



Clogher Road Community College offers parents the choice of an education based on the inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference and justice and equality for all. In our school, every child will learn in an inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each child to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society. (Adapted from Educate Together Mission Statement)

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1. RSE Policy - Statement and Rationale

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in Clogher Road community college provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development. SPHE, which includes the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), along with CSPE, Digital Literacy and PE are part of the Wellbeing subjects. SPHE is taught in Clogher Road Community College from 1st year to 6th year through various programmes and initiatives.

The RSE Policy was produced after a process of consultation between staff, Board of Management, parent representatives and student representatives. The policy will apply to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality within our school. Discussion about relationships and sexuality also takes place in classes other than SPHE/RSE (e.g. Science, Biology, Home Economics, Ethical Education and Digital Literacy) and it is therefore important that all teachers are familiar with the RSE policy. The policy will apply to all school staff (teaching and non-teaching staff), to students, Board of Management, parents/guardians, visiting speakers and external facilitators.

2. Mission Statement

Clogher Road Community College culture is based on the four pillars: Care, Respect, Commitment and Community. We seek to enrich students' lives and empower them for the many challenges of life in a caring atmosphere in partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s). CRCC is inclusive of intercultural values of respect for difference and justice and equality for all. Every child will learn through our values which enable and support each child to achieve their full potential while preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society.

3. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding of beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships, and intimacy. This is achieved by supporting the development of healthy and fully informed individuals using up-to-date public health information. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults, and the media. The RSE class gives pupils formal opportunities, through experiential learning, to cultivate healthy attitudes and values towards themselves and others, promoting the overall development of the person, and the integration of sexuality into personal life.

Building on the work completed in Primary School, RSE at Post-Primary level seeks to provide opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that will enable them to think and act in a healthy, caring, and responsible way.

4. Rationale: Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

Section 9 of the Education Act, 1998 requires that every school use its available resources to promote the social, emotional, personal, safety and health of students in consultation with parents/guardians and having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

Access to sexual and health education is an important right for students under the terms of the Article 11.2 of the European Social Charter. The Council of Europe European Committee of Social Rights, which examines complaints regarding breaches of the Charter, has indicated it regards this Article as requiring that health education *“be provided throughout the entire period of schooling”* and that sexual and reproductive health education is *“objective, based on contemporary scientific evidence and does not involve censoring, withholding or intentionally misrepresenting information, for example as regards contraception or different means on maintaining sexual and reproductive health.”* ([Circular 0037/2010](#))

In 2023, the [Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum](#) Framework was updated. This document provides a flexible framework within which schools can plan a three-year SPHE programme to meet students’ needs. The framework comprises of the following four strands:

- Understanding Myself and Others
- Making Healthy Choices
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Wellbeing

At Senior Cycle, the updated [SPHE Curriculum](#) will commenced in September 2024. This framework encompasses the following three strands:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Into Adulthood

In accordance with Department of Education and [Skills Circular 0037/2010](#), *Relationships and Sexuality Education*, post-primary schools are obliged to develop a RSE policy to implement a programme in this area for all students from first to sixth year. Junior cycle RSE should be

taught as an integral component of SPHE. In Senior Cycle, schools are required to teach RSE, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class. The Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle curriculums outline the expected content of an RSE programme under the following themes:

Junior Cycle	Senior Cycle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> What is RSE • <input type="checkbox"/> Gender stereotypes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Gender identity • <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What makes a family Healthy connected relationships Maintaining healthy relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy relationships • <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abusive and violent relationships Sexual health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in adolescence <input type="checkbox"/> Human reproduction <input type="checkbox"/> Personal hygiene 	

The [RSE Interim Curriculum and Guidelines](#) informs the development of each school's RSE programme. A whole-school RSE policy underpins the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the RSE curriculum programme in each school.

5. The Aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme

Aims

- To build students' self-awareness and positive self-worth
- To develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives
- To empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with themselves and others
- To enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society

Objectives

RSE should enable the students to:

- explore personal thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings about relationships
- develop an understanding of the different types of relationships, what is important in them and the skills to enhance relationships
- promote empathy with others who have different cultural values, attitudes and beliefs about family, relationships, sex and sexuality
- develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills in support of sexual reproductive health
- develop students' understanding of sexuality and sexual orientation and the importance of an inclusive environment
- develop personal and interpersonal skills which support beginning, maintaining and ending relationships
- develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict, and threats to personal safety
- acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness and the skills for building and maintaining self-esteem
- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change especially during adolescence and to develop respect for difference between individuals
- understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex role stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality
- value family life (in all its forms) and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood and develop an appreciation of family life and its challenges

□

RSE connects closely to Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) which provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others, and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. RSE as part of the SPHE framework aims to:

- enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment
- promote self-esteem and self confidence
- enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making
- provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

6. Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our School

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the SPHE/RSE programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal. The RSE component will take six or more classes over the school year. The programme will be in line with the NCAA Curriculum and Guidelines.

In delivering the programme, teachers will show sensitivity to the needs of the group and the school. The methodologies used are expected to be child-centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the students. Active learning methodologies are favoured in SPHE and RSE to encourage engagement and learning.

Teaching methods may include:

- Group discussions
- Case studies
- Brainstorming
- Role-play
- Art work
- Narrative expression
- Games
- Debates
- Project work
- Visitors and speakers
- Reflections

The programme will be delivered by teachers timetabled for SPHE at Junior and Senior Cycle level and supported by learning support and support space teachers where necessary.

7. 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. This policy has been designed in consultation with our Parent Council/Board of Management and the views expressed by parents/guardians will be considered when reviewing the policy. A copy of this policy will be made available to any parent on request to the School Office. It will also be made available on the school website and school app. Parents/Guardians will receive notification when the RSE component of SPHE will commence.

Parents/Guardians may have the opportunity to attend informational sessions within the school on the SPHE and RSE curriculum. This may vary year on year and will be dependent on staff availability and expertise.

Withdrawal of students

CRCC understands and accepts that parents/guardians have a right (Section 30, Education Act) to have their child not attend teaching on areas of the curriculum and schools are expected to uphold this right following such a request. The Department of Education states the way the school ensures the right is upheld is a matter for the school concerned. If a parent/guardian wishes to withdraw their child from participating in the RSE programme it must be made in writing each year or it will be assumed that the withdrawal request has elapsed at the end of each academic year. It should be noted that the school may not be in a position to supervise the student due to staff/classroom availability. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to collect the student for the period of the RSE class that day and subsequent days. We do not ask for reasons for withdrawal although we invite parents to discuss their concerns with us so that we can provide any necessary support and make parents aware that pupils may receive inaccurate information as a result of being withdrawn from an RSE programme. Once a student turns 18, they have a right to decide for themselves if they wish to participate in learning.

8. Class Organisation and Timetabling

[Circular M11/03](#)

All second level schools must timetable Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of the Junior Cycle Core Curriculum from September 2003. The time allocation recommended is the equivalent of one class period per week. In CRCC, all year groups will be timetabled for 1 hour of SPHE per week which includes RSE.

9. Child Protection

Child protection Procedures 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”. The age of consent is 17 for sexual intercourse. All students of RSE are made aware of the limits to confidentiality that should a teacher become aware that a student is at risk they are obliged to pass this information onto the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), in accordance with the procedures outlined in our Child Protection Policy.

10. Students with Additional Education Needs

Continuum of Support

Teachers are aware that there is now a three-tier support structure within the school that ensures there is support for all at classroom level.

For learning activities to be meaningful, relevant, and achievable for all students, it is important that the teacher finds ways to respond to student diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies.

In consultation with the AEN coordinator the following strategies may be used:

- ensure that the objectives are realistic for students and ensure that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- pre-teaching concepts by the Learning Support teacher where applicable
- provide opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups
- spend more time on tasks and organise the learning task into small stages
- ensure that language is pitched at the students' level of understanding and does not hinder understanding of the activity
- pose key questions, to guide students through the different stages/processes and to assist in self-direction and correction
- teachers to check for understanding
- have short and varied tasks
- the use of role-play would be emphasised here as a learning tool where appropriate for scenarios of acting out situations such as an understanding of *public* and *private* and *safe* and *unsafe* situations.

11. Cross Circular Links

Cross curricular links with the RSE programme are evident with the subject areas below (but may not be limited to):

- SPHE
- PE
- Science
- CSPE
- Digital Literacy
- English
- Ethical Education

12. Ongoing Support, Development and Review

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. Some teachers have expert training in the specific areas of health, relationships and sexuality education and are 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.

13. Supporting LGBTQ+ Students

All aspects of RSE and SPHE are taught with the understanding that it is likely there are students who identify as LGBTQ+ in the classroom, or students who have LGBTQ+ people in their families, as parents/guardians, siblings or other relatives. Therefore, planning, classroom activities/resources and classroom language used will be mindful of the inclusion of all identities.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 11/12/2025

Chairperson

Allison Masterson

Principal

Lesley Byrne