



# **Coláiste Nano Nagle**

## **RSE Policy**

**2024-2025**

## **Rationale**

Section 1.5.1 of the Child Protection Procedures states, “All post-primary schools are also required to have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at senior cycle.”

The Board of Management recognises their responsibility to ensure that RSE programme is taught throughout junior and senior cycle. All teachers must be aware of the RSE policy.

## **Coláiste Nano Nagle Ethos**

Our School is a Christian community which welcomes students in the tradition of Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Order. A primary aim of our school is the pursuit of academic excellence. We seek to develop the full potential of each person; intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, physical, and creative. To achieve this the school strives to provide an educational environment suited to the needs of everyone, within the demands of a changing world.

This school is ideally placed in the context of a community where Christian values are accepted and the dignity of persons respected. This community exists to promote the total education; spiritual, intellectual, creative, emotional, physical, and social of the students in its care and to provide them with the requisite skills, both academic and technical that will prepare them for their future roles in life.

## **Definition of RSE**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships, and intimacy. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults, and the media.

Building on the work done in primary school, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) at post-primary level seeks to provide opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that will enable them to think and act in a moral, caring, and responsible way.

## **RSE Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

- To help young people 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 relationship with others.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.
- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual, and social framework.
- To enable students to make informed choices.

## Linked to SPHE:

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment.
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence.
- To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision making.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
- To promote physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being.

With such support, students may be enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and others. There is a growing recognition that RSE and SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) (delivered to our junior cycle and transition year students) are as important as any other area of the curriculum.

## Objectives

RSE should enable the students to:

1. Explore personal thoughts, values, attitudes, and feelings about relationships.
2. Develop an understanding of the several types of relationships, what is important in them and the skills to enhance relationships.
3. Promote empathy with others who have diverse cultural values, attitudes and beliefs about family, relationships, sex, and sexuality.
4. Develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills in support of sexual 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.

RSE connects closely to Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) that provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves

and to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development.

Coláiste Nano Nagle wants them 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 respect for difference between individuals.
- Understand human physiology with reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility, and sexually transmitted infections.
- Understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex role stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality.
- Value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.

### **SPHE, RSE and the School Ethos**

The aims of RSE and SPHE curriculum contribute to the overall ethos of Coláiste Nano Nagle in promoting the holistic development of our students.

### **Class Organisation and Timetabling**

#### **Junior Cycle**

A dedicated Wellbeing curriculum in junior cycle aims to ensure that all students engage in important learning about wellbeing through key curriculum areas. Up to 400 hours will be available for learning in the area of Wellbeing in junior cycle.

The SPHE short course has been designed for approximately 100 hours of Junior Cycle student engagement.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year – two SPHE classes per week.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year – two SPHE classes per week.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year – one SPHE class per week.

### **Transition Year**

As part of the transition year curriculum in Coláiste Nano Nagle students have one SPHE class per week.

### **Senior Cycle**

SPHE is currently not a timetabled class for 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Year students in 2023-2024, however, all senior cycle students do receive six RSE sessions. This takes place as an RSE day for senior cycle students.

Fifth Year Students: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023

5LCA – This is completed during Social Education Classes in December and January

Sixth Year Students: 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023

### **Child Protection**

Child Protection Procedures 2.1.6 state “In all cases where a school becomes aware of underage sexual intercourse the school should take appropriate steps to inform the child’s parents.” The age for consent is 17 for boys and girls for heterosexual and homosexual sex. All students of RSE are made aware of the limits to confidentiality that should a teacher become aware that a student is at risk they are obliged to pass this information on to the DLP (Designated Liaison Person).

## Students with Special Education Needs

### Three Tier Support Structure

Teachers are aware that there is now a three-tier support structure within the school that ensures there is support for all at classroom level.

For learning activities to be meaningful, relevant, and achievable for all students, it is important that the teacher find ways to respond to students' diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies. The following strategies may be used:

- Ensuring that the objectives are realistic for students and ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning.
  - Pre-teaching concepts by the resource teacher where applicable.
  - Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups.
  - Spending more time on tasks and organising the learning task into small stages.
  - Ensuring that language is pitched at the student's level of understanding and does not hinder understanding of the activity.
  - Using task analysis, outline the steps to be learned/completed in any given task.
  - Posing key questions to guide students through the different stages/processes and to assist in self-direction and correction.
  - Teacher to check for understanding.
  - Using graphic symbols as reminders to assist students in understanding the sequence/steps in any given task/problem.
  - Modelling task analysis by talking through the steps of a task as it is being done
  - Having short and varied tasks.
  - Creating a learning environment using concrete and where possible everyday materials.
  - Displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.
- Role play would be emphasized here as a learning tool where appropriate for scenarios of acting out situations such as an understanding of 'public' and 'private' and 'safe' and 'unsafe' situations.

## Content and Teaching Methodologies

Through participation in the SPHE Programme the student will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of experiences. These issues will be addressed in ten modules. The emphasis will be on building skills, understanding, attitudes and values important in all these areas.

## Themes of RSE at Post-Primary Level:

### 1. Human growth and development

- (Fertility/reproductive organs/family planning/pregnancy/development of foetus/STIs)

### 2. Human sexuality

- (Gender/sexual orientation/attitudes and values/making choices/sexual harassment and abuse and online sexual exploitation)

### 3. Human Relationships

- (Peer Pressure/conflict resolution/loving relationships/marriage and commitment/importance of family life and consent)

## Learning in RSE

RSE will incorporate the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of the lives of young people.

Using the ASK model to provide students with opportunities to develop their:

- Attitudes and Values.
- Skills.
- Knowledge.

Teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with the emphasis on discussion, reflection, and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be student centred and appropriate to the age and development of the student. The class atmosphere must be one of respect and privacy of the individual teacher and student hallmarked by sensitivity and care; where the student feels that they are participants in a safe environment. A respectful code of conduct is expected from all participants. Every class group establishes ground rules which are referred to throughout the workshops.

### Teaching Methodologies may include:

- Group Discussion.
- Brainstorming.
- Role Play.
- Case Studies.
- Artwork.
- Games – Icebreakers.
- Games – simulations.
- Guest Speakers.
- Debates.
- Project Work.
- Situation Cards.
- Visualisation.
- Visitors.

The Department of Education and Skills recognises that each school has flexibility to plan the RSE Programme in harmony with the students' needs and school's resources. Coláiste Nano Nagle realises its obligation to provide an RSE programme for its students and that no aspect of the programme can be omitted on the grounds of a schools' ethos taught within a framework of values and morality consistent with its ethos.

### Cross Curricular Links

The SPHE establishes links with any subject areas which will support RSE.



## Resources

### Supports for Teachers

- DES Syllabus and Guidelines.
- SPHE.ie.
- HSE Resources. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/hse-education-programme/junior-cycle-sphe-training-resources/>
- Webwise – Lockers. <https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/resources/>
- Webwise – Be in CTRL. <https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/resources/>
- Before You Decide. <https://b4udecide.ie/>
- Belong to. <https://www.belongto.org/>
- ALERT.
- My Friends Youth.
- Body Whys.
- Teaching about consent at key stages 3 and 4 [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk) (Consent).
- PowerPoints and other resources on SharePoint.

### Staff development and subject development

Professional development is an integral part of this programme. Management is responsible for responding to the relevant expressed and perceived training needs of RSE teachers and whole staff.

### Participation

It is a legal requirement of schools to provide RSE to students at Junior and Senior Cycle. SPHE at Junior Cycle and RSE at Senior Cycle (when relevant) is a core curricular subject. Each parent has a right to withdraw their child from some or all RSE classes, but parents are encouraged to provide alternative RSE at home. The school will respect this choice as their right. It will be necessary for parents opting out of RSE to make suitable arrangements with the school management for the welfare of their child at these times. Where students are withdrawn for RSE the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them

by other students. A letter will be sent home to parents prior to the beginning of RSE module explaining the content to them.

### **Sensitive Issues**

Group discussion will be of a general nature, and will not be personally directed at any person, in accordance with the agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by the class teacher, or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. Should a teacher be concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal.

The teacher has the responsibility to set clear boundaries to ensure the classroom is a safe place for everyone, including themselves. While there are no definitive guidelines, the teacher should bear the following in mind when making decisions about where to set limits:

- Age of student.
- School ethos.
- Schools' RSE policy.
- RSE curriculum guidelines.

### **Confidentiality**

While an atmosphere of trust is a pre-requisite of RSE class, the following limits of confidentiality must be observed. These limits are:

- Child abuse-physical, emotional, sexual, neglect.
- Intention to harm self or others.
- Substance misuse.
- Underage sexual intercourse.

Any disclosure will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (Ms Sinéad Moloney, Principal) in compliance with the Child Protection Policy.

RSE teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the programme.

### **Visitors**

Visiting speakers can complement and support the RSE Programme.

Teachers inviting these speakers must keep the visit in line with Circular 0043/2018.

## Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting

Every junior cycle and TY student has an SPHE folder which will include their RSE body of work. The folder contains for example worksheets, handouts, workbooks. At the end of every lesson every student records a short reflection.

## Review and Evaluation

The RSE course is never static and must be examined and evaluated regularly and adapted to the needs of the students. The RSE programmes and policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the RSE and SPHE team.

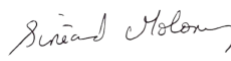
This policy was reviewed by the Parent's on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

This policy was reviewed by the Student Council on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023

This policy was reviewed by Teachers on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024

Signed:   
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:   
(Principal)

Date: 01/02/2024

Date:01/02/2024

Date of next review: 01/02/2026

## Dissemination and Publication

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website or is readily available to parents and pupils on request. A copy will be provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and CEIST if requested.

