

# **Castlecomer Community School**

## **RSE Policy**

### **School Mission Statement;**

Our school is a community of learning in an environment of respect and commitment. All who live in our area are welcome to participate in our learning experience in an atmosphere of concern and openness.

We embrace the future.

RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) is a module in the overall framework of the SPHE programme.

### **Aims and Objectives of RSE**

#### **Aims**

1. To develop a positive sense of self-awareness and skills needed for building and maintaining self-esteem.
2. To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships.
3. To promote an understanding of sexuality.
4. To promote a positive attitude towards one's own sexuality and in one's relationships with others.
5. To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.
6. To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

#### **Objectives**

RSE should enable students to;

1. Acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships.
2. Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change, especially during adolescence, and to develop respect for difference between individuals.
3. Understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility and STI's.
4. Understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex roles, stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality.
5. Value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
6. Develop strategies for decisions and actions consistent with personal moral integrity and respectful of the rights and dignity of others.
7. Develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety.

## **Time allocation, Structure and Timetabling of RSE**

At Junior cycle, RSE is provided as a modular programme within the SPHE programme and is facilitated during SPHE class time from 1<sup>st</sup> year to 3<sup>rd</sup> year. There is a single class period per week and classes are 35 – 40 minutes long. At Junior cycle, SPHE is generally delivered by the Class Tutors, to encourage trust and develop regular open forums for discussion. At Senior cycle, RSE is delivered through a module in Religion class. There are two RE classes per week in Transition year and three classes per week in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year. Students at senior cycle rotate teachers every 8-10 weeks. RSE is delivered to Leaving Cert Applied students through Social Education in LCA years 1 and 2.

**SPHE Subject co-ordinator:** Glynn Clarke

### **Programme Outline**

There are three core themes in the RSE programme; ***Human Growth and Development, Human Sexuality and Human Relationships.***

Topics for **Junior Cycle** students will include:

#### **1. Human Growth and Development**

- ❖ An understanding of physical and emotional changes at puberty.
- ❖ Fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS.
- ❖ An awareness of the consequences and implications of sexuality activity.

#### **2. Human Sexuality**

- ❖ Understanding and respecting what it is to be male or female.
- ❖ An appreciation of the roles of women and men in society.
- ❖ Awareness of discrimination.
- ❖ Personal safety.
- ❖ Sexual orientation.

#### **3. Human Relationships**

- ❖ Developing skills regarding making and maintaining good relationships and friendships.
- ❖ Family roles and responsibilities.
- ❖ Group behaviour and resolving conflict.
- ❖ An understanding of how peer pressure works.

Topics for **Senior Cycle** students will build on elements covered in Junior cycle and will treat issues in ways suitable for the young adult:

### 1. Human Growth and Development

- ❖ Fertility and family planning.
- ❖ A deeper understanding of pregnancy and the developing foetus.
- ❖ Human Health – Breast, cervical, testicular and lung cancer.

### 2. Human Sexuality

- ❖ Treating women and men with equal respect.
- ❖ Sexual harassment.
- ❖ Sexual abuse, rape, legal rights; voluntary and statutory agencies.
- ❖ Making moral and healthy choices regarding sexual activity.
- ❖ Sexual orientation and Gender Identity.

### 3. Human Relationships

- ❖ An awareness of what constitutes a loving healthy relationship.
- ❖ The long term commitment involved in marriage/civil partnerships.
- ❖ Parenting and family life.
- ❖ Prejudice and discrimination.

## **Teaching and Learning Strategies**

A variety of Teaching and Learning strategies are used to facilitate diverse learning needs. Differentiation of some of the strategies below is important;

- ❖ Class debate and discussion
- ❖ Walking debates
- ❖ At Junior cycle, textbooks are also work books which can be completed by students
- ❖ SPHE tree in Room 9
- ❖ SPHE notice board outside room 9 and the Chaplains Corner notice board on the ramp.
- ❖ Individual and group research
- ❖ Individual and group presentations to the class
- ❖ Use of newspapers and current affairs websites
- ❖ Role play
- ❖ Guest speakers
- ❖ DVD's
- ❖ Project work
- ❖ Teaching using key words

## **Guest Speakers**

Visitors to the classroom or school, particularly those engaging directly with students, should be aware of relevant child protection legislation and the school's RSE policy. Talks or programmes delivered by outside speakers must be consistent with and complimentary to the school's ethos and SPHE/RSE programme and be appropriate to the level of student involved. Classroom teachers should remain in the classroom with the students to ensure that the school follows appropriate procedures for dealing with any issue/s that may arise as a result of the external input.

## **Resources**

### **Junior Cycle:**

- ❖ Minding Me (Books 1, 2 and 3) by Fiona Chambers, Anne Jones and Anita Stackpoole.
- ❖ B4udecide.ie - RSE resource materials for teachers.
- ❖ Growing up LGBT – a resource for SPHE and RSE (Junior Cycle)

### **Senior Cycle:**

- ❖ 'TRUST - Talking Relationships Understanding Sexuality Teaching Resource'
- ❖ 'Growing up LGBT - a resource for SPHE and RSE' (Senior Cycle)
- ❖ 'Cancer Awareness Programme – A resource for SPHE teachers'.
- ❖ 'Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education' – Senior Cycle
- ❖ Audio – visual resources and ICT resources are available in each classroom.

## **Parents**

Parents have the primary responsibility for the Social, Personal and Health education and development of their children. Their contribution and involvement is vital to the successful implementation of the overall RSE programme. Parents Council, Board of Management and Student Council members have the opportunity to read, review and contribute to the development of this policy. All resources listed are available for review on request. Further detailed information on RSE can be found on [www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)

Note:

Under Section 9 of the Education Act 1998, regard must be had to Section 30(e) under which a child may not be required 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 18, the student.

If a parent/guardian feels that any of the RSE programme is contrary to the conscience, values or religious beliefs held, they have the right to withdraw their son/daughter from partial/all instruction at such designated times. The responsibility is on the parent/guardian to contact the school in writing to communicate this request. Due to limited resources the school cannot guarantee appropriate supervision for the student during their withdrawal from class.