

RSE Policy

# Ashbourne CNS

## RSE Policy



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## RSE Policy

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## RSE Policy

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## RSE Policy

### 1. Overview

At Ashbourne CNS we are committed to our core values of courage, creativity, collaboration and care. Our school celebrates diversity of belief, language and cultural traditions and we all learn to respect, trust and encourage each other every day. We listen to each other and negotiate our differences. This makes it easy for us accept, respect and include every person for who they are.

‘Learning is the Heart of our Community’ and we are dedicated to the holistic development of every child. Our practice is informed by Glasser’s Caring Habits, Growth Mindset and a Restorative approach. By focusing on inter and intra-personal skills we seek to enhance relationships in our community and with the community. This holistic approach acknowledges that ‘learning takes place in a relationship’ and seeks to help children develop the resilience, self-esteem and relationships needed to overcome the many challenges on the road to adulthood.

We combine socio-cultural building blocks with high-quality approaches to teaching and learning in order to develop each child’s academic, social, moral, emotional, spiritual and creative capabilities. Thus, enabling them to reach their full potential and play an active part in the local community and wider civic society.

Education is a partnership, and at Ashbourne CNS experienced teaching professionals, students and parents work together with members of the wider community in a welcoming educational environment which is safe, happy, stimulating, inclusive and reflective of the diverse modern society in which we live.

At Ashbourne CNS we seek to provide a safe physical, psychological and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, background or ability. We promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We seek to prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of social justice.

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### 1.1 Clarification of Key Terms used in this policy

LMETB: Louth Meath Education and Training Board

CNS: Community National School

SNA: Special Needs Assistant

RSE: Relationship and Sexuality Education

SPHE: Social Personal and Health Education

NCCA: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

CPD: Continuous Professional Development

PDST: Professional Development Service for Teachers

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy, in accordance with the provisions of the Child Care Act (1991), Education Act (1998), Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the revised 'Primary School Curriculum Guidelines' (1999), details the aims and the content of the agreed programme for the provision and the delivery of 'Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) in Ashbourne CNS.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to members of the Board of Management, teachers, SNAs, pupils and parents in Ashbourne CNS.

### 4. Policy

#### 4.1 Definition of RSE

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work will be based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others and providing them with appropriate information. RSE also aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring, respectful and responsible way.

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### 4.2 Relationship that RSE has to SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

SPHE:

- Is a lifelong process and consequently RSE is a continual process throughout primary school and is not confined to once off inputs or lessons;
- Is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. RSE education should include an input from all, and collaboration can be fostered through the teaching and delivery of materials;
- Is a generic approach. It is not so much about the specific content of RSE but rather the relationship with a child's skills, attitudes, values and understanding relevant to a range of social, personal and health issues;
- Is based on the needs of the child, therefore RSE education should prioritise the needs of the child and his/her environment, with appropriate adaptations made within the curriculum to suit individual requirements and individual school situations;
- Is spiral in nature. RSE is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in Ashbourne CNS, this will provide opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning. This allows for issues and topics to be explored and treated in a manner appropriate to the children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity;
- Engages children to be involved in activity-based learning. RSE should provide a range of learning opportunities that include working together, learning about one's own feelings and those of others, developing a sense of empathy and experiencing and supporting healthy relationships.

Through SPHE and RSE, members of the Ashbourne CNS should be enabled to enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing through;

- A sense of identity
- A sense of purpose
- A sense of belonging

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- A sense of security
- A sense of competence.

In an ever-changing world, RSE encourages children through consistent messages that are taught in line with SPHE. Ashbourne CNS has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free of bias and that issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with (SPHE Teacher guidelines, p25). In learning about cultures and traditions of others, children can develop a sense of respect for difference and appreciate the contribution that such has to offer. It will encourage children to be inclusive with each other, challenge prejudice and learn how to live in an intercultural society.

### 4.3 What the School Currently Provides

- Multi-Belief and Values Education taught through Goodness Me! Goodness You! (Curriculum for Community National Schools)
- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration and explicit lessons)
- Use of the RSE Manuals (PDST) and Busy Bodies (HSE) resources
- Stay Safe Programme (PDST)
- Walk Tall Programme (PDST)
- Webwise resources (PDST)
- All Together Now (PDST) – Homophobic and Transphobic bullying lessons
- RESPECT (INTO) Guidelines (suggested approaches to teaching about different families)
- Adapted resources for SEN from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

The teachers will cover all aspects of RSE with their classes every second year. The mandatory Stay Safe programme is taught in the year that RSE is not being taught. Busy Bodies will be taught to children in sixth class every year.

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### 4.4 Aims of the RSE Programme

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child
- To help the child to develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral and social framework
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction at age-appropriate levels
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life at age-appropriate levels
- To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality and sexual identity of oneself and others while growing and developing.

### 4.5 Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE in Ashbourne CNS

The SPHE curriculum will be followed and will be taught from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school and the ethos of the patron, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy. Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level each year as set out in the curriculum, in accordance with the ethos of the school, and utilising the RSE manuals to complement their teaching. Teachers will remain impartial in the delivery of RSE lessons and will only answer questions based on the content of programme for that year or below e.g. they will not answer questions that are unsuitable for the age or class level of the pupils.

The management of RSE is as follows:

- The strand Growing and Changing is taught in Junior Infants, First, Fourth and Sixth Class while the strand Taking Care of my Body is taught in Senior Infants, Second, Third and Fifth Class.
- Sensitive lessons are covered as part of the broad topic “As I grow I change” in 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> classes. These lessons are gender specific and age appropriate and will be taught separately. Both groups will be taught the same information e.g. what happens to the female and male bodies during puberty. The principal will engage with any child who presents as non-binary and in consultation with their parents will place the child



appropriately. This will be done on a case-by-case basis and take into account the interests of all children in the class.

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- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

#### 4.6 Parental Involvement

- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum and may speak with the Principal/class teacher if they have any concerns at any time during the year. The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children about growing and changing.
- Parents will be informed in advance of the programme content. They will also be informed in advance of the formal lessons on the sensitive areas of the programme e.g. puberty, sexual intercourse.
- Parents are responsible for informing themselves about the programme content, to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and to discuss areas covered in school in RSE/ SPHE with their children. Information on content of lessons can be found at <https://www.pdst.ie/walktall> or at school.
- Parents are requested to inform teachers of special family situations. These will be dealt with in confidence.
- If a parent has a particular concern/ issue in relation to the teachings of the RSE programme, they are encouraged to discuss same with Principal/class teacher.
- Following discussion with Principal, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be recorded on Aladdin. Every effort will be made by teachers to organise sensitive lessons to be taught at the end of the day so that parents may collect children from school prior to sensitive lessons being taught.
- It is the responsibility of the parents, as primary educators, to teach their child about these sensitive lessons if they are withdrawn.

- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons e.g. what they may hear on yard.

4.7 Organisation and Curriculum Planning

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from infants to 6th class. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

Strand: Myself

Strand Unit: Growing and changing

Taking care of my body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

1) The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and compliment the aims and objectives of RSE

- Friendship
- Self-identity
- Family
- Self-esteem
- Growing up

2) The second section will deal with any sensitive / specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are in bold.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Topics covered up to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping safe</li> <li>• <b>Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)</b></li> <li>• Making age-appropriate choices</li> <li>• Appreciating the variety of family types and the variety of family life that exists in our school and community</li> </ul> | <p>Topics covered from 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bodily changes</li> <li>• Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise</li> <li>• Keeping safe</li> <li>• Expressing feelings</li> <li>• Appreciating the variety of family types within our school and</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising and expressing feelings</li> <li>• Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep</li> <li>• Expressing opinions and listening to others</li> <li>• <b>Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/ Senior Infants)</b></li> <li>• <b>Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd).</b></li> </ul> | <p>community and how these family relationships shape us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>• Making healthy and responsible decisions</li> <li>• Forming friendships</li> <li>• <b>Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (3rd, 4th class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Introduction to puberty and changes (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6th Class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th and 6th class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th class).</b></li> </ul> |
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#### 4.8 Approaches and Methodologies

When implementing the programme, staff at Ashbourne CNS will display respect for and sensitivity towards the different cultural and family backgrounds experienced by the children while maintaining responsibility to deliver the programme fully. The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times. The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants

to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral RSE Policy curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals). The materials taught will reflect the needs of the children.

The RSE curriculum will be taught through:

- stories and poems
- classroom discussion
- group work
- games
- art activities
- reflection
- circle time

#### 4.8 Differentiation

Teachers will use assessment and professional judgment to differentiate the programme and content to suit the needs of the class.

Some techniques used:

- ensuring that objectives are realistic for the students
- ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups and spending more time on tasks
- organising the learning task into small stages and ensuring that the language used is pitched at the student's level of understanding
- understanding of the activity using task analysis, outlining 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

- having short and varied tasks **Creating** a learning environment through the use of concrete, and where possible every day materials, and by displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.

Sometimes the stage of development in a class can vary widely and strategies to differentiate in class can support gradual and appropriate teaching.

- group work and discussion
- higher and lower order questioning in groups
- moderated whole class discussions through use of a Question Box.

Teachers can only answer questions that are age appropriate and relevant to the curriculum. For any questions that are not based on the curriculum, pupils will be advised to speak to their parents.

#### 4.9 Students with Special Educational Needs

- Taking into account student's cognitive, social and emotional development and their class level (4th, 5th & 6th Class), instruction on the sensitive aspects of RSE, will be based on individual needs and decided together by parents, mainstream teachers and support teachers during the child's School Support Plus meeting. The support and resource teachers will aid the mainstream teacher with the facilitation of appropriate and agreed RSE provision for the child with SEN. Careful consideration will be given to the NCCA Guidelines for Moderate and Severe and Profound General Learning Disabilities for RSE provision.
- There will be ongoing assessment of the programme through observation by and feedback from parents, teachers and pupils.

#### 4.10 Language

SPHE curriculum provides a context in which children are given opportunities to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to SPHE. Children should become aware of the power and influence of language. When used positively, language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner can hurt, diminish and demean. Children need to recognise and become

sensitive to the ways in which they use language in their relationship and their everyday interactions. Language is a powerful tool and should be used with respect and integrity for the dignity of each person.

There are two areas where the use of language is applied in RSE lessons;

- The formal use and teaching of language generally throughout the school
- The use of language in discussion through your formal RSE lessons
- Appropriate vocabulary in formal teaching
- Relating to sexuality, growing up, physical changes, parts of the body and feelings will be used, the use of slang will be discouraged
- Anatomical terms and language introduced is consistent with RSE Materials Books.

#### 4.11 Provision of Ongoing Support

- Opportunities provided by Navan Education and Support Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials
- Support from a PDST Advisor
- Promotion and communication of resources available from [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 5.1 Parents

Parents are responsible for informing themselves about the curriculum content being taught in RSE lessons, teaching their children about sexual relationships and sexual identity if they their children are withdrawn from programme and ensuring their children are respectful towards difference and diversity within Irish society.

#### 5.2 Pupils

Students are responsible for being respectful towards the sexuality and sexual identity of oneself and others and for upholding the values of the school and the patron body.

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### 5.3 Ashbourne CNS Staff

Ashbourne CNS staff members will read and familiarise themselves with all aspects of the RSE Policy.

### 5.4 Principal

Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and is accountable to the BoM for the implementation of the RSE Policy.

### 5.5 Board of Management

The Board is responsible for ratification of the policy.

Chairperson of the Board on the date of its ratification by the Board signs the policy document.

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed after every two years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise

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