

# Meánscoil na mBráithre Críostaí, Cill Chainnigh Christian Brothers Secondary School, Kilkenny.



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## Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) POLICY APRIL 2016

**School Name:** Christian Brothers Secondary School, Kilkenny

**School Address:** James's Street, Kilkenny

**School Details:** CBS Kilkenny is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education and Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

### **Mission Statement**

Our school founded by the Christian Brothers endeavors to be a caring Christian community which promotes to the best of its ability the personal, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students.

**School Management:** The Board of Management of CBS Kilkenny is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

### **Mission Statement**

Inspired by its founder, CBS Kilkenny aims to provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition. The school endeavors to be a caring Christian Community which promotes to the best of its ability the personal, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students.

### **Ethos**

As an Edmund Rice School, CBS Kilkenny seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

## **We aim to provide**

- A programme, curricular and extra-curricular, which develops the whole person.
- A Christian value system encompassing respect, responsibility, co-operation, honesty, fairness, and friendship.
- A Code of Behaviour has been published after consultation with staff, students and parents and the following excerpts illustrate how the ethos of the school operates on a daily basis:
- The entire Code is based on respect – respect for yourself, respect for other students, respect for staff, respect for parents/guardians, respect for property, and respect for the school.
- The aims of the Code of Behavior are -
- To develop a moral framework within which initiative, responsibility and sound relationships can flourish.
- To enable students to develop a sense of self-worth and a respect and tolerance for others.
- To produce an environment in which students feel safe, secure, valued and respected.

## **Definition of RSE**

RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge understanding and skills which enable us to develop attitudes beliefs and values about sexual identity relationships and intimacy (DES 1996). Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development in all our lives, but particularly important in the life of the adolescent. As a catholic school we wish to support parents/guardians in this important aspect of their child's education and preparation for life. In keeping with our above mission statement, therefore we believe we have a complimentary role in preparing young people for their place in society. In the school setting it is an integral part of general educational provision, which seeks to promote the overall development of the person and which includes the integration of sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development.

## **Relationship of RSE to SPHE**

The Draft Guidelines for RSE (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that SPHE is 'spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology'. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's 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.

## **The Aims of our RSE Programme**

RSE which is located in the overall framework of SPHE has as its specific aims:

1. To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships.
2. To promote an understanding of sexuality.
3. To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's own relationship with others.
4. To educate the students to have a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive systems.
5. To enable the students to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

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

## **What we currently provide**

The RSE programme as taught in our school is the programme laid out by the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment). As per official guidelines, all students at both Senior and Junior level receive a minimum of six classes of RSE per year. The tenets of RSE and SPHE are supported through cross-curricular and broader school structures.

- The school encourages parents/guardians to ensure that students participate in this programme as a way of supporting parents as the primary educators of their children.
- RE programme at senior cycle which discusses relationships, values, peer pressure, conflict and decision-making.
- Student centered pastoral care structure supports include Year Head, Tutor, Guidance and Counselling, Pastoral Care Team, Learning Support, Cairdeas, Principal and Deputy Principal.
- Possibility of one to one conversations with the school Guidance Counsellors.
- Anti- bullying strategy and programme of prevention emphasising respect for the rights and dignity of others.
- Education of human physiology and human reproduction – Science, Home Economics and Biology class.
- Home Economics which discusses relationships within the family, maturity, adolescence and dealing with conflict, independence and responsibility.
- Visits by speakers on topics such as drugs and alcohol misuse and hygiene and sexual health.
- Awareness of human rights through Social Justice Programmes.
- Transition Year Health Education Programme

## **Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our school**

All education partners are consulted before ratifying school policy and programmes, i.e. parents/guardians, staff, Board of Management and where appropriate students.

### **1. Confidentiality**

While students should not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in SPHE/RSE classes, there may be times when they do talk about their own lives. Confidentiality will be respected unless a teacher becomes aware that a child is at risk, in which case the appropriate action will be taken, i.e. refer to the Designated Liaison Person for child protection.

### **2. Parents rights and responsibilities (including the withdrawal of students)**

It is our hope that all students will avail of the RSE programme provided by the school. We understand however that at times parents may wish to withdraw their sons from particular aspects of the RSE programme because of perceived conflict with their own values and beliefs; the school respects this parental right but will engage with parents with a view to resolving any perceived difficulties. If students are withdrawn arrangements will be made where possible between parents and management for their care while the programme is in progress.

### **3. Visiting speakers**

In keeping with Child Protection Guidelines, all visiting speakers and facilitators to the school with unsupervised access to students will have Garda clearance and will sign in and out of the school. Visiting speakers will be made aware of the school's ethos and will agree to work within those parameters.

### **4. Sensitive issues**

From time to time some issues within the RSE programme may present as particularly sensitive for some students. Every effort will be made by staff to become aware of the profile of the group in advance of the delivery of the programme and our Guidance and Counselling services or external counselling will be offered where necessary.

### **5. Class groupings**

All students participate in SPHE and RE in mixed ability classes.

### **6. Students with Special Needs**

Students with special needs are welcomed and facilitated in this subject. SNAs work in some classes with the teacher to facilitate student learning. Students with special needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. Language used will be pitched at the student's level of understanding. Teachers will pose key questions to guide students through the different stages/processes and will endeavor to keep tasks short and varied.

### **7. Staffing**

There is a team of SPHE/RSE teachers led by the SPHE coordinator. Typically there are eight or more staff members on this team. Numbers may vary slightly from year to year but we recognize the importance of maintaining a core, committed and trained team.

### **8. Parents**

First year parents are informed at the information night for Incoming First Years (which takes place in the last term of 6th class) of the existence of the SPHE/RSE programme. Transition year parents are informed of the RSE programme module.

### **9. Cross Curricular**

All staff will be made aware of the RSE policy to refer to when RSE issues are linked to their subject.

### **10. Assessment**

In Senior Cycle and Transition year RSE continuous assessment will be provided through course based quizzes, assignments and will conclude with an overall evaluation sheet. At Junior Cycle, assessment is facilitated through diary entries at the end of each topic. Project work, work done in the copybook and group participation is also integral to the assessment process.

## **Provisions for Ongoing Support, Development and Review**

### **1. Staff training**

We maintain an updated record of In-Service courses attended by staff. All SPHE staff are encouraged to register with the SPHE website ([www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)) for In-Service. This is facilitated through PDST. Wherever possible, staff will be given opportunities to attend further professional development courses. Information received at In-Service will be made available to all relevant teachers.

### **2. Planning**

The SPHE team are given time to meet at School Development planning days. At these meetings the SPHE coordinator will update staff in relation to In-Service training available.

### **3. Resources**

We have core and supplementary resources available to all SPHE and RSE staff. These are located in the SPHE section in the co-coordinator's room and resource press in the staff room. There is a Guidance and Counselling notice board and an SPHE notice board both contain relevant literature and information for students. Staff may also avail of web based resources for class planning; every classroom is now equipped with ICT equipment which aids the use of ICT in classes. The SPHE department will identify necessary resources and present them to the Principal as part of its projected budget.

## **Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating**

Senior School Management will ensure that this policy is under regular review and evaluation.

## **Review of Policy**

The school authorities will review this policy on a regular basis in order to stay up to date with current best practice and with relevant legislation in this area.

## **Approval**

This policy has been approved by CBS Kilkenny Board of Management.

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

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

Chairperson, Board of Management