

Portmarnock Community School



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction:

The RSE policy was drawn up as a result of a consultation process involving management, teachers and parents.

The RSE programme at Portmarnock Community School will be implemented to junior cycle – year 1 to year 3 and senior cycle – year 4 to 6. Our development of the RSE policy is in keeping with our school ethos and philosophy and follows the Department of Education guidelines and syllabus.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education:

The course aims to provide young people with information and skills to evaluate critically the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy' (Ref.Dept.of Ed.) RSE also aims to help young people to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. The RSE programme also provides opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality and dealing with the challenges of growing up in an online world. The programme will be delivered in a safe and caring environment.

RSE as part of the wider programme of Social Personal and Health Education:

Relationships and sexuality Education will be delivered as part of the SPHE programme at Portmarnock Community School. The content of the schools SPHE programme will include a wide range of topics such as communication skills, nurturing positive self-esteem and self-confidence, healthy eating, alcohol, drugs, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as RSE.

Teaching RSE:

The approach to teaching RSE will involve giving students clear information, building up their self-esteem and helping them communicate, to make decisions and to express feelings in an appropriate way.

RSE Aims and Objectives:

Aims:

To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships and in so doing strengthen their knowledge, attitude and skills for healthy relationships.

To promote an understanding of sexuality and to equip students with skills to be proactive and positive by-standers if confronted with an incident of abusive behaviour or assault.

To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and one relationship with others.

To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.

To enable young people to develop positive attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

To promote acceptance of difference.

To promote a positive climate by engaging students in awareness campaigns and activities to promote healthy relationships and positive by-stander behaviour.

To reduce the risk of relationship abuse and assault by educating students and supporting healthy teen relationships and responding effectively to incidents and disclosures.

To promote a safe and supportive school environment to address adolescent relationships and provide relevant activities to promote positive peer relationships and behaviour interventions and initiatives.

These aims will be fulfilled by teaching evidence-based curricula in RSE classes.

Response to Adolescent Relationship Abuse and Assault:

The school will develop and implement an effective and consistent response to incidents of adolescent relationship abuse or assault.

Confidentiality – there may be times when students wish to disclose private or personal information during SPHE/RSE classes, students should be made aware that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed. Confidentiality should be respected unless a teacher feels that the student is at risk. Appropriate action should be taken in such cases and the Designated Liaison Person informed and the Child protection procedures followed.

Objectives

RSE should enable students to –

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 a respect for differences between individuals

Understand human physiology particularly reproduction, human fertility and sexually transmitted diseases

Understand sexual development and identity

Explore aspects of sexuality, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality

Value family life and responsibilities of parenthood

Nurture informed decision-making consistent with personal moral integrity

Be respectful of the rights and dignity of others

Develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety

The areas of RSE will be supported by the Social Personal and Health programme, Science, Biology, Religious Education, Home Economics and Pastoral Care.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE at Portmarnock

Community School:

RSE is an integral part of the SPHE programme. All junior classes are timetabled for one class period per week of SPHE. Senior classes receive 6 sessions over an academic year.

It is intended that the RSE programme will build on and support what children experience at home and outside school.

Parents/guardians will be informed by letter of upcoming RSE classes.

Parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their child from RSE classes, such withdrawal to be given in writing to the Principal.

Parents/guardians are welcome to view the programme content.

Visiting speakers must be given a copy of the school policy on SPHE/RSE and must speak within the spirit of the policy. Teachers will be present at all times when a guest speaker is visiting a class.

Training and Resources

Resources in terms of time, finance and personnel will be made available to develop and support the SPHE/RSE programme in the school. Teacher- training is an essential element in delivering the programme, Our school will encourage and facilitate participation in in-service development opportunities whenever possible.

Evaluation

The policy statement will be reviewed by representatives of the school community on a regular basis. Amended statements will be brought to the attention of all parents.

SPHE resource materials and further RSE information are available from the school.

Timeframe

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13th December 2010 and came into operation on 14th December 2010. It has been reviewed and amended in May 2018.