



St Louis Secondary School Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

1. Introductory Statement

This RSE policy is a written statement of the aims of the RSE programme, the relationship of RSE to SPHE, and the organisation and management of RSE within the school. This is a reviewed and redeveloped policy as a result of a consultation process between SPHE/RSE teachers, staff, Board of Management, Parents Association, Coiste and Oide.

2. Scope

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 subjects other than SPHE/RSE and it is therefore important that all teachers are familiar with the RSE policy. The policy will apply to all school staff-teaching staff and non-teaching staff, to students, Board of Management, parents/guardians, visiting speakers and external facilitators.

3. Rationale

- Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. In the school setting, it 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.
- Through Relationships and Sexuality Education, formal opportunities are provided for young people to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral and spiritual framework.
- Aspects of contemporary life point to the need for a soundly based Relationships and Sexuality Education programme. There is broad agreement in Irish society on the need for Relationships and Sexuality Education in the formal education system.
- Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development. Young people are exposed to a bewildering variety of messages about sexuality and sexual activity.
- 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.
- Schools are required to teach RSE as an integral component of Junior Cycle SPHE up to and

including Third Year, as outlined in the Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework <https://bit.ly/3tPFB8s> developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA, 2000).

- [Circular 0027/2008](#) focuses on the development and implementation of an RSE policy and the implementation of a programme of RSE
- [Circular 0037/2010](#) further reminds schools of their obligations to develop and implement an RSE programme & policy.
- The Department of Education and Skills, Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2017) Section 8.4 reminds schools that the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme is a mandatory part of the curriculum for all students in primary schools and in the junior cycle of post-primary schools and must be fully implemented. All post-primary schools are also required to have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at senior cycle.

4. Relationship to Characteristic Spirit [\(See Le Cheile and JMB...and RSE Doc..or find the website](#)

St. Louis Secondary School Monaghan is a voluntary Catholic Secondary School for girls, founded by the Sisters of St. Louis and now under the trusteeship of Le Cheile Catholic Schools Trust.

Our school recognises that each pupil who enrolls is unique and has different gifts, as well as different needs. It is our wish that our pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence, and with life skills and attitudes, which enable them to lead lives which may contribute to the betterment of society. We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self-image, and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential. We see ourselves as working in partnership with parents, to develop the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment characterised by care and justice.

Spiritual, moral and ethical issues will arise when teaching RSE. This policy aims to guide teachers in their approach and treatment of such issues in accordance with the Catholic ethos and values of St. Louis. Teachers of RSE should understand that their role is to express the views of the whole school community and not their own personal views.

As outlined by the Department of Education and Skills in [Circular 0037/2010](#) no aspect of the RSE programme including Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI's), contraception, or sexual orientation can be omitted on the grounds of religious ethos. As we seek to promote the overall development of the student, this involves the integration of Relationships and Sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development within the context of our holistic educational ethos.

We aim to express our values and ethos while at the same time facilitating students in discussing a range of views in relation to topics within the RSE programme, in the context of a whole school climate that is inclusive and respectful.

Students will be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following:

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for God and creation
- Acknowledgement of and respect for other people's personal boundaries and the right of an individual to give or refuse consent.
- understanding and valuing the concept and qualities of consent in relationships
- self-understanding and self-awareness
- non-exploitation in relationships

- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships
- mutuality in relationships
- honesty towards self and others
- compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to one's vision of life
- self-discipline
- the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong

RSE is an integral component of Junior Cycle SPHE up to and including Third Year, as outlined in the Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework. RSE is an area of learning within the SPHE Framework for Senior Cycle <https://tinyurl.com/5n6h3x5z>. Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum is currently being redeveloped.

5. Policy Objectives **Come back to this look at RSE Guidance Doc?**

- To ensure clarity and consensus for teachers of RSE on how RSE is taught in St. Louis
- To ensure implementation of RSE an integral component of Junior Cycle SPHE up to and including Third Year, as outlined in the Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework.
- To ensure implementation of RSE as part of Senior Cycle SPHE.
- To clarify the rights, roles and responsibilities of all within the school community, in relation to the RSE programme, with particular reference to teachers of RSE, school staff, students, parents/guardians and the Board of Management
- To ensure that teachers, parents/guardians and students understand how the teaching of RSE is linked to the ethos of St. Louis.
- To provide information and guidance on the practicalities of delivering the RSE programme.

6. Provision of Training and Staff Development

SPHE teachers are encouraged to register with Oide.ie for all school support and for professional learning events. The school will support the training and professional development of teachers delivering the Junior Cycle SPHE specifications and the Senior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework.

7. Inclusion of Parents/Guardians

- St. Louis acknowledges the role of parents as our partners in education and strives to support parents by highlighting the resources for them as the primary educator, as follows:
 - sexualwellbeing.ie have created a resource for parents that supports having the RSE conversations in the home as the primary educators. [Making the Big Talk many small talks](#) comes with [nine support videos](#) to equip parents as the primary educators.
 - The NCCA have also created an [Information for Parents](#) leaflet in relation to the redeveloped JC SPHE specification.
 - Junior and Senior Cycle RSE curriculum resources have been hyperlinked in this policy.

A copy of this policy will be made available for parents/guardians to view on the school website.

In the case of SPHE/RSE, parents are informed via Vsware school messaging service at the beginning of school year regarding SPHE/RSE and outlining where they can view policies should they require further information

8. Ethical/Moral Considerations

i. Sensitive Issues

Discussions on sensitive/challenging topics can be challenging, but they can become opportunities for learning as they challenge students to think about and question not only their opinions, values, beliefs and worldviews but also those of others. Sensitive/ challenging topics should not be avoided, but they do need careful facilitation. The following Making the Most of Sensitive/Challenging Discussions <https://tinyurl.com/vc85d83t> provides guidance.

ii. Limits To Confidentiality

SPHE/RSE teachers should inform students of the limits to confidentiality and that teachers do not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality.

The school's *Child Protection Policy* and the *Children First Guidelines* (<https://tinyurl.com/mv99vsf7>) will be fully adhered to at all times.

ii. Sexual Activity

When addressing the issue of sexual activity, it is advisable for teachers to give young people information on the age of consent which, according to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006 is 17 years for both males and females.

iii. Sexual Health

The post-primary RSE curriculum guidelines state that the subject of sexual health, STIs and contraception should be addressed at both Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle.

Commented [GO1]: Sexual health

iv. Sexual Orientation

The post-primary RSE curriculum guidelines include the subject of sexual orientation.

The Equal Status Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2004 prohibit discrimination across nine grounds, including sexual orientation. To promote inclusivity, sexual orientation needs to be discussed in a clear, open and respectful way in the classroom.

9. Referrals

SPHE teachers may signpost in-school support and external support services which may be relevant to the class material. If individual issues emerge, the teacher may refer students to the supportive links within the school.

However, if a teacher receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected the teacher must follow the Child Protection Guidelines/Children First Guidelines and report the matter, without delay, to the Designated Liaison Person in the school. The

following Dealing With Disclosure About Sexual Abuse <https://tinyurl.com/zahkcav2> provides guidance.

Every registered teacher, as a mandated person, has a statutory obligation to make his or her own mandated report to TUSLA when the concern about a child is at or above a threshold of harm as defined in the Children First Act, 2015. Therefore, in addition to reporting a concern to the DLP, registered teachers must also consider whether or not the concern is at or above the defined threshold of harm at which the registered teacher has his or her own statutory obligation under the Children First Act, 2015 to submit a mandated report to Tusla, regardless of whether or not the DLP reports the concern in question.

10. Outside Speakers

When arranging for a speaker or visitor to the school, teachers should be guided by the school Visiting Speaker Policy.

Working With External Facilitators, (<https://tinyurl.com/5ypkvtfp>) also sets out some of the key questions and considerations to keep in mind when deciding to engage external support.

[Circular 0043/2018](#) provides schools with 'Best practice guidance for PP schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators'

11. Practical Issues

1. Class Organisation

Junior Cycle

Classes are taught in Base classes. Where possible, at junior cycle, class tutors are assigned the role of SPHE teacher for a three year cycle. The purpose of this is to build a positive classroom relationship and to ensure continuity. If timetabling does not allow for this then a teacher from the SPHE team is assigned.

Senior Cycle

Classes are taught in Base Classes.

Senior Cycle SPHE is modular in nature. Each module is delivered by teachers with expertise or training in a particular area. Classes rotate from teacher to teacher.

2. Timetabling:

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the RSE programme and the deployment of staff are made by the Principal.

- In Junior Cycle RSE is a strand (Strand 3) of the 2023 Junior Cycle SPHE Short Course Specification, (<https://bit.ly/3tPFB8s>). SPHE is timetabled for one class period (58 minutes) per week. SPHE students are taught in tutor groups which are mixed ability.
- In Senior Cycle, RSE, Gender Studies and Personal Safety are modules that are taught as part of the SPHE curriculum in TY, fifth and sixth year. SPHE is timetabled for one class period (58 minutes) per week. SPHE students are taught in tutor groups which are mixed ability.

- LCA students study Social Education which encompasses teaching and learning around SPHE and Life Skills.

12. Students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN)

The following guidelines [NCSE SPHE Guidelines](#) are designed to support teachers of students with mild general learning disabilities who are accessing the junior cycle SPHE curriculum, to develop the skills necessary to care for themselves and others, and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

13. Withdrawing pupils from the RSE programme

Parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their children from RSE classes (indeed any classes) following consultation with school authorities (JMB Bulletin 55, 2022/2023).

Note: 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 18 years, the student. Hence, parents have a right to opt their child out of the sensitive issues in RSE if they wish to do so. The school may wish to ask the parents to put their request in writing.

14. Curriculum

Junior Cycle

In Junior Cycle RSE is a strand (Strand 3) of the 2023 Junior Cycle SPHE Short Course Specification, (<https://bit.ly/3tPFB8s>). RSE ,Strand 3, explores the cognitive, physical, emotional and social aspects of relationships and sexuality through a positive, inclusive, rights and responsibilities-based approach. The focus is on family relationships, friendships, romantic and potential sexual relationships in the future.

Junior Cycle Strand 3 RSE Learning Outcomes

Commented [GO2]: Could this be AEN?

Students should be able to:

Awareness

- 3.1 reflect on the values, behaviours and skills that help to make, sustain and end relationships respectfully with friends, family and romantic/intimate relationships
- 3.2 examine benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships - friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationships
- 3.3 identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships
- 3.4 appreciate the importance of setting healthy boundaries in relationships and consider how to show respect for the boundaries of others
- 3.5 consider the importance of taking care of their reproductive health

Dialogue

- 3.6 appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways

Reflection and action

- 3.7 explore the pressures to become sexually intimate and discuss ways to show respect for people's choices
- 3.8 appreciate the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships, from the perspective of building caring relationships and from a legal perspective
- 3.9 explain the importance of safer sexual activity with reference to methods of contraception and protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- 3.10 discuss the influence of popular culture and the online world, in particular, the influence of pornography, on young people's understanding, expectations and social norms in relation to sexual expression
- 3.11 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health.

Junior Cycle Resources

Extensive resources are available to support teaching and learning in the resources section of the SPHE toolkits '[Resources for teaching and learning in SPHE](#)'. The Toolkit does not provide a prescriptive list of teaching and learning resources and it is important to decide what resources are best suited to supporting learning in the context of students' needs, stage of development and school context. The following questions will support SPHE teachers with resource choices:

Choosing SPHE Resources – Questions to Consider (<https://bit.ly/3FzkIGF>)

The HSE have developed resources, to support the teaching and learning of the learning outcomes from the 2023 redeveloped SPHE specification. The 1st and 2nd year set are currently available with a 3rd year set to follow.

- First Year: <https://tinyurl.com/2cn95utp>
- Second Year: <https://tinyurl.com/2c6c4u8b>
- B4U decide (Lessons 1-6) <https://tinyurl.com/65kssa5w>
- Catholic schools may also avail of RSE resources made available by the Catholic Education Partnership. These resources have been developed in harmony with the NCCA's draft SPHE (incorporating RSE) junior-cycle short-course curriculum specification.. These resources are available at <https://tinyurl.com/ab3vmcs8>

Senior Cycle

Senior Cycle SPHE is primarily planned using the NCCA 2011 Senior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework [2011](#)

[Curriculum Framework.](#)

Resources to support teaching and learning can be accessed from:

- SPHE Online Resource Portal <https://bit.ly/46L5K77>
- Curriculum Online Resources for Learning and Teaching SPHE/RSE <https://tinyurl.com/2r2nwabr>

In Senior Cycle, RSE, Gender Studies and Personal Safety are modules that are taught as part of the SPHE curriculum in TY, fifth and sixth year. The following offers a breakdown of learning objectives, topics and resources to support teaching and learning in each module.

Gender Studies (TY):

The objectives of this area of learning are to:

1. develop students' knowledge and understanding about the influence of gender on one's experience of health and wellbeing
2. explore personal experience of gender and gender stereotyping and the impact of these experiences on their lives
3. explore the differences and similarities between both genders in their approach to health and wellbeing
4. develop personal and interpersonal skills which support the development of respectful, dynamic relationships for both genders
5. examine the different influences on sex-role stereotyping and the implications for health and wellbeing
6. examine how different males and different females support or hinder their own and others' effective participation in education.

Topics

1. Gender stereotyping
2. Gender stereotyping in media
3. Coming out to self
4. Friendship
5. Coming out to others
6. Homophobic bullying

Resource: Growing UP Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender <https://shorturl.at/fjEW8>

RSE (TY, 5th, 6th)

The objectives of this area of learning are to:

1. explore personal thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings about relationships
2. develop an understanding of the different types of relationships, what is important in them and the skills to enhance relationships
3. promote empathy with others who have different cultural values, attitudes and beliefs about family, relationships, sex and sexuality
4. develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills in support of sexual and reproductive health
5. develop students' understanding of sexuality and sexual orientation and the importance of an inclusive environment
6. develop personal and interpersonal skills which support beginning, maintaining and ending relationships
7. develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict, and threats to personal safety

Topics

TY	5th	6th
Values in Relationships Wants and needs in relationships Consent and the Law Skills for Saying No Human Reproduction and Fertility The Menstrual Cycle Contraception STIs	Communicating Boundaries Decision Making Consent Communicating Consent Communicating about Contraception Condom Use	Intimacy and the development/stages of a relationship Influences on Relationships Pornography and influence on relationships Contraception STIs Ideal Future Self
Resources: B4U decide (Lessons 7±) https://tinyurl.com/65kssa5w Consent and tea https://tinyurl.com/3zsts54t Additional Resources to support teaching and learning: Relationships and Sex Education KS 3-4 Lesson Pack (PSHE Approved Resource) https://shorturl.at/ctM58 NSPCC Talk Relationships KS3-4 (PSHE Approved Resource) https://tinyurl.com/muy846zh TRUST Resource. Although this has been removed by the DE to be updated. Teachers in St Louis feel that there are still some good lessons within this resource and will continue to access these lessons and update these to be more reflective of the students in our school and the ever changing world they are growing up in.	Resources YES Project https://tinyurl.com/bde5thz2 B4U decide (Lessons 7±) https://tinyurl.com/65kssa5w Cycling Through Consent https://tinyurl.com/5ybpxkwb How To Put on a Condom NHS https://tinyurl.com/2fnezf3x Additional Resources to support teaching and learning: NSPCC Talk Relationships KS 3-4 (PSHE approved resource) https://tinyurl.com/muy846zh Consent Lesson Pack KS3-5 PSHE Association https://tinyurl.com/cecafxhr TRUST (See TY)	Resources YES Project https://tinyurl.com/bde5thz2 B4U decide (Lessons 7±) https://tinyurl.com/65kssa5w HSE 'What You Need to Know About Contraception' https://tinyurl.com/aeuv84wr HSE 'Your Guide to Sexually Transmitted Infections' https://tinyurl.com/5dmv6uks Additional Resources to support teaching and learning: NSPCC Talk Relationships KS 3-4 (PSHE approved resource) https://tinyurl.com/muy846zh Consent Lesson Pack KS3-5 PSHE Association https://tinyurl.com/cecafxhr Medway Public Health Directorate Relationships and Sex Education Packs KS4 (PSHE Approved resource) https://tinyurl.com/8e4k6j58

Personal Safety (5th)

Aims of Senior Cycle Personal Safety Resource Pack

Young people will:

- Identify causes and results of conflict, will understand the link between conflict and anger and develop strategies for managing anger in a non-violent manner
- Understand the link between anger and violence and will be able to identify ways of negotiating and managing conflict in a nonviolent manner
- Experience ways of negotiating and managing conflict in a non-violent manner
- Have a better understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and the supports available if required
- Have reflected on sexual harassment and appropriate responses to it
- Become aware of dating violence and rape and strategies to keep safe.

Topics

1. Negotiating and Managing Conflict in a non-violent Manner
2. Domestic Violence
3. Sexual Harassment
4. Coco's Law
5. Dating Violence and Rape

Resources

PDST SPHE Personal Safety Resource Pack <https://bit.ly/46KdPZv>

Coco's Law - <https://tinyurl.com/6wn7ec8h>

Managing Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship Behaviours KS4 Lesson Pack (PSHE Approved Resource) <https://bit.ly/3Sg5IVO>

1. Links to Other School Policies

- Child Protection Policy
- School Guidance Plan
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- ICT Policy
- Admissions policy
- SPHE Policy
- Religious Education Policy
- ICT?

7. **Implementation?**

The SPHE policy is available for all staff to view by its inclusion on the school website, within school policy

documents and in the SPHE department folder on the whole school Drive.

8. Review and Evaluated

The RSE policy will be reviewed in line with the school's programme of school development planning.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

