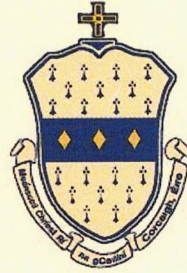


Christ King Girls' Secondary School, Half Moon Lane,
South Douglas Road, Cork.

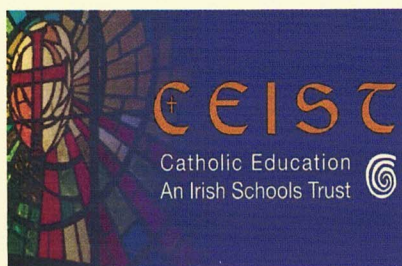
Roll No: 62692 I



RSE POLICY 2020

Reviewed with Teaching Staff:	Meeting with Focus Group: 11 th Dec. & 18 th Dec. 2020 Teaching staff: 22 nd Jan 2021
Reviewed with Parents' Council:	Meeting 1 of Focus Group: 19 th November 2020
Reviewed with Student Focus Group:	Meeting with Focus Group: 1 st Dec. 2020
Reviewed with Board of Management:	9 th February 2021
Ratified by Board of Management:	11th May 2021

RSE Policy drafted in 2017. Policy reviewed in December 2020 and ratified in May 2021. Review date December 2023.



Contents

A. Introduction	Page 3
B. Our School Philosophy	Page 4
C. Policy Context and Rationale	Page 4
D. Definitions of RSE & SPHE	Page 5
E. RSE within SPHE	Page 6
F. The aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme	Page 6
G. Guidelines for the management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school	Page 7
H. Ongoing support, development and review	Page 12
I. Board of Management Ratification	Page 14

Appendices

Appendix 1: Practical tips for building a positive school culture	Page 15
---	---------

A. Introduction

Christ King Girls' Secondary School is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust) with an enrolment varying between 750 and 800 students.

Our mission in Christ King Secondary School is "To respect the uniqueness of the individual. We are committed to providing an environment within which the development of intellectual and spiritual values is of prime importance." We aspire to this mission being fulfilled in cooperation and partnership with students, parents and the wider community.

B. Our School Philosophy

1. We encourage our students to consider and assess different viewpoints in relation to issues of morality. We believe the experience gained through the working out of this policy and through respecting the needs of minority groups and individuals enriches the whole life of our school.
2. We aspire to provide our students the opportunity to explore the humanities, sciences, arts, business studies and technical subjects. In addition, it provides religious, moral and physical education in order to meet the founding objectives of supporting our students in achieving their full academic potential and preparing students for participation in society.
3. Our code of behaviour has been published after consultation with parents, staff and pupils and the following excerpts illustrate how the ethos of the school operates on a daily basis:

- *Our discipline is founded on the principles of respect for people, environment, property and safety. All our rules follow from these basic principles which are*

intended to create and maintain a happy and stable community.

- *We believe that the best way in which our school can operate and with the maximum happiness and fulfillment for everybody is if the maximum courtesy and respect is shown for everyone. Our students are expected to respect the dignity of other students, teachers and other staff in the school and have the right to expect that their own dignity will be respected.*

C. Policy Context and Rationale

This policy is informed by:

- The School's Mission Statement
 - The School's SPHE Policy
 - The School's Code of Behaviour
 - The School's Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement
 - The School's Acceptable Use Policy
 - The School's Additional Educational Needs Policy
 - The School's Guidance Plan
 - 'Junior Cycle Wellbeing Framework', National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
 - 'Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities', National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
-
- The Education Act, 1998, requires that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
 - Section 4 of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for RSE and a suitable RSE programme in place for all students at both Junior and Senior cycle. At Junior Cycle the RSE programme is part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and at Senior Cycle, part of Health Education.
 - Circulars M4/95 and M20/96 request schools to commence a process of RSE policy development.
 - Circular 15/2017 'Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle.'

RSE Policy drafted in 2017. Policy reviewed in December 2020 and ratified in May 2021. Review date December 2023.

- Guided by our duty of care to all students, the school adopts and adheres to the DES Child Protection Procedures, Children First Legislation (2017) and has a Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement, with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principals as the Deputy DLPs. The RSE Policy is cognisant of all aspects of our current Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement. Where a child protection concern is raised, the procedures outlined in the school's Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement are followed.
- Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development. Young people are exposed to a wide variety of messages about sexuality and sexual activity. Schools, in consultation with parents, need to reflect on how to provide for the needs of the students.
- The effectiveness of an RSE programme is dependent on a collaborative policy involving teachers, parents, members of the Board of Management and students.

D. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

1. RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which our students participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

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

1. The *Draft Guidelines for RSE* (NCCA) state that Social, Personal and Health Education is “spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology”. Our 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.

F. The aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme

1. Relationships and sexuality education which is located in the overall framework of Social, Personal and Health Education, has as its specific aims:
 - a) To help students understand and develop friendships and relationships
 - b) To promote an understanding of sexuality
 - c) To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others
 - d) To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
 - e) To enable students to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy, culture, mission statement and 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.

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

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

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 and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important. Parents' permission will be sought prior to the delivery of the RSE programme. A copy of this RSE policy is available on the school website.

RSE Policy drafted in 2017. Policy reviewed in December 2020 and ratified in May 2021. Review date December 2023.

3. **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 student and in consultation with parents.

4. **Explicit Questions:**

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the SPHE co-ordinator or the Principal. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher will consider the age, readiness of the students, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

5. **Confidentiality:**

It is our school policy that in circumstances where a student is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to 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:

- a) teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality;
- b) students will 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 students to notify parents;
- c) teachers, as mandated people, will discuss any Child Protection concerns with the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person.

- d) teachers will indicate clearly to students when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential.

6. The division between biological and non-biological aspects of sex education:

Our school policy is that the Science, Home Economics and Physical Education Departments deal primarily with the biological aspects of reproduction. The basic biological aspects of reproduction are covered in SPHE.

7. Withdrawing pupils from the RSE programme:

- a) This policy will be made available to parents via the school website with details about the parent's right to withdraw their child from sensitive aspects of RSE.
- b) Issues such as over population and birth control may be covered in a minor way in other subjects. 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.
- c) Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so - sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent. (See also Appendix 1).

8. Visiting speakers

- a) It is school policy that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the students. However, visitors can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of RSE.
- b) The SPHE Co-ordinator will provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of this RSE policy. After gaining approval from the Principal for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme. The degree of appropriateness of the content and presentation should be considered.
- c) Visitors will be given advance notice of the school ethos, of the composition of the class and an idea of how their contribution fits into the RSE programme.

- d) In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group and to make better use of the time of the visitor it is advisable 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.
- e) The school office should be informed of the date and name of the visitor.
- f) All visitors will be accompanied by teaching staff at all times.
- g) The visitor will be welcomed at the reception.
- h) At the end of the session a vote of thanks will be given by a student and the visitor escorted to the main door.

9. **Students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN)**

Students with additional 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 understanding RSE concepts and learning how to stay safe.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's 'Guidelines for Teachers of Students With General Learning Disabilities' will underpin the schools approach. It contains comprehensive guidelines on teaching SPHE to students with mild general learning disabilities at primary and post-primary level, and to students with moderate and severe and profound general learning disabilities.

- Students with AEN may require more support to understand the concepts and content of RSE. Adaptations to the way in which the content is delivered are made for students with AEN. For some students individual planning and focus may be needed.
- Students with AEN may need support in a one-to-one or small group setting from the AEN team to support their learning outside of the RSE lessons and to contextualise the learning in their own relationships, behaviours and maturation. It may also be appropriate to revisit topics more frequently with pupils with AEN.
- Consultations with parents and guardians of students with AEN will be central in ensuring learning is meaningful and at an appropriate level to achieve consistency in approach across home and school.

H. Ongoing support, development and review

RSE Policy drafted in 2017. Policy reviewed in December 2020 and ratified in May 2021. Review date December 2023.

Training:

The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring access to CPD opportunities for all teachers involved in RSE, to provide relevant RSE school resources and to support efforts of parents to provide educational opportunities for other parents.

Resources:

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials as deemed necessary in consultation with the Principal.

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) student feedback;
- b) staff review and feedback;
- c) parental feedback.

This policy is ratified by the Board of Management and is the agreed policy of Christ King Girls' Secondary School. All teaching staff will be familiar with this policy and aware of any changes implied in curriculum delivery.

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated every three years under the direction of the Board of Management. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information, guidelines, feedback from parents, students and teachers. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school self-evaluation and policy planning.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 4/5/2021

Date of next review: December 2023

Signature Chairperson: Margaret McLernach

Signature Principal: Richel Lay

Appendix 1

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

- a) 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);
- b) we consider whether the programme can be amended 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;
- c) we attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education;
- d) we point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers;
- e) we offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.