

Meánscoil na mBráithre Críostaí, Cill Chainnigh
Christian Brothers Secondary School, Kilkenny.

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RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) Policy March 2022

School Name: Christian Brothers Secondary School, Kilkenny

School Address: James's Street, Kilkenny

School Details: CBS Kilkenny is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education and Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

School Management: The Board of Management of CBS Kilkenny is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement

Inspired by its founder, CBS Kilkenny aims to provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition. The school endeavors to be a caring Christian Community which promotes to the best of its ability the personal, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students.

Ethos

As an Edmund Rice School, CBS Kilkenny seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership (remove the full stop here)

This policy is informed by:

- CBS Kilkenny Mission Statement
 - CBS Kilkenny Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy
 - CBS Kilkenny Code of Behaviour
 - CBS Kilkenny Child Protection Policy//Child Safeguarding Statement
 - CBS Kilkenny ICT Acceptable Use Policy
 - CBS Kilkenny Special Educational Needs Policy
 - CBS Kilkenny Whole School Support and Guidance Policy
 - CBS Kilkenny Pastoral Care Policy
 - CBS Kilkenny Anti Bullying Policy
 - CBS Kilkenny Visiting Speaker Policy
 - CBS Kilkenny Wellbeing School Improvement Plan 2018
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1. The Education Act, 1998, requires that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
 2. Section 4 of the Rules and Program for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for RSE and a suitable RSE program in place for all students at both Junior and Senior Cycle. At Junior Cycle the RSE program is part of Social, Personal and Health Education and at Senior Cycle, part of Health Education and Religious Education.
 3. Circular 15/2017, ‘Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19’, identifies RSE as a key component of the Wellbeing Program .
 4. This policy has been developed in accordance with CBS Kilkenny Child Safeguarding Statement, in line with the Children First Act 2015 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools 2017. 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 Safeguarding procedures are followed.
 5. While reviewing this RSE Policy, due consideration has been given to all aspects of the wellbeing of students at CBS Kilkenny and particularly to the Wellbeing School Improvement Plan (May 2018).
 6. General Data Protection Regulation came into force in May 2018, and this policy has been reviewed in light of this legislation.
 7. The effectiveness of a RSE program is dependent on a collaborative policy process involving: teachers, parents, members of the Board of Management and students.

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills which enable us to develop attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy (DES 1996). Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development in all our lives, but it is particularly important in the life of the adolescent.

As a Catholic school we wish to support parents/guardians in this important aspect of their child's education and preparation for life. In keeping with our mission statement, we believe we have a complementary role in preparing young people for their place in society. In the school setting, RSE is an integral part of general educational provision which seeks to promote the overall development of the person and which includes the integration of sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE and Wellbeing, Turas

SPHE/Wellbeing/Turas 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.

The guidelines for RSE state that SPHE is '*spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology*'. The RSE program is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE and Wellbeing (Turas) cover other areas that 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 program.

Aims of the RSE Program

In CBS Kilkenny, the RSE Program will be delivered within the context of our SPHE and Wellbeing (Turas) program. The specific aims of RSE in CBS Kilkenny are:

- To provide a program , curricular and extra-curricular, which develops the whole person
- To support a Christian value system encompassing respect, responsibility, co-operation, honesty, fairness, and friendship
- To build on the primary school program 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 help young people to understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's own relationship with others

- To educate students to have a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive systems
- To enable students to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To provide young people with information and skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today, so that they will make positive, moral, caring and responsible decisions about themselves and the way they live their lives, while also respecting the dignity of others.
- CBS Kilkenny recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators, and home is the natural and primary environment in which RSE should take place.

Current Provision in CBS Kilkenny

The RSE program as taught in CBS Kilkenny is the program laid out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA):

- The school encourages parents/guardians to ensure that students participate in this program as a way of supporting parents as the primary educators of their children.
- All Junior Cycle students receive RSE classes in line with DES guidelines.
- The Transition Year Health Education program incorporates a RSE module.
- Fifth and Sixth Year RSE will be delivered as a module during Religious Education (minimum of six classes per year).
- The RSE program is supported by the pastoral care system and by management and staff of the school.
- In RSE we emphasise respect for the rights and dignity of others.
- Occasional guest speakers will support the RSE program.

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in our school:

Education partners are consulted before ratifying school policy and programs, i.e. parents/guardians, staff, Board of Management and, where appropriate, students.

1. Confidentiality

While students should not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in SPHE and Wellbeing (Turas)/RSE classes, there may be times when they do 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 will be respected unless a teacher becomes aware that an individual was, is, or maybe at risk. Teachers must indicate clearly to students when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential. Where a child protection concern is raised, the procedures

outlined in the Child Safeguarding Statement are followed, and the concern is referred to the Principal as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principal as the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP).

2. Parent/Guardian Rights and Responsibilities (including the withdrawal of students)

It is our hope that all students will avail of the RSE program provided by the school. We understand however that at times parents/guardians may wish to withdraw their sons from particular aspects of the RSE program because of perceived conflict with their own values and beliefs. CBS Kilkenny respects this right and will engage with parents/guardians with a view to resolving any perceived difficulties.

When a request for withdrawal from the RSE program is made by a parent/guardian:

- We discuss the nature of the concerns with the student's parent/guardian and, if appropriate, we attempt to address their concerns.
- In keeping with the RSE program, we consider whether the program can be amended or improved in a way that will address concerns. However, care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the RSE program and the entitlement of other students.
- We outline the importance of receiving RSE from trained personnel rather than receiving inaccurate information from their peers.
- If parents/guardians still wish to withdraw their son from RSE class they are requested to make a formal request to the principal.
- Parents/guardians may remove their son from the school premises for the duration of RSE class or provide supervision within the school for their son during RSE.

3. Visiting speakers

In keeping with Child Safeguarding guidelines, all visiting speakers and facilitators to the school with unsupervised access to students will have been Garda vetted. Visiting speakers will be made aware of the school's ethos and will agree to work within those parameters outlined in the CBS Kilkenny Visiting Speakers Policy.

4. Sensitive issues

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 CBS Kilkenny ethos and DES-NCCA guidelines. From time to time, some issues within the RSE program may present as particularly sensitive for some students. Every effort will be made by staff to become aware of the profile of the group in advance of the delivery of the program. If necessary, our guidance and counselling services (or external counselling) will be offered.

5. Class groupings

All students participate in SPHE, Wellbeing (Turas) and RE in mixed ability classes.

6. Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Students with SEN are welcomed and facilitated in this subject. SNAs work in some classes with the teacher to facilitate student learning. Students with SEN may require more support than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. Differentiated methodologies will be used to ensure an inclusive classroom environment.

7. Staffing

There is a team of SPHE and Wellbeing (Turas)/RSE teachers led by the SPHE Coordinator. Typically, there are eight or more staff members on this team. Numbers may vary slightly from year to year, but we recognise the importance of maintaining a core, committed and trained team.

8. Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians of First Year students are informed of the existence of the SPHE and Wellbeing(Turas)/RSE program. Parents/Guardians of Senior Cycle students are also informed of the RSE program module.

9. Cross Curricular

All staff members are informed of the RSE policy enabling them to refer to RSE issues and to identify for students how they are linked to their subject.

10. Reflection & Evaluation

- At Junior Cycle, reflection is facilitated through diary entries at the end of each topic. Project work, work completed in the copybook and group participation is also integral to the evaluation process.
- In Senior Cycle, ongoing reflection will be provided through course based quizzes, discussion and reflection. This, and an overall evaluation sheet, will inform our evaluation process.

Provisions for Ongoing Support, Development and Review

1. Staff training

CBS Kilkenny maintains an up to date record of in-service courses attended by staff. All SPHE staff are encouraged to register with the SPHE website (www.sphe.ie) for in-service. This is facilitated through Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). Where

possible, staff will be given opportunities to attend further professional development courses. Information received at in-service will be made available to all relevant teachers.

2. Planning

The SPHE and Wellbeing (Turas) team are given time to meet during school development planning days. At these meetings, the SPHE and Wellbeing (Turas) coordinator will update staff in relation to in-service training available.

3. Resources

We have core and supplementary resources available to all SPHE and RSE staff. Staff may also avail of web based resources for class planning; every classroom is now equipped with ICT equipment which aids the use of ICT in classes. The SPHE department will identify necessary resources and present them to the principal as part of its projected budget.

Review of Policy

The school authorities will review this policy on a regular basis in order to stay up to date with current best practice and with relevant legislation in this area.

Approval

This policy has been approved by CBS Kilkenny Board of Management.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

APPENDIX I: RSE at Junior Cycle:



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Please be aware that Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught for one period a week in First, Second and Third Year. Your son will also have studied SPHE in primary school. Please note that a Relationships and Sexuality education is integral to the SPHE course. This element of the curriculum focuses on Human Growth and Development, Human Sexuality and Human Relationships. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills which enable us to develop attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy (DES 1996). Content covered includes:

1st Year

- Friendship: the value of friendship, qualities of friendship
- Physical changes at adolescence
- How pregnancy begins. The Reproductive System
- Gender Stereotyping

2nd Year

- Friendship : the changing nature of friendship
- Becoming an Adult: changes in the body.
- Conception and Sexual Intercourse
- Sexuality and Gender Identity

3rd Year

- Friendship: romantic relationships
- The nature of healthy relationships.
- Difficulties in relationships. Ending relationship
- Sexuality: Sexual orientation. Sexual Health. Sexual consent. Sexually transmitted diseases.

We recognise that parents and guardians have the primary responsibility in facilitating the personal development of their children and we aim to complement this role. We encourage you to support the SPHE and RSE program at home by communicating with your child about his own growth, development, friendships, decisions and health. The teaching of RSE is supported by resources from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

[Resources for Junior Cycle RSE](#)

Our Relationships and Sexuality Policy is available to view on our school website:
cbskilkenny.ie

APPENDIX II

RSE at Senior Cycle:



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills which enable us to develop attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy (DES 1996). Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development in all of our lives, but it is particularly important in the life of the adolescent.

As a Catholic school we wish to support parents/guardians in this important aspect of their child's education and preparation for life. In keeping with our mission statement, we believe we have a complementary role in preparing young people for their place in society. In the school setting RSE is an integral part of general educational provision which seeks to promote the overall development of the person, and which includes the integration of sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development.

All Senior Cycle students in CBS Secondary School Kilkenny participate in an RSE module. Our aim is to support students in making positive choices for health and wellbeing. A sample of the resources being used to support the teaching and learning in this module are available on the following link.

[Resources for learning and teaching SPHE/RSE](#)