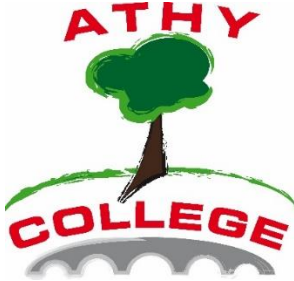


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Athy College Kildare

RSE Policy

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Approval Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Approval Date: _____

MISSION STATEMENT

In a caring school we are dedicated to fostering educational excellence empowering all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, we openly respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of each individual'.

ETHOS

Athy College is a caring school. The staff are dedicated to fostering educational excellence and earnestly endeavour to empower all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, the staff of Athy College respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of everyone.

Athy College defines education as the on-going development of all students so that they may realise their true and best selves. The college motto is “Fas agus Foghlaim” (Lifelong Learning).

From the outset students are taught they are partners in their own education. The school aims to prepare students for public examinations, in an age when academic qualifications are indispensable for admission to further education and entry into employment. The school recognises that its students are of varying cultural and social backgrounds and have a wide variety of aspirations and abilities.

The school embraces the vital role that parents, and guardians play in the overall education for their children. The school also recognises the importance of the community in which the student lives. For this reason, every effort is made to ensure that the student is aware of his/her role in the community and is encouraged to be positively involved in the wider community.

RATIONALE

This RSE Policy is important in the development of the whole person, empowered to lead effective lives in the wider society. The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent/guardian is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy.

This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which values the gifts and talents of students in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect. The school's role in the development of young people, supports and is enriched by the active participation of teachers and parents / guardians in many aspects of students' lives.

SCOPE

This document sets out the policy of Athy College in relation to the Relationships and Sexuality Education provided to our students. As a school, we try to create an atmosphere of care and concern within which each student is cared for and feels cared for, and where each student can feel safe and valued as he / she grows to maturity.

DEFINITION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process where a person may acquire knowledge and understanding to develop attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships, and intimacy. This education is delivered by parents, teachers, peers, adults, and the media. Children and young people learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner.

RSE equips young people with information and skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values experienced today, and so make positive, responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives. In the school setting RSE will be taught in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education. RSE will be taught during Ethics classes at senior cycle also.

RELATIONSHIP OF RSE TO OUR SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Athy College is committed to providing the best holistic education possible for all our students, by providing a caring learning environment where all aspects of the student are valued and nurtured.

We aim to provide an education for all students which will embrace their full human development: personal, academic, physical, moral and spiritual. Relationships and Sexuality Education encompasses the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy, contributing towards the full human development of the student.

As outlined by the Department of Education and Skills in Circular 0037-2010, no aspect of the RSE programme including STI's, family planning, 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.

The policy will apply to school staff, students, board of management, parents /guardians, visiting speakers and external facilitators. The policy will apply to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality. Discussion about relationships and sexuality also takes place in classes other than SPHE/ RSE; it is therefore important that all teachers are familiar with the RSE policy.

AIMS OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Our aims of Relationships and Sexuality Education within Athy College are:

- to provide students with education on relationships and sexuality which encourages self-respect and respect for others
- to provide students with the information required to make informed decisions regarding their own behaviour as adolescents and, later, as adults.
- To help pupils 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 pupils to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy of the school
- To provide opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

During the R.S.E. programme, our students will be given the opportunity to:

- gather information on all kinds of relationships, child to parent, parent to parent, teacher to student, adult to child, friend to friend, boyfriend to girlfriend, husband to wife, etc.
- learn the skills that will enable them to critically reflect on and evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values they may encounter in today's world.
- develop their self-esteem and social confidence so that they can deal maturely with the questions, pressures, opportunities and responsibilities presented by life itself.
- develop both morally and spiritually and to cultivate a respect and tolerance for the beliefs and values of others.

The overall aim of R.S.E. is to contribute to the full development of the human person, a life-long process in itself. We hope through this programme to enrich all students' lives by helping them to put a meaningful balance on all aspects of the human person, the biological, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and moral dimensions. The overall aims of the programme are to be met in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the students.

THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF RSE IN ATHY COLLEGE

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal. All classes in the school will be taught RSE. A parent / guardian who has concerns about any aspect of R.S.E. should discuss the matter with the relevant teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. If the parent / guardian wishes to withdraw his / her son / daughter from the programme, those wishes will be respected and accommodated.

The RSE programme will, in general, be drawn up by the teachers of R.S.E. and will be in line with the NCCA curriculum and guidelines and our school's R.S.E. policy. The specific topics taught to each class will depend on the age and maturity of the students involved and will be carefully decided upon by the subject teacher.

As R.S.E. is a specialised subject, a small group of specially trained teachers, who are both competent and willing to teach it, will take responsibility for the programme. The R.S.E. programme will be taught using a wide variety of teaching methodologies and resources.

PROVISION OF TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The SPHE and RSE coordinators ensure the delivery of a relevant and appropriate RSE programme in Athy College, in conjunction with the school's Wellbeing programme.

In Junior Cycle the RSE program is delivered to the class by their SPHE teacher. The SPHE syllabus includes a full module on RSE: other subjects at Junior Cycle level, such as Science, Religious Education and Home Economics also cover material important to RSE.

In the Senior Cycle Programme, RSE is delivered to the class by their Religious Education teacher. In the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme, RSE is delivered to students as part of the subject Social Education as well as in Religious Education class.

INCLUSION OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

It is recognized by the school that parents/ guardians are the primary educators of children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important.

Information is provided for parents/guardians about the content and the timing of the RSE module prior to its delivery in an academic year. Informing parents guardians of when these topics are being taught in school enables them to discuss any further issues at home. The RSE policy is available to download on the school's website for parents and guardians.

OFFERING ADVICE

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. Teachers may provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. their doctor or other suitable agency. Advice offered should not be directive and should be appropriate to the age of the pupil.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Designated Liaison person in the school, the Principal. The Principal will decide whether to inform the parents and or appropriate authorities and may arrange for an appropriate intervention / counselling.

- Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality.
- Pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal and possibly to parents if the Principal decides that it is in the best interests of the pupil to notify parents;

The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools state in 4.1.1. and 4.2.1.

4.1.1. If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he /she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Designated Liaison Person. The need for confidentiality at all times, as previously referred to in Chapter 1 Paragraph 1.2 of these guidelines, should be borne in mind. The support of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

4.2.1 If the Designated Liaison Person is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation he /she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.

All personal in the school and other individuals connected to the school can access and refer to the child safeguarding statement in the school to follow the procedures

WITHDRAWING STUDENTS FROM THE RSE PROGRAMME

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from sensitive aspects of RSE — parents will always be provided with a full copy of this policy following a request to do so.

Issues such as over population and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and Religious Education. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the RSE Programme.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that LGBTI+ will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning LGBTI+ is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussion of LGBTI+ should be appropriate to the age of the pupils.

TIMETABLING OF RSE/ SPHE/ETHICS CLASSES

SPHE is timetabled for all Junior Cycle classes for one period per week. In the Senior Cycle Programme all classes are timetabled for 2 class periods of Religious Education per week. The RSE module is covered as part of this subject and is also covered in the subjects Biology and Home Economics. For Leaving Certificate Applied Students, RSE also forms part of the subject, Social Education.

SPHE and Religious Education are taught in students' base classes. Boys and girls are taught together for all aspects of RSE unless there is a specific request otherwise from either group.

VISITING SPEAKERS

The RSE Program is mainly delivered by the staff of the school. When visiting speakers are invited to speak to the students the relevant areas of the RSE Policy and the SPHE Visitor Guidelines are communicated to the speaker verbally. If necessary, a copy of the policy and guidelines will be given to the speaker.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL 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. The three-tier structure is School Support for All; School Support for Some and School Support Plus for a Few.

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.

In consultation with the JCSP Coordinator and the SEN Coordinator the following strategies will 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
- Co teaching or withdrawal of students with SEN for pre-teaching/reteaching concepts
- 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 students 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 through the use of 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.
- Meet with students individually or in a group to check understanding and unpack any issues that may arise for the student(s).
- Teacher responsible for assessing/monitoring student progress. An example method: gather samples of work and refer to SEN Coordinator for review

ONGOING SUPPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

TRAINING

All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. The skills acquired in general teaching apply also to health education. Some teachers have expert training in the specific areas of health, relationships and sexuality education and will be encouraged to train other teachers.

The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field, bearing in mind the overall budgetary framework and the need for the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the school to continue with as little disturbance as possible.

REVIEW

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the RSE Programme are:

- pupil feedback;
- staff review and feedback:
- parental feedback.

RESOURCES

Social, Personal and Health Education Resource Material for Relationships and Sexuality Education for Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle booklet .

- TRUST- Teaching Relationships, Understanding Sexuality
- Teaching let.
- TRUST DVD
- B4uDecide.ie
- [Relationship Sexuality Education: RSE - Post-Primary](#)
- Minding Me 1,2,3 for Junior Cycle

LINKS TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES AND NATIONWIDE SUPPORTS

It is imperative that all school policies are consistent with one another and cohesive within the framework of the overall school plan.

The RSE policy is developed in this context and takes into consideration the following policies.

- Well-being policy
- Guidance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Guidelines - Tusla
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- SPHE Policy

Teachers of our RSE programme will be informed of the content, and the timing of the delivery of RSE, and in so far as possible. RSE will be taught in a cross-curricular way.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What we do if a request for withdrawal from the RSE programme is made by a parent:

We discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent and if appropriate attempt to reassure them (initially such discussion takes place at a meeting with the Year Head and SPHE Co-ordinator. The Principal may become involved if necessary).

We consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents - care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the RSE programme and the entitlement of the other pupils. e.g. it may be appropriate and desirable to have single sex classes for some sections of the RSE programme.

We attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education.

We also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers. We offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.