

# Kishoge Community College

## Social, Personal & Health Education and Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

### *Adopted by Board of Management 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019*

*“Under the patronage of Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB, Kishoge Community College operates in formal partnership with Educate Together to develop a welcoming, inclusive school community that enables young people to meet their full potential in society” – Kishoge Community College Ethos*

#### **1. Rationale for this Policy**

Under the guidelines of the Department of Education and Science, and as part of the ethos of our school, SPHE, including RSE, is considered an integral part of the holistic development of our students.

The Education Act 1998 requires that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development. Young people are exposed to a variety of messages about sexuality and sexual activity. Schools, in consultation with parents/guardians, need to reflect on how to provide for the needs of their students.

Section 4 of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for RSE and a suitable RSE programme in place for all students at both Junior and Senior Cycle. At Junior and Senior Cycle, the RSE programme is part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

#### **2. Goals of SPHE/RSE:**

Each student should receive the equivalent of one forty minute period of SPHE per week, with the aim of achieving the following goals, as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in collaboration with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA):

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities
- To promote self-esteem and self confidence
- To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

Within the allocated time for SPHE, the equivalent of six forty minute periods, each year, will be dedicated to achieving the aims of RSE:

- To help young people 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 young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To provide opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that helps them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

The SPHE/RSE teachers acknowledge the importance of SPHE/RSE being taught in the context of a whole school climate that is inclusive and respectful. It is acknowledged that the aims above will be achieved through a learner-centred, equality-based, co-educational and democratic approach consistent with the Educate Together ethos implemented in KCC.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities in developing and implementing this policy:**

#### **3.1 Whole School Approach**

SPHE/RSE teachers appreciate that classroom teaching of SPHE/RSE is one aspect of a whole school community, holistic approach to achieving the aims outlined above. It is acknowledged that these aims are only fully achieved by cooperation of the following parties, intending to achieve these aims, across all areas of school life:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Students
- School staff members
- Pastoral Care team members – Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Councillors
- School Management

The KCC school community provides opportunity for achievement of these goals through a range of cross-curricular, extra-curricular and co-curricular initiatives including, but not limited to; Wellbeing Week, health and fitness initiatives, anti-bullying initiatives, ethical education and pastoral care support frameworks.

Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the goals of SPHE/RSE are also reinforced and achieved through curriculum content covered in science, home economics, English and ethical education.

Specific duties of certain members of the school community, relating to SPHE/RSE, are outlined below.

#### **3.2 Parents**

KCC acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for the SPHE/RSE development of their children. KCC aims to support parents in this endeavour through provision of relevant material, and organisation of relevant speakers - considering the support, advice and feedback of the parents' council in such matters.

Key information relating to SPHE/RSE will be available to parents as follows:

- This SPHE/RSE Policy will be available for examination on the KCC school website, and in the KCC school office.
- At the beginning of students' Junior and Senior Cycle programmes, a letter will be sent to parents/guardians outlining the SPHE/RSE programme and providing links to curriculum and resource documentation.
- A standard text message will be sent to parents each year, advising of the times at which RSE will be taking place, and of the primary focus of this education.

If parents wish to withdraw their child from the RSE programme, visiting speakers or sensitive issues, they must notify the school in writing and alternative arrangements may be made. Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme, supervision and/or the deployment of staff will be made by the principal, and may be delegated to the school management team.

#### **3.3 Teachers**

SPHE/RSE will be delivered by class tutors, in keeping with the pastoral care approach implemented in KCC, and the recommendation of the Department of Education and Skills that SPHE/RSE should be delivered by members of the school teaching staff.

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.

### 3.4 School Management Team

It is acknowledged that the school management team, under the guidance of the principal, have ultimate responsibility for the implementation and review of SPHE/RSE in KCC. The school management team will be supported by, and may delegate responsibility to, an SPHE/RSE coordinator and teaching team.

Complex and sensitive issues, such as may arise in SPHE/RSE will be referred to the school management team for consideration.

The SPHE co-ordinator will report to the Board of Management and Parent's Council once a year on SPHE/RSE curricular content and whole school initiatives.

## **4. Content/Organisation of SPHE/RSE**

### 4.1 Organisation

As above, SPHE/RSE lessons will be delivered by class tutors, as part of a whole school community approach to student SPHE/RSE development. The strong emphasis on discursive practice, and student voice, in the SPHE/RSE classroom is acknowledged, as is the importance of setting clear guidelines for respectful and appropriate communication at the outset of SPHE/RSE programmes.

Teaching methods are discussed at the subject department meetings, which will be facilitated by an SPHE/RSE department coordinator. Professional development and resources will also be discussed at subject department meetings. Individual teachers will choose from a range of preferable methods. Such methods include, but are not limited to:

- Group activities and projects
- Pair work
- Class discussion
- Debates
- Role-Play
- Art Work
- Narrative expression
- Review and discussion of stimulus material – documentaries, articles etc.
- Research and class projects

### 4.2 Content

#### 4.2.1 Junior Cycle Content

- Belonging and integrating
- Self-management: a sense of purpose
- Communication skills
- Physical health
- Friendship
- Relationships and sexuality
- Emotional health
- Influences and decisions
- Substance use
- Personal safety

#### 4.2.2 Senior Cycle Content

SPHE:

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Influences and decisions
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Self-management

RSE:

- Fertility awareness
- Family planning
- Values and relationships
- Personal integrity
- Responsible parenthood
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Sexual harassment
- Gender Orientation
- Gender discrimination
- Personal rights and personal safety
- Making, keeping and ending relationships
- Love is...
- Commitment and marriage

#### 4.3 Resources:

SPHE/RSE resources are chosen in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Education and Skills, and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials, which have been identified by staff as useful and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school resources allow.

#### **5. Management of sensitive issues, confidentiality and referral**

Students are reminded at the start of every year of the importance of 'I' statements within the SPHE/RSE classroom, and that, in keeping with the focus on their personal development, they should not divulge the experiences of others, or share private information, in what may not be an appropriate space.

Students are encouraged to approach the teacher at the start or the end of class if they want to share a private concern. Students presenting with concerns may be referred to the school guidance counsellor, Principal or Deputy Principal.

All staff in the school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in *Children First Guidelines* and the Department of Education and Skills document, *Child Protection: Guidelines and Procedures*.

The Board of Management has appointed Niall Hare as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Lisa Nolan as the deputy (DDLPP).

## **6. Policy Review**

### **6.1 Persons/Groups responsible for reviewing this policy (in no particular order)**

- SPHE/RSE Policy Committee (including representation from staff, students and parents)
- Year Heads
- Teaching staff
- Other voluntary staff members
- Interested parents
- Management
- Guidance Counsellor
- Board of management

### **6.2 Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE programme:**

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

- Pupil feedback
- Staff feedback
- Parental feedback
- Feedback from the Board of Management and Parent's Council.

*This policy is subject to review.*