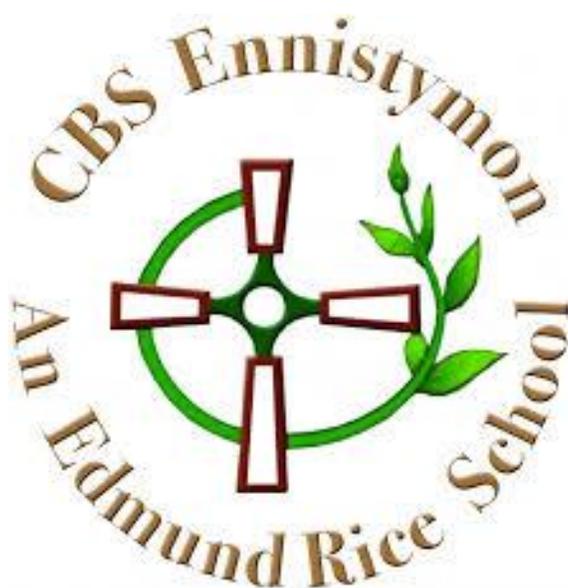


CBS Ennistymon

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy



Reviewed	Ratified by the Board of Management	Review Date
Jan –Mar 2019	12-03-2019	March 2021

Meánscoil na mBráithre

Christian Brothers School, Ennistymon

School Name: Christian Brothers Secondary School Ennistymon

School Address: Monastery Lane, Ennistymon, Co Clare.

School Management: The Board of Management of Meánscoil na mBráithre is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement

We are a voluntary Catholic Secondary School for boys under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST), focusing on the importance of a value-based Christian education in the Catholic tradition.

We endeavour to educate our students so that as emerging adults they will have the confidence and skills necessary to participate fully:

- In community life
- In family life
- In their work life
- In leisure

Ethos

The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter. The five characteristics of an Edmund Rice school underpin the operation of Edmund Rice Secondary School, namely:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership
- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership

Scope of the RSE policy

This policy will apply to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality. RSE teaching and the topics and ideas covered benefit greatly from cross curricular linkages but also impact other subjects, so therefore it is important that all teachers are familiar with the school's RSE policy.

This policy will apply to school staff, students, Board of Management, parents/guardians, visiting speakers and external facilitators.

Definition of RSE

The implementation of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) as part of the Social, Political, Health Education (SPHE) course is built on the foundation of the following two definitions 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. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media. (Department of Education website, www.education.ie).

RSE is an important part of the education of young people, and schools provide a safe context within which young people can learn about themselves and the wider world. This makes access to RSE in schools all the more important' – (Mayock, Kitching and Morgan 2007, p2).

RSE is a developmental process using learning that is experiential in which students participate to help foster a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, especially in the area of sexuality and relationships. RSE in CBS Ennistymon will provide structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Relationship of RSE to the School's Mission Statement

CBS Ennistymon is committed to providing the best educational formation possible for all our students as evidenced through our Mission statement. We aim to provide an education for all students which will embrace and develop their full human potential: personal, academic, physical, moral and religious. Our RSE programme will encompass the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy, contributing towards the full human development of the student. As outlined by the Department of Education and Skills in Circular 0037/2010, no aspect of the RSE programme including STIs, contraception, or sexual orientation can be omitted on the grounds of religious ethos. As we seek to promote the overall development of the student, this involves the integration of the RSE programme into the context of our holistic educational ethos.

Guidelines for the Management, Implementation and Organisation of RSE in CBS Ennistymon

Arrangements for the teaching of the RSE programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal. Teachers will follow the guidelines drawn up by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

RSE at Junior Cycle will be delivered each year as a module within the SPHE curriculum as per the DES guidelines and the SPHE Department plan. RSE at the Senior Cycle will be delivered to all students as a module within their allocated R.E class.

Visiting speakers can develop and enhance the RSE programme but should not be used to replace it. All visiting speakers should be provided with a copy of the RSE policy and also be familiar with the mission statement and ethos of the school. The RSE teacher should remain in the classroom whilst the speaker is delivering the subject matter in line with Circular 0023/2010 from the Department of Education and Science.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

SPHE

- Is a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary and secondary school and is not confined to once off inputs or lessons
- Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community RSE education should include an input from all, and collaboration can be fostered through the teaching and delivery of materials
- Is a generic approach. It is not so much about the specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues
- Is based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements and individual school situations
- Is spiral in nature. RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in school, this will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity

- Engages children to be involved in activity based learning. RSE should provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one's own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships.

Through SPHE and RSE, members of the school community should be enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through;

- A sense of identity
- A sense of purpose
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of security
- A sense of competence.

In an ever changing world, RSE encourages children through consistent messages that are taught in line with SPHE. The school has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with (SPHE Teacher guidelines, p25). In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an intercultural society.

Current Provision Included in the School Curriculum is:

- *SPHE lessons (one per week over approximately 6-8 weeks a year provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- *Use of the RSE Manuals and a mix of different SPHE books available to us.
- *Webwise resources
- *Belong To – Homophobic and Transphobic anti bullying lessons
- *Adapted resources for Special Educational Needs (SEN)from www.pdst.ie
- *Religious Education.

Aims of our RSE Programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

Broad Objectives

Aims taken from the Interim Guidelines for RSE Education 1996

Objectives taken from Interim Guidelines for RSE Education 1996 – if there are any objectives that the school wishes to include for their own RSE policy, here is where it might be included.

When due account is taken of abilities and varying circumstances, the RSE education curriculum should enable the child to (in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum)

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self
- Develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and wellbeing of others
- Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-worth
- Understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and wider contexts
 - Develop an awareness of differing family patterns
 - Come to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
 - Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity

- Develop personal skills which help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships
- Develop coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse
- Acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction
- Acquire the use of appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development
- Develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyles and decision making.

We support the aims on which RSE is modelled. We encourage good behaviour, open communication, understanding and tolerance of differences, and respect for self and others. We recognise that both pupils and staff have rights and responsibilities in our school. A sense of responsibility is fostered and attention is paid to the wellbeing of all of the members of the school community.

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- * Child Protection Policy
- * Substance Use Policy
- * Code of Behaviour
- * Anti-Bullying Policy - particular care is given to ensure that students are made aware of the zero tolerance approach the school takes to homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- * ICT policy
- * Guidance policy

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our School

RSE is received at junior cycle during SPHE lessons once a week for approximately 6-8 weeks from first year to third year. RSE at CBS Ennistymon generally happens at the beginning of the second term as recommended at RSE CPD training.

At senior cycle, RSE is taught during R.E classes. This generally occurs at the beginning of term 2 but additional classes may be provided as deemed necessary or appropriate or within the context of any relevant news stories.

Teachers teaching RSE should be comfortable and willing to teach RSE and should attend regular CPD pertaining to the efficient and effective teaching of RSE.

Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

Parental Involvement

Going Forward Together (Parents Booklet) states that – “As a parent, you are the first teacher of your child. You hand on values and attitudes to each new generation of children”. For this reason, CBS Ennistymon sees as very important, the communication between parents and SPHE teacher around the teaching of RSE.

It should be noted in line with the Education Act 1998, section 30 subsection 2 (e) shall not require any student to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years. Therefore, parents have the right to withdraw their child out of the sensitive aspects of RSE if they so wish. However, as RSE is an integral component to SPHE, consent is not needed. For this reason, the communication deemed most suitable is that a letter is sent home to parents outlining the content that will be covered with their child as part of RSE over the coming weeks (see appendix). Should the parents feel a need to withdraw their child from these lessons, they are free to do so without judgement.

If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons. eg. What they may hear on yard.

Communicating in this way ensures the most effective and safest learning for the child as parents have the opportunity to develop and explore the content of what is learned within the context of their own family experience and the child should receive the most holistic experience of RSE possible.

Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught to all students. Whilst SPHE is not currently being taught as a short course, teachers will predominantly be following the new layout for SPHE.

In first year, under Relationships and Sexuality, students learn:

1. Me as unique and different
2. Friendship
3. Changes at adolescence
4. The reproductive system
5. Images of male and female
6. Respecting myself and others

In second year, RSE deals with:

1. From conception to birth
2. Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions
3. Peer pressure and other influences
4. Managing relationships
5. Making responsible decisions
6. Health and personal safety

In third year, RSE deals with:

1. Body image
2. Where am I now?
3. Relationships - what's important
4. The three R's: respect, rights, and responsibilities
5. Conflict

At senior cycle, RSE deals primarily with:

1. Sexual Health
2. Contraception
3. Consent
4. Relationships (healthy or unhealthy)
5. Respect

Approaches & Methodologies

When implementing the programme, staff will endeavor to display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times.

Active Learning Methodologies are an integral part of teaching of SPHE and RSE

Any or all of the following techniques will allow the student to play an active part in the learning process:

- Discussion
- Role play
- Interviewing friends, or other school pupils, family members
- Surveys of attitudes
- Analysing and evaluating news stories and articles
- Hosting visitors
- Ranking statements
- Viewing and discussing videos.

The school policy should indicate, when necessary, the approaches it uses to be sensitive of various cultural or contextual issues that may affect the inclusion of some children. It should address these in a child-centred manner, in line with the SPHE curriculum and other relevant policies and procedures.

Differentiation

The very nature of RSE education, and the differing maturity and growth levels of children mean that some children will need more support to understand the concepts and content. The teacher must use their assessment techniques to determine how to manage this.

For students with special educational needs, they may be pre-taught some of the language on a one to one basis before learning the content within the classroom setting. A smaller group of SEN student may be taught in a smaller group setting if resources permit.

Language

The SPHE curriculum provides a context in which students are given opportunities to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to SPHE. Students should become aware of the power and influence of language. When used positively, language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner can hurt, diminish and demean. They need to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationship and their everyday interactions. Language is a powerful tool and should be used with respect and integrity for the dignity of each person.

There are two areas where the use of language is applied in RSE lessons;

- The formal use and teaching of language generally throughout the school
- The use of language in discussion through your formal RSE lessons
- Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching
- Relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used, the use of slang will be discouraged
- Anatomical terms and language introduced is consistent with RSE Materials Books

Questions

A safe and comfortable atmosphere should be fostered within the classroom. Students should feel like they can ask questions and for their question to be taken seriously. However, guidelines must be made clear about appropriate and inappropriate questions. This discussion could be facilitated when constructing the ground rules with the class on the first RSE lesson.

We use some simple principles when fostering discussion and questioning

- *No personal questions of the teacher
- * The Question Box may be availed of by the students
- * The teacher will be mindful of their reaction to any questions
- * Questions do not have to be answered straight away

Assessment

Assessment of the students' learning is essential as in every other subject, however it is conducted in a less formal manner and will generally consist of games and quizzes (e.g Kahoot)

Confidentiality

Students may disclose personal information about themselves during class. The ground rules designed by the class will include an element around confidentiality. Students will be encouraged to disclose any personal issues to the teacher after class. These will then be dealt with in accordance with school policy and Children First Guidelines 2011.

Provision of Ongoing Support

- * Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members.
- * Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE
- * Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials
- * Support from a PDST Advisor
- * Promotion and communication of resources available from www.pdst.ie

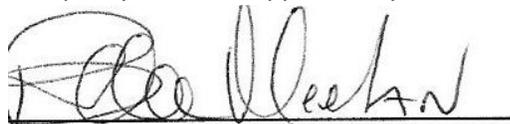
Review

- *The policy will be reviewed after every two years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise
- *Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made .
- *This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on 12-03-2019

This policy is due for review March 2021.

Approval

This policy has been approved by CBS Ennistymon Board of Management. Signed: _



Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 12-03-2019