



Coláiste Cois Life

Gleann an Ghrífin, Leamhcán

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

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A: The School and its Vision Statement

The college's ambition is to achieve an excellent standard in Irish-medium education, language awareness, teaching quality, extra-curricular and cultural activities. In addition, the college's vision is that students of Coláiste Cois Life will be prepared to embrace the challenges they face in the future.

Mission Statement

Coláiste Cois Life is a designated Irish-medium Community College with a Catholic Ethos that provides holistic education to all students in a safe and secure environment where all students can achieve their full potential.

A learning environment is created in which the care of students is catered for. This environment is trustful, positive, helpful, spiritual and friendly. In this atmosphere all students will be expected to succeed so that they can fulfill their potential and that all members of the college community will feel valued, important and respected.

At Coláiste Cois Life we aim to make our school a centre of learning that embodies the rich traditions of Ireland, our faith, our language, our music, and all other aspects of Irish culture. In the school the pupils will get to know the valuable aspects of life through good example, advice and friendship with the school staff.

We strive to develop the student's whole personality, their understanding of justice, scholarship, freedom, self-discipline and empathy for others. We recognise the importance of parental involvement in promoting these values in school, at home and in life.

This Policy was developed in conjunction with the management, teaching staff, parents and pupils of the school to help fulfill these aims. The policy is consistent with these aims and the Catholic ethos of the school and enables students to develop attitudes and values regarding their own sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework. It also gives them the opportunity to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act responsibly.

B. Scope

The Policy encompasses every aspect of teaching and learning in relation to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). Dialogue, regarding this aspect of the curriculum, occurs also in other classes, as well as SPHE and RSE and it is important that all teachers, as well as management, parents, pupils and guest speakers / facilitators are familiar with the policy.

In drafting this policy, the legislation, various guidelines, school policies and the following circulars were taken into account, as well as the school ethos:

- Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Circulars 23/2010, M4/95, M20/96 (Department of Education & Skills)
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Department of Education & Skills)
- the School's Child Protection Policy
- the School's Pastoral Care Policy
- the School's Behaviour Policy
- Antibullying Policy

C. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a central part of the social and personal development of the pupil. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, provide information on this at home and

the school supports this education by providing classes which give pupils the opportunity to develop, in a structured way, an understanding of, and a positive attitude to, human relationships, sexuality and identity.

D. Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social, Personal and Health Education

The Social, Personal and Health Education Programme (SPHE) enables the pupils to develop important skills and to learn about taking care of themselves and of others. In this way, they are enabled to take a responsible and informed role in society and to make responsible decisions about their own health, which show respect for their own dignity and for the dignity of others. The learning is spiral, and age-appropriate in methodology and content. SPHE covers areas which are closely linked to developing a healthy outlook in relation to sexuality in the pupil herself and in her relationship with other people.

E. The aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme

The RSE programme is set in the framework of the SPHE programme and has the following aims:

- To help pupils 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

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

F. The management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school

1. Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal.

2. Parents' Role / Withdrawal

Parents are the primary educators of their children and the school recognises their important role in education concerning relationships and sexuality. This policy was drafted in consultation with parents' representatives and the views of parents will be taken into account when reviewing the policy. This policy will be made available to the school community on the school website.

A letter and permission form will be sent to parents when the RSE module of the SPHE programme is about to commence at the beginning of the Junior Cycle and again at the beginning of the Senior Cycle setting out the topics to be covered. They will also be informed that it is their right to withdraw their child but that this must be communicated in writing. Any worry or anxiety expressed will be dealt with sympathetically. Appropriate arrangements will be put in place for pupils who are withdrawn. At the same time, care will be taken not to undermine the RSE programme and the entitlement of the other pupils. If a parent wishes to withdraw their Child from the RSE section they must schedule a meeting with the Principal and SPHE co-ordinator.

3. Providing Advice:

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters, not to offer an individual advice, information or guidance. However, sources of professional advice and information will be identified when appropriate.

4. Explicit Questions:

It may not be appropriate to deal with certain explicit questions in class. Teachers may say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, he/she should seek advice from the SPHE Co-ordinator or the Principal. When deciding whether or not to answer questions, the teacher should consider the age and maturity of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

5. Confidentiality:

It is school policy that where a pupil is considered at risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Designated Liaison Person (the Principal). The Principal will decide whether or not to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities according to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Dept of Education & Skills) 4.1.1. and 4.1.2.

The following is also school policy:

- Teachers cannot promise absolute confidentiality.
- Pupils are made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal or possibly to parents, if the Principal decides that it is in the best interests of the pupil to notify a parent.
- Teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential.

6. The biological aspects of the Programme:

It is school policy that the Science Department deals primarily with specialist information on the biological aspects of reproduction.

7: Visiting speakers and others

-It is school policy that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However, visitors can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of, a planned programme of RSE.

- If it is decided to bring in an external speaker / to run an external workshop for an aspect of the programme, the teacher must follow the guide set out for guest speakers and must get permission from the Principal beforehand.

- Parents will be informed in writing regarding the guest speaker / workshop a week in advance.

-The teacher will ensure that the subject of the talk is age-appropriate and conforms to the RSE programme.

- Visitors will be made aware of the RSE policy, the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme. The teacher will be present for the talk, along with the guest speaker.

- In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group and to make better use of the time of the visitor, it is advisable to draw up questions in advance and to forward them to the visitor. This will involve the pupils in the talk and also facilitates planning.

8. Sexual orientation

The teachers recognise that different sexual orientations are acceptable in society and therefore, it is inevitable and natural that various sexual orientations will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning homosexuality is the opportunity given to correct false ideas and assumptions and to address prejudice. Discussion of this topic will be at a stage which is appropriate to the age of the pupils.

9. Special Needs

It may happen that pupils with special needs may need more help in learning what sort of behaviour is suitable as they deal with the physical and emotional aspects of this programme. With parental permission, this support and help will be provided to prepare them for life and to make them vigilant of abuse by others.

10. Family Planning / Sexual Health

Family planning will be dealt with in an age-appropriate way and each aspect of the question will be considered in an open manner.

Age-appropriate information will be provided in the senior cycle regarding safe sex practices and sexually transmitted infections.

G. Provision of the programme in the school

An RSE module will be provided for each year group in the school in the junior cycle and in the senior cycle. RSE is a part of the SPHE classes for junior cycle. There will be six RSE classes for 4th, 5th and 6th year.

H. Ongoing support, development and review

Training

All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly and honestly within the school ethos and in the context of God's love, and that they would be willing to take advice and training.

The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field by enabling them to attend in-service courses.

SPHE will not be put on a teacher's timetable without consulting with the teacher first.

Teachers will be given the opportunity to hold meetings to plan the programme and to share expertise.

Resources

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful material and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school resources allow.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE programme

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. The monitoring and evaluation will be done by:

- pupil feedback
- staff review and feedback
- parental feedback

It is recommended that this policy is reviewed every three years or when the Board of Management deems it necessary.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the _29/11/21_____