SCOIL RUÁIN

KILLENAULE



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCTION (RSE) POLICY



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| Policy Area | Schools |
| Document Reference Number | SC.R/RSE/040/1 |
| Version No. | 1 |
| Document Drafted by | Scoil Ruáin Killenaule |
| Date previous version adopted by TETB | 12th June, 2018 |
| Date Reviewed/Amended by School | September, 2021 |
| Date Reviewed/Ratified by Senior Management Team – CE and Directors | 14th October, 2021 |
| Date noted/to be noted by TETB | 21st October, 2021 |
| Date of Withdrawal of Obsolete Document | 14th October, 2021Document Ref. No. SC.R/RSE/040/0Version No. 1 |

# **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy Statement**

*Please note: all references to gender are taken to be inclusive and the term parent includes guardian.*

1. The School and staff

Scoil Ruáin is a multi-denominational, co-educational post-primary school of approximately 400 students and a staff of over 40. Our motto is *Ad Totam Personam*, and we believe a well-rounded education incorporates all areas of achievement: academic, sporting, social and personal.

1. Definition of RSE

RSE is a programme which helps our young people to learn about relationships and develop a healthy understanding of human sexuality as it relates to themselves and to others. The programme is grounded in the promotion of self-esteem and respect for themselves and others by providing access to appropriate, accurate information in an environment of openness and co-operation.

1. Aims of RSE

The aims of RSE in Scoil Ruáin are to:

* Offer all young people a planned programme of education about human development, relationships, sexuality and family life which is appropriate to the age and maturity of the young people
* Provide young people with the skills to recognise, prepare for and manage growth, development and change
* Encourage young people to respect and value themselves and others and to demonstrate this respect in their interactions with others
* Encourage young people to develop positive attitudes to towards the rights and responsibilities involved in relationships, along with compassion and tolerance when people do not conform to their way of life
* Encourage better communication about relationships and sexual matters between young people and their parents, families and friends
* Encourage young people to develop an understanding of risk and safety and the motivation and skills to keep themselves safe
* Encourage awareness of the law as it relates to sexual behaviour
* Make young people aware that they determine their own sexual health and trust them to use information in a responsible manner
* Encourage young people to appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood and value human life
1. RSE and SPHE

Junior cycle: SPHE within which a module of RSE is taught every year.

 Year 1 (6, 58-minute sessions)

* Self esteem
* Value of positive friendships; responsibilities in relationships
* Physical/emotional/psychological changes at adolescence
* Human reproduction: reproductive organs/intercourse/conception
* Gender issues and stereotyping
* Respect for sexuality of self and others

Year 2 (6, 58 minute sessions)

* Conception to birth
* Different types of relationships and their associated emotions
* Peer pressure and other influences on sexuality
* Managing relationships
* Decision making
* Personal safety in relationships including STIs

 Year 3 (6, 58 minute sessions)

* Body image and self-esteem
* Review of adolescence
* Relationships: values and where we get them
* Rights, responsibilities and respect in relationships
* Conflict: sources and resolution

Senior cycle: RSE is taught in both years 5 and 6

* Relationships and values
* Sexuality, sexual orientation, gender issues
* Decision-making and consent
* Safe sex and sexual health
* Personal safety
* Conflict management and coercive control
1. Management and organisation of RSE in Scoil Ruáin
2. Teachers

The principal will ensure that, as far as possible, teachers are *invited* to teach the RSE course. This invitation includes the opportunity for teachers to avail of training, CPD and regular updating in best practice in relation to RSE. While gender balance of RSE teachers is desirable, the priority is to provide willing and effective teachers.

1. Parental involvement

A letter will be sent to all parents before commencement of RSE lessons each year, outlining the areas to be covered. A copy of this policy is available for parent inspection. Parents questions are welcome at any time.

1. Teacher judgement

Teachers of RSE make it a priority to create a class atmosphere of openness and trust, where questions about sensitive issues are answered, where appropriate. Young people first need to be taught how and what to share. No teacher or student will be expected or encouraged to answer questions of a personal nature or those that might be deemed intrusive or inappropriate. Teachers should feel confident in deflecting questions they feel unqualified or uncomfortable in asking.

Confidentiality and disclosure:

Students will be notified at the earliest opportunity and reminded before each series of lessons in RSE that, under the Children First Act 2015, teachers are mandated persons. They are required by law to report any revelations of “at risk” behaviour to the designated liaison person (DLP) or deputy (DDLP). In Scoil Ruáin, the DLP is the principal, Mr James Williams and the DDLP is the deputy, Ms Siobhan Landers. Any allegations or disclosures of physical or sexual abuse or neglect, or any suggestion that a young person has harmed or intends to harm themselves or others, will be passed to the DLP. Inappropriate personal disclosures relating to sexuality will be discouraged and redirected in the classroom.

1. Involvement of other subject areas

A number of subjects are involved in the teaching of RSE-related topics. Science, Home Economics, Biology, RE and Social Education may touch on aspects of human reproduction, but other subjects may touch on issues around values, consent, sexuality, etc. Therefore, all staff must familiarise themselves with the RSE policy.

1. School-wide promotion of values

Inappropriately sexualised behaviour is unacceptable. Overt displays of affection between couples, sexual harassment, reference to sex acts and or use of sexual profanities are not tolerated.

1. Parental consent and involvement

While the school is obliged to make RSE available to all students, it is every parent’s right to remove their child from classes they deem to be sensitive. The school will inform parents of when RSE will take place. Unless a parent explicitly withdraws a child from RSE class, the school will assume consent is implied. Supervision of the child during this time will be arranged in consultation with the parent.

1. Visiting speakers

In order to make the teaching of RSE a natural and open part of the education of our students, external speakers will not normally be used in programme delivery. From time to time, however, speakers from approved agencies will be invited to share their expertise with students. Such speakers will be provided in advance with copies of the RSE policy and the visiting speakers policy and made aware of the ethos and values of the school. The RSE teacher will remain with the group for the duration of the speaker’s visit.

1. Diversity

Scoil Ruáin believes that the role of the family in society is paramount, however that family is comprised. School correspondence will contain inclusive language and not assume that married, biological parents are the guardians of our students.

Furthermore, we recognise that heterosexuality is not the only sexual orientation our students or their parents’ practice. Teachers do not promote any one lifestyle as the only acceptable one for society. We will endeavour to include all orientations and not only refer to heterosexual relationships as “normal”.

Homophobic and transphobic bullying will not be tolerated and use of the word “gay” as a derogatory expression will be strongly discouraged. We recognise the importance of not singling out lesbian/gay/bisexual students and any student who is coming to terms with their sexual identity should not experience any harassment, embarrassment or isolation.

1. Linked policies

Code of behaviour

Child protection

Anti-bullying

SEN Inclusion policy

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of board of management) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_