

Clonakilty Community College



RSE (Relationships, Sexuality Education) Programme and Policy

Draft	May 2024
Ratified by BOM	26/09/24

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of, and connects with, aspects of SPHE. It is of particular importance for young people at this stage of their lives as they reflect on questions such as ‘what kind of person am I?’ and ‘what matters for me in relationships?’.

As they continue to form their identity, they are making sense of life experiences, information, images and messages about relationships and sexuality from a range of informal sources such as their peers, family, the media and the online world. Having the opportunity to think about and discuss relationships, sexuality and healthy sexual expression within a safe classroom setting and with a skilled teacher is vitally important.

RSE is taught for the required 6 class periods (minimum) to all students across the school (as per Circular 0037/2010). This RSE Policy is supported by a separate SPHE Policy.

AIMS

The teaching of RSE in CCC aims to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will empower students to become healthy, resilient, responsible and empathetic young adults; nurture respectful and caring relationships; and prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life now and beyond school.

It ties in with our school Mission Statement: *‘As a college, we wish to empower our pupils to become independent and confident young adults enabling them to reach their full potential’.*

As a Cork ETB school, we also recognise and affirm the Core Values of care, respect, equality, community and excellence in education.

TIMETABLING and ORGANISATION

1 st Year	RSE taught in SPHE class after February mid-term
2 nd Year	RSE taught in SPHE class after February mid-term
3 rd Year	RSE taught in SPHE class after February mid-term
L1LP, L2LP	RSE taught in Personal Care, Living in the Community PLUs
TY	RSE taught in RE after February mid-term
5 th Year	RSE taught in RE/Guidance after February mid-term
6 th Year	RSE taught in RE/Guidance/PE after February mid-term
LCA	RSE taught in RE class after February mid-term

Parents of Junior Cycle students are informed of upcoming RSE lessons by letter in advance. The topics are outlined in the letter and links are sent to relevant documentation. See Appendix 2 attached. Parents of Senior Cycle students are informed by text of upcoming RSE lessons.

Parents have the right to opt their child out of RSE. To do so, they need to contact the school and collect their child at the time of the RSE classes. Supervision of students who opt out of RSE is not provided by the school.

At Senior Cycle, all students have a minimum of six lessons of RSE per year. This is planned collaboratively between the RE, Guidance and PE Departments. SPHE is not a timetabled subject at Senior Cycle in 2024-25.

TRAINING and RESOURCES

Where possible, teachers of SPHE attend Oide training for RSE. Teachers plan for RSE lessons collaboratively. Resources and strategies are shared between teachers on our Shared Drive.

All teachers have completed the most recent training in Child Protection and are aware of their roles as Mandated Persons.

External facilitators are generally not used in Junior Cycle RSE. This is in line with Department guidelines (Circular 0043/2018):

'The qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and she/he can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values, and behaviour in all aspects of wellbeing education.'

Textbooks are supplemented by NCCA and HSE Resources for the teaching of Junior Cycle RSE. See links below:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/hse-education-programme/junior-cycle-sphe-training-resources/rse/>

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/junior-cycle/short-courses/sphe/sphe-2016/sphe-rse-toolkit/>

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/junior-cycle/short-courses/sphe/sphe-2023/sphe-toolkit/resources-for-teaching-and-learning-in-sphe/>

RSE FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All students have a right to participate in meaningful and relevant learning experiences in all aspects of SPHE. Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in RSE lessons to encourage participation by students with additional needs. The SET teachers will collaborate with class teachers to support and supplement the work done in the classroom where necessary.

SPHE is delivered in the Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes through the following Priority Learning Units:

- Personal Care
- Living in the Community

However, as per the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2021: *"In the case of a student on a personalised L2LP in a school where students are also studying a Level 3 junior cycle Programme, it is anticipated that much of their learning in PE, SPHE, CSPE and guidance-related learning will be done with their peers"*. This is facilitated where possible.

See the SPHE Subject Plan for examples of ways AEN students are accommodated in SPHE classes.

APPENDIX 1 CURRICULUM

RSE in JUNIOR CYCLE

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is one of the four strands of the Junior Cycle SPHE Specification.

For **current 1st Years and 2nd Years (2024-25)**, it is Strand 3 of the revised 2023 SPHE Specification.

Strand 3: Relationships and sexuality

This strand 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.

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Junior Cycle
Specification
Social, Personal
and Health Education

Strand 3: Relationships and sexuality

Awareness

Dialogue

Reflection and action

Students should be able to:

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

For **current 3rd Years (2024-25)**, RSE is Strand 3 of the 2016 SPHE Specification.

Strand 3: Team up

This strand focuses on students learning about important relationships in their lives and building relationship skills.

Strand 3: Team up

ation

Learning outcomes	
Students learn about	Students should be able to
Having a friend and being a friend	3.1 establish what young people value in different relationships and how this changes over time
	3.2 evaluate attitudes, skills and values that help to make, maintain and end friendships respectfully
	3.3 recognise their capacity to extend and receive friendship
The relationship spectrum	3.4 explain the different influences on relationships and levels of intimacy
	3.5 analyse relationship difficulties experienced by young people
Sexuality, gender identity and sexual health	3.6 describe fertility, conception, pre-natal development and birth, and the particular health considerations for each
	3.7 explain what it means to take care of their sexual health
	3.8 demonstrate assertive communication skills in support of responsible, informed decision-making about relationships and sexual health that are age and developmentally appropriate
	3.9 reflect on the personal and social dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity
Media influence on relationships and sexuality	3.10 critically analyse the use of sexual imagery and gender stereotyping in various forms of media
	3.11 critique the influence of media on their understanding of sexuality and sexual health

RSE in SENIOR CYCLE

4 th Yr	5 th Yr	6 th Yr
Decision Making	Development of Healthy Relationships	Respectful communication in a relationship
Responsibility	STIs	Parenting & Supports
Generation Gap	Contraception	Adoption & Foster Care
Mindset	Fertilisation	Pornography
Consent & the Law	Explore the beginning of life	Consent
	Consent	

APPENDIX 2 LETTERS TO PARENTS

1st YEAR

Dear Parents,

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a core part of the Junior Cycle SPHE programme. It forms Strand 3 of the new SPHE specification which was rolled out nationally for all 1st Years in September 2023.

We will be teaching the following topics to 1st Year students after February midterm, over a period of approximately 4 weeks:

- What is RSE?
- Gender Stereotypes
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation
- What makes a family
- Healthy relationships
- Changes in adolescence
- Human reproduction – the journey of the egg and sperm

During this period, your son/daughter may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have. The module will begin during the week of 19th February 2024.

For more information on the three-year SPHE course, please click on this link:

https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/ca8f8975-50ca-4dc3-bba5-a04e25b4f978/JC_SPHE_Short_Course_2023.pdf

The NCCA has also published this information leaflet for parents: <https://ncca.ie/media/6217/jc-sphe-information-for-parents-en.pdf>

If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the school.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator

2nd YEAR

Dear Parents,

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a core part of the Junior Cycle SPHE programme.

We will be teaching the following topics to 2nd Year students after February midterm, over a period of approximately four weeks:

- Being an adolescent
- The changing nature of friendship
- Peer pressure
- Managing relationships
- Health and personal safety
- From conception to birth
- Sexuality, sexuality identity and sexual orientation

During this period, your son/daughter may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have. The module will begin during the week of 19th February 2024.

For more information on the three-year SPHE course, please click on this link:

[https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/ca8f8975-50ca-4dc3-bba5-a04e25b4f978/JC SPHE Short Course 2023.pdf](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/ca8f8975-50ca-4dc3-bba5-a04e25b4f978/JC_SPHE_Short_Course_2023.pdf)

The NCCA has also published this information leaflet for parents: <https://ncca.ie/media/6217/jc-sphe-information-for-parents-en.pdf>

If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the school.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator

3rd YEAR

Dear Parents,

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a core part of the Junior Cycle SPHE programme.

We will be teaching the following topics to 3rd Year students after February midterm, over a period of approximately six weeks:

- The adolescent stages of human growth and development
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Respect, rights and responsibilities
- Conflict and breaking up
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Sexting
- Consent
- Media influences on relationships and sexuality

During this period, your son/daughter may wish to talk about the topics raised in class and you are best placed to address any concerns they may have. The module will begin during the week of 19th February 2024.

For more information on the three-year SPHE course (2016 Specification), please click on this link: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-Cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE/>

If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the school.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

SPHE Co-ordinator