happy environment and our mission statement is based on these principles:

We respect, we care,

We learn, we develop,

We belong.

This is essential in our RSE programme as each individual involved is entitled to be treated with dignity and their beliefs respected.

- 4 The best way in which the school can operate with the maximum happiness and fulfilment for everybody is if the maximum courtesy and respect is shown for other people. Students in Colaiste na Sceilge are expected to respect the dignity of other students, teachers and other non-teaching staff in the school and have the right to expect that their own dignity will be respected.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

RSE is a development process through experiential learning in which students participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social, Personal and Health Education

The Draft Guidelines for RSE (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that Social Personal and Health Education is "spiral, development in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology".

The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills —

all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

Aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme

Relationships and sexuality education which is located in the overall framework of Social, Personal and Health Education has as its specific aims:

- (a) To develop in our students a sense of self-worth.
- (b) To help students understand and develop friendships and relationships
- (c) To promote an understanding of sexuality
- (d) To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others
- (e) To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- (f) To enable students to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy of the school
- (g) To provide opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

It is acknowledged that in a course of limited duration these aims are aspirational.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of Relationships and Sexuality in our school

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal.

The RSE Programme developed and produced by the Department of Education & Science will form the core units of our RSE programme.

1 Informing and Involving Parents

Parents are the primary educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important. The policy has been designed in consultation with the staff, school management, Board of Management, Parents' Council Association and, the views expressed by parents will be taken into account

when reviewing the policy.

At the First Year open night, parents of First Year Students will be given an overview of the SPHE programme and will have an opportunity to view material pertinent to the RSE/SPHE curriculum. Parents will be notified by text when the teaching of the RSE module will commence.

2 Offering Advice

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception – however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate.

Teachers may provide students with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. their doctor or other suitable agency. Advice offered should not be directive and should be appropriate to the age of the student.

3 Explicit Questions

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. 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 SPHE coordinator, the Guidance Counsellor or 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 and the RSE policy.

4 Confidentiality

It is school policy that in circumstances where a student is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the schools Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who is the Principal. The Principal, acting in accordance with DES Child Protection Guidelines, will decide whether to inform the parents-and or/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling.

The following is also school policy:

- (a) Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality.
- (b) Students must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the DLP and possibly to parents if the Principal decides that it is in the best interests of the student to notify parents;
- (c) Teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information;
- (d) Teachers must indicate clearly to students when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential – the student can then decide whether to proceed or not.

The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools state in 4.1.1. and 4.2.1.

4.1.1. If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he/she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Designated Liaison Person. The need for confidentiality at all times, as previously referred to in Chapter 1 Paragraph 1.2 of these guidelines, should be borne in mind. The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

4.2.1. If the Designated Liaison Person is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation he/she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.

5 Withdrawing Students from the RSE Programme

- (a) This policy will be available to view on the school website. Colaiste na Sceilge will endeavour to address any concerns any parent may have in relation to programme content. Parents may withdraw students from RSE – this request should be in written form and addressed to the Principal.
- (b) Issues such as over population and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography, CSPE, RE, etc. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the RSE Programme. Biological aspects of reproduction are also taught through Science/Biology.

6 Using Visiting Speakers and Other Guests 0023/2010

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 and guest speakers 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 coordinator will provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of this RSE policy. After gaining approval from the Principal for the visit the organiser will make the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme. Visitors should be given advance notice of the composition of the class and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work. In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group and to make better use of the time groups may draw up questions in advance which can then be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the students in the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them – it also facilitates planning. The visiting speaker will always be accompanied by a member of the teaching staff.

7 Special Needs

Students with special needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being educated and prepared against abuse by others.

8 Homosexuality

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that homosexuality will be discussed during a programme of sex education. Teaching about homosexuality is not avoided, although teachers take care not to advocate homosexual behaviour, present it as the norm, or encourage homosexual experimentation by pupils. One of the many advantages of exploring issues concerning homosexuality is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice.

9 Contraception and Abortion

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way.

10 RSE Programme Content

<i>Junior Cycle</i>	<i>Senior Cycle</i>
Communication	Communication
Feelings	Feelings
Hygiene	Human Reproduction
Positive Image – self esteem	Human Sexuality
Sexual Language	Family Planning - contraception
Puberty – Growing & Changing	Pregnancy and Parenthood
Reproduction, Conception, Pregnancy and Birth	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Relationships – Family, Friends, Boy/Girl	Loving Relationships
Gender Roles and Pressures	Marriage
Personal Safety	Gender Roles, Pressures, Outside Influences including Pornography
Responsible Decision Making	Sexual Orientations & Homophobia
Age of Consent	Sexual Harassment, Assault, Rape, Abuse
Teenage Pregnancy	Implications of Sexual Activity
Sexting and consequences	Planning for Future
Sexual Orientations & Homophobia	Responsible Parenthood & Family Life

Ongoing support, development and review

1 Training

(a) All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. The skills acquired in general teaching applies also to health education.

(b) Some teachers have expert training in the specific areas of health, relationships and sexuality education and will be encouraged to attend relevant in-service training. The school

will facilitate teachers to obtain such training bearing in mind the overall budgetary framework and the need for the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the school to continue with as little disturbance as possible. Furthermore many of our teachers also have training in related areas such as counselling and have acquired skills useful in teaching RSE.

2. Resources

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school resources allow.

3. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the RSE Programme

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme.

Specifically important to the RSE Programme are:

- (a) Student feedback
- (b) Staff review and feedback
- (c) Parental feedback

Date submitted: 20 May 2015

Date for Review: May 2017