



**Coláiste na Carráige**

**Relationship and  
Sexuality Education  
Policy**

## **1. School**

Coláiste na Carraige, Carrick, Co. Donegal is a co-educational vocational school.

## **2. School Mission Statement**

Coláiste na Carraige welcomes all members of the community and strives for excellence in delivering holistic educational services and supports based on the principles of respect, co-operation and partnership.

## **3. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a developmental process, through experiential learning, in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

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.

## **4. Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education**

The Draft Guidelines for RSE (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that Social, Personal and Health Education is "spiral and developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology". The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern and achieves this through the schools delivery of ten modules of RSE at Junior Cert level. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in one's self and one's relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills – all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme. Page 8 of the Child Protection procedures as issued from the Department of Education and Skills states that it is mandatory for schools to deliver SPHE to all classes up to Junior Certificate level and RSE through to Leaving Certificate

## **5. Aims of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme**

The aims of our RSE programme are as follows:

- (i) To foster a culture of respect within the school community that will transfer into the wider community as the students' progress through their education.
- (ii) To help students develop informed attitudes and decisions towards sexual matters.
- (iii) To help pupils understand and develop friendships and relationships.
- (iv) To promote an understanding of sexual matters.
- (v) To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others.
- (vi) To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.

## **6. Current Provision of SPHE/RSE**

The current provision of SPHE in Coláiste na Carraige is as follows;

- ◆ All Junior Certificate classes have one SPHE class per week which includes the relevant RSE modules.
- ◆ Transition Years have one SPHE class per week.
- ◆ Senior classes have no provision for SPHE.
- ◆ RSE will be delivered to all senior cycle students during the schools provision of Religious Education within the senior cycle.

## **7. Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE**

Social, Personal and Health Education and Relationships and Sexuality Education are an integral part of the pastoral care ethos of our school.

There is an awareness of the differing views and sensitivities that could arise regarding a RSE programme and our concern would be to treat these with respect.

Parents are the primary educators of their children and their role in relationships and sexuality education is seen by the school as very important.

Representatives of the Parents' Association shall be consulted during the policy development and review.

Parents shall be encouraged to support the work of the programme.

## **Informing Parents**

Parents will be informed about the themes that will be covered in RSE by letter at the beginning of the Junior Cert Cycle and again at the beginning of the Senior Cycle.

Individual parents have the right to withdraw their child from the programme and if they choose to do this they must inform the school in writing. Any issues or concerns that parents may have will be dealt with in an open and understanding way.

The Relationships and Sexuality Education programme shall primarily be taught by teachers within the school. Visiting speakers may be used to enhance the quality of the programme in addition to the planned programme of Relationships and Sexuality Education.

## **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. 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.

## **Explicit Questions**

It is unlikely to be appropriate to deal with a pupil's explicit questions in front of the whole class. In practice this means that teachers should say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. The teacher may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in deciding whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Principal. At all times cognisance shall be made of adherence to the State's issued guidelines on Child Protection.

## **Confidentiality**

It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Designated Liason Person (DLP). In Coláiste na Carraige the Principal is the DLP. He/she will decide whether to inform the parents and appropriate authorities.

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

- Where a disclosure is not a child protection issue, teachers will use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained.
- Teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential.

## **8. Ongoing Support, Development and Review**

The school will continue to provide adequate support for teachers and students in relation to the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme.

The school will facilitate teachers to obtain training in this area.

The RSE programme will be evaluated by the pastoral care team annually.

A full policy review will take place every two years.

Development and implementation of the programme will be subject to the final approval of the Board of Management.

This RSE policy has been approved and ratified by the Board of Management of Coláiste na Carraige.

Signed:

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date \_\_\_\_\_