



RSE Policy 2020

### **Introduction and Scope of this Policy:**

This document sets out the policy of Curragh Post Primary School in relation to the Relationships and Sexuality Education provided to our students. As a school, we try to create an atmosphere of care and concern within which each student is cared for and feels cared for, and where each student can feel safe and valued as he / she grows to maturity.

### **Relationship to school's Mission / Vision / Aims:**

Curragh Post Primary School's Mission Statement is as follows:

#### **Mission Statement**

***Our School values the gifts and talents of students and staff in their development in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect. Can we achieve this? Yes, we can. Is Feidir Linn.***

This RSE Policy is important in the development of the whole person, empowered to lead effective lives in the wider society. The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent / guardian is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy.

This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which values the gifts and talents of students in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect. The school's role in the development of young people, supports and is enriched by, the active participation of teachers and parents / guardians in many aspects of students' lives.

### **Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education:**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process where a person may acquire knowledge and understanding to develop attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This education is delivered by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media.

Children and young people learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner.

RSE equips young people with information and skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values experienced today, and so make positive, responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives.

In the school setting, RSE will be taught in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education. RSE will be taught during Ethics classes at senior cycle also.

### **Relationship of RSE to our School Mission Statement:**

Curragh Post Primary School is committed to providing the best holistic education possible for all our students, by providing a caring learning environment where all aspects of the student are valued and nurtured. We aim to provide an education for all students which will embrace their full human development: personal, academic, physical, moral and spiritual. Relationships and Sexuality Education encompasses the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy, contributing towards the full human development of the student. As outlined by the Department of Education and Skills in Circular 00372010, no aspect of the RSE programme including STI's, family planning, or sexual orientation can be omitted on the grounds of religious ethos. As we seek to promote the overall development of the student, this involves the integration of Relationships and Sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development within the context of our holistic educational ethos.

The policy will apply to school staff, students, board of management, parents /guardians, visiting speakers and external facilitators. The policy will apply to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality. Discussion about relationships and sexuality also takes place in classes other than SPHE/ RSE; it is therefore important that all teachers are familiar with the RSE policy.

### **The aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme:**

Our aims of Relationships and Sexuality Education within Curragh Post Primary School are:

- To help pupils understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- To enable pupils to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy of the school
- To provide opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

These are the overall aims of the programme to be met in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the students

### **Guidelines for the management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Curragh Post primary School**

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal.

- **Provision of training and staff development:**

The SPHE and RSE coordinators ensure the delivery of a relevant and appropriate RSE programme in Curragh Post Primary School, in conjunction with the school's Wellbeing programme.

In Junior cycle the RSE program is delivered to the class by their SPHE teacher. The SPHE syllabus includes a full module on RSE: other subjects at Junior Cycle level, such as Science, Ethics and Home Economics also cover material important to RSE.

In Senior Cycle, RSE is delivered to the class by their Ethics teacher. In Leaving Certificate Applied, RSE is delivered to students as part of the subject Social Education.

- **Inclusion of parents/guardians:**

It is recognized by the school that parents/ guardians are the primary educators of children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important.

Information is provided for parents/guardians about the content and the timing of the RSE module prior to its delivery in an academic year. Informing parents guardians of when these topics are being taught in school enables them to discuss any further issues at home. The RSE policy is available to download on the school's website for parents guardians.

- **Offering Advice:**

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. Teachers may provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. their doctor or other suitable agency. Advice offered should not be directive and should be appropriate to the age of the pupil.

- **Confidentiality:**

It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Designated Liaison person in the school, the principal. The Principal will decide whether to inform the parents and or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling.

The following is also school policy:

- Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality;
- Pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal and possibly to parents if the Principal decides that it is in the best interests of the pupil to notify parents;

The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools state in 4.1.1. and 4.2.1.

4.1.1. If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Designated Liaison Person. The need for confidentiality at all times, as previously referred to in Chapter 1 Paragraph 1.2 of these

guidelines, should be borne in mind. The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

4.2.1 If the Designated Liaison Person is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation he /she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.

All personal in the school and other individuals connected to the school can access and refer to the child safeguarding statement in the school to follow the procedures

- **Withdrawing pupils from the RSE programme:**

Parent's have a right to withdraw their child from sensitive aspects of RSE — parents will always be provided with a full copy of this policy following a request to do so.

Issues such as over population and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and Ethics. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the RSE Programme .

- **Sexual Orientation:**

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that LGBTI+ will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning LGBTI+ is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussion of LGBTI+ should be appropriate to the age of the pupils.

- **Timetabling of RSE/ SPHE/Ethics classes:**

SPHE is timetabled for all Junior Cycle classes for one period per week. In Senior Cycle all classes are timetabled for 1 class period of Ethics per week. RSE module is covered as part of this subject and is also covered in the subjects Biology and Home Economics. For Leaving Certificate Applied Students, RSE also forms part of the subject, Social Education.

SPHE and Ethics are taught in students' base classes. Boys and girls are taught together for all aspects of RSE unless there is a specific request otherwise from either group.

- **Visiting Speakers:**

The RSE Program is mainly delivered by the staff of the school. When visiting speakers are invited to speak to the students the relevant areas of the RSE Policy and the SPHE Visitor Guidelines are communicated to the speaker verbally. If necessary, a copy of the policy and guidelines will be given to the speaker.

- **Special Needs:**

For children with special needs, the teacher will explain the information in more detail or more appropriate language as required. It may be necessary to highlight appropriate behaviours to some students with special needs and also to give guidelines regarding self protection from possible abuse.

If there is a student who is pregnant in a group. the teacher will speak to the tutor and year head concerned in advance so as to ensure that the teacher is aware of how the student is likely to cope with the content of the RSE topic to be covered. The student will be spoken to by the teacher in advance of the class so that any sensitive issues are flagged beforehand for the student.

### **Ongoing support, development and review:**

#### **Training:**

All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. The skills acquired in general teaching apply also to health education. Furthermore. many teachers have training in related areas such as counselling. Some teachers have expert training in the specific areas of health, relationships and sexuality education and will be encouraged to train other teachers.

The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field, bearing in mind the overall budgetary framework and the need for the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the school to continue with as little disturbance as possible.

#### **Review:**

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the RSE Programme are:

- pupil feedback;
- staff review and feedback:
- parental feedback.

#### **Resources:**

- Social, Personal and Health Education Resource Material for Relationships and Sexuality Education for Senior Cycle booklet .
- TRUST- Teaching Relationships, understanding Sexuality teaching booklet.
- TRUST DVD
- B4uDecide.ie
- PDST/ webwise online
- Belong 1,2,3 for Junior Cycle

### **Links to other School Policies and Nationwide supports:**

It is imperative that all school policies are consistent with one another and cohesive within the framework of the overall school plan.

The RSE policy is developed in this context and takes into consideration the following policies;

- Well-being policy
- Guidance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Guidelines - Tusla
- Child Safeguarding statement

Teachers of our RSE programme will be informed of the content, and the timing of the delivery of RSE, and in so far as possible. RSE will be taught in a cross-curricular way.

### **Additional Information**

What we do if a request for withdrawal from the RSE programme is made by a parent:

- We discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent and if appropriate attempt to reassure them (initially such discussion takes place at a meeting with the Year Head and SPHE Co-ordinator. The Principal may become involved if necessary).
- We consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents - care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the RSE programme and the entitlement of the other pupils. e.g. it may be appropriate and desirable to have single sex classes for some sections of the RSE programme.
- We attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education,
- We also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers.
- We offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.

This policy was approved by the Board of Management of the Curragh Post Primary on

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board Of Management

Review Date May 2023