



PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL, BALLYPHEHANE

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Principal: Mr. Barry O'Shea

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RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Rationale

Presentation Secondary School Ballyphehane was founded by the Presentation Sisters to educate girls and young women in the tradition, and after the example of, the Venerable Nano Nagle.

Presentation Secondary School Ballyphehane is a Catholic school under the patronage of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). It is conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the CEIST Charter for Schools and its RSE Policy is underpinned by the Church's understanding of RSE.

Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane is a community of people which fosters a warm, caring and supportive atmosphere, welcomes all, respects the human dignity of each and encourages everyone to recognise and realise their potential and is grounded in the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane is a community of teaching and learning which seeks "to provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs", to equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills to help them make their way in the modern world and to "promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school"

Schools have an obligation to teach Senior Cycle RSE (6 classes a year), even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class. The NCCA has developed a curriculum framework for SPHE at Senior Cycle. Section 1.5.1 of the Child Protection Procedures states, "All post-primary schools are also required to have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at senior cycle. The Board of Management recognises its responsibility to ensure that the RSE programme is taught throughout junior and senior cycle. All teachers must be aware of the RSE policy.

This policy has been designed in consultation with the Parents' Association, Teaching Staff, the Student Council and the Board of Management.

The implementation of the RSE Policy will be monitored at SPHE/RSE meetings and other meetings deemed necessary by the Principal or Board of Management.

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. Building on the work done in primary school, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) at

post-primary level seeks to provide opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that will enable them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

RSE Aims

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To enable students to make informed choices

RSE objectives should enable the students to:

- Explore personal thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings about relationships
- Develop an understanding of the different types of relationships, what is important in them and the skills to enhance relationships
- Promote empathy with others who have different cultural values, attitudes and beliefs about family and relationships
- Develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in support of sexual reproductive health
- Develop students' understanding of sexuality and sexual orientation and the importance of an inclusive environment
- Develop personal and interpersonal skills which support beginning, maintaining and ending relationships
- Develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety

Linked to SPHE

RSE connects closely to Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) that provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

These links include:

- Acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness and the skills for building and maintaining self-esteem
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change especially during adolescence and to develop respect for difference between individuals
- Understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility and sexually transmitted infections
- Understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex role stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality
- Value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood

With such support, students may be enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and others. There is a growing recognition that RSE and SPHE (delivered to our junior cycle students) is as important as any other area of the curriculum.

Class organisation and timetabling

Circular M11/03 states that all second level schools must timetable Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of the Junior Cycle Core Curriculum from September 2003. The time allocation recommended is the equivalent of one class period per week.

Circular 0037/2010 states that all second level schools must develop a school policy in regard to RSE and implement a programme in this area as an element of SPHE at junior cycle and as an RSE programme in senior cycle, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class. Schools are required to teach all aspects of the RSE programme, elements of the programme cannot be omitted on the grounds of school ethos. All aspects of the programme can and should be taught within the ethos value system of the school as expressed in the RSE policy. The Board of Management have a responsibility to ensure RSE is made available to all students. The time allocation recommended is six periods of 40 minute classes per year.

At Presentation Secondary Ballyphehane, Junior cycle classes are all timetabled SPHE. 1st Year and 3rd Year are timetabled one class of SPHE per week. 2nd Year is timetabled two classes of SPHE per week.

SPHE is not a timetabled class for 4th, 5th and 6th Years, but these students receive at least six classes of RSE a year during Religious Education classes. Students receive RSE classes in their dedicated class tutor groups.

RSE and Special Educational Needs

Students with additional needs may require more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. In the context of RSE each student with additional needs will be considered individually depending on his/her needs. Consultation with the AEN Coordinator may take place in providing appropriate RSE education these students and cognisance of L2LP programmes will be considered in planning.

Child Protection

Child Protection Procedures 2.1.6 state “In all cases where a school becomes aware of underage sexual intercourse the school should take appropriate steps to inform the child’s parents”. The age for consent is 17 for boys and girls for heterosexual and homosexual sex. All students of RSE are made aware of the limits to confidentiality that should a teacher become aware that a student is at risk, they are obliged to pass this information on to the DLP.

While an atmosphere of trust is a prerequisite of RSE class, the following limits of confidentiality must be observed. These limits are:

- Child abuse-physical, emotional, sexual, neglect
- Intention to harm self or others
- Substance misuse
- Underage sexual activity

Any disclosure will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in compliance with the Child Protection Policy. RSE teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year, remind them at necessary points throughout the year and where possible before making a disclosure.

Content and Teaching Methodologies

Through participation in the SPHE Programme the student will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of experiences. The emphasis will be on building skills, understanding, attitudes and values important in all these areas.

Themes of RSE at Post-Primary Level:

1. Human growth and development (Fertility/reproductive organs/family planning/pregnancy/development of foetus/STIs)
2. Human sexuality (Gender/sexual orientation/attitudes and values/making choices/sexual harassment and abuse)
3. Human Relationships (Peer Pressure/conflict resolution/loving relationships/marriage and commitment/importance of family life)

Learning in RSE

RSE will incorporate the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions of the lives of young people. Teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with the emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be student centred and appropriate to the age and development of the student. The class atmosphere must be one of respect, where the student feels that they are participants in a safe environment. A respectful code of conduct is expected from all participants. Every class group establishes ground rules which are referred to throughout the workshops.

Teaching Methodologies may include:

- Group work
- Role play
- Brainstorming
- Icebreakers
- Simulation
- Narrative expression
- Walking debates
- Project work
- Art work
- Multimedia materials
- Case studies
- Visiting speakers

The Department of Education and Skills recognises that each school has flexibility to plan the RSE Programme in harmony with the schools' ethos, the schools' resources and the students' needs.

Cross Curricular Links

The following subject areas form the cross curricular links with the RSE Programme:

- R.E.
- SPHE
- P.E.
- Science
- CSPE
- Geography
- I.T.

- English

Resources, Accommodations and Outside Agencies

A limited budget is available for RSE and is used to purchase resources and textbooks and to accommodate workshop facilitators and guest speakers.

Resources include:

- RSE Guidance for Catholic Post Primary Schools
- www.sphe.ie RSE Curriculum Guidelines
- RSE Policy Booklet
- RSE Parent Booklet
- Junior Cycle RSE Resource Materials
- Senior Cycle Resource Materials
- www.healthpromotion.ie
- You Can Talk To Me
- Busy Bodies
- The Facts Leaflets
- TRUST Talking Relationships Understanding Sexuality

Training Supports for Teachers

- School RSE Policy
- www.sphe.ie
- PDST-Health and Wellbeing
- DES Syllabus and Guidelines
- Before You Decide
- Trust
- HSE leaflets
- Growing Up LGBT
- Belong to Stand Up
- Mental Health Matters
- Working Things Out
- Body Whys
- Up to Us
- Marie Keating Cancer Awareness Teaching Pack about consent
- www.pshe-association.org.uk (Consent)

Staff development and subject development

The value placed on RSE by Presentation Secondary School will be evident by the commitment on the part of management to developing a core of trained RSE teachers and to appointing an RSE/SPHE coordinator. Career development is an integral part of this programme. Management is responsible for responding to the relevant expressed and perceived training needs of RSE teachers and whole staff.

The SPHE Coordinator 2022-2023 is: Ms. K. Casey

The core RSE teaching team includes Ms.S. Bouse, Ms. K. Casey, Ms T Kingston, Ms P O Donovan, Ms. G O'Sullivan and Ms. R. Wall. It is the aim that all RSE teachers will have undertaken RSE in-service training.

Confidentiality and Referrals Participation

It is a legal requirement of schools to provide RSE to students at Junior and Senior Cycle. Each parent has a right to withdraw their child from some or all RSE classes but parents are encouraged to provide alternative RSE at home. The school will respect this choice as their right. It will be necessary for parents opting out of RSE to make suitable arrangements with the school management for the welfare of their child at these times. Where students are withdrawn for RSE the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students.

Sensitive Issues

Group discussion will be of a general nature, and will not be personally directed at any person, in accordance with the agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by the class teacher or students. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The RSE facilitators may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in checking whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished in accordance with school ethos. Should a teacher be concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Principal. The teacher has the responsibility to set clear boundaries to ensure the classroom is a safe place for everyone, including themselves. The teacher should bear the following in mind when making decisions about where to set limits:

- Age of student
- School ethos
- Schools RSE policy
- RSE Curriculum Guidelines.

Referral

Where it is appropriate, the teacher may refer students to other supportive links within the school. The teacher may inform the class group of external resources relevant to the class material. RSE teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Principal.

Parents/Guardians

The school accepts that it is in the interests of all parents/guardians that the child grows up in a healthy and mature fashion. The school will strive to keep parents informed of the contents of the RSE Programme. The RSE Policy is available online at www.presballyphehane.com. The involvement of parents/guardians at the core of every aspect of RSE gives it extra impetus, depth and validity and training and/or input and development opportunities will be offered to parents in certain aspects of RSE if appropriate.

Whole Staff

This policy will be available for all teachers and SNAs in the school by its inclusion in the online Policy Documents folder, which is shared with all teachers and SNAs. Copies will be given to each teacher of RSE by the SPHE Coordinator.

Review and Evaluation

The RSE course is never static and must be examined and evaluated regularly and adapted to the needs of the students. The RSE programmes and policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis.

Signed: 
Dr. F.J. Steele (Chair)

Date: 06-12-22

Appendix A: Parents' Information Letter



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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Young people are presented with many challenges that affect their health and well-being. The school aims to address some of these challenges by providing R.S.E. (Relationships and Sexuality Education). Through the R.S.E. class students learn to develop important skills for living a healthy life.

We recognise that parents have the primary responsibility for the personal development of their children, and it is our wish to compliment that role. With the school and the family working together, the programme can have greater success. You can support the R.S.E. Programme at home by talking to your teenager, by communicating with them about their own growth, development, friendships, decisions and health.

The R.S.E. component of the Programme will be conducted in Presentation Secondary School in harmony with the Catholic ethos of the school. While we assume that all students will want to participate in the classes, if you have any concern about your daughter attending these R.S.E. classes, please contact the school to discuss the issue.

Yours Sincerely

Barry O'Shea - Principal

