



Lucan Community College

Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

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(Chairperson of BOM)

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A. Rationale

The RSE policy was drawn up to inform parents/guardians of the curriculum and provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Lucan Community College. Lucan Community College wishes to support parents/guardians in this important aspect of a young person's education and preparation for life.

B. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education (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.

Our RSE programme provides students with factual knowledge and an understanding of the influences on young people, encouraging them to be aware of the options open to them and to take charge of decisions about their own behaviour. It should encourage the development of personal and interpersonal skills; the awareness and respect of self and others and it should encourage reflection and responsibility.

C. The School's Mission Statement and Ethos

"Within a supportive, safe and friendly environment, we foster collaboration and promote equality and tolerance as preparation for life and involvement in society."

Our Mission in Lucan Community College is to create a safe learning environment within the community which acknowledges diversity, fosters mutual respect, celebrates achievement, recognises the needs of the individual and challenges all to meet their full potential.

The aims of the RSE curriculum contribute to the overall ethos of Lucan Community College in promoting the holistic development of our students.

Parents are the primary educators of the student. The school also has a role in preparing young people for their place in society. The policy was drawn up in consultation with staff, parents, students, and the Board of Management of the school. Regular monitoring, evaluating and reviewing of the RSE programme is facilitated by the RSE and SPHE departments and involves students, parents, staff and the Board of Management.

D. Relationship of RSE to Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

At Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle, the RSE programme is a module embedded into the strands of the SPHE programme. The NCCA Draft Guidelines for RSE state that SPHE is "spiral, developmental in nature and age-appropriate in content and methodology". The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. SPHE supports the development of self-esteem, assertive communication and decision-making skills, all of which complement the RSE programme.

E. What the school currently provides

An outline of the school RSE programme can be seen in Appendix 1.

F. Aims of our RSE Programme

RSE, has as its specific aims:

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality
- To promote a positive attitude towards one's sexuality and in one's relationships 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.

G. The management and organisation of RSE in our school

The Board of Management recognises its responsibility to ensure that the RSE programme is taught throughout Junior and Senior cycle (Circular M495/M496).

Meeting time is allocated to the RSE Team for collaborative subject planning as required on school planning days. The teachers are given opportunities and supported to attend relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses. An updated record of CPD training is maintained by the RSE/SPHE Coordinator.

The teachers have access to a structured programme and supplementary resources. They share information received at CPD via the school online collaborative space.

The RSE teacher follows the Department of Education and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Guidelines on the teaching of RSE.

Timetabling of RSE

Students in Junior Cycle receive one period of SPHE per week. The RSE programme will be covered within this programme during 6 consecutive weeks.

Transition Year students receive a minimum of 6 RSE lessons as part of their Health Education Programme. Students in Senior Cycle will receive 6 RSE lessons during the academic year.

Fifth Year groups will receive 6 RSE lessons as part of the Religious Education / Relationships and Sexuality Programme.

Sixth Years groups will receive 6 RSE lessons as part of the Social, Personal and Health Programme.

Students will be taught all aspects of RSE together, regardless of gender.

The boundaries of the RSE programme will be delivered with consideration of the following:

- (a) The age of the students.
- (b) The limits of confidentiality and the limits to discussions and questions.
- (c) The assurance that the RSE classroom is a safe place for all, including students and teachers.
- (d) The awareness of the sensitivity that must be given to the needs of students with special circumstances.

Informing and involving Parents

Parents are the primary educators of children and the RSE programme supports parents in this role. The RSE Policy and Plan are available on the school website. Parents are welcome to read these documents which provide information on the provision being made for the teaching of RSE at our school, including the topics covered in the lessons.

We will endeavour to inform parents before the RSE module takes place. A text message is sent which will direct the parents to the school website where they can find information on the content of the SPHE programme including the RSE programme. Students will also be encouraged to tell their parents when the programme is starting.

The Parents' Association is consulted regarding the development of the RSE Policy and are involved in the review.

Withdrawing students from the RSE programme:

If parents wish to withdraw their child from RSE lessons, they will be invited by the school to discuss the matter with the RSE / SPHE Coordinator or other relevant staff. Parents do not have to give reasons for their request for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so. Sometimes, a meeting can resolve any misunderstandings in relation to the provision of the RSE programme.

Where a student has been withdrawn from RSE alternative arrangements for the supervision of the student will be agreed with the parents.

Giving of Advice / Answering Questions:

The role of the RSE teacher is to provide non-directive information in line with the Department of Education guidelines and the ethos of the college. It is not the role of the teacher to provide individual advice.

Teachers may provide students with information on where they can receive confidential advice and treatment, such as their general practitioner or appropriate support agencies.

The teacher can respond to questions and decide which are the most appropriate for the class group. The teacher may exercise their own professional judgement in deciding to answer questions privately. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, advice may be sought from the principal.

Confidentiality

An atmosphere of trust is a pre-requisite of RSE class. However, in a circumstance where a student is considered to be at risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer the matter to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The DLP will decide whether to inform the parents or appropriate authorities and may suggest counselling for the student.

The teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year and remind them at necessary points throughout the year and where possible before making a disclosure.

Sexual Activity

It is advisable for teachers to give students information on the age of consent which, following the passage of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2006, is 17 years of age for all students.

Child Protection

The school follows Children First Guidelines 2017 and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 in the event of a disclosure or other child protection concern.

Visiting Speakers

It is Lucan Community College policy that the RSE programme is best taught by the teachers and tutors who are known and trusted by the students. However, the college also recognises that a visiting speaker can enhance the quality of the provision if they are used in addition to, and not instead of a planned programme of RSE. If a visiting speaker is included in the programme, they will be provided with a copy of the RSE policy in advance of their input to the programme.

Additional Needs

Students with Additional needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional changes of growing up. They may also need additional support in learning what types of behaviour are/are not acceptable. Adaptions to the way in which the content is delivered may be made following consultation with parents/guardians and the Additional Educational Needs Department. Anticipation of the student's needs are central in ensuring that learning is meaningful. It is school policy that students will not be removed from RSE classes to receive learning support.

LGBTQI+

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

Abortion

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all aspects of the issues in a non-directive way.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

While awareness of STIs is one of the objectives of the Second Year SPHE/RSE syllabus, STIs are mainly addressed in Senior Cycle.

Contraception

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way. This topic is also dealt with in science classes.

Cross-curricular structures which support the provision of RSE in our school include:

- SPHE, Religious Education, CSPE, Science, Biology and Home Economics
- Pastoral Care system including Year Heads, Class Tutors
- Gluais
- School Counsellors, and AEN Department
- Code of Behaviour and Discipline, Anti-bullying Policy and programme, Child Safeguarding Statement
- Teacher Leadership Programme
- The Wellbeing Programme
- Wellbeing Week

H. Ongoing support, development and review

Training

It is school policy that the RSE programme is taught by the SPHE/RSE teachers on our staff. Teachers have access to ongoing RSE training and professional development courses for the RSE programme. The school will facilitate the teachers in obtaining this training.

All teachers involved in the programme 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 and honestly, and may seek more expert advice if necessary.

Resources

All relevant RSE resources are shared on the school SharePoint drive and are reviewed and updated regularly.

Appendix 2 lists a number of resources that are used.

I. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the RSE Programme

Lucan Community College is committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the RSE programme. This is done through: student feedback, teacher review and feedback as well as parental feedback. The policy will be reviewed and evaluated at certain predetermined times under the direction of the Board of Management.

Ongoing review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information, guidelines, legislation and feedback from parents/ guardians, teachers and students. The policy will be revised as necessary considering such review and evaluation within the framework of school planning. The RSE and SPHE coordinators and teachers will have the role of monitoring the review aspect of the policy.

Appendix 1: Current School Programme

Junior Cycle Plan

First Year

THEMES/TOPICS LESSONS	LESSONS
HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS (a) Me as unique and different (b) Friendship	Self-Esteem Body Awareness / Body care Common Senses Developing Ground Rules You've got a Friend Friendship Communication and Respect Values

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (a) Changes at puberty	Puberty Hygiene Hints Busy Bodies Adolescent Development DVD & Booklet, HSE
(b) The male and female reproductive system	The Words We Use Human Reproduction
HUMAN SEXUALITY Images of male and female	Don't Box me In The Influence of the Media

Second Year

THEMES/TOPICS LESSONS	LESSONS
<u>HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS</u> (a) Managing relationships	Family Ties Healthy Friendships Building a Relationship How I Relate
(b) Peer Pressure and other influences	Peer Pressure The Influence of Friends
<u>HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT</u> (a) From conception to birth	The Miracle of New Life Pregnancy and Birth
<u>HUMAN SEXUALITY</u> (a) Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions (b) Health and Personal Safety (c) Making Decisions	Feelings and Adolescence Saying How I Feel Take Care The Age of Consent STIs Time to Reflect Making Decisions Teenage Pregnancy

Third Year

<u>TOPICS/THEMES</u>	<u>LESSONS</u>
<u>HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS</u> (a) Relationships – What's Important (b) The Three Rs – Respect, Rights and Responsibility (c) Conflict	Relationships Rights and responsibilities in relationships
<u>HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT</u> Where Am I now?	Relationship pressures Resisting Relationship pressures <i>[Material may need to be revised from 1st and 2nd Year due to the effects of previous Covid restrictions.]</i>
<u>HUMAN SEXUALITY</u> Body Image	The Image of Me Respect and Tolerance for Difference <i>[Material may need to be revised from 1st and 2nd Year due to the effects of previous Covid restrictions.]</i>

Senior Cycle Plan

<u>Year 1: Transition Year</u>	<u>Year 2: 5th Year</u>	<u>Year 3: 6th Year</u>
Relationships Self-esteem Communication Keeping your cool Living with loss Human Sexuality Sexual Orientation Activity Contraception STIs Sexual Harassment/Assault	Consent Understanding our Boundaries Communicating our Boundaries Fertility Sexual Orientation Gender Identity Unplanned Pregnancy STIs Sexual Abuse/Rape	Intimacy Decision Making Responsible Relationships Contraception 2 STI Transmission Influences & Values 6th Year LCA - using Year 3

	5th Year LCA - using Year 1 & 2	
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Appendix 2: Resources

The following resources are used in the programme:

b4udecide

Relationships and Sexuality Education 1

Busy Bodies (HSE Publication)

Webwise

Health and Wellbeing (Edco) – JC Textbook

Trust Pack – LC Resource Pack

Yes Project: Youth Empowerment in Sexual Health