

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Mission Statement

Caring, challenging and achieving together...



Introductory Statement

Coláiste Bhríde, Carnew is a co-educational school established under the Vocational Educational Act of 1930. Our school offers a multi-denominational education. The student enrolment is in excess of 900, aged 12 to 19 years. In line with the aims of Department of Education and Skills Guidelines regarding RSE, it is intended to provide all students with RSE which is an integral part of each student's overall education in our school. The RSE Programme was established through a consultative process involving parents, students, teachers and the Board of Management.

This policy should be read in consultation with:

- *The Whole School Inclusion Policy*
- *The Anti-bullying Policy*
- *The ICT Acceptable Use Policy*

Definition of RSE

RSE is a life-long process of acquiring knowledge and understanding of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexuality and relationships. In the school context RSE provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and

understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and to establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Aims and Objectives

The school ethos is one of respect for self and others and it demonstrates the importance of making a positive contribution in our school community. The teaching of RSE aims to give expression to these concepts as follows:

- To help students to understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality
- To promote a positive attitude to their own sexuality and in their relationships with others
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- To enable students to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy of the school
- 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

Provision of RSE in the Whole School Context

1. Overall school mission statement
2. SPHE Programme (supported by the whole school)
3. Cross-curricular areas which include Home Economics, Science subjects, Religion Education, PE, CSPE, etc.

Time Allocation

RSE is covered for six hours during timetabled SPHE classes per year in line with Department of Education and Skills (DES) recommendations.

RSE at senior cycle is covered during one class period per week for fifth year students and a minimum of six class periods for sixth year students – as part of their Religious Education programme.

Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the principal. All teachers delivering the RSE programme in our school will have received the relevant training provided by the DES.

Informing and Involving Parents

Parents are primary educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is very important

Parents are informed of the programme content via the school app/website

Withdrawing Students from the RSE Programme

Each parent/guardian has the right to withdraw his/her child from some or all RSE classes

Parents should inform the principal in writing of this so that alternative arrangements can be made for the student.

Consideration of Students with Special Education Needs (SEN)

At Coláiste Bhríde we adhere to the guidelines for teaching SPHE to SEN students provided by the The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. All materials used in the classroom are selected for appropriate reading age and the language used is accessible for all students. The RSE coordinator is available to clarify any issues that may prove challenging for SEN students and to work one on one with designated SNAs. A full list of NCCA approved RSE resources for SEN students is also available to parents on ncca.ie.

Best Practice in the RSE Classroom

Offering Advice

The school will not offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception

It will identify external sources of information sources of professional information and advice when appropriate eg. GP, other relevant agencies

It will offer advice which is age appropriate and non-directive

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 a question at a particular time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the RSE/SPHE co-ordinator 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.

Confidentiality

The school will adhere to *The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools at all times and in particular to the relevant sections as stated below.*

Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality.

Students must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the principal/Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and possibly to parents if the principal/DLP decides that it is in the best interest of the student to do so.

Teachers must clearly indicate 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.

Visiting Speakers

Visitor speakers can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to and not instead of, a planned programme of RSE.

The RSE/SPHE Co-ordinator will organise the visit well in advance, after gaining approval from the principal. The visitor should be made aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme. All presentations or workshops provided by outside facilitators should be reviewed by the participants to inform future planning.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

The school does not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that different sexual orientations and gender identities will be discussed during RSE classes. Discussion of these topics provides an opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudices. Discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity should be age appropriate.

Contraception

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, factual manner in a non-directive way.

Ongoing Support, Development and Review

Training

Teachers delivering the programme do not necessarily have to be “experts” on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary.

The school will facilitate teachers to obtain specific training in RSE.

Management will endeavour to accommodate any teacher who does not wish to teach a particular topic.

Resources

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials which have been identified by RSE teachers as useful and which have been approved by the principal.

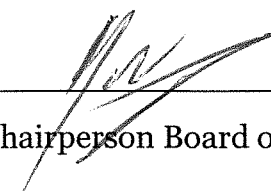
Review and Evaluation

The programme will be reviewed and evaluated by students and the relevant teachers when deemed on an ongoing basis.

A review of the policy statement will take place at the end of the year.

Policy Development Procedure:

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| Version number | 1 3 |
| Policy drafted by | Staff Parents Students |
| Approved by Board of Management | 30/06/2020 |
| Sent to KWETB for approval | 01/07/2020 |
| Next review date | TBC |



Chairperson Board of Management