COLÁISTE BHAILE CHLÁIR

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy Statement

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
21/3/2019

9 TH APRIL 2019
THIS POLICY HAS BEEN PREPARED IN CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS, STUDENT COUNCIL, STAFF, THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND GALWAY AND ROSCOMMON EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

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In this policy document all references to gender are taken to be inclusive and the term "parent" is taken to include "guardian".

Introduction

The schools new **Vision** statement ***"Together We Will Achieve"*** reflects the hopes for our school and students where each of us wisher to achieve to the best of our ability, while acknowledging that this can ultimately be better achieved through partnership.

The schools new ***Mission*** statement reflects how we will achieve this vision by Caring, Developing, Praising and Believing in our students and by empowering them to also take personal responsibility for their growth and development.

This is all mediated through a shared set of core **Values** which underpin everything we do.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships. The RSE programme provided opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring and in a responsible way.

Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education

The *Draft Guidelines for RSE* (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that Social Personal and Health Education is "spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology". The 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.

The aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme

Relationships and sexuality education which is located in the overall framework of Social, Personal and Health Education, Science, Home Economics, English, C.S.P.E. To ensure an adequate response ot the needs of all students, specific provisoin for RSE is made within the SPHE programme. Below are specific aims:

a) To help pupils 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 pupils to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy of the school
f) 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.

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

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

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

1. **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. Relevant sections of this RSE policy will be included in the Parents section on the school's website http://www.colaistebhailechlair.com/parents/rse-info/

This policy is designed as a vehicle for consultation with Parents' Association representatives and the views expressed by parents will be taken into account when reviewing the policy.

2. **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.

3. **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 should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

4. **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 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) 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;
c) teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information;

d) teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.

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.

The division between biological and non-biological aspects of sex education

The school policy is that the Science Department deals primarily with the biological aspects of reproduction.

Withdrawing pupils from the RSE programme

1. Relevant sections of this policy are made available to parents on the school website with details about the parent's right to withdraw their child from sensitive aspects of RSE http://www.colaistebhailechlair.com/parents/rse-info/
2. Issues such as over population and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography. 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.
3. 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)

Using visiting speakers and others

a) It is school policy that the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. 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. As part of RSE, we may invite additional speakers. They will only deal with topics as detailed in the relevant syllabus or specifications from the NCCA.

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 & the Board of Management in accordance to the circular 0043/2018 appendix 2 for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the RSE programme. Issues to consider are:

i) the degree of explicitness of the content and presentation;
ii) will the visitor be accompanied by teaching staff?
iii) will the 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 plan for the year.
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 pupils in the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them - it also facilitates planning.
e) The Office should be informed of the date and name of the visitor.
f) Where applicable, refreshments should be arranged with the catering staff.
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 pupil 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 School Newsletter.

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 homosexuality will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning sexual orientation is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussion should be appropriate to the age of the pupils.

Contraception

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way.

Special Needs

Children with special 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 learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.
Appropriate resources may be required for student with special needs.

Ongoing support, development and review

Training:

1. 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.
2. 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.

Resources:

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school resources allow.

Within budgetary constraints, all resources needed in terms of time, finance and personnel, will be made available to develop and support the RSE programme in the school. The programme will be supported by the SPHE support service and the schools team within the Health Promotion Service of the HSE West.

The core resource materials for SPHE are as follows:
On My Own Two Feet Substance Abuse Prevention Programme. Department of Education and Science, Department of Health and Children, Mater Dei Counseling Service (1994).

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education, Junior Cycle, Department of Education and Science (1998).

Busy Bodies DVD (junior cycle), TRUST DVD (Senior Cycle)

Teachers on occasions may use other materials deemed suitable and appropriate for student needs and in accordance with school ethos.

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) pupil feedback;
b) staff review and feedback;
c) parental feedback
d) BOM review and feedback.

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 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;

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 who have been withdrawn are vulnerable to teasing - we therefore attempt to cause minimal embarrassment to the pupil and minimal disruption to the programme;

e) we also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers;

f) we offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.

Appendix 2

Coláiste Bhaile Chláir

Claregalway
Galway

TEMPLATE FOR EXTERNAL SPEAKERS for Wellbeing Promotion incl: RSE

In accordance with the new circular 0043/2018 in best practice guidelines in the use of external facilitators within post primary schools the following items will need to be completed.

Engaging External Facilitators in the School Check List	***Tick if completed***
Please outline materials & learning intention proposed for use with this program so that the Principal and Board of Management can approve.	
That the facilitators presenting the program have the necessary training, qualifications and expertise to deliver this program.	
That the chosen program is informed by research and methodologies	
Facilitators have a written child protection policy & safeguarding statement.	
Facilitators have met any vetting obligations that arise under the Vetting Act in line with Circular 0031/2016.	

Approved by: _____
Date: _____
Alan Mongey Principal

Approved by: _____
Date: _____ Dr Patrick Tobin, Chair, BOM