De La Salle College Churchtown

RSE -Relationships & Sexuality Policy

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Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy and Programme

Introduction

This updated Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy has been developed for De La Salle College, Churchtown, a co-educational Catholic post-primary school in Dublin 14. It aligns with:

- Current NCCA SPHE and RSE Guidelines (1997; updated specifications 2019–2023)
- Oide support materials and guidance from the Department of Education
- The school's Wellbeing Framework, Lasallian ethos, and commitment to holistic development

In this policy, all references to gender are understood to be inclusive, and the term *parent* includes *guardian*.

School Context

De La Salle College Churchtown is a co-educational Catholic school under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust. The school embodies Lasallian values of faith, service, respect, social justice, and community. With an enrolment of approximately 420 students, the school supports each young person in developing academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and morally.

RSE is a core element of the school's Wellbeing Programme, delivered through SPHE, Religion, Science, PE, Guidance, and the wider school environment.

School Philosophy

The school aims to:

- Provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment
- Encourage students to explore diverse moral and ethical viewpoints
- Promote respect for all individuals regardless of gender, identity, orientation, culture, or background
- Support students in developing healthy relationships and understanding the importance of empathy, communication, and personal responsibility

The school's Code of Behaviour underpins daily interactions, emphasising:

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for property, environment, and safety
- Courtesy, dignity, and positive relationships

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong, developmental process. It equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to form healthy relationships, understand human development, and make responsible decisions regarding their wellbeing, sexuality, and personal safety.

RSE in De La Salle College is:

- Age-appropriate and developmentally suitable
- Inclusive and respectful of diversity
- Evidence-based and aligned with Department of Education guidelines
- Delivered within the ethos of the school

RSE within SPHE and Wellbeing

RSE is an integral part of the SPHE curriculum and the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Wellbeing Programme.

Junior Cycle

Delivered using the NCCA SPHE short course (2019), including:

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-Management
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Emotional and Mental Wellbeing
- RSE

Senior Cycle

Delivered through:

- Senior Cycle SPHE modules
- TY Wellbeing and RSE Programme
- Senior RE
- Guest speakers and workshops

Oide planning materials and the updated 2024 RSE resources are incorporated into teaching and learning.

Aims of the RSE Programme

The RSE programme aims to enable students to:

- Develop self-esteem, resilience, and a positive self-image
- Form and sustain healthy friendships and relationships
- Develop communication, empathy, and decision-making skills
- Understand physical, emotional, mental, and social aspects of human development
- Explore sexuality, identity, consent, and respect
- Understand the reproductive system, fertility, conception, and pregnancy
- Become aware of sexual health, including contraception and STI prevention
- Understand influences such as media, pornography, peer pressure, and cultural norms
- Appreciate the value of family life and different family structures
- Develop personal safety skills and recognise unhealthy or abusive relationships

Organisation & Management of RSE

Delivery of Programme

RSE is primarily delivered by:

- SPHE teachers at Junior Cycle
- Designated Wellbeing/SPHE teachers at Senior Cycle
- RE and Guidance teachers for complementary elements

Teachers delivering RSE will be supported through Oide training and school-based CPD.

Parental Involvement

Parents are the primary educators of their children. The school will:

- Provide an overview of RSE yearly with the school information pack
- Supply this policy on request
- Invite feedback during policy review cycles

Responding to Student Questions

Teachers will:

- Provide factual, age-appropriate information

- Avoid providing personal advice or opinions
- Defer inappropriate or explicit questions when necessary
- Consult with the SPHE Coordinator or Deputy Principal where needed

Confidentiality

In line with *Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools*:

- Absolute confidentiality cannot be promised
- Concerns must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)
- Students will be informed of the limits of confidentiality

Withdrawal from RSE

Parents may request in writing to withdraw their child from sensitive lessons. The school will:

- Discuss concerns respectfully
- Ensure alternative supervision is provided
- Ensure minimal disruption to learning

(See Appendix 1 for the procedure.)

Use of External Facilitators

External speakers may support but not replace the school's RSE curriculum. They must:

- Be approved by school leadership
- Share materials in advance
- Teach alongside a qualified member of staff
- Support, not contradict, the ethos of the school or national guidance

RSE Programme Content

Junior Cycle RSE Topics

- Self-esteem, identity, and belonging
- Puberty and bodily changes
- Feelings and emotional literacy
- Communication and conflict resolution
- Relationships: family, friendships, romantic relationships
- Consent (as per NCCA 2020 guidelines)
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Online safety, social media, and digital consent
- Human reproduction, conception, pregnancy, and birth
- Sexual health and delaying sexual activity
- Personal safety, boundaries, and recognising abusive behaviours

Senior Cycle RSE Topics

- Mature relationships and communication
- Consent and the law
- Sexual health, contraception, and accessing support services
- STI awareness and prevention
- Healthy/unhealthy relationship dynamics
- Gender, sexuality, identity, and respect
- Media, pornography, and online behaviours
- Fertility, pregnancy options, reproductive health
- Rights, responsibilities, and personal values
- Family life, parenting, and modern family structures

Senior Cycle content follows NCCA SPHE Framework (2023) and Oide guidance.

Teacher Training & Resources

The school will:

- Support staff in engaging with Oide RSE and SPHE CPD
- Provide resources approved by the Department of Education and NCCA
- Ensure access to updated digital and printed instructional materials

Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

The policy and programme will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required. Feedback will be gathered from:

- Students
- Staff delivering SPHE and RSE
- Parents/guardians
- The Board of Management

Review will ensure alignment with:

- New NCCA specifications
- Oide guidance
- Child protection policies
- School Wellbeing indicators

Withdrawal Procedure

If a parent requests to withdraw their child from RSE:

1. A meeting will be offered with the SPHE Teacher and/or Principal/Deputy Principal and concerns will be discussed openly and respectfully.
2. The school will clarify curriculum requirements and what content is involved.
3. Reasonable efforts will be made to address concerns without compromising curriculum integrity.
4. A written request must be submitted and kept on record.
5. Alternative educational provision will be arranged during RSE lessons.
6. Withdrawal remains in place until revoked in writing by the parent.

Alignment with National Guidelines

This policy aligns with:

- NCCA SPHE/RSE Guidelines (1997, 2019–2023)
- Wellbeing Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools (2017, updated 2023)
- Oide SPHE/RSE Supports (Teacher Guidance and Senior Cycle Framework)
- Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools (2023)

Presented to the Board of Management for approval.

Chairperson: _____

Date: 15/9/2026