



Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel

Social, Personal and Health Education Policy including Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

2025-2026

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on Tuesday 7th October 2025



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Mission Statement

Presentation Secondary School Clonmel is committed to offering our students a holistic Catholic education in a caring environment conducive to learning and personal development

Aims

Presentation Secondary School Clonmel has a proud tradition based on the core educational values of Nano Nagle and our founding Sisters. This has been fostered by dynamic and committed staff through the generations.

We aim to provide:

- An inclusive Catholic education with the emphasis on respect for all the school community.
- A caring disciplined atmosphere conducive to learning.
- An innovative holistic education where the God given talents of our students are developed to equip them for life in the 21st century.

Aims of SPHE

This course aims to build students' self-awareness and positive self-worth; to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives; empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others; and enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society. (2023 SPHE Short Course Specification for Junior Cycle)



SPHE/RSE in our School

In our school we endeavour to create a positive school climate and atmosphere where:

- People are valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- Fairness and tolerance are evident
- High expectations and standards are promoted
- Those experiencing difficulty are supported
- Communication is open
- Effort is recognised
- Uniqueness and difference are valued
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Initiative and creativity are encouraged
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted.

Aims of RSE in our School

- To help young people understand and develop friendship and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality.
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own 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.
- To enable students to make informed choices.



Junior SPHE

The 2023 Social Personal Health Education Short Course Specification for Junior Cycle can be viewed here:

https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/ca8f8975-50ca-4dc3-bba5-a04e25b4f978/JC_SPHE_Short_Course_2023.pdf

RSE Junior Level

SPHE is allocated one class period per week for all Junior Cycle students. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is located in the overall framework of SPHE.

The RSE strand explores the cognitive, physical, emotional and social aspects of relationships and sexuality through a positive, inclusive, rights and responsibilities-based approach. The focus is on family relationships, friendships, romantic and potential sexual relationships in the future.

(2023 SPHE Short Course Specification for Junior Cycle)



Topics covered in 1st Year (2023 SPHE Specification for Junior Cycle)

- Impact of physical, emotional and psychological and social development in adolescence
- Managing relationships
- The human reproductive system
- Menstruation
- Age of consent
- Sexual intercourse & conception
- Gender stereotyping

Topics covered in 2nd Year (2023 SPHE Specification for Junior Cycle)

- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Consent and the law
- Male reproductive health
- Female reproductive health
- Health & personal safety (introduction to sexually transmitted infections)
- Sharing of images and the law
- Internet safety and the law

Topics covered in 3rd Year (2023 SPHE Specification for Junior Cycle)

- Consent and the law
- Healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships
- Setting and respecting healthy boundaries
- Respect, rights and responsibilities
- Health & personal safety (sexually transmitted infections, contraception)
- Sharing of images and the law
- Explore the pressures to become sexually intimate and discuss ways to show respect for people's choices
- The influence of popular culture and the online world
- The influence of pornography on young people's understanding, expectations and social norms



- Accessing and appraising appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health



Senior SPHE 2025-2026

Senior SPHE

The 2024 Social Personal Health Education Course Specification for Senior Cycle can be viewed here:

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/sphe/>

RSE Senior Level

SPHE is allocated one class period per week for all Senior Cycle students. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is located in the overall framework of SPHE.

Topics to be covered in Transition Year – still under curricular development.

Module 2 – Relationships & Respect

6. Respectful communication & empathy
7. Healthy vs. unhealthy relationships
8. Consent & boundaries (values-based)
9. Online safety and digital respect
10. Peer support, friendship, and community
11. Decision-making and problem-solving

5th Year RSE topics to be covered

*(Note: some topics need to be covered again as not all students will have done TY.
Some of the strands will overlap and be taught at both 5th and 6th year level.)*

Relationships, sexuality and wellbeing

- Respectful communication
- Consent & the law, boundaries
- Recognising unhealthy relationships

- Explore attitudes, beliefs, values and identity.
- Explore how the media, online platforms, and wider society promote both positive and negative attitudes about gender, and identify ways to challenge and change harmful stereotypes.



- Sexual Health

6th Year RSE topics to be covered

Relationship, sexuality and Wellbeing

- Managing intimate relationships (break-ups, contraception, STI, unplanned pregnancy)
- Digital safety & online identity
- Mental health & community support in relation to violence & the law.
- Investigate the possible influence of pornography on attitudes, behaviours and relationship expectations and what supports are available.
- Discuss the impact of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape and what to do and how to seek support if they or someone they know has experienced any of these.

Resources: b4udecide.ie, spunout.ie, Lockers, HSE.ie, various speakers and workshops as appropriate e.g. Tipperary Rape Crisis Centre, Cuan Saor.



Cross-Curricular Aspects of SPHE/RSE

- There are aspects of the SPHE/RSE programme addressed in other subject areas such as Home Economics, Science, CSPE, Religion, PE, Life skills, Biology and within the Transition Year Programme.
- The programme is also supported informally through the Pastoral Care system (Class monitors, Year Heads, Leaders) Guidance Counsellor and Student Counsellor.
- The strong tradition of sport, drama, music and charity events within the school contribute to the personal development of students.



Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of SPHE/RSE in the School

- It is the responsibility of the BOM to ensure that an SPHE/RSE programme is in place for all students.
- Arrangement regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal.
- In organising the learning environment, the teacher will endeavour to create an atmosphere which respects the privacy of each individual student and treats all students with due sensitivity and care. Active learning methods will be used to ensure that students actively participate in their own learning.
- SPHE teachers are aware that sensitive issues or disclosures may be made by students during SPHE class.
- Contemporary topics and issues, which may emerge in this class, will be dealt with at a level appropriate to the age and stage of the student and within a moral framework.
- Parents have the primary responsibility for the teaching of sexuality to their children and RSE is a support to the family in this.
- A copy of this policy will be available to parents on the school website.
- Visiting speakers on SPHE/RSE topics will be given a copy of the school SPHE/RSE policy and must speak within the spirit of the policy. Teachers will be present at all times when a guest speaker is visiting a class.
- Our SPHE/RSE policy has been developed through a consultative process involving parents, board of management, teachers and students.
- All elements of the RSE programme must be taught.



Explicit Questions

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, he/she should seek advice from the principal or Year Head. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

Confidentiality

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

The following is also school policy:

- 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.
- Teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.



Training and Resources

All resources needed in terms of time, finance and personnel will be made available to develop and support the SPHE/RSE programme in the school, taking into consideration budget and planning considerations. Teacher training is seen as an essential element in delivering the programme. The objectives of this training are to enhance the personal growth of teachers and to enable them to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to teach the programme.

Evaluation

- The SPHE/RSE policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis.