



Relationships and Sexuality Policy

(A) Introductory Statement

Presentation College, Carlow is a voluntary second-level, co-educational school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST. The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy has been developed following consultation between staff, parents, students, Principal and the Board of Management. In this policy document the term 'parent' is taken to include 'guardian'.

(B) Policy Context and Rationale

This policy is informed by:

- The Mission Statement of Presentation College, Carlow
 - The SPHE Policy
 - The Code of Behaviour
 - The Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement
 - The Acceptable Use Policy
 - The Special Educational Needs Policy (Draft)
 - The Guidance Plan
 - The Wellbeing Policy
 - The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, 2021
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- 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 and Senior Cycle the RSE programme is part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), in line with CL M11/03.
 - Circulars M4/95 and M20/96 request schools to commence a process of RSE policy development, and its implementation is outlined in CL 37/2010.
 - Circular 15/2017 'Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19'
 - Section 1.5.1 of the DES Child Protection Procedures (2017) stated: 'All post-primary schools are also required to have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at Senior Cycle'.
 - 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 **process involving teachers, parents, members of the Board of Management and students.**



(C) Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

- The RSE policy acknowledges the importance of RSE being taught in the context of Wellbeing / SPHE and a whole-school climate that is inclusive and respectful.
- The RSE policy reflects the educational philosophy of the Presentation Sisters, CEIST and the core values and ethos of the school, as outlined in the school's Mission Statement below:

Mission Statement

Presentation College is, by choice, a truly co-educational school. We aim to prepare all of our pupils, boys and girls alike for the challenges, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. All members of the school community – pupils, parents, teachers and other staff – are held in very high regard and their dignity, worth and individuality is respected. We strive to build a sense of community based on Christian values. The school's Code of Behaviour acknowledges this and aims to promote a culture of respect throughout the school. It recognises that good discipline enables good teaching and allows good learning to take place.

The school, through its academic, pastoral and spiritual undertakings strives to provide for the holistic development and welfare of each of the students in its care.

Spiritual, moral and ethical issues will arise when teaching RSE. The school's RSE policy guides teachers in the treatment of such issues in accordance with the ethos of the school. It is important that teachers of RSE understand that their role is to express the views of the whole school community on these sensitive issues, and not their own personal views. In this regard, it should be noted that:

1. Schools are required to deliver all aspects of the RSE curriculum, including those in relation to sexual orientation, contraception, sexually transmitted infections etc. This can be done within the context in which the teaching of the programme is informed by the school ethos.
2. A school can express its ethos while at the same time facilitating students in discussing a range of views in relation to topics within the RSE programme.

(D) Scope

The policy will apply to all aspects of teaching and learning about friendships and sexuality. Discussion about relationships and sexuality also takes place in classes other than RSE / SPHE. It is therefore important that all teachers are familiar with the RSE policy.

The policy will apply to school staff, students, Board of Management, parents, visiting speakers and external facilitators.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle SPHE and of the Wellbeing programme. 'It facilitates teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of relationships and sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to develop self-awareness and self-esteem, realise their health, wellbeing and dignity; develop positive and respectful, social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others; and, understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to themselves and others'. (See Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2021, p.44 and *Report on the Review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Primary and Post Primary Schools (NCCA) 2019* p.72

(E) Aims of the RSE programme

- To build on the primary school programme which strives to help young people learn at home and at school about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others.



- To develop knowledge and informed understanding of developing beliefs, respectful attitudes and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality.
- To promote a positive attitude towards one's own sexuality and one's friendships and relationships with others.
- To enable students to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for human reproduction.
- To provide young people with information and skills to evaluate critically the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today, in order that they will make informed, positive, responsible, moral and caring decisions about themselves and the way they live their lives, while also respecting the dignity of others, behaving in a caring, responsible and ethical way. The school recognises that parents are the primary educators and home is the natural and primary environment in which RSE should take place.

(F) Goals / Objectives

- The policy ensures clarity and consensus on how RSE is taught in the school.
- It articulates the relationship of RSE to SPHE.
- It articulates the aims of the RSE programme.
- It clarifies the rights, roles and responsibilities of all within the school community in relation to the RSE programme, with particular reference to school staff, students, parents and the Board of Management.
- It ensures that teachers, parents and students understand how the teaching of RSE is linked to the school ethos.
- It provides information on the practicalities of delivering the programme.
- RSE should help students develop an understanding of different types of relationships and support the skills to enhance relationships.
- RSE should help develop empathy with others from a variety of cultures, family arrangements, gender identities, sexual orientations, attitudes and beliefs, fostering inclusion throughout.
- RSE should help develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills and values in relation to sexual and reproductive health.
- RSE should help students develop skills to cope with challenges in relationships, peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety.

(G) The Relationship of RSE to SPHE / Wellbeing

- SPHE / Wellbeing provide opportunities for students to develop personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.
- Physical, mental and emotional health and well-being are fully promoted.
- The Guidelines for RSE state that SPHE is 'spiral, developmental in nature and age-appropriate in content and methodology.' (NCCA, 1995, 1.2). The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern.
- SPHE covers areas such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision-making skills – all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.
- Opportunities for reflection and discussion are provided.
- SPHE adds the dimension to education of empowering people to manage their own lives. By providing RSE through an SPHE programme we teach students personal skills to increase their personal effectiveness so that, in the context of their own lives, they are able to make informed divisions in relation to their sexuality and relationships with others.
- Currently, SPHE is part of the Junior Cycle timetable as well as Transition Year, Fifth and Sixth Year timetables. One period per week is timetabled for Junior and some Senior Cycle classes. Students in Sixth



- Year choose to study either LCVP or SPHE or Computer Studies. Arrangements are made for students who study Computer Studies or LCVP to engage with RSE for the minimum requirement of six periods.
- Students in Fifth Year choose to study either SPHE or LCVP. Arrangements are made for students who study LCVP to engage with RSE for the minimum requirement of six periods.
 - The RSE module is taught to all Junior Cycle classes for six to ten class periods after the Christmas Holidays in January - February. At Senior Cycle, the Transition, Fifth and Sixth Year SPHE classes participate in the RSE module, which is usually scheduled between October and Christmas.
 - There is continued emphasis on health and well-being, responsibility and decision-making throughout the RSE programme.

(H) What the School Currently Provides

Formal examples of RSE in action in Presentation College include the teaching of 'TRUST' - Teaching Relationships, Understanding Sexuality Teaching for Senior Cycle, the 'Growing Up Gay and Bisexual in Ireland' programme (*SPHE-PDST*) and 'Lockers' (*SPHE-PDST*). All Junior and Senior classes receive a minimum of six class periods of RSE in each academic year. Units of Learning templates have been shared using One Drive with RSE teachers to support their collaborative planning for RSE in each Year Group. Arising from an audit review of RSE (September 2021), specific additional units of learning may be developed to complement the existing SPHE programme and respond to identified needs in the area of relationships and sexuality education. For example, units in one or more of these topics might be relevant: managing relationships in the online world; exploring the link between body image, self-esteem and youth mental health; developing skills for creating healthy relationships (see Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, 2021, p.45).

Some aspects of RSE are approached during subjects such as Biology, CSPE, Guidance and Counselling, Home Economics, Physical Education, Religious Education, Geography and Science e.g. issues such as over-population and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and R.E. Some are taught informally using a cross curricular approach and support what is taught in Junior Cycle SPHE (see *SPHE Policy*) [e.g. CSPE / RE – values, rights and responsibilities]. Where there are cross-curricular links with SPHE / RSE the school ethos is respected at all times and informs what is taught, and content in other subjects does not constitute part of the RSE programme.

The RSE programme is supported by the Pastoral Care system and by the Management and Staff of the school.

Junior Cycle Topics Covered:

First Year – Puberty and Pubescence

Lesson One: The Relationship Spectrum

Lesson Two: The Changes in the Body at Puberty

Lesson Three: Hygiene Habits as we Develop into Adolescents

Lesson Four: Being an Adolescent

Lesson Five: Sexuality, Gender Identity and Being A Friend

Lesson Six: Respecting Ourselves and Those Around Us

Second Year – From Conception to Birth

Lesson One: Sexual Intercourse – The Facts

Lesson Two: Menstruation and the Menstrual Cycle

Lesson Three: Early to Mid-Pregnancy

Lesson Four: Late Pregnancy and Birth

Lesson Five: Respecting Choices

Lesson Six: Developing Relationships

Third Year – Discovering Sexuality and Making Responsible Choices



- Lesson One: The Relationship Spectrum Revisited
- Lesson Two: Respectful Communication Revisited
- Lesson Three: Healthy Romantic Relationships
- Lesson Four: Body Image
- Lesson Five: Sexuality, Gender Identity and Being A Friend Revisited
- Lesson Six: Making Responsible Choices

Senior Cycle Topics Covered:

Transition Year – Sexual Health

Transition Year RSE is delivered by an outside agency called Squashy couch, who are hired to come in and deliver workshops to the students. Due to current restrictions this is no longer possible so TY students will follow the Fifth Year RSE program. We will aim to bring Squashy Couch back for their RSE in Fifth Year.

Fifth Year – Sexual Health and Sexual Intercourse

- Lesson One: Setting Boundaries and Respectful Relationships
- Lesson Two: Safe Sex and Contraception
- Lesson Three: Contraceptive Methods
- Lesson Four: Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Lesson Five: Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Lesson Six: HIV – Aids Education

Sixth Year – Belonging in a Diverse World

- Lesson One: Diversity
- Lesson Two: Stereotyping
- Lesson Three: LGBTQI±
- Lesson Four: Respecting Beliefs and Ways of Life
- Lesson Five: Looking Out For Fellow Man
- Lesson Six: Reflecting on Change in Our World

Junior Cycle topics covered include:	Senior Cycle topics covered include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Circle of Life • Communication and Respect • Feelings and Adolescence • Saying How I Feel • Body Awareness-Body Care • Hygiene Hints! • Common Senses • The Image of Me • The Words we Use • Puberty • Human Reproduction • The Miracle of New Life • Pregnancy and Birth • How I Relate • Family Ties • You’ve Got a Friend • Boy/Girl Relationships • Consent • Don’t Box Me In! 	<p>Human Growth and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Understanding the structure and function of sex organs . Awareness of fertility . Awareness of the importance and method of family planning . Understanding of pregnancy and development of the foetus . Appreciation of the importance of healthcare during pregnancy . Recognising the range of human emotions and ways to deal with these . An understanding of the relationship between safe sexual practice and sexually transmitted infections. <p>Human Sexuality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Understanding of what it means to be male, female, gender fluid, LGBT+ etc. . Consideration of male and female roles in relationships and in society . Exploration of some of the issues pertaining to equality . Understanding the concept of sexual harassment and its different forms . Awareness of sexual abuse, consent and rape, including legal issues and the identification of help agencies in these areas . The Rape Crisis Centre delivers the KAS programme to students in Transition Year, with an emphasis on issues such as consent, sexual violence and mature, responsible decision-making



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Esteem • Peer Pressure • Take Care! • Time to Reflect • Teenage Pregnancy • Respect and Tolerance for Difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Skills for making choices about sexual activity . Exploration of the range of attitudes, values and beliefs regarding sexual behaviour in modern society <p>Human Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Understanding the nature of peer pressure . Developing skills for resolving conflict . Development of an awareness of the complex nature of love and loving relationships . Understanding of marriage as a loving commitment . Deeper awareness of the importance of family life
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The teaching of the RSE programme is age-appropriate as directed by the DES-NCCA RSE Programme and Guidelines.

Teaching Methodologies may include:

- Brainstorming
- Icebreakers
- Use of graphic organisers
- Role Play and simulation
- Art work
- Project work
- Video-clips
- Reflection
- Discussion
- Pair work and group work
- Walking debates
- Case studies
- Research and presentation
- Analysis of web content
- Guest speakers (*this list is not exhaustive*).

Some Resources used may include:

www.sphe.ie - RSE Curriculum Guidelines, Policy Booklet and Parent Booklet, Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Resource Materials.

DVDs: ‘Busy Bodies.’ produced by the Health Promotion Department, Southern Health Service Executive. PDST Busy Bodies workbook available [here](#)

‘The Human Body’, BBC TV series available on DVD.

TRUST programme, [Talking Relationships, Understanding, Sexuality, Training] (Senior Cycle), available [here](#)
www.b4udecide.ie available [here](#)

‘Growing Up Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender in Ireland’ programme (SPHE-PDST), available [here](#)

Lockers – (SPHE-PDST), available [here](#)

Belong To Stand Up.

Bodywhys.

Marie Keating Cancer Awareness Pack.

Consent resources at www.pshe-association.org.uk

On My Own Two Feet programme resources.

Books: ‘Let’s Talk About Sex’, Walker Books.

‘Understanding The Facts of Life’, Usborne Books.

This list is not exhaustive.



Cross-Curricular Links

RSE links with the following subjects:

Wellbeing subjects: SPHE, P.E., CSPE, Digital Media Literacy.

R.E., Biology/Science, English.

(I) Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in Presentation College

1. Arrangements regarding the teaching of the RSE programme and the deployment of staff are made by the Principal.
2. Provision of Support, Training and Staff Development:
 - Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to attend RSE and SPHE CPD training,
 - Teachers of RSE and SPHE have access to teaching materials and resources,
 - Teachers who express an interest in SPHE / RSE will be given consideration (See Appendix I for list of RSE teachers).
 - A Co-ordinator of SPHE (including RSE) has been provided in a voluntary capacity. The role of the RSE Coordinator includes the following:
 - Scheduling regular meetings of RSE teachers to engage in collaborative planning and review of RSE,
 - Record minutes of RSE meetings and include in the RSE Plan,
 - Ensure all active RSE teachers complete and upload to One Drive Units of Learning. These are best designed in a collaborative manner between teachers in each Year Group.
 - Support RSE teachers through dialogue.
 - Keep up-to-date with CPD training opportunities and inform RSE teachers of same by email, making bookings with relevant support services, having checked S&S cover with the Deputy Principal in advance.
 - Organising suitable, vetted guest speakers, where necessary, having obtained the approval of the Principal, and providing them with a copy of the RSE Policy in advance, explaining the importance of the school's ethos and values.
 - Financial administration – ensuring that resources are provided as necessary, and follow correct procedures re purchasing, purchase orders, invoices, receipts etc.
 - Liaising with Senior Management and PDST/SPHE support service regarding needs and supports for the RSE programme.
 - Liaising with the SEN co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads and others as necessary in the school, and parents, where required.
 - Ensuring that the Letter Template in Appendix II is sent to all parents of First Year students, on headed school note paper, at least one week in advance of the commencement of the RSE programme.
3. Inclusion of Parents:
 - The Parents' Council is consulted on the design and review of the RSE policy. The views expressed by parents will be taken into account when reviewing the policy.
 - Parents have a responsibility to inform themselves of the RSE programme content and to prepare their sons / daughters for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas covered in RSE.
 - **Parents of First Year students are notified by letter (see Appendix II) at least one week in advance of the RSE module commencement.**
 - The RSE policy is available to download from www.presentationcollegecarlow.com or a copy may be requested by a parent from the school office. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with the policy content.



- While all partners in the school community - teaching staff, students, parents and management - are agreed on the programme, we recognise, nevertheless, the right of any parent who so wishes to request that his/her daughter should not participate in the programme.
4. Student Voice:
- Units of Learning are evaluated by students, who contribute their feedback on each topic (see Appendix III). The Student Council is consulted as part of the RSE Policy Review process and the views of students are given consideration in the formulation of the policy and its implementation.

(J) Withdrawing students from the RSE programme

- I. The Education Act (1998; section 30, subsection (2)(e)) provides that a student is not required to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent or in the case of a student who has reached the age of eighteen years, the student. Parents have a right therefore to withdraw their son / daughter from all or any aspect of RSE. Parents must notify the Principal in advance of their wish to have their child withdrawn from all or part of the programme. The Principal may ask the parents to put their request in writing.
- II. Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so – we aim to resolve misunderstandings if possible. Once a parent's written request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.
- III. If a student is withdrawn from the lessons pertaining to the sensitive elements of the RSE programme, parents must give a notice in writing to the school that they are withdrawing their child. The student may be accommodated in another teacher's classroom in the school.
- IV. Issues such as overpopulation and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and RE. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the formal RSE Programme.

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

- I. We discuss the nature of the concerns with the student's parent and, if appropriate, attempt to reassure them (initially such discussion takes place at a meeting with the RSE teacher but the Principal may become involved if necessary).
- II. 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 students.
- III. We attempt to ensure that where a student is withdrawn from RSE there is no disruption to other parts of their education.
- IV. We point out that students who have been withdrawn may be vulnerable to teasing - we therefore attempt to cause minimal embarrassment to the student and minimal disruption to the programme.
- V. We also point out that students may sometimes receive inaccurate information from their peers.
- VI. We offer parents access to appropriate information and resources.

(K) Ethical / Moral Considerations – Guidelines for Teachers

1. Answering Explicit Questions

It is natural that students should wish to ask questions in the area of RSE. While it is important to create an environment in RSE in which students can discuss issues openly, teachers may not be able to answer all questions asked by students and can set appropriate limits. If any questions asked by students are deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the student to their parents or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum. 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 Principal. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school, the RSE policy



and use their professional judgment. With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed among students outside of the RSE lesson.

2. Confidentiality

Teachers strive to create a safe learning environment for all students. While students should not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in RSE classes, there may be times when they talk about their own lives. It is important that students are made aware of the limits of confidentiality and that teachers do not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality. Confidentiality should be respected unless the teacher has a concern that the child is/was/will be at risk or where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a law may be broken. In such a case, the appropriate action should be taken in accordance with the procedures set down in the Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools, the school's Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement and the Children First legislation (2017) or the school's Substance Use Policy, i.e. the teacher must inform the Designated Liaison Person, and ensure that that all reporting procedures are complied with. The DES Child Protection Procedures (2017), Section 2.1.6 state: 'In all cases where a school becomes aware of underage sexual intercourse the school should take appropriate steps to inform the child's parents'. Teachers of RSE comply with these procedures, and will report any child protection concern or risk to the DLP.

Limits to confidentiality include:

- Child abuse – physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, whether past, present or potential in the future,
- Intention to or actual harm to self or others (including harm online e.g. sexting, intimidation, bullying etc.),
- Substance misuse,
- Underage sexual intercourse,
- Illegal activity (e.g. exposure to pornography, prostitution, child trafficking, extortion etc.) *This list is not exhaustive.*

3. Sexual Activity

Teachers should give young people information on the age of consent which, following the passage of Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006, is seventeen years of age for both males and females. In all cases where the school becomes aware of underage sexual activity the school will take appropriate steps to inform the child's parents, in accordance with Children First legislation and the Child Protection Procedures, Section 2.1.6.

4. Out-of-School Factors

The school also recognises the many out-of-school factors which affect the development of a positive attitude to sexuality during adolescence - the social lives of students, the relationships they form, their behaviour within these relationships, the peer expectations of relationships, the reading material of students, their exposure to sexually explicit material / pornography on video / smart phones, television and through music. The RSE programme will attempt to heighten the students' awareness of the influences of these forces on the development of their values and attitudes and empower them to make informed decisions and choices.

5. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Identities, Sexual Orientations and Related Issues

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that sexual orientation, sexual identity and gender identity will be discussed during a programme of relationships and sexuality education. One of the advantages of exploring LGBT+ identities and issues is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussion of sexual and gender identity and sexual orientation should be appropriate to the age of the students. The Equal Status Acts of 2000 and 2004 prohibit discrimination on nine grounds, including sexual orientation, and it is therefore important to make students aware of this in a respectful manner. This also relates to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, which



firmly forbids bullying in the school, including homophobic bullying, and aims to foster emotional and mental health and wellbeing among students.

6. Sensitive Issues e.g. Sexual Activity, Abortion, Contraception and STIs

Sensitive topics will be dealt with in an age-appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way, within the context of the school's ethos and DES-NCCA guidelines. RSE teachers give young people information on the age of consent which, following the passage of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2006, is seventeen years of age for both males and females. The post-primary RSE Curriculum Guidelines state that the subject of family planning should be covered within the Senior Cycle RSE programme. There is a lesson on family planning in the RSE Senior Cycle Resource Materials on P77. The RSE programme requires that young people are provided with information about methods of contraception, and this is done within the values and moral framework of the ethos of Presentation College, Carlow. Abortion is dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all aspects of this sensitive issue in a non-directive manner – the topic may also be covered from a moral perspective in R.E. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are part of the Senior Cycle RSE programme, while awareness of STIs is covered in Second Year.

(L) Practical Issues

- SPHE is an integral part of the Wellbeing / SPHE programme and is timetabled in all classes.
- RSE is taught to Transition Year, Fifth Year and Sixth Year students within SPHE.
- The programme is delivered in a mixed setting of boys and girls.

(M) Students with Additional Educational Needs

- Students who have additional educational needs (AEN) may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. They may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.
- The NEPS Continuum of Support is adopted in the school, where students are supported at three levels: support for all, some and few.
- Annual events recognising and celebrating people who are LGBT+ are held. Differentiated approaches are taken by subject teachers to ensure that students with AEN are included.
- Friendship Week and Wellbeing Week are annual events enjoyed by all. The school's Mental Health group welcomes all students and respects diversity and inclusion.
- The SEN Coordinator will advise on differentiation and inclusion, as appropriate.

RSE teachers will further support students with AEN by:

- Create a safe, respectful, student-centred, inclusive learning environment for all students in RSE – a code of conduct which is respectful of all students is essential,
- Linking content with prior learning,
- Use lower order and higher order questions to guide students through learning activities,
- Scaffolding key learning activities and concepts on the advice of the SEN Coordinator, where relevant,
- Provide opportunities for pair-work and group-work,
- Organise tasks into smaller stages, giving clear verbal and written instructions for tasks,
- Use language that is understandable to students with AEN,
- Use graphic organisers to support learning,
- Display key words with visuals,
- Monitor and assess all students' progress e.g. gathering samples of students' work and reviewing with feedback.

(N) Guest Speakers



Presentation College

Carlow

In compliance with CL 23/2010, (available [here](#)) and CL 43/2018 (available [here](#)) outside speakers are sometimes invited into the RSE class to facilitate learning on specific aspects of the programme e.g. Rape Crisis Centre facilitates the KAS programme with Transition Year students.

- 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 / RSE teacher will inform the visitor, well in advance of the visit, of this RSE policy on the school website, and request that they familiarise themselves with its content. 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.
- c) The Principal is informed by the RSE teacher in advance.
- d) The RSE teacher remains with the class group at all times during the visit of the guest speaker.
- e) The credentials of the guest speaker will be checked in advance, and Garda vetting requirements met, where appropriate.
- f) Content delivered by guest speakers must use evidence-based approaches with clear educational outcomes. Evaluation of the guest-speaker input should occur soon after the learning activity.

Issues to consider include:

- i) The degree of explicitness of the content and presentation.
 - ii) Will the visitor be accompanied by teaching staff?
 - iii) Will the teaching staff take an active role in the visitor's activities?
 - iv) How will the visitor be prepared for the visit?
 - v) How will the visit be built upon and followed up?
- c) Visitors should be given advance notice of the composition of the class and an idea of how their contribution fits into the Unit of Learning.
- 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, though not mandatory, 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 - it also facilitates planning.
- e) The Principal, Deputy Principals and the Administration Office staff should be informed of the date and name of the visitor.
- f) Where applicable, refreshments should be arranged.
- g) The visitor should be welcomed at the main door.
- h) At the end of the session a vote of thanks should be given by a student and the visitor escorted to the main door after refreshments.
- i) A written acknowledgement of their contribution should be sent to the visitor and could appear in the Weekly Schools News in the local media / school's social media platforms.

(O) Implementation Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management has assigned the role of co-ordinating the implementation of this policy.

SPHE (including RSE) Co-ordinator, 2021-2022: Ms. Kim O'Flaherty

SPHE and RSE Teachers: See Appendix I.

The RSE teachers will meet at least twice a year to plan, review and evaluate the implementation of the programme. RSE teachers will keep up-to-date with CPD in RSE.

RSE teachers may avail of support from fellow-RSE teachers, the SPHE Coordinator, Senior Management, Guidance Counsellor, the SEN Coordinator, the Junior / Senior Student Support Teams, SNAs.

Finance will be made available to provide necessary resources for the teaching and learning of RSE.

RSE teachers will be facilitated (on a rota basis, where necessary) to avail of relevant CPD opportunities.



The Parents' Council and Student Council should provide feedback and any relevant suggestions to the Deputy Principal, with responsibility for School Planning, as part of the Policy review process. Views of students are considered following evaluation of Units of Work and evaluation of guest speaker inputs.

(P) Implementing, Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy

Effective policy requires constant monitoring and evaluation to ensure successful implementation and to review what adjustments may be necessary from time to time.

This policy is ratified by the Board of Management and is the agreed policy of Presentation College. All teaching staff will need to be familiar with this policy and aware of any changes implied in curriculum delivery.

The Board of Management and Senior Management Team are committed to ensuring access to CPD opportunities for all teachers involved in RSE, to providing relevant RSE school resources and to supporting efforts of parents to provide educational opportunities for other parents. Senior Management and the Board of Management facilitate teachers to participate in professional development opportunities, with due regard to the school budget and Supervision/Substitution rota, and the need for the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the school to continue with as little disturbance as possible.

Any teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive elements of RSE, following reasonable notification to the Principal. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure content is covered by another teacher or an outside speaker.

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated at least every two years under the direction of the Board of Management. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information, guidelines, legislation and feedback from parents, students, teachers and others. 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.

To review and evaluate the policy, it will be necessary to gauge the impact and effectiveness of the policy by examining the extent to which:

- RSE is being successfully taught through SPHE at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle for students.
- Resource materials are available to teachers in designated area in workroom and online.
- The timetable facilitates the implementation of the RSE programme e.g. at Senior Cycle, that all classes at Senior Cycle are taught RSE.
- Appropriate professional development for teachers is available and relevant teachers are availing of it.
- Staff, students and parents are aware of the policy.
- Feedback is received from teachers, other school staff, students, parents, members of Board of Management etc.

Specifically important to the review and evaluation of the RSE Policy and Programme are:

- a) Student feedback: A confidential survey of students is conducted once the RSE lessons are completed. Feedback is sought from the Student Council.
- b) Staff review and feedback.
- c) Parental feedback, including at parent-teacher meetings and Parents' Council meetings.
- d) Feedback is sought as part of our School Self-Evaluation process and helps to inform future planning.



Ratified by the Board of Management on 30th September 2021

Date of next review: September 2023

Signature (Chairperson): _____

Appendix I

Relationships and Sexuality Education: Teaching Staff 2021-2022

Junior Cycle	Senior Cycle
Vanessa Byrne	Vanessa Byrne
David Doyle	Janet Bradley
Ann-Maire Kelly	David Doyle
Georgina Maher	Ann-Maire Kelly
Edel Murphy	Georgina Maher
Kim O’Flaherty (SPHE Co-Ordinator, 2021-22)	Edel Murphy
	Tara O’Sullivan

Appendix II

Template Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

The Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) Programme for your child will commence on [insert X date, 2021 / 2022]. The name of your child’s RSE teacher is [insert Mr/Ms X here].

The school’s RSE Policy is available on our website at www.presentationcollegecarlow.com and we encourage all parents to read the policy in order to be informed about the holistic nature of RSE and its importance in the context of students’ personal, social and health education. The content of the RSE programme may be explored in greater detail on www.sphe.ie

RSE is mandatory in all schools, and we consider it to be an essential part of students’ growth and development. In the event that you wish to exercise your right to withdraw your child from any part of the RSE programme, please inform me in writing well in advance of the commencement date. If your child has an identified additional educational need, or if there are home circumstances which may be relevant and you wish to advise how best to approach a particular topic, please contact the RSE teacher directly at the school. Your support in this regard is most welcome.

Yours sincerely,

Principal



Appendix III

Class Evaluation of Senior Cycle RSE (at the end of a Unit of Learning)

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD WORKSHEET 1



RSE SENIOR CYCLE: EVALUATION

Rate the RSE lessons by marking the appropriate box, using the scale below

1 = Not helpful, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very good, 5 = Excellent

- Content of RSE lessons (topics and key messages)

1 2 3 4 5

- Way of working (e.g. group work, worksheets, discussions, walking debates)

1 2 3 4 5

- Usefulness of the lessons (for me in my life now and into the future)

1 2 3 4 5

- 1 What did you enjoy about this module/programme, e.g. the topic, way of working?

- 2 What are the three key things you learned?

- 3 How could the programme/module be improved?

Source: TRUST Programme, p.119 available [here](#)



Appendix IV

Sexual Health Support Services

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



GENERAL SUPPORTS

CHILDLINE

24-hour support and information service for children and adolescents.

Tel: 1800 666 666

ISPC

Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Tel: 01 676 7960

SAMARITANS

24-hour confidential support service for anyone who is in crisis.

Helpline: 1850 60 90 90

www.samaritans.org

SPUNOUT

An interactive website for young people which deals with a wide variety of issues.

www.spunout.ie

ACCOMMODATION

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT SERVICE

Helpline: 1800 724 724

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

HEADSUP

Support service for mental health issues.

Freetext: 50424 to receive a list of topics with which help might be needed.

www.headsup.ie

MENTAL HEALTH IRELAND

A support service around positive mental health.

www.mentalhealthireland.ie

Tel: 01 284 1166

GROW

Support service for people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems.

www.grow.ie

Tel: 1890 474 474

HEADSTRONG

Support service for youth mental health issues.

www.headstrong.ie

Tel: 01 660 7343

ALCOHOL AND DRUG RELATED ISSUES

AL-ANON & AL-ATEEN

Alcohol misuse support service.

Tel: 01 8732699

DRUGS/HIV HELPLINE

Drugs misuse and HIV support service.

Helpline: 1800 459 459

DRUG AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT

Drugs and alcohol information and support.

www.drugs.ie

www.unlocked.ie

Support and information service for young people around alcohol misuse.

SEPARATION AND BEREAVEMENT ISSUES

TEEN BETWEEN

Support service for teenagers 12-21 (years of age) of separated parents.

www.teenbetween.ie

Lo call: 1890 380 380

RAINBOWS IRELAND LTD

Support service for children dealing with the grieving process and losses around separation and divorce or bereavement.

Tel: 01 4734175

CONSOLE

Support service for people dealing with the grieving process and losses around bereavement by suicide.

Helpline: 1800 201890



SEXUAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES



GENERAL

www.yoursexualhealth.ie

HSE support and information service on a range of sexual health topics.

www.cluedup.ie

Information on sexual health.

REPRODUCTION AND FERTILITY ISSUES

IRISH FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION

Information and support service on a wide range of sexual health issues.

www.ifpa.ie

National pregnancy helpline: 1850 495051

www.thinkcontraception.ie

Information service targeted at 18-25 year olds. Covers the wide range of contraceptive methods available in Ireland.

www.positiveoptions.ie

Crisis pregnancy support service. Freetext "list" to: 50444 for a list of crisis pregnancy counselling agencies.

STIs (cont)

CORK – Victoria Hospital

Tel: 021 4966844

GALWAY –

University College Hospital

Tel: 091 525200

Portiuncula Hospital Ballinasloe

Tel: 090 9648372

LIMERICK – Regional Hospital

Tel: 061 482382

SLIGO – Sligo General Hospital

Tel: 071 9170473

TIPPERARY –

Nenagh General Hospital

Tel: 061 482382

South Tipperary Hospital

Tel: 051 842646

TRALEE – Tralee General Hospital

Tel: 021 4966844

WATERFORD – Waterford Regional Hospital

Tel: 051 842646

STIs

STI CLINICS

Support services around Sexually Transmitted Infections

DUBLIN –

St. James's Hospital, GUIDE Clinic

Tel: 01 4162315 / 4162316

Mater Misericordiae Hospital

Tel: 01 8032063

The Gay Men's Health Project Clinic

Tel: 01 6699553

The HIV Testing Centre (open to all)

Tel: 01 6699500

Free phone number: 1800 201187

CARLOW – Carlow District Hospital

Tel: 051 842646

CASTLEBAR – Mayo General Hospital

Tel: 094 9021733

CLARE – Ennis Regional Hospital

Tel: 061 482382

GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

GLEN

Working for equality for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender people in Ireland.

www.glen.ie

BELONGTO

Support service for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender young people.

www.belongto.org

SEXUAL ABUSE AND VIOLENCE ISSUES

CARI (CHILDREN AT RISK IN IRELAND)

Support service for young people around sexual abuse issues.

www.cari.ie

Helpline: 1890 924567 (Mon-Fri 9.30am - 5.30pm)

DUBLIN RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

Support service around sexual abuse issues.

National 24 - hour helpline: 1800 778 888

Source: TRUST Programme, p.120-121 available [here](#)