

**Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)
Policy**

**Loreto College,
Swords, Co. Dublin**

Ph: 01/8407025

Roll No: 60810B

Enrolment: 627 female students

School Category: Voluntary Secondary School



RSE Policy

Mission Statement

The Principal and Board of Management support teachers in their efforts to create a positive teaching and learning environment in the school. The school seeks to promote partnership and communication between home and school through information sessions and meetings with parents and guardians. The school also wants students to participate in activities so that they may feel a sense of belonging to the school, develop socially and build positive relationships with students and teachers alike.

In Loreto College we aim to create a safe and caring environment for staff and students. Students are encouraged to develop a sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and to respect the needs and safety of others. Values such as courtesy and thoughtfulness should influence the behaviour of students at our school. In the spirit of justice and in the interest of co-operation and positive relationships, students should exercise self-discipline and respect for others. We fully recognise the role of parents as having the primary responsibility for the development of their children and we support them in this role. The Code of Behaviour is drawn up in consultation with students, staff and parents and ratified by the Board of Management.

We aim to provide

- A programme, curricular and extra-curricular which develops the whole person.
- A Christian value system encompassing respect, responsibility, co-operation, honesty, fairness and friendship.
- A partnership with parents, primary schools and the local community.

Definition of RSE

RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills which enable us to develop attitudes beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy (DES 1996). Sexuality is a key element of healthy, social and personal development in all our lives, but particularly important in the life of the adolescent.

As a catholic school we wish to support parents/guardians in this important aspect of their child's education and preparation for life. In keeping with our above mission statement, therefore we believe we have a complementary role in preparing young people for their place in society.

In the school setting it is an integral part of general educational provision, which seeks to promote the overall development of the person and which includes the integration of sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

The Draft Guidelines for RSE (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that SPHE is 'spiral, developmental 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. The RSE content for the 3 year groups (TY, 5th & 6th years) is included in Appendix 1.

The aims of our RSE programme

RSE which is located in the overall framework of SPHE has as its specific aims:

1. To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships.
2. To promote an understanding of sexuality.
3. To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's own relationship with others.
4. To educate students to have a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive systems.

5. To enable the students to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

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

Scope of RSE Policy

The 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 SPHE/RSE; 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/guardians, visiting speakers and external facilitators.

What we currently provide

The RSE programme as taught in our school is the programme laid out by the NCCA. The core resource used is the TRUST programme developed by the HSE and the DES.

- We currently provide a minimum of 5-6 timetable classes of 40 minutes duration RSE in TY, 5th and 6th year as per Department recommendations.
- The school encourages parents/guardians to ensure that students participate in this programme as a way of supporting parents as the primary educators of their children.
- A RE programme which discusses relationships, values, peer pressure, conflict and decision-making.
- Student centred pastoral care structure supports include Year Head, Tutor, Guidance and Counselling, School Chaplain, Learning Support, Principal & Deputy Principal, Big Sister/Little Sister programme, Student Council, 5&6th Year Leadership Committees.
- Possibility of one to one conversations with the school Guidance Counsellor.
- Anti-bullying policy and programmes of prevention (Friendship Week, Internet Safety Programme etc.) which emphasise respect for the rights and dignity of others.
- Education of human physiology reproduction in Science, Home Economics and Biology classes.

- Home Economics which discusses relationships within the family, maturity, adolescence, and dealing with conflict, independence and responsibility.
- Visits by speakers on topics which may be relevant to senior cycle RSE.
- Awareness of human rights through Social Justice programmes such as the JPIC group, TY module on social justice in RE.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our school

All education partners are consulted before ratifying school policy and programmes, i.e. Parents/guardians, staff, Board of Management and student council

1. Confidentiality

While students should not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in RSE classes, there may be times when they do talk about their own lives. Confidentiality will be respected unless a teacher becomes aware that a child is at risk; at which point the child protection guidelines will be followed and the appropriate action will be taken, i.e. refer to the Designated Liaison Person (the Principal) for child protection.

2. Parents rights and responsibilities (including the withdrawal of students)

It is our hope that all students will avail of the RSE programme provided by the school. We understand however that at times parents may wish to withdraw their daughters from particular aspects of the RSE programme because of perceived conflict with their own values and beliefs; the school respects this parental right (as per the Education Act 1998 Section 30 Subsection 2E) but will engage with parents with a view to resolving any perceived difficulties. If students are withdrawn arrangements will be made where possible between parents and management for their care while the programme is in progress.

3. Visiting Speakers

In keeping with child protection guidelines, all visiting speakers and facilitators to the school will only have supervised access to students (i.e. teacher present) and will be made aware of the school's ethos and will agree to work within those parameters. The content of all such presentations will be vetted by the RSE teachers or management in advance.

4. Sensitive Issues

From time to time some issues within the RSE programme may present as particularly sensitive for some students. Every effort will be made by staff to become aware of the profile of the group in advance of the delivery of the programme and our Guidance and Counselling services or external counselling will be offered where necessary.

5. Class groupings

All students participating in RSE will be in mixed ability grouping

6. Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs are welcomed and facilitated in this subject. SNAs work in some classes with the teacher to facilitate student learning. Students with special needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up.

7. Staffing

The school has an appointed co-ordinator of RSE; it is a voluntary position that will rotate on a two yearly basis. The school has 3 fully trained RSE teachers for senior cycle who are consulted prior to being timetabled for RSE for each academic year.

8. Parents

Transition year parents are informed of the RSE programme module during attendance at the information night which is held prior to their daughter's entry to TY. Parents of 3rd year students will be informed of the RSE module in 5th & 6th year during a subject choice information night. Fifth and sixth year parents will be reminded of the RSE module by letter from their RSE teachers at the beginning of each academic year and parental consent must be given before admission onto the programme. Upon receipt of this letter, parents who wish to withdraw their daughter from the programme must contact the RSE teacher who may then arrange to contact them with a view to resolving any issues they may have and if necessary may then refer the matter to the Principal.

9. Cross Curricular

All staff will be made aware of the RSE policy during ratification of the policy and will try where possible to link RSE issues to their subject.

Provisions for Ongoing Support, Development and Review

1. Staff Training

We maintain an updated record of In-Service courses attended by staff. All RSE staff are encouraged to register with the SPHE website (www.sphe.ie) for In-Service. Wherever possible staff will be given opportunities to attend further professional development courses. Information received at In-Service will be made available to all relevant teachers.

2. Planning

Where possible the RSE team are given time to meet at school development planning days. At these meetings the RSE co-ordinator will update staff in relation to In-Service training available.

3. Parents

The school will continue to offer supports to parents through the pastoral care team, the parents association and visiting speakers for parents.

4. Resources

We have core and supplementary resources available to all RSE teachers, which are located in the SPHE press beside the photocopier. The core resource used is the *Trust* programme developed by the HSE and the Department of Education and Skills. Staff may also avail of web based resources for class planning; every classroom is now equipped with ICT which aids the use of ICT in classes. The RSE department will identify necessary resources and present them to the Principal as part of their annual projected budget. The Guidance and Counselling service offers resources in the form of HSE leaflets on stress management,

mental health, pregnancy, and sexuality issues etc., which are located on the leaflet board outside the guidance office.

5. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE programme

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our RSE programme, this is conducted through student evaluations at the end of their RSE module, student feedback via the student council, staff review and feedback and parental feedback.

This Policy was ratified by the BOM on March 11th 2014

Appendix - RSE Course Content

Transition Year:

Relationships

What we value in Relationships

Healthy Relationships

Self Esteem

The influence of Self Esteem

When We Feel Hurt

Understanding Boundaries

Communicating Our Boundaries

Intimacy

5th Year:

Relationships

What we value in Relationships

Healthy Relationships

Self Esteem

The influence of Self Esteem

When We Feel Hurt

Understanding Boundaries
Communicating Our Boundaries
Intimacy
Taking Time To Think
Sexuality
Sexual Orientation
Influences & Values
Decision Making
Responsible Relationships

6th Year:

Sexual Health
Human Reproduction & Fertility
Understanding Female Fertility
Contraceptive Methods
Unplanned Pregnancy
Sexually Transmitted infections
STIs Transmission

Note - TY and 5th year course content overlap to reflect the reality that only a proportion of students participate in the TY programme.