



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Reviewed 2019 Due for review: 2022

Enacted after consultation between staff, parent representatives, Student Council, Principal and Board of Management. In this policy document the term “parent” is taken to include “guardian”

A. School

1. The school is a day-school for girls in the Voluntary Secondary category. Our catchment area is South County Dublin, North Wicklow and North Kildare.

B. Our School Mission Statement

1 . Rosemont is an academically stimulating school with a Catholic ethos that encourages girls to live their faith in the ordinary events of every day. Christian faith is the reason why each individual girl in Rosemont is respected and valued, whether she is a believer or not. Our educational mission draws life from ideals that are sincerely Catholic; these same ideals are open to people with a wide array of beliefs and backgrounds. This partnership is possible because the Catholic faith is a truly humanising faith: the salvation it offers is a salvation that makes us more genuinely human. St. Josemaría Escrivá wanted people to discover in their Catholic faith a basis for unity and solidarity in working with others to build up an authentically human ecology in the world.

2. Our school was founded by a group of forward-thinking parents in 1977. They recognised that strong, effective partnerships between parents and teachers are essential for children to achieve their greatest potential. From birth to adulthood parents are the primary educators of their children. By forming a real partnership with parents, Rosemont gives students a powerful advantage. We have found that success is certain for students whose teachers and parents collaborate with them in the development of their goals and strategies for pursuing academic excellence.

3. As a school with a Catholic ethos we are committed to our responsibility to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of all students and promote health education for all, in

consultation with their parents, having regard to the Catholic ethos of the school. (Ref. Education Act 1998, section 9(e)).

In accordance with our Anti-bullying policy and Equality and Dignity in the Workplace policies all staff, students and the wider school community are committed to fostering the maximum respect for the dignity of the person. The underlying objective of some policies is to nurture respect towards oneself and others.

C. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

1. The RSE unit in both Junior and Senior cycle teaches the dignity and beauty of human sexuality through a diversity of learning methodologies in an age appropriate way. Students learn to cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

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

“In Irish schools, RSE 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.” (RSE Policy Guidelines 1997) Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

E. The aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme

Six classes on Relationships and Sexuality Education are delivered for Junior Cycle (1st, 2nd and 3rd year) and Senior Cycle (4th, 5th and 6th year). RSE has as its specific aims: a) To help students understand and develop friendships and relationships b) To promote an understanding of human sexuality c) To promote knowledge of and respect for human reproduction d) 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 f) To provide opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

F. Guidelines for the management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school

Rosemont School, RSE policy, 2019

1. 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 especially in matters of relationships and sexuality. Their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as being of primary importance. On this basis parents will always be informed before RSE units are taught so that they have the option to deal with these matters in advance at home and will be encouraged to do so. This policy is communicated to all school parents. Views expressed by parents will be taken into account when reviewing the policy. This policy is accessible to all parents on the school website.

3. Programme content: The basis of the RSE programme is the origins and meaning of human sexuality. As an integral part of human nature human sexuality will be explored in the context of relationships, understanding one's fertility, responsible parenthood, STDs etc. within the ethos of the school. Expert outside speakers will be invited to address classes where relevant.

4. Questions arising in class: On occasion it may not be appropriate to deal with certain questions in the classroom setting. Teachers in consultation with the SPHE or RE co-ordinator or the Principal will decide an appropriate manner of dealing with the relevant situation. Where appropriate in the interests of child welfare the matter will be discussed with the parents. The exception being in cases of a suspected Child Protection issue in which case Children First Act 2015, Child Protection Procedures 2017 and Rosemont Child Safe Guarding Guidelines are immediately followed.. (Accessible on Rosemont Website under Policies)

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The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

6. The division between biological and non biological aspects of sex education: the Science Department also deals with the biological aspects of reproduction.

7. Withdrawing students from the RSE programme: 1. Parents are informed of their right to withdraw their child from sensitive aspects of RSE – parents have access to this policy on the school website. 2. Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.

8. Visiting speakers: a) It is school policy that the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers and experts in this area. Also visitors can enhance the quality of the provision, b) The SPHE Co-ordinator will provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of this RSE policy. The organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme. Issues to consider are: c) Visitors should be given advance notice of the composition of the class and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work. d) In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group and to make better use of their time, it can be helpful for the group to draw up questions in advance and these should be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the students in the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them - it also facilitates planning. f)

1. 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 and prepared against abuse by others.

G. Ongoing support, development and review Parents have access to policies and are informed when the RSE module will take place.

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Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE programme: We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the RSE Programme are: a) pupil feedback; b) staff review and feedback; c) parental feedback.

Children First Act of 2015

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-guidance-and-legislation/>

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children

<https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20171002ChildrenFirst2017.pdf>

Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Child-Protection/child_protection_guidelines.pdf