

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

Scoil Pól is a co-educational, Catholic, voluntary secondary school. Founded by the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul the Apostle, the school is now under the trusteeship of the Le Chéile Schools Trust.

### **Mission Statement**

Scoil Pól is committed to the provision of an inclusive broad-based education, within a Christian community, where mutual trust and respect facilitate personal, social, vocational, academic and spiritual development

### **Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

RSE is a developmental process based on experiential learning in which students participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

### **Our RSE programme**

The RSE programme is “spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology”.

RSE at post-primary level deals with three main themes:

1. Human relationships
2. Human growth and development
3. Human sexuality

Aims of the programme:

- a) To help students understand and develop friendships and relationships
- b) To promote an understanding of sexuality
- c) To promote a positive attitude to one’s own sexuality and in one’s relationship with others
- d) To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- e) To enable students to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the ethos of the school in a non-directive manner

- f) To provide opportunities for student to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

RSE is delivered to Junior Cycle students during Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) classes and is part of the national SPHE curriculum. RSE is delivered to Senior Cycle students during Wellbeing classes.

## **Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in Scoil Pól**

### **1. Timetabling**

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

### **2. Informing and Involving Parents**

Parents are the primary educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important.

- Ordinarily, parents will be informed of the RSE programme at the Information Evening for First Year Parents and by letter on enrolment. Parents may request to withdraw their child from the RSE programme, should they so wish. Such requests must be communicated, in writing, to the school Principal.

Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so - sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.

### **3. Role of Visitors**

Visiting speakers are seen as complementing and supporting the SPHE/Wellbeing Programmes in the school. Teachers inviting these speakers are to

- Inform the Principal in advance (Garda vetting??)
- Make the speaker aware of the Scoil Pól RSE policy
- Agree the content of the presentation
- Do preparatory and follow up work where possible
- Under normal circumstances remain with the class group during the visit.

### **4. Sexual Orientation**

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Interchange (LGBTI) will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages

of exploring issues concerning LGBTI is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions, and address prejudice. Discussion of LGBTI should be appropriate to the age of the students.

5. **Family planning, Contraception, Unplanned pregnancy**

All three topics are covered in the prescribed Senior Cycle resources (Trust)

These topics will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open and non-directive manner.

Issues such as over population and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Home Economics, Geography and Religious Education. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the RSE Programme.

6. **Age of Consent**

This topic will be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner.

7. **Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections**

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner.

8. **Special Needs**

Children with special needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. They may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned about and prepared against abuse by others. Within the RSE class, children with special needs will be catered for with this in mind and in collaboration with the Special Education Department.

9. **Explicit Questions**

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. Teachers may choose to 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/Wellbeing department and/or Principal. When deciding whether or not to answer explicit questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

10. **Confidentiality**

Teachers must be cognisant of their role as mandated persons and adhere to the reporting procedures outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools.

### **Ongoing support, development and review of RSE programme**

**1. Training**

The skills acquired in general teaching apply also to RSE education. The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field, bearing in mind the overall budgetary framework and the need for the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the school to continue with as little disturbance as possible.

**2. Resources**

Requests for resources shall be considered for approval by School Management.

**3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE programme.**

The RSE team are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme.

### **Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated accordingly.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management (BOM) on 18/06/2019