

Relationships and Sexual Education Policy

Our sexuality is a central and significant part of who we are and how we see ourselves in relation to others and so contributes to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is primarily about human relationships and has moral, ethical and religious dimensions; for this reason the College delivers its programme largely, though not exclusively, through the planned pastoral provision of the curriculum. As a Catholic College, the primacy of Catholic teaching on all matters of spiritual and moral development will be foremost in any taught classes and in any external provision organised by the College.

Aims:

To prepare the students for adult relationships within a Catholic moral setting that will ensure the development of responsible and healthy behaviour in all friendships and relationships

To present accurate, factual information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner appropriate to the age and maturity of the students within the traditions and values of the College's Catholic ethos

To promote the values of a stable family life, self-restraint, respect for the dignity of others, chastity, marriage as sacrament and the responsibilities of parenthood

To promote a positive view of sexuality that will enhance students' personal development and self-esteem and develop the skills necessary to feel good about themselves and others

To make students aware of their own sexuality, the physical and emotional changes in life, the importance of relationships and how these are affected by human growth

To promote strategies that will allow students to develop the skills necessary for healthy relationships with their peer group, family, friends and adults.

To help each student to arrive at an understanding of the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality and to foster an awareness of the scriptural and doctrinal foundations of these teachings.

As a result, we seek to enable students to acquire knowledge and understanding of self which will develop a positive sense of self awareness and an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others. They should develop personal skills which will enable them to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships as well as coping strategies to protect themselves and others in situations of peer pressure and conflict. All students will have an opportunity to acquire and use communication and social skills to solve problems, make decisions and develop a critical understanding of external influences on lifestyle. Through the development of appropriate vocabulary and concepts, they will be able to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development, as well as exploring stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality.

Organisation:

Mr M Donnelly 2018

The programme is co-ordinated by the Assistant Principal Pastoral Manager, Heads of Year and Head of Religious Development who will review the programme and whole school policy on a biennial basis via reports from form teachers and input received from parents in the course of the previous year. They will arrange for in-service training for the RSE Team, form tutors and/or other staff in topics which they feel require additional help.

Methodology:

The programme is largely taught within a timetabled programme of personal, social and health education, but with clear curricular links to units of work in both Science, Religious Education and KS3 Home Economics.

Teaching and learning is based on a wide range of strategies including whole class and small group teaching, brainstorming, quizzes and questionnaires, role play, investigative work, audio-visual materials, discussion and involvement of outside speakers and qualified professionals. All such outside help will be provided on the understanding that they promote the teaching of the Catholic Church on matters of sexuality and human development and are invited only after approval by the Assistant Principal Pastoral Manager and Head of Religious Development.

As maturity is not always determined by age, teachers are alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of each student and take this into account in the delivery of the programme. The range of teaching resources employed in the programme for all year groups is available to parents for perusal on request.

Students are allowed a right to privacy in class discussions on sexuality [i.e. they may not wish to ask or answer personal questions] but in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy, not to confidentiality.

Parental Involvement:

St Patrick's and St Brigid's College regards RSE as a shared responsibility between school and parents. The College thus welcomes the involvement of parents at every stage of the RSE Programme from planning through delivery to review. Parents are made aware of the programme at the beginning of each Key Stage and copies of the programme itself, this policy document and any audio-visual materials used are available to parents from the school for perusal at home. The teaching offered by the school is intended to reinforce positive family relationships and the role of parents, highlight the importance of marriage between man and woman as a sacrament and encourage students towards a healthy and Christian approach to all relationships.

Programme of Study:

Pupils undertake a coherent programme of study in RSE from Year 8 to Year 12 in the College. This is done largely through the College's Pastoral and Religious Education Programmes. Assemblies and Liturgies are used as a means to promote positive messages in relation to these programmes. They highlight the uniqueness and precious nature of each individual and reinforce the respect that each person deserves. At each stage, the content is appropriate to the age group and teachers seek to achieve the balance between delivery of content and the development of a moral approach based on Catholic teaching.

At KS3 there is a focus on physical development and the human body, in light of being created in God's image and likeness. This unit is delivered through Science and the Pastoral

Programme. In Science the focus is on identification of male and female body parts, acquisition of appropriate language, puberty and menstruation, pregnancy and the life of the embryo. The Pastoral Programme builds on these resources and addresses the wonder of each life as a miracle of God's creation and the natural development of a young person through teenage years to a young adult. In addition, further units of RE work focus on positive family relationships, talking to parents and exploring morals, values and beliefs. The RE programme explores moral issues in relation to making good choices.

In Year 9 the focus is on relationships with adults, peer groups and friends. The role of parents, resisting peer pressure and the development of good communication skills to resolve conflicts within family and friendship groups feature in the Pastoral Programme. In the Year 9 pastoral lessons, whilst considering the characteristics of a good friend, students learn to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses as well as the importance of having respect for themselves and others. The RE Programme also explores moral issues in the context of developing conscience and dealing with sin.

Students are encouraged to establish and sustain healthy friendships and relationships based on mutual respect. They explore: Self Concept and Emotions; Personal Safety including Internet Safety; Morals and Values; Managing Influences and Making Decisions. Through the Pastoral Programme, students develop skills for making responsible choices, coping with peer pressure, influences including the media, social interaction and abstinence, all as positive options and achievable realities. The Pastoral Programme concentrates on the promotion of assertiveness skills, risk assessment concepts and safety techniques, encouraging students to take responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. Students are made aware of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, ways of saying 'no', how to ask for help and how to cope in an emergency.

At KS4, the focus is on the promotion of positive self-image and the development of skills to deal with relationships. A unit on Self-Awareness looks at the uniqueness of the individual, the skills of giving and receiving compliments and the qualities of each human being. A unit on Healthy Living, delivered in collaboration with the PE Department, promotes greater understanding of personal hygiene. The PSE programme identifies and explores the risks and implications associated with alcohol, drug taking and peer pressure. A unit of work is also dedicated to developing relationships, nurturing self-respect and sexual responsibility, assertiveness skills and the identification of the qualities students seek in the opposite sex.

In Year 12, we explore Relationships and Conflict Resolution and endeavour to equip students with the skills of conflict resolution when dealing with various types of relationships. Through the RE Programme, students are given the opportunity to examine issues surrounding relationships in terms of human sexuality and the sanctity of life. The core areas examined are: The sacredness of human life from conception; Marriage; abortion; euthanasia; contraception; IVF; Responsible Parenthood. This brings the **entire** programme material from Key Stage 3 and 4 together and deals with it in the context of making good life choices and decisions.

Confidentiality:

Any student approaching a member of staff for individual advice on sexual matters is encouraged to seek advice from his/her parents or from qualified professionals. Where any

approach leads a member of staff to believe that a child is contemplating a course of behaviour likely to place him/her in moral or physical danger or in breach of the law, the member of staff has a duty to inform the pupil of the risks involved and inform the designated Child Protection teacher who, where appropriate, will involve parents and support services. No undertakings of confidentiality are given to pupils in this area.

Parents are welcome at any time to discuss the delivery of the RSE programme with the Heads of Year, the Head of Religious Studies, any Form Tutor or School Counsellor or the Assistant Principal Pastoral Manager.

Child Protection:

We are aware that young people growing up can experience confusion around sexual identity and sexual orientation. All curricular delivery advocates abstinence as the acceptable option for young people. This is promoted in the context of God's Natural Law and His design for humanity.

Where a student reports that he or she has been subject to threatening sexual behaviour, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy.

Related School Policies:

The Relationships and Sex Education Policy is set within the broader context of Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy

- Anti Bullying Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Medicines Policy

Review:

The RSE policy is reviewed biennially by the Pastoral Manager, Heads of Year and Head of Religious Studies and amended as considered necessary. Where necessary, the reviewed policy is presented at a governors meeting and subsequently a staff meeting to allow adjustments to be discussed.