



Relationships & Sexuality Policy

School Philosophy, Mission Statement, and Ethos

St. Peter's College is committed to providing the highest quality education for each student in its care. Our school fosters holistic development by nurturing the spiritual, intellectual, physical, moral, and emotional growth of each individual student. We recognise the importance of relationships and strive to equip students with the necessary skills to make informed, responsible decisions in an ever-changing and challenging world.

The RSE programme provides students with critical thinking skills and knowledge to evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes, and values they encounter, supporting responsible decision making when it comes to relationships and personal lives. This programme is delivered within the Catholic ethos of the school, ensuring that all spiritual, moral, and ethical issues are addressed in accordance with the school's mission statement.

Relationships and Sexuality Education: Guidance for Catholic Post-Primary Schools

Rationale

As a Catholic school, our RSE policy is rooted in a Christian understanding of the person. We acknowledge the Church's teachings on relationships and sexuality, emphasizing dignity, respect, and the importance of personal responsibility. Our RSE programme aligns with the Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum and seeks to equip students with the personal and social skills necessary to navigate relationships in a moral and responsible manner.

By providing RSE through SPHE, we aim to support young people in making informed decisions regarding their sexuality and personal relationships. SPHE aims to develop self-esteem, communication skills, and decision-making abilities, all of which are integral to the effective delivery of the RSE programme.

Policy Formation & Consultation Process

This policy has been developed in consultation with the school management, staff, parents, and students. The following stakeholders contributed to its formation:

- School Management
- RSE/SPHE Co-ordinators
- Parents/Guardians
- Students
- Board of Management
- Relevant Subject Teachers

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation and delivery of the RSE programme involve various roles:

- **Board of Management:** Ensures the provision of RSE in line with the ethos of the school.
- **Principal:** Oversees the implementation of the policy.
- **SPHE/RSE Co-ordinators:** Manage the programme and liaise with staff and external agencies.
- **Teachers:** Deliver the RSE curriculum in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner, having regard to the Catholic Ethos of the school.
- **Parents/Guardians:** Parents/Guardians can support the school in the implementation of this policy, however as the primary educators of their children, they make the ultimate decision about participation in the programme.
- **Students:** Engage respectfully and actively in the programme.

Aims, Objectives, and Skills of RSE

Aims:

The aim of the RSE programme at St. Peter's College is to foster, encourage, and promote physical and mental well-being among students. Additionally, it seeks to equip students with essential social and organisational skills that contribute to their overall personal and academic development. This is achieved through a cyclical programme in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills (D.E.S.) guidelines, the unique spirit of the school, and our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Objectives:

- To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence as key aspects of personal development.
- To provide students with a framework for responsible decision-making in their personal and social lives.
- To create opportunities for reflection and discussion on important aspects of relationships, sexuality, and well-being.
- To support students in developing a comprehensive understanding of their physical, mental, and emotional health to ensure a balanced and informed approach to relationships and sexuality.

Methodology, Programme Content, and Teaching Approaches

RSE is integrated into the SPHE curriculum and delivered in accordance with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) guidelines. Teaching methods include discussion, group work, role-play, and the use of appropriate teaching resources.

Junior Cycle Topics:

- Belonging & Integrating
- Self-Management
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendship

- Relationships & Sexuality (RSE)
- Emotional Health
- Influences & Decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety

Senior Cycle Topics:

- Relationships and Healthy Boundaries
- Consent
- Sexual Orientation and Identity
- Reproduction and Fertility
- Contraception
- Media Influence on Sexuality
- Responsible Decision-Making

RSE and Additional Educational Needs (AEN)

Students with AEN are supported to access the RSE content to ensure their full participation in the programme. Individual needs are taken into account, and appropriate resources and teaching methods are employed.

Sensitive Issues and Confidentiality

All discussions in RSE classes are age-appropriate and handled with sensitivity. Teachers will respond to students' questions in line with the school's ethos. Confidentiality is maintained, but students are made aware that certain disclosures may need to be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) where necessary.

Child Safeguarding Information

The school's Child Protection Policy is adhered to in all RSE-related discussions. Teachers are trained to identify and respond appropriately to disclosures or concerns.

Practical Issues

Timetabling and Class Organisation:

- Junior Cycle: Integrated into SPHE classes.
- Transition Year: Two periods per week for eight weeks.
- Senior Cycle: Six class periods per year as part of Religious Education.

Resources and Outside Agencies:

- The Trust Programme
- Growing Up LGBT Programme (Supported by the DES)
- Oide Resources
- Guest speakers where appropriate (subject to approval by the Principal)

Staff Development and Training

Staff are encouraged to engage with Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to support their competency and confidence in delivering the programme.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed periodically. The effectiveness of the RSE programme is evaluated through feedback from students, teachers, and parents. The SPHE/RSE Co-ordinators oversee this process.

Ratification and Communication

This policy is available on the school website. Updates and amendments will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

General Content

Junior Cycle Strands

- Understanding myself and others
- Making healthy choices
- Relationships and sexuality
- Emotional wellbeing

[Curriculum Online: Junior Cycle SPHE](#)

Senior Cycle

- Relationships
- Taking time to think
- Sexual health