

Coláiste Chiaráin, Leixlip Community School**Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy****School**

Coláiste Chiaráin is a co-educational community school under the trusteeship of the Presentation Sisters, The Archbishop of Dublin and Kildare VEC. The Board of Management, which governs the school, has representatives from the Trustees, the Parent Body and the Teaching Staff.

Our School Philosophy

Coláiste Chiaráin respects the individual; valuing, understanding and empowering the gifts and differences of each person. This school community commits itself to educating the whole person in an atmosphere of trust and respect. The school is committed to respecting the moral standards and culture of the community it serves. It recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators and home is the natural environment in which Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) should take place.

We as a school believe that no young person in our care should feel excluded or marginalized for being who they are. Therefore, our RSE programme will seek to:

1. Support the understanding that RSE is about the sexuality, relationships and sexual health of all young people.
2. Support the understanding that questioning of one's sexual identity is a normal and valued part of adolescence.
3. Address the myths, prejudices and stereotypes that may exist in relation to sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Definition of RSE

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs, values and skills about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This knowledge is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media. Sexuality education seeks to provide young people with formal opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality, through processes, which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). SPHE deals with issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision-making skills - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

What the School Currently Provides

Elements of SPHE and/or RSE are being approached during such subjects as Science, Biology, Religious Education, Home Economics, Guidance and Counselling and Physical Education. Fifth Years have seminars on addiction and substance abuse from professionals trained in this area. Sixth Years have personal development days conducted by trained counsellors from outside the school.

The Aims of our RSE Programme

- 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.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School The Principal, in consultation with the staff, will make provision for the delivery of the RSE Programme. Teachers will follow the guidelines and lesson plans drawn up by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). One timetabled period per week will be allocated to SPHE and out of the SPHE programme in the year, five/six timetabled periods will be assigned to RSE. It is spiral in nature and age appropriate in content. It is envisaged that the services of suitably qualified outside professionals will be availed of for the more technical aspects of the RSE course. The child's right to privacy will be respected at all times. Parents may view the content of the RSE programme in the school if they so wish and they retain the right to withdraw their child from any stage of the programme. In September, parents will be made aware of the deadline by which they can exercise their right to withdraw their child. The first RSE programme was introduced in the school year 1998/99 for First Year students.

Classroom strategy regarding questions, which may arise in class

Teachers will explain that the amount of information given will be part of this year's programme and that any further information will be given at a later stage.

Teachers will not answer personal questions

If it is felt that a question is genuine, the teacher may advise the child to seek further information at home or may consult the parents to get their permission to answer the question.

Ongoing Support, Development and Review

In-career development will be sought for teachers where opportunities arise. The Parents Association may be able to access training for parents and will be supported in their efforts. This policy will be reviewed by the Policy Committee once the RSE programme has been taught for one school year. Further review will be decided upon at that point.

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This policy was updated by the Board of Management at its meeting on Monday 14th May 2007