



RSE POLICY

Maryfield College is a voluntary second level all-girls school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of Le Chéile.

Maryfield College is a teaching and learning community that looks to prepare pupils for life in all aspects – personal, academic, professional, and social.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES, 2018-2023)

Maryfield College RSE/SPHE policy is in line with the Continuum of Support framework to assist schools in identifying and responding to students' needs.

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships, and intimacy. **RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in sexuality and relationships.**

RSE will provide structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes that will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual, and social framework. This approach gives opportunities to young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring, and responsible manner.

The aims of RSE are:

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality.
- To encourage a positive attitude to one's sexuality and in one's relationship with others.
- To promote knowledge and respect for human reproduction.
- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in the moral, spiritual, and social framework while also respecting the dignity of all.

RSE is in the overall framework of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). SPHE provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn

about themselves, care for themselves and others, and make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development. SPHE is spiral, developmental in nature and age-appropriate in content and methodology. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. 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 oneself 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.

Circular 0043/2018 states: Schools must have a policy for RSE that has been developed in consultation with teachers, parents/guardians, members of Boards of Management, and students.

Maryfield College has developed this school policy regarding RSE to be implemented as an element of SPHE at Junior Cycle and as an RSE programme in Senior Cycle. Schools are required to teach all aspects of the RSE programme. Elements of the programme cannot be omitted on the grounds of the school ethos. All aspects of the programme can and should be taught within the ethos and value system of the school as expressed in the RSE policy. The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure RSE is made available to all students.

This Policy was developed in 1996 and has been reviewed periodically, most recently August-June 2018/19. It was developed in conjunction with:

- The SPHE teaching team
- The whole teaching staff
- The Principal and Deputy Principal
- The Board of Management
- The Parents Association
- The Student Council

SCOPE

The RSE policy applies to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality. RSE is an integral part of the SPHE programme at Junior Cycle and at Senior Cycle.

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."

Information and engagement regarding RSE takes place throughout all aspects of school life. The RSE programme is supported by the wider junior and senior cycle curriculum such as Home Economics, Religious Education, Physical Education, Science, Civic, Social & Political Education and Social, Academic & Personal Development (SPAD) in Transition Year. Therefore, it is important that all teachers and external facilitators (if necessary) are trained

in and familiar with the RSE programme. Teachers inviting external facilitators /speakers must keep the visit in line with Circular 0043/2018

This Policy applies to school staff, students, Board of Management, parents/guardians, garda vetted visiting speakers, external facilitators, and outside agencies.

RELATIONSHIP TO ETHOS AND MISSION OF SCHOOL

Maryfield College as a teaching and learning community recognises the interdependence of management, teachers, pupils, and parents in the process of forming happy, secure, well-educated, and productive young people.

Underlying and permeating this process are the following firmly held beliefs.

- That there is a good balance between academic, social, and spiritual growth of the person so that her full potential can emerge.
- That the school is a happy and welcoming place where the atmosphere is characterised by friendliness and a caring relationship between staff, parents and pupils of different backgrounds and abilities.
- That Christian values of freedom, love, justice, self-discipline, faith-centeredness, and truth are alive in the school.

The Maryfield School community creates a caring and supportive atmosphere where students, teachers, parents, and management are encouraged to develop and realise their potential. This atmosphere within the school energises teachers and staff to use their gifts fully in the best interests of all the students.

The aims of RSE contribute to the overall ethos of Maryfield College in promoting the holistic development of our students. Teachers of RSE will facilitate students in discussing a range of views concerning topics within the RSE programme.

OBJECTIVES

This RSE Policy:

- Ensures clarity and consensus on how RSE is taught in Maryfield College, which includes an annual review with whole school staff
- Provides information on the practicalities of delivering the programme
- Clarifies the rights, roles, and responsibilities of all within the Maryfield community, concerning the RSE programme, with reference to school staff, students, parents, the Board of Management, and the trusteeship of the Maryfield College
- Ensures that teachers, parents, and students understand how the RSE programme is linked to the ethos of Maryfield College.

KEY MEASURES

PROVISION OF TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This school values SPHE and has a core of trained SPHE teachers with an SPHE coordinator who is a member of the middle management team. In-career development is an integral part of this programme.

All SPHE teachers have access to resources including:

- RSE Junior and Senior Cycle Resource Materials Book
- PDST Workshops
- Before You Decide
- Trust
- HSE leaflets and DVDs
- Growing Up LGBT

INCLUSION OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The school recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators, and home is the natural and primary environment where RSE takes place. The RSE Policy is available online at www.maryfieldcollege.ie and notifications regarding reviews are also published online. The Parent's Association is involved in the review of the RSE Policy.

The involvement of parents/guardians continues throughout the year, whereby they are informed of the RSE/SPHE programme and various resources available.

ETHICAL/MORAL CONSIDERATIONS

Circular 0037/2010 states that schools are required to teach all aspects of the RSE programme, including family planning, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual orientation. All aspects of the programme can and should be conducted within the ethos and value system of the school.

Class discussion will be general and will not be personally directed per the previously agreed class ground rules. This discussion is guided by the age of the students, the RSE curriculum and the RSE Policy

Confidentiality

The RSE curriculum and this Policy align with the Child First Act 2015 Legislation for all Child protection, including Maryfield College Child Safeguarding Statement.

Any disclosure of a confidential matter will be reported directly to the Designated Liaison Person in compliance with the Child Protection Procedures 2017.

RSE teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year, remind them at necessary points throughout the year and where possible before disclosing.

RSE classes will inform students of the age of consent which, following the passage of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2006, is 17 years of age for both males and females.

PRACTICAL ISSUES

External facilitators

Under Circular 0043/2018 and Vetting Act, 0031/2016, best practice guidelines will be followed regarding external facilitators when teaching the RSE programme.

Students with Special Educational Needs

Students with additional educational needs may require more support in engaging with the RSE/SPHE programme. In consultation with the Special Needs Teacher (SET), differentiated approaches and methodologies will be adopted. (Guidelines for Post Primary Schools – Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools 2017)

Participation

SPHE at Junior Cycle and RSE at Senior Cycle is a core curricular subject. Each parent has the 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 of any student opting out of RSE to make suitable arrangements with school management for the welfare of their child at these times. When students are withdrawn from RSE, the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students. Parents must meet with the SPHE Coordinator and the Principal to discuss their decision to withdraw their child from the RSE module in September of each year. They can contact reception to make an appointment.

RELATED POLICIES

- SPHE Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- School Self Evaluation
- Code of Behaviour

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MONITORING AND REVIEW

The RSE programme and Policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the SPHE team in consultation with school management

RATIFIED BY BOM ON 5-10-21

SIGNED Michelle O'Rourke (PRINCIPAL)

Signed Declan Mowlds (Chairperson)

APPENDIX A – JUNIOR CYCLE RSE (SPHE Guidelines for Teachers)

Themes in Junior Cycle RSE:

- Human Growth and Development
(Puberty/awareness of emotions/fertility conception and birth/STI's)
- Human Sexuality
(Gender/sexual orientation/personal safety)
- Human Relationships
(Self-esteem/friendship/skills for establishing and maintaining relationships/awareness of peer pressure)

RSE Year 1	RSE Year 2	RSE Year 3
Me as unique and different	From conception to birth	Body image
Friendship	Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions	Where am I now?
Changes at adolescence	Peer pressure and other influences	Relationships- what's important
Reproduction system	Managing relationships	The three Rs- respect, rights and responsibilities
Images of male and female	Making responsible decisions	Conflict and conflict resolution
Respecting myself and others	Health and personal safety	

APPENDIX B – SENIOR CYCLE RSE (SPHE Guidelines for Teachers & TRUST programme)

Themes in Senior Cycle RSE:

- Human Growth and Development
(Fertility/reproductive organs/family planning/pregnancy/development of foetus/STIs)
- Human Sexuality
(Gender/sexual orientation/attitudes and values/making choices/sexual harassment and abuse)
- Human Relationships
(Peer pressure/conflict resolution/loving relationships/marriage and commitment/importance of family life)

RSE Year 4	RSE Year 5	RSE Year 6
What we value in relationships	Healthy relationships	Loving relationships
Healthy relationships	Influence of self esteem	Influences and values
Self esteem	Communication- assertive communication and communicating our boundaries	Decision making/ consent
Communication – consent	Human sexuality	Responsible relationships
Human sexuality	Sexual orientation	Contraception III
Accepting sexual orientations	Human reproduction	STI transmission
Human reproduction and fertility	Contraception II	Responsible parenthood
Contraception I	STI	Life support
Sexual harassment/ assault	Unplanned Pregnancy	Marriage
	Sexual abuse	Intimacy