



# Draft RSE Policy

Oct 2023

**This document serves as a draft policy, open for review by all stakeholders.**

**We encourage members of the school community to share their insights and feedback. Your input is not only valuable but essential in shaping a policy that best serves our collective interests.**

**For any comments or suggestions regarding this draft, please reach out to Dr Gash through email or other available channels.**

**To facilitate a timely review process, we kindly request that all feedback be submitted by Wednesday, 25th October 2023.**

**Thank you for your invaluable contribution and assistance.**

MIDDLETON COLLEGE



# Draft Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy

DRAFT Version 0.4, October 2023

## I. Linking the Study of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) to the Mission and Ethos of Midleton College

The study of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) at Midleton College is integral to fulfilling both the mission and ethos of our institution. As our mission statement suggests, the College is a place where "each student realises their potentials in an atmosphere of respect, care, support and encouragement." Our approach to RSE is designed to align with these principles, by promoting healthy relationships and fostering an understanding of human sexuality that is rooted in respect and care for oneself and others.

Within the ethos statement, it is evident that Midleton College is a diverse community which values the full participation of all students in all aspects of school life. "Diversity of academic capability among pupils is recognised, and the College seeks, within resources, to foster equally the educational development of each person." This commitment to inclusivity and diversity extends to the delivery of our RSE curriculum, which is designed to be accessible, relevant, and beneficial to all students, irrespective of their background, experiences, or capabilities.

Furthermore, our ethos statement indicates that Midleton College is an institution that seeks to equip its students with the "academic, personal and moral qualities necessary to enable them to take their place within, and ready to make a contribution to, the wider community." In the realm of RSE, this translates into providing students with not just factual information, but also the critical thinking skills and moral framework necessary to navigate the complexities of relationships and sexuality in a responsible and ethical manner.

The ethos statement also emphasises the importance of partnerships, stating, "Midleton College cherishes the partnerships - with teachers, parents/guardians, friends of the college, the local and wider community - which support the fulfilment of its characteristic spirit and goals." This notion of partnership is crucial in our approach to RSE, as we believe that the education of students on these topics should involve collaboration between the school, parents/guardians, and the wider community.

In conclusion, the study of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) at Midleton College is a reflection of the principles embedded in our mission and ethos. By aligning the teaching and learning of RSE with these core tenets, we endeavor to uphold our proud heritage while preparing our students to navigate the future with confidence, respect, and dignity.

## II. Introduction

### A. Purpose and Scope of the Policy

The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy at Middleton College is a comprehensive framework guiding our commitment to educate students on topics related to relationships and sexuality. Anchored in our mission and ethos, it aligns with local, national, and international educational standards and regulations.

#### 1. Rationale Behind the Policy

Becoming a sexually healthy adult is a key developmental task for adolescents. The contemporary context necessitates that we empower young people with the skills to navigate the complexities of sexual activity comfortably and confidently. To this end, our RSE policy acknowledges sexuality as an essential and complex component of healthy social and personal development, and lifelong learning.

Today's young people are exposed to a multitude of messages about sexuality and sexual activity. This, coupled with the trend of increased sexual activity among teenagers and the apparent gaps in young people's knowledge of sexual health issues, makes it vital for schools, in collaboration with parents/guardians, to offer balanced, informative, and respectful education in these areas.

Our RSE Programme provides students with formal opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships. It enables them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual, and social framework, ultimately aiding them in their lifelong process of learning about relationships and sexuality.

#### 2. Areas Covered by the Policy

The RSE Policy applies to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality at Middleton College. While the primary platform for RSE is our Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, discussions about relationships and sexuality can arise in various contexts, necessitating the policy's application beyond formal RSE lessons.

The policy pertains to everyone within our school community, including school staff, students, board of management, parents/guardians, visiting speakers, and external facilitators. All individuals involved in the education of our students are expected to adhere to this policy to ensure consistent, holistic, and effective RSE.

This policy was developed through a collaborative process, incorporating various stakeholders' perspectives within our school community. It will undergo regular reviews to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness, fostering an environment that promotes a healthy attitude towards sexuality and relationships within oneself and others.

#### 3. Links to Other School Policies

This policy must be read in conjunction with other school policies, including but not limited to the Anti-bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour, Rules of Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Assault Policy, Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Statement, and Guidance Plan. School policies need to be consistent with one another, within the framework of the overall School Plan. Relevant school policies already in place, being developed or reviewed, will be examined with reference to the RSE Policy, and any implications which may impact upon them will be addressed. Similarly, the implications of other school policies and guidelines/plans for the RSE policy also need to be considered. The interconnectedness of these policies ensures that all areas of student welfare are considered holistically and that our approach to RSE is consistently reinforced across all areas of school life.

This policy was developed through a collaborative process, incorporating various stakeholders' perspectives within our school community. It will undergo regular reviews to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness, fostering an environment that promotes a healthy attitude towards sexuality and relationships within oneself and others.

## B. Policy Vision and Objectives

### 1. Long-term Vision

Our long-term vision for the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy at Midleton College is to foster a compassionate, informed, and accountable community of individuals who understand and respect their own sexuality, as well as that of others. We aim to help our students navigate the complexities of relationships and sexuality that inevitably arise during adolescence. This vision is grounded in the belief that students need to critically evaluate the array of information, opinions, attitudes, and values they encounter about sexuality.

The RSE programme at Midleton College seeks to foster students' personal and sexual development holistically, with reference to the range of social and societal influences that can potentially impact how young people think and feel about their personal (family and peer), romantic and sexual relationships. Our teaching approach emphasises relationships over sexuality, aiming to help students develop self-esteem and self-confidence.

Our goal is for students to form values and establish behaviors within a moral, spiritual, and social framework, providing them with the skills necessary to make informed decisions, form healthy relationships, and respect diversity in all its forms. This comprehensive understanding and approach are integral to the broader personal and social development of our students and align with the mission and ethos of our school.

### 2. Short and Medium-term Objectives

The short and medium-term objectives of our RSE policy include:

**Promote Knowledge and Respect:** We aim to foster an understanding of sexuality and promote a positive attitude and sense of responsibility towards one's own sexuality and in one's relationships with others. Our RSE programme will provide opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring, and responsible way.

**Ensure Clarity and Consensus:** Our policy seeks to ensure clarity and consensus among all stakeholders on how RSE is taught in the school, developing a shared understanding of the programme's curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment methods. The RSE policy at Midleton College is a written statement of the aims of the programme, its organisation within the school and how it will meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers.

**Articulate Relationship of RSE to Wellbeing and SPHE:** RSE is an integral part of the Wellbeing and Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) programmes. Our policy aims to clearly articulate this relationship, outlining how RSE contributes to and enhances the overall objectives of these programmes.

**Define Roles and Responsibilities:** The policy aims to clarify the rights, roles, and responsibilities of everyone within the Midleton College community in relation to the RSE programme. This includes school staff, students, parents/guardians, and the board of management.

Link RSE teaching to School Ethos: Our policy ensures that the teaching of RSE is seamlessly integrated into the school's ethos, promoting understanding and respect for reproduction, and supporting parents in their desire for a comprehensive education for their children.

Provide Information on Programme Delivery: The policy outlines the practicalities of delivering the RSE programme, including specific teaching methodologies, resources, and assessment tools, ensuring the programme's effective and consistent implementation across the school.

Enable Skill Acquisition: Our RSE policy seeks to equip students with skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships, develop a positive sense of self-awareness, respect individual differences, understand human physiology, value family life, and cope with challenges like peer pressure, conflict, and threats to personal safety.

While we acknowledge that these aims are aspirational due to the limited duration of the course, we firmly believe that even an introductory exposure to these themes can significantly shape our students' perspectives and behaviours in a positive way.

## C. Legal Framework

This policy is developed within the context of local, national, and international laws and guidelines which govern Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). These laws are created to provide guidelines and safeguards for the provision of RSE in a way that respects the rights of all parties involved and ensures a safe, inclusive, and fair learning environment.

### 1. Local Laws and Regulations

The development and implementation of this policy is guided by local educational guidelines and regulations.

- The Education Act, 1998 (Section 30, subsection (2)(e)) stipulates that a student is not required to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student. Therefore, parents/guardians have the right to opt their child out of sensitive issues in RSE if they wish to do so. In such instances, the school is responsible for making alternative arrangements for the student. The school may request the parents to put their request in writing.

### 2. National Policies and Laws

At the national level, several pieces of legislation and policies provide guidance for the formulation of this RSE policy:

- The Education Act, 1998 necessitates schools to promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- 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 Cycle, the RSE programme is part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).
- Circulars M4/95 and M20/96 direct schools to initiate a process of RSE policy development.
- The Child Protection Procedures and Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools, 2004, highlight the necessity of confidentiality, except in cases where a child's safety is at risk. In instances of under-age sexual activity, the school must take appropriate steps to inform the child's parents.

- The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2006 sets the age of consent at 17 years of age for both males and females, and it is essential that students are informed about this law. A sexual relationship where one or both parties is under 17 years of age is illegal. However, a mandated person is exempt from making a mandated report to Tusla in relation to underage sexual activity where certain specified criteria are met as per Section 14 (3) of the Children First Act, 2015.
- Circular 0037/2010 states all second level schools must develop a school policy in regard to RSE and implement a programme in this area as an element of SPHE at Junior Cycle, and as an RSE programme in Senior Cycle, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class. Schools are required to teach all aspects of the RSE programme, elements of the programme cannot be omitted on the grounds of school ethos.
- Circular 0015/2017 states the new area of learning entitled Wellbeing, introduced for First Years from September 2017, includes a key component of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), including Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).
- The Equal Status Act, 2000, and the Equality Act, 2004, prohibit discrimination across nine grounds, including sexual orientation. It is under these laws that our school guarantees that no student will be discriminated against in the delivery of the RSE curriculum based on their sexual orientation. All students have equal rights to access the information and skills taught in the RSE programme.

### 3. International Law and Guidelines

Internationally, various guidelines and conventions play a role in shaping our policy:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a human rights treaty that sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children. Article 13 of the UNCRC establishes the child's right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, while Article 17 recognises the important function performed by mass media and ensures that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of sources.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) provides guidance on sexuality education. The International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education published by UNESCO is an evidence-informed approach for schools, teachers, and health educators. It is intended to provide clear and concrete answers to content questions that will assist the implementation of sexuality education.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) standards for Sexuality Education in Europe set a framework for policymakers and education and health authorities to create and improve sexuality education programmes.

These international guidelines help shape our RSE programme, ensuring that it is in line with globally recognised standards for student learning and well-being. The goal is to equip our students with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to realise their health, well-being and dignity, develop respectful social and sexual relationships, consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others, and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

### III. Definition of Key Terms

#### A. Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)

##### 1. Formal Definition

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) refers to the structured and systematic educational program aimed at equipping students with knowledge about human relationships, sexual development, reproduction, and sexual behavior. It is designed to foster healthy attitudes and behaviors related to relationships and sexuality, empowering students to make informed, respectful, and responsible choices.

##### 2. Practical Understanding

In practical terms, RSE is about teaching students to understand their own bodies, emotions, and relationships in a positive and responsible manner. It covers a wide array of topics including human reproduction, sexual health, gender identity, sexual orientation, consent, and emotional wellbeing. It's about providing a safe and supportive environment for young people to ask questions, acquire facts, and develop a healthy and respectful understanding of relationships and sexuality.

#### B. Other Relevant Terms

##### 1. Glossary of Associated Terms

*Sexual Health*: A state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being related to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships.

*Consent*: Freely given agreement to the conduct in question. In the context of sexual activity, it means agreeing by choice where one has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

*Gender Identity*: The internal perception of an individual's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be.

*Sexual Orientation*: Refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, both genders, neither gender, or another gender.

*Emotional Wellbeing*: The capacity to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional health and the capacity to live a full and creative life.

*Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)*: A program that provides students with unique opportunities to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and to care for themselves and others, and to make informed decisions about their overall health, personal lives, and social development.



## IV. Policy Principles

### A. Inclusivity and Equality

The RSE program reaffirms our commitment to inclusivity and equality, ensuring that every student, irrespective of their sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability status, or socioeconomic background, is valued and respected. It acknowledges the rich tapestry of diverse experiences and perspectives that our students bring and strives to create an environment where every voice is heard and every experience is acknowledged.

**Non-discriminatory Environment:** We pledge to create a learning environment that is free from discrimination. Every student has the right to access the RSE curriculum in a safe and supportive environment, regardless of their personal identities or backgrounds.

**Respect for Diversity:** We believe that diversity enriches our learning environment. Therefore, the RSE curriculum will include perspectives and examples that reflect the experiences of people from different backgrounds, cultures, and life situations.

**Equality of Access:** Every student has an equal right to receive an education about relationships and sexuality. We will ensure that all our students can access and engage with the RSE curriculum by considering diverse learning needs and by providing necessary resources and supports.

**Encouraging Empathy:** An integral part of our RSE curriculum is fostering an environment of empathy and mutual respect among our students. We encourage students to understand and respect the experiences and perspectives of others, particularly those that may differ from their own.

**Active Engagement:** We encourage all students to actively participate in RSE, contributing their unique perspectives and enriching the learning experience for everyone. We will ensure that classroom discussions, activities, and materials do not marginalise or exclude any student.

Through this commitment to inclusivity and equality, the RSE program seeks to empower every student with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to understand, respect, and navigate relationships and sexuality in a diverse world.

### B. Respect for Diversity

Respect for diversity is a fundamental principle of this RSE policy. The program will be respectful of the varied backgrounds, identities, and experiences of students. It will uphold the recognition and acceptance of the wide array of family structures, cultural beliefs, and personal values within the school community.

The policy actively acknowledges and respects diversity in sexual orientation, sex, and gender. Recognising that students may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA+), or may be exploring their sexual orientation and gender identity, the program aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Furthermore, the policy respects and acknowledges the spectrum of biological sex and gender identities, which includes male, female, transgender, non-binary, and other identities. Understanding that gender identity and biological sex may not align for some students, the policy ensures that the RSE program is inclusive and respectful of this diversity.

In acknowledging these aspects of diversity, the RSE program is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful, and sensitive learning environment where every student feels acknowledged and valued.

### C. Age-Appropriateness

The RSE program will be strategically tailored to align with the age, cognitive, and emotional maturity of students. This ensures that students receive the most beneficial and relevant information at each stage of their development. The depth and complexity of topics will progress as students advance through the school years.

**Developmental Considerations:** The curriculum will be designed with a clear understanding of developmental psychology. This will help us to address the changing needs and concerns of students as they grow, ensuring that the content, language, and methods of delivery are all developmentally appropriate.

**Timely Information:** The topics and materials used will provide students with timely information, enabling them to make informed decisions about their health and relationships. This will involve introducing certain topics at stages when students are likely to need or be curious about them.

**Respect for Individual Differences:** While age is a key factor in determining the appropriateness of content, individual differences will also be taken into account. Recognising that students mature at different rates, teachers will be sensitive to these variations and will adjust their delivery as needed to ensure it is appropriate for all students.

**Safe and Comfortable Learning Environment:** The age-appropriate approach ensures that students are neither overwhelmed with too much information too soon nor left uninformed when they need guidance. This creates a safer, more comfortable learning environment where students can engage with the content more effectively.

**Progressive Learning:** By ensuring the RSE program is age-appropriate, we also create a progression of learning, where each year builds on the knowledge and understanding developed in the previous years. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of relationships and sexuality to develop over time.

**Parental Involvement:** Parents will be kept informed about the content of the RSE program as it pertains to their child's age group. This transparency allows parents to reinforce lessons at home and to have informed discussions with their children.

By aligning the RSE program with students' developmental stages, we can ensure that the education they receive is relevant, engaging, and beneficial to their personal development.

### D. Cultural Sensitivity

Understanding and respecting cultural diversity is a crucial aspect of the RSE program. The curriculum is committed to acknowledging the cultural, religious, and social norms of all students and their families, while also providing necessary education on relationships and sexuality.

**Inclusive Curriculum:** The curriculum will be inclusive, taking into consideration the diverse backgrounds of students. It will incorporate a range of perspectives and experiences, thus ensuring that students from various cultures and traditions can identify and engage with the material.

**Respect for Traditions and Beliefs:** The delivery of the RSE program will demonstrate respect for the various traditions and beliefs within the student body. The content and delivery will not impose any specific cultural or religious viewpoints but will ensure that students are educated on a variety of perspectives.

**Balance of Information:** While respecting cultural sensitivities, it is important that all students receive a comprehensive education about relationships and sexuality. The program will aim to strike a balance, ensuring that cultural norms are acknowledged without withholding essential information that promotes students' health, well-being, and informed decision-making.

**Open Dialogue:** The program will foster an environment of open dialogue, where students feel comfortable discussing cultural norms and perspectives. Students will be encouraged to understand and respect differences, promoting empathy and mutual respect within the classroom.

**Parental Engagement:** Recognising parents as essential partners in the educational process, the school will engage with parents, seeking their perspectives and addressing any cultural concerns or suggestions they may have related to the RSE program.

Through these strategies, the RSE program will maintain cultural sensitivity, while ensuring that all students receive comprehensive, informative, and respectful education about relationships and sexuality.

## E. Confidentiality and Privacy

While the RSE program encourages open discussion, it is crucial to maintain an environment of respect and safety. Both personal and professional boundaries must be observed at all times, and the program is not a forum for the disclosure of personal or private experiences.

**Student Boundaries:** Confidentiality must be respected at all times among students, with the exception of cases where a child's safety is at risk. In such situations, the school's child protection procedures must be adhered to. Students will be made aware of the boundaries of confidentiality, and it should be understood that teachers cannot provide unconditional guarantees of confidentiality. In cases of under-age sexual activity, it is the school's responsibility to take appropriate steps to inform the child's parents in line with the Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools.

**Staff and External Presenter Boundaries:** Similarly, teaching staff and external presenters engaged in the RSE program should avoid personal disclosures that are inappropriate or unrelated to the learning objectives of the program. Staff and external presenters should refrain from sharing intimate or sensitive personal experiences that may cross professional boundaries, create discomfort, or blur the relationships within the educational context. All involved in the delivery of the RSE program should be aware of the school's policies on confidentiality and professional conduct, and any concerns about an individual's disclosure should be reported to the Principal or another designated authority within the school.

By respecting these confidentiality and privacy guidelines, the RSE program can ensure a safe, comfortable, and respectful learning environment for all participants.

## V. Policy Implementation and Stakeholder Responsibilities

### A. RSE Committee

The Principal may assign an RSE committee to coordinate the implementation of the policy and the development of the RSE programme on a yearly basis. This committee's tasks include:

- Planning and executing the RSE programme in line with the policy's vision and objectives.
- Presenting that year's RSE programme to the Board of Management (no later than November of each academic year).
- Providing regular updates and reports to the Principal and the rest of the school staff regarding the progress and status of the RSE programme.
- Identifying and addressing any challenges or issues that arise during the implementation of the RSE programme.
- Undertaking an annual evaluation of the programme and a review of the RSE policy.

### B. School Staff and Management

#### 1. Administrative Staff:

- Ensuring smooth operation of RSE-related activities.
- Regularly updating and maintaining records related to the RSE programme.
- Providing support and assistance to teachers and parents/guardians as necessary.
- Communicating and collaborating effectively with all stakeholders.

#### 2. Teaching Staff:

- Implementing the RSE curriculum in an unbiased, respectful, and age-appropriate manner.
- Keeping up-to-date with RSE teaching methods, resources, and professional development opportunities.
- Respecting and valuing the diversity of students in the classroom.
- Reporting any concerns about a student's welfare in line with the school's child protection policy.
- Communicating effectively with parents/guardians about their child's learning in RSE.

### C. Parents/Guardians

- Engaging with and supporting the school in the delivery of the RSE programme.
- Discussing RSE-related topics with their children at home, complementing what is being taught in school.
- Attending meetings, consultations, or workshops arranged by the school regarding the RSE programme.
- Providing feedback to the school to enhance the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

### D. Students

Students are the primary beneficiaries of the RSE programme, and their active and respectful participation is crucial to the success of the programme. Their roles and responsibilities in the policy implementation include:

**Active Participation:** Students are encouraged to actively participate in RSE classes and activities, which will enhance their understanding and contribute to the overall learning environment.

**Respecting Diversity:** Students are expected to respect the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds of their fellow students. They should be open to differing viewpoints and engage in civil discourse.

**Confidentiality and Privacy:** In RSE discussions, it's important that students respect the confidentiality and privacy of their peers. They should refrain from sharing personal information outside the classroom without consent.

**Conduct:** Students should conduct themselves in a respectful and considerate manner during all RSE-related activities and discussions. Any inappropriate behavior or comments should be avoided.

**Reporting Issues:** If students encounter any instances of discrimination, bullying, or any other behavior that violates the school's policies during RSE sessions, they are encouraged to report these issues to a trusted staff member.

**Feedback:** Students are invited to share their feedback and experiences to contribute to the ongoing development and improvement of the RSE programme.

**Adherence to Policy:** Students are expected to understand and follow the guidelines and principles set out in the RSE policy.

By fostering an environment that encourages active participation, mutual respect, and open dialogue, students can get the most benefit from the RSE programme.

## E. External Partners

- Working closely with the school to ensure their contributions align with the objectives of the RSE policy.
- Providing resources, insights, or expertise that enhance the delivery of the RSE curriculum.
- Adhering to the school's policies and guidelines when interacting with students, parents, and staff.
- Engaging in regular communication and feedback with the school to continuously improve their contributions to the RSE programme.

## VI. Curriculum

### A. Curriculum Overview

**Scope and Structure:** The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) program is a vital component of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) that is part of the Junior Cycle core curriculum in post-primary schools. All students in the Junior Cycle undertake a short course in SPHE, which equips them with the skills and competencies to care for themselves and others, make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development. The RSE module is included each year, typically in the second term, as part of their SPHE programme. Students in the senior cycle receive a minimum of 6 weeks of tuition or equivalent as part of their RSE provision. The RSE aspect ensures that students receive accurate, age-appropriate information on relationships and sexuality from First Year through to Sixth Year.

**Development and Approval of RSE Programme:** The RSE programme is adapted annually to cater to the specific needs and context of the student body, informed by comprehensive feedback and learning experiences from the previous year. This adaptive curriculum, the foundation of which can be found in Appendix 1, is developed by the dedicated RSE committee. The proposed programme is then presented to the Board of Management for review and approval, ensuring its coherence with the wider educational objectives and ethos of the school. The final curriculum is established no later than November of each academic year, affording teachers ample time for thorough preparation and effective delivery. A template for the RSE Programme is in Appendix 3.

**Key Learning Outcomes:** RSE aims to provide students with knowledge about sexual health, personal relationships, and the social and emotional changes they will experience during their school years. They will learn the importance of respectful relationships, personal safety, and understanding their own and others' sexual identity.

### B. Integration with Other Subjects

**Cross-curricular Links:** Elements of RSE are delivered across the curriculum, incorporated into subjects such as Religious Education, Science, Biology, and Home Economics. This cross-curricular approach ensures a more holistic understanding of the subject matter.

**Reinforcement of Concepts:** The RSE policy seeks to reinforce its teachings by integrating RSE principles throughout all relevant subjects, thereby enabling students to link learnings and understand these concepts' wider implications.

### C. RSE Curriculum Policy Statement on Key Topics

In our Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum, we recognise the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses a wide array of topics to ensure our students are well-informed, supported, and guided. Here are some of the key topics that may form part of the RSE programme, and how they are referenced:

**Understanding and Challenging Gender Stereotypes:** Discussing and challenging traditional gender roles for a more equitable understanding of relationships and sexuality

**Body Image and Self-esteem:** Addressing societal pressures and media representation on self-perception to promote self-acceptance

**The Impact of Media and Culture on Perceptions of Relationships and Sexuality:** We'll explore how media and cultural norms can influence perceptions of relationships, sexuality, beauty standards, and body image, fostering students' critical analysis of these influences

**Coping with Peer Pressure:** Tools for making independent decisions and resisting pressure from peers, particularly in sexual situations

**Respect for Diversity:** Understanding and respect for different cultural, religious, and personal beliefs about relationships and sexuality

**Healthy Relationships:** Instruction on what constitutes a healthy relationship, understanding respect, trust, communication, boundaries, and equality

**Understanding Boundaries and Personal Space:** Teaching about personal boundaries for respectful interactions and understanding of consent

**Consent:** This critical aspect will be addressed directly, emphasising the importance of mutual, informed consent in all interpersonal relationships

**Navigating Breakups:** Providing strategies for managing the emotional fallout from ending relationships

**Digital Citizenship and Cyber Relationships:** Understanding how to maintain respectful and safe relationships online

**Navigating Online Dating:** Given the rise of digital platforms for meeting people and forming relationships, we'll provide guidance on how to use these platforms safely and responsibly

**Online Behaviours:** We will discuss the implications of online behaviours, focusing on digital safety, etiquette, and the impact of digital footprints

**Bystander Intervention:** How to safely intervene when witnessing potentially harmful situations, fostering a culture of collective responsibility

**Puberty and Emotional Changes:** We'll cover the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty, providing students with strategies to manage these changes healthily

**Menstrual Health:** We'll provide comprehensive education about menstrual health, including the use of menstrual products and understanding menstrual disorders

**Male Sexual Health:** Discussions will include topics around erections, wet dreams, and testicular health, including how to perform self-examinations for testicular cancer

**Female Sexual Health:** Topics here will include discussions around vaginal health, the changes that occur during the menstrual cycle, how to perform breast self-examinations for breast cancer, and understanding the changes that occur during menopause

**Prostate Health:** We'll teach young men to understand the function of the prostate and potential health concerns, including how to recognise symptoms of prostate issues

**Reproductive Health and Infertility:** In addition to teaching about reproduction, it's important to discuss infertility and its emotional and physical impacts

**Pregnancy and Parenting:** The biological processes of pregnancy and the responsibilities of parenting for a holistic view of human reproduction

**Menopause:** We'll provide information about menopause, its symptoms and the changes it brings about, using informative resources and lectures

**Sexual Activity:** Teachers will provide information on the legal age of consent in line with the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2006

**Masturbation:** This natural aspect of human sexuality will be openly discussed in a non-judgmental manner

**Sexual Pleasure and Satisfaction:** We'll discuss sexual pleasure and satisfaction, promoting a holistic understanding of human sexuality, in an age-appropriate manner

**Body Autonomy and Self-Respect:** Students will learn about their rights over their own bodies, empowering them to resist unwanted touches, seek medical care when needed, and promote body positivity

**Contraception:** This topic will be presented in an age-appropriate manner

**Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault:** Our curriculum will cover these serious issues, emphasising the importance of respect, consent, prevention, and awareness

**Domestic Violence and Abuse:** Raising awareness of the signs of domestic violence and abuse, as well as available support systems

**Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):** In light of the rising rates of STI transmission, we commit to providing awareness and preventive education on STIs, primarily addressed in the Senior Cycle

**Effects of Substance Abuse on Judgement and Consent:** The repercussions and associated risks of impaired judgement due to substance abuse

**Abortion:** We will address this topic in an age-appropriate manner, ensuring a comprehensive, open, and non-directive discussion of all aspects of the issue

**Sexual Orientation:** We will include the topic of sexual orientation, incorporating a dedicated lesson from the RSE Senior Cycle Resource Materials

**Gender Identity:** Our curriculum promotes understanding, respect, and acceptance of various gender identities

**The Impact of Pornography:** Potential influences of pornography on sexual expectations and behaviours, emphasising the difference between pornography and real-life relationships

**Sex Trafficking and Exploitation:** We'll educate students about the dangers of sex trafficking and exploitation, raising awareness of these serious global issues

In addressing these key topics, our goal is to provide a comprehensive RSE program that informs, supports, and empowers our students. By doing so, we aim to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions about their health and relationships, and to navigate their social development effectively



## VII. Teaching Methodologies

### A. Active Learning Approaches

RSE should not be purely lecture-based. Active learning methodologies, including group work, case studies, role plays, and open discussions, allow students to engage with the topics on a more personal and in-depth level. Students in the senior cycle will receive a minimum of 6 weeks of tuition in RSE as part of their SPHE programme.

### B. Inclusion of Students with Special Needs

Our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme strives for inclusivity and equal access for all students. In accordance with the NCCA guidelines, provisions are established for students with special needs. Prior to the programme, class teachers are required to liaise with the special needs coordinator to discuss any students with special needs and determine how they can be adequately supported throughout the programme. Students with special circumstances are given careful consideration and addressed with utmost sensitivity.

Expanding on these fundamentals, these guidelines are designed to support the teachers involved in our RSE program for students with special educational needs. Our program provides a structured and safe environment where students can develop important skills such as positive self-esteem, social and communication skills, safety and protection skills, and decision-making skills.

To ensure continuity and progression, an essential part of the educational experience, we reference the Primary School Curriculum in all our exemplars. We emphasise individual differences and link potential areas of difficulty with possible strategies for classroom use.

We strive to offer a differentiated approach, allowing all students to access the curriculum. Our active learning approach is underpinned by real-life experiences that relate to the students' environment and prior learning. We utilise a range of assessment strategies to provide meaningful feedback and help our students experience success in learning.

Our goal is to make learning activities meaningful, relevant, and achievable for all students by:

- Setting realistic objectives for the students
- Aligning the learning tasks with prior learning
- Providing opportunities for students to interact and work in small groups
- Allocating more time for tasks
- Breaking down the learning task into small stages
- Ensuring the language used matches the students' understanding level
- Using task analysis, outlining steps in any given task
- Guiding students through different stages/processes via key questions
- Using graphic symbols as reminders to assist students' understanding
- Modelling task analysis by talking through the steps of a task as it is being performed
- Having short and varied tasks
- Creating a learning environment through the use of concrete, everyday materials, word lists, and laminated charts with pictures.

For the area of RSE, we consider a variety of teaching strategies to respond to the unique challenges faced by students with mild general learning disabilities. Our RSE program allows students to experience, process, generalise, and apply their learnings, which mirrors the stages of learning in SPHE, outlined in Social, Personal and Health Education, Junior Cycle Guidelines for Teachers.

We understand that potential areas of difficulty may arise for students with mild general learning disabilities during classroom experiences and methodologies. Hence, we are prepared to tackle these issues proactively, with strategies addressing commonly found areas of potential difficulty.

### C. Answering Questions

Creating an environment in Wellbeing/SPHE/RSE where students can openly discuss issues is critical. However, teachers may not be able to answer all questions asked by students and can set appropriate limits. Students may ask questions about issues not included in the curriculum. On these, and on all questions, teachers will use their professional judgment, guided by the age of the students, the RSE curriculum, and the school's RSE policy. Students should be aware at the beginning of the RSE programme that asking personal questions of staff and peers is inappropriate and unacceptable. A "question box" might be made available in the classroom, allowing students to place questions of an embarrassing nature to be addressed anonymously and confidentially. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, they should seek advice from the Principal/Deputy Principal.

### D. Modelling Positive Relationships

Building healthy relationships is a core aspect of RSE. It's critical for teachers to model positive and supportive relationships to help students learn from real-life scenarios. Here are several ways to build and foster these relationships in the SPHE/RSE context:

**Show You Care:** Get to know students' names as quickly as possible, and show interest and concern for them both in and outside the classroom.

**Be a Good Listener:** Think back to your younger years - if someone made you feel truly heard, try to emulate their methods. Show openness, interest, and empathy, but refrain from probing intensely into personal stories.

**Validate Their Feelings:** Acknowledge the feelings of students without targeting specific individuals. Reassure them that worrying is normal, and stress can even be helpful in some situations by prompting self-care or seeking support.

**Focus on Their Strengths and Capabilities:** Encourage students to reflect on their personal strengths and consider how these traits can assist them in challenging situations. Help them remember times when they demonstrated resilience during difficult circumstances.

**Facilitate Solution-Finding:** Include opportunities for students to engage in problem-solving and find solutions together. Allow students to brainstorm and select the best solution without interruption or prescribed solutions from the teacher. This approach will help students develop self-efficacy and coping mechanisms for future challenges.

**Acknowledge Diversity:** Assume diversity as the norm within every classroom - this includes diversity in sexual identities, gender identities, religious, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Plan for inclusive teaching and learning that accommodates and celebrates this diversity.

**Show Respect for Diverse Views:** Create an environment that allows for open discussions and respects diverse beliefs, values, and experiences. Be prepared to manage strong reactions, ensuring the dialogue remains respectful and constructive.

**Help Students Understand Feelings:** Teach students that feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant, are normal and temporary. Encourage open conversation about their emotions, and guide them to talk to trusted adults or peers when dealing with unpleasant feelings.

In case a student becomes upset, provide the needed support and space, considering their comfort and dignity. Seek support from the school's structures such as the Student Support Team, for ongoing concerns about a particular student. Always report any child protection concerns to the designated liaison person (usually the principal) in the school.

By modelling these positive relationships, teachers can foster an inclusive, empathetic, and respectful classroom environment, aiding the overall goals of SPHE/RSE.

## E. Teacher as a Facilitator

In RSE, the teacher's role extends beyond the traditional realm of imparting knowledge to facilitating students' understanding, learning, and exploration.

This facilitative role entails several key aspects:

**Planning for Learning:** Teachers should consult with students to understand their specific interests and concerns in the area being studied. This ensures that the learning is relevant and engaging for the students.

**Using Active and Collaborative Methodologies:** Teachers should employ active and collaborative teaching and learning methodologies, promoting a more engaging and effective learning experience.

**Admitting Lack of Experience or Knowledge:** The need to be an 'expert' on every subject should be relinquished. Teachers can acknowledge a lack of experience or knowledge on certain questions that arise, which can foster an atmosphere of mutual learning and respect.

Facilitation Skills for Classroom Discussion:

**Active Listening:** Teachers should listen actively to students' thoughts, ideas, and questions to ensure their voices are heard and valued.

**Reflection:** Teachers should reflect back what they have heard to ensure they've accurately understood the student's perspective.

**Clarity Seeking:** When unclear, teachers should ask for further explanation or detail about a student's point, avoiding accusatory or confrontational phrasing like 'why?' or 'what do you mean?'.

**Student's Wording:** When noting ideas from a class discussion or brainstorm, teachers should use the students' own words to validate their contributions.

**Prompting Deeper Thinking:** Teachers should ask questions that provoke further thought and deeper exploration of the topic.

**Validating Experiences:** Teachers should validate students' feelings and experiences, ensuring every student feels heard and acknowledged.

**Managing the Discussion:** Teachers should be comfortable managing intensive discussions, even pressing pause if necessary, to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all students.

**Issue Focus:** Teachers should focus on the issue at hand, avoiding personalising or turning the discussion into personal narratives.

**Presenting Alternative Perspectives:** Teachers should encourage the sharing of different perspectives in a controlled, respectful manner.

**Comfort with Silence:** Teachers should not fear silence, as it can often provide space for thought and reflection.

**Use of Names:** Teachers should use students' names during discussions, ensuring that no one feels singled out or put on the spot.

By assuming this facilitative role, teachers can foster an open, respectful, and engaging learning environment that encourages the exploration and understanding of relationships and sexuality.

## F. Creating a Safe Environment

In the context of SPHE/RSE, students delve into personal, critical, and occasionally challenging aspects about themselves and others. The subject may stir strong emotions, reactions, and feelings of anxiety, embarrassment, and vulnerability. As such, it is crucial to establish a safe environment where students can share, learn, and participate without feeling singled out.

This sense of safety can be fostered through:

**Teacher's Boundaries:** Professional boundaries are essential in teaching SPHE/RSE. Teachers can maintain friendly, trustworthy relationships with students while remembering their role as educators, not friends. The teacher should express their humanity and humor, and sharing life experiences judiciously can be beneficial. However, it's important to avoid personal or professional exposure and respect the boundary of being 'in role' as a teacher, always aware of their limits and when to draw on the expertise of others.

**Classroom Ground Rules:** It's important to establish clear ground rules on how the class will operate. These rules, developed in consultation with students, help ensure respect for privacy and establish appropriate boundaries for class discussions. Ground rules may include:

**Openness While Respecting Boundaries:** Encourage openness and honesty without pressuring anyone to discuss personal lives. Maintain confidentiality within the class.

*Respectful Listening:* Promote a culture of respectful listening and constructive disagreement, devoid of mockery or belittlement.

*Right to Pass:* Reiterate the importance of participation but respect the right to opt-out from answering a question or participating in an activity.

*Awareness of Assumptions or Judgments:* Encourage students to be aware of their assumptions or judgments and to understand differing values, attitudes, and experiences.

*Use of Appropriate Language:* Stress the use of respectful language and correct terminologies. A teacher should be available to clarify any terms.

*Constructive Questions:* Guide students to ask questions or make comments in a manner that doesn't aim to embarrass or hurt anyone. Consider a question box for anonymous queries.

*Sharing Time:* Teach students to appreciate silence and give others an opportunity to voice their thoughts.

**Child Protection:** Lessons in SPHE/RSE might lead to the disclosure of personal stories and information. As such, it's crucial to create awareness about protecting privacy and sharing appropriately. Students should understand the boundaries for class discussion, the limits to confidentiality, and when teachers might need to seek advice or inform others about certain issues for safeguarding purposes.

By instilling these guidelines, a respectful, safe, and accommodating learning environment is fostered, ensuring the well-being of both students and teachers. Such an environment allows for open dialogue about sexuality and relationships while maintaining an atmosphere of respect and mutual trust. This sense of safety and respect helps students feel comfortable, participate fully, and learn effectively.

## G. Addressing Sensitive Issues

Teaching SPHE/RSE is a complex task requiring both sensitivity and adeptness. The curriculum encompasses topics that are deeply personal, often leading to challenging and sensitive discussions. These can range from sexual activity, family planning, sexual orientation, to sexually transmitted infections. These topics demand particular care and delicacy, always within the moral and ethical parameters outlined in the RSE policy.

Recognising the profound impact of these discussions on students' understanding, our RSE policy underscores the importance of open discussions. A closed or incorrect dialogue around these subjects could inadvertently deliver harmful messages to the students. Hence, fostering a safe, open environment where students can meaningfully engage with these topics is crucial.

One must not forget the essentiality of age-appropriate content delivery, considering the cultural context and religious ethos of the school community. Addressing these issues without respecting the diverse backgrounds of our students could alienate some, hindering their educational journey. It is fundamental that all discussions and lessons are cognisant of the diverse needs of our students, including those with special circumstances.

Beyond the topic's sensitivity, the facilitation of such discussions can become complex due to the personal beliefs, values, and comfort levels of educators.

To guide teachers through this challenging journey, we propose the following guidelines:

**Communicate the Learning Intentions:** Ensure students understand the purpose of each lesson to keep the learning focused and on track.

**Model Respectful and Balanced Behaviours:** Students learn significantly from the behaviours modelled by their teachers. Show balance in representing different perspectives and listen respectfully to all students.

**Acknowledge Your Triggers and Limitations:** Be aware of your own limitations when discussing certain topics. It's acceptable to take a pause, think, or acknowledge a lack of knowledge on a particular issue.

**Anticipate Discussions and Viewpoints:** Prepare yourself to handle various viewpoints or questions that might arise during discussions, particularly to challenge misinformation or stereotypes.

**Gauge Students' Prior Knowledge:** Before opening a discussion, assess what students already know about the topic, and address any misconceptions they might have.

**Depersonalise the Discussion:** Use third-person references to make discussions feel less personal and more comfortable for students.

**Appeal to Students' Sensibility:** Remind students to avoid remarks that may hurt their classmates' feelings when discussing a potentially controversial topic.

**Encourage Participation but Respect Boundaries:** While active participation is encouraged, it's essential to acknowledge that some students may prefer to learn by listening and observing.

**Practice Safe Interruption:** Learn to guide the flow of conversation, especially if you need to pause or halt a discussion that is crossing boundaries or veering off-topic.

**Ensure Sensitive Closure:** After discussing a sensitive topic, provide a thoughtful conclusion and make yourself available for further conversation if needed.

In conclusion, the teachers' role is pivotal in transforming challenging moments into opportunities for learning. They must uphold the agreed ground rules, support students, and be open to seeking help or self-reflection. The ultimate goal remains to create an open, safe, and inclusive space for the discussion of vital SPHE/RSE topics.

## H. Student Voice in RSE

Considering student consultation as the starting point in planning teaching and learning in RSE could yield a multitude of benefits. Student voice enriches the learning experience in SPHE, providing unique insights into students' prior knowledge, concerns, interests, and what truly matters for their learning. Without this consultation, we risk developing curriculum based on adult assumptions rather than the actual and expressed needs of young people.

**Benefits of Student Voice in RSE:** Including student voice ensures that the content of RSE lessons and the methodologies for teaching and learning align with what students perceive as critical. It

provides a current snapshot of their needs and fosters a sense of shared responsibility for learning. Furthermore, integrating students' perspectives can serve as a catalyst for parent involvement.

**Card Sorting:** Prepare sets of cards (hard copy or digital) with different topics from the RSE curriculum written or depicted on each card. Have students rank the cards or arrange them in order of importance. Discuss why the top-ranking cards are important and what exactly they want to learn about these topics. Use this information to inform your planning.

**Reflection on Past Learning:** Ask students to reflect on their previous learning in RSE. What was good about it? What was missing? What would they change? Collect responses anonymously via an online survey with your class or a whole year group. Use the collected feedback to improve your teaching plans.

**Small Group Discussions:** Divide your students into small groups. Explain the aim of SPHE and ask what they have learnt so far that has helped them move towards achieving this aim. What else could they learn about in class to help achieve the aim? Are there specific skills they need to develop?

**Feedback after Lessons:** After each lesson, ask open-ended questions that allow students to give regular feedback. Consider using emoji's for students who might find open-ended questions difficult to answer.

**Postcard Activity:** Invite students to write a postcard or record a message to their past selves about what they wish they had been taught and another to their future selves about what they hope to learn. Ensure these contributions remain anonymous.

**Entrance and Exit Slips:** Use Entrance Slips at the beginning of class for students to reflect on the previous lesson and write down any difficulties or questions. At the end of the class, use Exit Slips for students to note down their key takeaway or any lingering questions.

**KWL Strategy:** Before introducing a new topic, use the KWL (Know, Want to know, Learned) strategy. Ask students to jot down what they already know, what they want to know, and, at the end of the lesson, what they've learned.

Promoting student voice helps establish a safe classroom environment. Encourage students to discuss the various factors that enable them to voice their opinions and the barriers that might prevent them from expressing their thoughts and feelings. Solutions to these barriers can be explored collectively in small groups or pairs.

Remember, young people have a right to have their voices heard and for adults to listen and take them seriously in matters that affect them, as stated in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## I. Creating an Inclusive Classroom

In the realm of RSE, it is crucial to understand and acknowledge that there is no 'typical' child or young person. Students come from an array of backgrounds and experiences, and they possess diverse identities. Celebrating these differences and promoting an inclusive environment is the key to effective teaching in RSE.

Our classrooms are a melting pot of diversity – from family backgrounds, abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations, to socio-economic circumstances, cultures, and beliefs.

Here are strategies that can help build an inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong:

**Develop caring relationships:** Getting to know each student by their names promptly and expressing genuine interest in their lives both inside and outside the classroom.

**Establish a conducive classroom atmosphere:** Create a safe space for honest discussions, respectful listening, and openness to diverse opinions and experiences.

**Use respectful language:** It's critical to employ compassionate language when talking about people and to promptly address disrespectful language or discriminatory behaviors.

**Assume diversity:** Even in seemingly homogeneous classrooms, it's essential to be conscious of potential unseen diversity. For instance, there may be LGBTQI+ students or students with LGBTQI+ loved ones, even if it isn't openly known.

**Support development of inclusive attitudes:** Encourage students to recognise and address stereotypes, bias, unfairness, and discrimination. Also, foster their ability to challenge such behaviours.

**Use diverse teaching methods:** Incorporate a range of examples, scenarios, and case studies that reflect the spectrum of students' lives, experiences, and identities.

**Create an inclusive physical space:** Display images that reflect diversity, like different family units, types of relationships, and information relevant to diverse students.

**Allow all voices to be heard:** Ensure every student gets a fair chance to express their views, respecting their differing comfort levels, maturity, and openness.

**Use inclusive and gender-neutral language:** Language is a powerful tool that shapes perception. Therefore, be conscious of the language used in class, and actively promote inclusivity.

The true essence of an inclusive RSE classroom lies in treating individual differences as a resource that can enrich everyone's lives and learning. It's crucial to be mindful of the language used, as unintentional misuse can cause discomfort or make students feel undervalued. Instead of labels that stereotype or degrade, promote the use of respectful terms and emphasise health over physical appearance. Moreover, actively challenge heteronormative assumptions, keeping in mind the fluidity of gender and sexuality.

Lastly, avoid the word 'normal' as it often implies a judgment on those who fall outside the category. Point out your own assumptions when possible and correct them, signalling to students that it's okay to learn and grow. This also applies when textbooks or resources do not reflect diversity and inclusion, turning them into teachable moments to develop a critical eye. Avoid unnecessary grouping based on gender, which can perpetuate stereotypes and exclude some students. Instead, use neutral terms like 'everyone' or 'folks'.

In summary, creating an inclusive SPHE/RSE classroom involves the commitment to challenge biases, assumptions, and stereotypes continuously while promoting respect, compassion, and a sense of belonging for all students.



## J. Choosing RSE Resources

In the context of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), an extensive array of resources is available to support teaching and learning processes. The utilisation of diverse resources can be valuable in meeting the requirements of an assorted student body. However, it is of utmost importance to deliberate the resource selection critically, considering the unique needs of each school and classroom setting.

To guide this selection, several key considerations are suggested:

**Relevance to Learning Outcomes:** The resource should align with intended learning outcomes, be relevant to the curriculum, and support lesson plans.

**Relevance to Students' Lives:** The resource should be applicable to the students' lived experiences and needs.

**Appeal and Accessibility:** Resources should be appealing and accessible to students, taking into consideration language, layout, and types of media used. It should also be possible to adapt the resource to accommodate students with special educational needs (SEN) to learn alongside their peers.

**Promotion of Active Learning:** Resources should encourage active and experiential learning, and stimulate critical thinking, questioning, discussion, and reflection.

**Age and Stage Appropriateness:** Resources must be suitable for students' age and developmental stage.

**Inclusivity:** Resources should respect and include the diverse family forms, backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs present in the class and the broader community. They should encourage students to consider different perspectives and viewpoints.

**Stereotype Reinforcement or Challenge:** Resources should challenge, rather than reinforce, biases and stereotypes concerning gender, social class, and ability/disability.

**Representation of All Gender and Sexuality Identities:** The lives of people of all gender and sexuality identities should be meaningfully reflected in the resources.

**Source of Funding:** The funding source for the resource should be considered, especially if it might bias the content.

**Reputation and Evidence-Informed Content:** Resources should be created by reputable sources and include evidence-informed content and methodologies.

**Promotion of a Particular Worldview:** The resource should be evaluated for any attempts to promote a specific worldview, belief system, or set of values.

**Alignment with School's RSE Policy:** Resources should align with the established RSE policy of the school.

Resource selection for RSE should be conducted with these considerations to ensure a rich, comprehensive, and inclusive educational experience for all students. Optimal resources will cultivate

a safe, open environment that promotes understanding, inclusivity, and respect. Appendix 2 provides a curated list of resources used in the preparation for teaching of RSE at Midleton College.

## VIII. Parent/Guardian Engagement

### A. Communication and Consultation

#### 1. Channels of Communication

We firmly believe that parents/guardians play an invaluable role as primary educators in their children's lives, particularly in their education about relationships and sexuality. To foster an open, transparent relationship with parents/guardians, the school uses multiple communication channels. These include direct meetings, regular newsletters, and updates on the school's website. Parents/guardians will receive an RSE information letter at the beginning of each RSE programme, providing an overview of what their child will be learning.

#### 2. Opportunities for Consultation

To ensure active participation and to create a shared understanding of the RSE programme, the school organises parental consultation processes in various forms. These include participation in policy development, invitation to informational talks, and providing parents/guardians with a summary of the RSE programme in the school. Where possible, the school also offers parents/guardians the opportunity to access the teaching materials used in the RSE programme, ensuring complete transparency about what their children are learning.

### B. Parental Consent and Opt-out Provisions

#### 1. Process for Providing Consent

Prior to the commencement of RSE units of work, parents/guardians will receive a notification detailing the content to be covered and asking for their consent. This process ensures that parents/guardians are fully aware of the topics their child will be engaging with, allowing them to make informed decisions about their child's participation.

#### 2. Opt-out Guidelines

We understand and respect that some parents/guardians may prefer to handle certain aspects of RSE at home. Therefore, the school offers an opt-out provision for those who wish to withdraw their child from the RSE programme. While we don't require a reason for this decision, we encourage parents/guardians to communicate their concerns with us to help us continually improve our approach to RSE.

### C. Parent Education and Resources

#### 1. Parental Workshops

Recognising the crucial role parents/guardians play in their child's education, the school may offer workshops and information sessions about the RSE programme. These sessions offer an in-depth understanding of the curriculum, discuss sensitive issues related to relationships and sexuality, and provide strategies to engage children in meaningful conversations at home.

#### 2. Available Resources

In addition to workshops, the school provides a range of resources to parents/guardians to aid them in their vital role as primary educators. These resources include the RSE policy document, detailed syllabus, and core resource materials. Parents/guardians can request these resources from the school office or download them from the school website.

In all these ways, we strive to keep parents/guardians actively involved in their child's RSE education. By fostering open dialogue and providing a wealth of resources, we aim to support parents/guardians and enhance the effectiveness of our RSE programme.

## IX. External Partnerships and Collaborations

### A. Health Services Collaboration

Our school maintains an ongoing partnership with local health services to enhance the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme. These partnerships, governed by Circular 0023/2010 (SPHE and RSE Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools), contribute by providing accurate and relevant health information, sharing expertise, and delivering specific health-related sessions. All collaborations are strategically planned to align with the school's RSE policy and curriculum.

### B. Partnerships with NGOs and Community Organisations

We collaborate with various NGOs and community organisations possessing expertise in areas pertinent to RSE. These partnerships enrich the RSE program by offering external perspectives, resources, and knowledge. Partner organisations contribute through guest lectures, workshops, and other educational interventions, all thoroughly scrutinised for relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with the school's policies.

### C. Use of External Speakers and Programs

#### 1. Integration of External Speakers in RSE Curriculum

Incorporating external speakers and programs can enrich the school's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum, as long as they comply with and respect the established school policies and their content is consistent with the existing RSE curriculum. Content delivered should be age-appropriate and refrain from deploying ineffective techniques, such as scare tactics, sensationalist interventions, or testimonials.

Integration of visiting RSE speakers into the annual RSE program is anticipated and communicated to parents/guardians well in advance, fostering transparency and keeping them informed about the information imparted to their children.

The schedule and integration of external speakers and programs into the RSE curriculum require meticulous planning. Subsequent evaluations by both students and teachers confirm if learning outcomes are achieved and provide insights for future enhancements.

The ultimate objective of these varied external collaborations is to establish a comprehensive and effective RSE program that empowers students with vital knowledge and skills for their personal and social lives.

#### 2. Guidelines for External Facilitators in RSE

The school recognises the potential of external facilitators to complement, support, and enhance learning in the field of SPHE and RSE. Careful consideration and preparation are prerequisites before inviting a guest facilitator into the classroom.

To guide this process, the following considerations are suggested:

*Requirement of External Facilitator:* While the qualified classroom teacher is the primary professional to work sensitively and consistently with students, there may be instances where external facilitators can offer additional expertise to support SPHE and RSE teaching.

*Communication:* External facilitators must be approved by the principal or Board of Management, in consultation with relevant teaching staff. All materials proposed for use by the external facilitator must be shared in advance with the Principal.

*Complementary Approach:* The input from the external facilitator needs to be part of an integrated program of learning, providing a context for the overall approach to SPHE.

*Wellbeing-Supportive Approach:* The approach should enhance protective factors that predispose students to positive life skills, avoiding shock or scare tactics and handling sensitive topics with care and expertise.

*Relevance and Up-to-Date Content:* The content should be factual, up-to-date, evidence-informed, and relevant to the life experiences of our students.

*Teacher Capacity Building:* The engagement with external facilitators should aim to build teacher capacity too, allowing the teacher to build their understanding and skills alongside their students.

*Source of External Facilitators:* Facilitators might be found within the local community, through local health centres, sexual health centres, and NGOs that provide expert facilitators.

*Review and Evaluation:* The use of external facilitators should be evaluated by students and teachers with regard to the subject matter, methodology, and learning gained.

### 3. Additional Considerations

External facilitators must have passed garda vetting and comply with the school's child protection policy and other relevant school policies and procedures.

Programs should be delivered by facilitators who are qualified to work within the specific area of content and with the students for whom the programs are designed.

Facilitators should demonstrate appropriate understanding of the SPHE curriculum and be able to link their work to relevant learning outcomes within the SPHE curriculum.

## X. Staff Training and Support

### A. Training Opportunities

#### 1. Internal Training

The school acknowledges the importance of teacher training in the successful delivery of the RSE programme. While not all teachers need to be experts on RSE, they must be equipped with the necessary skills to handle discussions sensitively, answer questions openly and honestly, and know when to refer to more specialised advice. Accordingly, the school facilitates internal training opportunities for teachers interested in teaching RSE. The Principal will handle arrangements regarding the deployment of staff for RSE instruction. Preference is given to teachers who express an interest in teaching the subject.

#### 2. External Training

In addition to internal resources, the school also leverages external training opportunities provided by the Wellbeing and SPHE support services. Teachers are encouraged by the Principal to participate in such training to continuously enhance their teaching skills in the area of RSE.

### B. Supporting Staff Well-being

#### 1. Available Support Services

The school recognises the potentially sensitive nature of teaching RSE and is committed to supporting the well-being of the teaching staff. A designated SPHE coordinator is appointed to guide the staff and ensure the smooth implementation of the RSE programme. This person also serves as a point of contact for staff seeking advice or experiencing challenges in their role.

#### 2. Encouraging Consultation and Collaboration

Teachers are consulted prior to being timetabled to teach RSE, ensuring their comfort and readiness to handle the subject matter. Consideration is also given to gender balance in the teaching of RSE to create a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

### C. External Support and Resources

#### 1. External Training Providers

The school is open to collaboration with external training providers to supplement the professional development of our staff in RSE. Such collaborations are carefully evaluated for their relevance and effectiveness.

#### 2. Resource Accessibility and Utilisation

The school ensures that all RSE teachers have access to the necessary teaching materials. These resources support the delivery of high-quality, age-appropriate and engaging RSE instruction. The school is committed to keeping these resources up-to-date and relevant to the evolving needs of the students and the curriculum.

## XI. Policy Review and Updates

### A. Review Schedule

#### 1. Regular Review Timeline

The RSE policy will undergo a comprehensive review every three years, or sooner if necessary. This regular review is essential to ensure the policy remains effective, relevant and responsive to the needs of the students, parents/guardians, and the school community.

#### 2. Trigger Events for Unscheduled Reviews

In addition to the regular review, unscheduled reviews may be triggered by changing information, guidelines, legislation, or significant feedback from students, parents/guardians, teachers, and other stakeholders. It may also occur in response to specific events or developments within the school community that have implications for the RSE policy.

### B. Policy Revision Procedures

#### 1. Steps for Policy Amendment

The principal, while overseeing the overall implementation of the policy, may delegate the monitoring task to the RSE staff. Amendments to the policy, resulting from the review process, are coordinated by the policy committee in consultation with the wider school community. Inputs from students, teachers, and parents/guardians are actively sought and considered to ensure the policy continues to serve the needs of all stakeholders effectively.

#### 2. Approval and Implementation of Changes

Once the amendments are finalised, they will be submitted to the board of management for approval. Upon approval, the revised policy will be implemented in line with the school's planning framework.

At each review, practical indicators will be used to assess the policy's impact and effectiveness. Such indicators may include:

- Successful teaching of RSE across all relevant students
- Availability and use of resource material by teachers
- Level of in-service training availed by teachers
- Awareness of the policy among students, parents/guardians
- Positive feedback from teachers, students, parents/guardians, and members of the Board of Management

Tools such as student/teacher evaluation forms, confidential surveys, feedback from student council, parent/teacher meetings, and a comment/suggestion box could support the review and evaluation process.

Furthermore, an evaluation of the RSE programme will be conducted with all students and staff at the end of each RSE module. This evaluation forms part of an annual review, which informs the development of the RSE programme for the forthcoming year.

## Appendix 1

Foundational Curricular RSE

### Junior Cycle RSE

Aims, educational outcomes and topics for each year:

Form I

This module will be prepared in accordance with school policy on relationships and sexuality education. Further details are included in the Teacher Guidelines for Social, Personal and Health Education.

| Topic                               | Aims  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Me as unique and different</b>   | — To develop skills for promoting self-esteem   |
| <b>Friendship</b>                   | — To further explore the qualities valued in friendship;<br>— To help the students to identify their responsibilities in different types of relationships.  |
| <b>Changes at adolescence</b>       | — To help the students to understand the physical, emotional and psychological changes that take place during adolescence;<br>— To help the students to appreciate that these changes occur at different times and at different rates, depending on the individual. |
| <b>The reproductive system</b>      | — To enable the students to clarify their information on the male and female reproductive systems, intercourse, and conception.   |
| <b>Images of male and female</b>    | — To enable the students to deepen their awareness of stereotyping and its influence on attitudes and behaviour.  |
| <b>Respecting myself and others</b> | — To identify some contemporary attitudes to sexuality;<br>— To help the students to recognise the need for respect for sexuality.  |

**Outcomes:** As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- Have an appreciation of their personal talents and those of others;
- Have explored some aspects of sex stereotyping;
- Have a knowledge of the physical, emotional and psychological change related to adolescence;
- Have a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive systems;
- Be sensitive to the need for respect for one's own sexuality and the sexuality of others.

## Form II

This module will be prepared in accordance with school policy on relationships and sexuality education. Further details are included in the Teacher Guidelines for Social, Personal and Health Education.

| Topic   | Aims  |
|---|---|
| <b>From conception to birth</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— To examine the stages of development from conception to birth.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— To help the students to differentiate between different types of relationships;</li><li>— To promote awareness of the feelings and emotions associated with a variety of relationships.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Peer pressure and other influences</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— To help the students to explore the role of peer pressure and other influences in the area of sexuality.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Managing relationships</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— To enable the students to develop skills for establishing and maintaining relationships at appropriate levels.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Making responsible decisions</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— To identify skills necessary for making decisions—consistent with personal values and within a moral framework—about behaviour in relationships.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Health and personal safety</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— To help the students to develop an awareness of the potential risks involved in developing new relationships;</li><li>— To enable the students to identify practical steps for personal security;</li><li>— To raise awareness about sexually transmitted diseases.</li></ul> |

### *Outcomes:*

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- Have a knowledge of the developmental stages from conception to birth;
- Have a heightened awareness of the emotional aspects of a range of relationships;
- Have analysed some of the influences that shape views of sexuality;
- Have developed their skills for communicating in relationships;
- Have further developed their decision-making skills;
- Be aware of the potential for danger in forming new relationships;
- Have a basic knowledge of sexually transmitted disease;
- Have a knowledge of some help agencies and their role.



Form III

This module will be prepared in accordance with school policy on relationships and sexuality education. Further details are included in the Teacher Guidelines for Social, Personal and Health Education.

| Topic  | Aims  |
|--|---|
| <b>Body image</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To offer opportunities for self-reflection;</li> <li>— To enable the students to further develop their skills for enhancing self-esteem.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Where am I now?</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To facilitate a review of the stages of human growth and development, with particular reference to growth and</li> <li>— development at adolescence.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Relationships: what's important?</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To help the students to identify the qualities they value in a relationship;</li> <li>— To enable the students to examine some of the priorities in relationships as depicted in a variety of media.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>The three R's: respect rights, and responsibilities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To enable the students to identify their rights and responsibilities in a relationship;</li> <li>— To develop skills for protecting rights and promoting</li> <li>— responsibilities in personal relationships;</li> <li>— To develop awareness of the importance of respect in relationships.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Conflict</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To enable the students to identify possible sources of conflict in relationships;</li> <li>— To help the students to apply conflict resolution and communication skills to those situations.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Health and personal safety</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To help students get a basic understanding of contraception in relation to preventing pregnancy, and how contraception works to prevent pregnancy;</li> <li>— Students are provided with basic understanding of how Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are transmitted. They also become aware of how certain contraceptives can help protect against STIs.;</li> <li>— To increase students' awareness of sexual orientation and explore;</li> <li>— Some of the issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people. Students come up with a variety of different ways that they can support people of different sexual orientation. Students also appreciate that everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.</li> </ul> |

### Outcomes:

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- Have practised communication skills and skills for enhancing self-esteem;
- Have reviewed their understanding of the adolescent stage of human growth and development;
- Have identified and recognised the importance of respect, rights and responsibilities in relationships;
- Be aware of the causes of conflict in relationships;
- Be prepared to deal with such situations of conflict.

## Senior Cycle RSE

The three themes of RSE at post-primary level are:

- Human relationships;
- Human growth and development;
- Human sexuality.

Young people in senior cycle are involved in many different relationships with family, friends and others. Everyday students are forming, developing and ending relationships. There can be a dramatic change in the level of intimacy experienced and the quality of relationships. Students' ability to interact effectively depends on a personal sense of self-worth and having the life skills to negotiate their way respectfully through the cycle of various relationships. Parallel to this, young people are maturing sexually and are growing in awareness of their sexuality.

RSE emphasises the importance of self-awareness and self-esteem in understanding these changes. It emphasises the development of one's ability to interact respectfully with others. It provides students with an opportunity to understand different types of relationships and the attitudes, values and life skills that support the healthy development of these relationships.

Students can continue to develop a positive and respectful attitude to their own and others' sexuality and sexual health. They can make informed choices about themselves as sexual beings, which respect both the needs and rights of themselves and others.

Students can develop an understanding of familial, cultural and religious values and consider how these values support healthy informed choices in relation to relationships, sexuality and sexual health.

### **The aims of this area of learning are:**

- To explore personal thoughts, values and attitudes and how they influence relationships;
- To develop an understanding of what is important in relationships and how one can act in support of different relationships;
- To promote an understanding of the facts and considerations in relation to sexual reproduction, sexuality and sexual orientation;
- To encourage the development of personal and social skills which support beginning, maintaining and ending relationships;
- To support students' active involvement in their own learning.

*The learning outcomes have been informed by the RSE interim curriculum and guidelines for post-primary schools (NCCA, 1996).*

| Content  | Learning outcomes  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Self-awareness and personal skills</b></p> | <p><b>Students will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Develop awareness of the personal strengths that they bring to relationships;</li> <li>— Critically examine what they value in relationships, including their relationships with their parents;</li> <li>— Compare and contrast what they value in relationships with the values and attitudes displayed in different relationships portrayed in the media;</li> <li>— Consider the impact of supportive parent/child relationships on the development of self-esteem and independence;</li> <li>— Draw up a personal life plan including consideration of their personal, social and vocational goals and the place of parenthood in this plan;</li> <li>— Consider the importance of positive body image and self-image in the context of relationships;</li> <li>— Explore the concepts of love and being in love and the importance of love in its various aspects, including closeness, intimacy, distance, pleasure and commitment.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Relationship skills</b></p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Consider the importance of genuineness, empathy and respect in all types of relationships;</li> <li>— Develop assertiveness skills in support of positive, healthy relationships;</li> <li>— Identify and apply relationship skills which support the setting up, maintenance and ending of relationships;</li> <li>— Identify and develop the skills to negotiate sexual relationships in order to avoid unwanted or unprotected sexual intercourse.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Sexual &amp; Reproductive Health</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Understand the different stages of sexual development, including the physical and emotional changes that take place in puberty;</li> <li>— Understand the reproductive process including fertility from both male and female perspectives;</li> <li>— Understand different methods of contraception and discuss contraception in relation to physical health including sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy;</li> <li>— Know and understand about Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) and STIs, the importance of early medical intervention and where this support is available;</li> <li>— Critically examine different lifestyle choices about sexual activity, the arguments for delaying sexual activity and the consequences of being sexually active for themselves and their personal relationships;</li> <li>— Recognise and discuss the emotional, social and sexual pressures experienced by young people in personal relationships in relation to sexual behavior decisions behaviour decisions.</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Sexual identity</b></p>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Differentiate between sexual activity, sexuality and sexual orientation;</li> <li>— Develop awareness of and comfort with personal sexual orientation; Respect others of a different sexual orientation;</li> <li>— Understand the effects of homophobic bullying.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Parenting</b></p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Consider the role of commitment and relationship skills in marriage and other committed relationships that help to support lasting relationships and family life;</li> <li>— Know and understand the responsibilities and consequences of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— close relationships, including being a parent;</li> </ul> </li> <li>— Outline and discuss the consequences of unwanted pregnancy,</li> <li>— teenage pregnancy and/or parenthood for males and females.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Sexual harassment</b></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Reflect on their right to personal safety, privacy and their own space, and the consequences for them when these are not respected;</li> <li>— Know and understand what sexual harassment is, including issues of power and control;</li> <li>— Consider personal and social skills for dealing with such an <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— experience, including where to access help and support;</li> </ul> </li> <li>— Develop personal and social skills to assess risks, to be assertive and to manage conflict situations appropriately.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Building health literacy</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Know and understand the law as it relates to sexual activity, for example, the legal age for consensual sex or how to seek independent medical advice;</li> <li>— Examine the complexity of moral, social and cultural issues that impact on sexual behaviour and relationships;</li> <li>— Identify and discuss the services offered by statutory and voluntary;</li> <li>— organisations in the community to promote sexual health and wellbeing, especially of young adults;</li> <li>— Identify the statutory and voluntary agencies which offer support to those experiencing relationship difficulties;</li> <li>— Critique different media sources in relation to the messages about sexual activity, sexuality and sexual orientation.</li> </ul> |

## Appendix 2

### Curated List of Resources for RSE Teaching

#### Self-awareness and Personal Skills

- "Yes Project" by Youth Work Ireland: A consent education program to support RSE in informal education settings.
- "B4udecide" by HSE: Includes various sessions focusing on the influence of media, friends, values, making decisions, and self-esteem.

#### Relationships

- "B4udecide" by HSE: Includes sessions focusing on friendships, building relationships, rights and responsibilities in a relationship, age of consent, and relationship pressures.
- "BodyRight" by Dublin Rape Crisis Centre: A series of workshops teaching about sexual violence, consent, online coercion, and supporting someone who has been abused.
- "Let's Get Real" by Dublin Rape Crisis Centre: Educates young people about the impact of media, culture, and pornography on relationships.
- "Consent – What do I need to know?" by Dublin Rape Crisis Centre: A fact sheet about consent.
- "Cycling Through Consent" by Western University: An animated video about consent.
- "Teaching about consent in PSHE Education at Key Stages 3 and 4" by PSHE Association UK: Guidance and lesson plans.
- "The Active Consent programme" by NUI Galway: Provides support to schools and colleges wishing to provide sexual consent education.

#### Sexual and Reproductive Health

- "B4udecide" by HSE: Includes sessions focusing on teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.
- "Talking about Sexual Health" by Youth Work Ireland: A resource to support youth workers to identify opportunities to open up conversations with young people about sexual health and staying safe.
- "Sex Educated" by Grace Alice O'Shea, Sexual Health West

#### Sexual Identity

- "Gender identity and gender expression e-resources for second-level schools" by University of Limerick: Helps teachers understand and support diversity of gender identities.
- "BelongTo": An organisation supporting LGBTI+ young people.
- "Transforming the Classroom: Supporting Trans Young People in Schools" by TENI.
- "Being LGBT in school" by GLEN: A resource to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying and support LGBT students.

## Personal Rights and Personal Safety


- "Senior Cycle Personal Safety Resource Pack" by PDST: Explores various topics such as anger, violence, conflict, domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and rape.
- "BodyRight" by Dublin Rape Crisis Centre: A series of workshops teaching about sexual violence, consent, online coercion, and supporting someone who has been abused.
- "Why is porn an issue for schools?" : Discusses the impact of pornography on schools.
- "Pornography – What do you need to know?" by Dublin Rape Crisis Centre: A fact sheet about pornography.
- "It's Time We Talked" : An Australian website discussing the harms of children and young people's exposure to and consumption of pornography.
- "A guide to talking to your teenager about consent and pornography" by Dublin Rape Crisis Centre.

## Being Health Literate

- "Guidance": A webpage on how to identify reliable and age-appropriate websites.
- "Spunout": Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people.
- "BeWiser" by Sexual Health West: A resource promoting positive sexual health awareness.
- "Sexual Wellbeing" by HSE: Provides advice and information on all aspects of sexual health.

# Appendix 3

## Template for RSE Programme

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  <b>RSE Programme 23-24</b><br>Nov 23  | <p>4. Main points from staff review.</p> <div data-bbox="799 456 1310 663"></div> <p>5. Main points from RSE coordinator and committee review.</p> <div data-bbox="799 696 1310 902"></div> <p>6. Any other observations on implementation of RSE programme last year</p> <div data-bbox="799 943 1310 1149"></div> |
| <p><b>Previous Academic year</b></p> <p>1. Was the RSE Programme completed as envisaged? If no, please state what was different and why.</p> <div data-bbox="225 591 735 745"></div> <p>2. What were the number of students in each year group that opted out of RSE in the previous academic year; if reasons were offered, please list.</p> <div data-bbox="225 790 735 945"></div> <p>3. Main points from student review.</p> <div data-bbox="225 978 735 1133"></div> |   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. <b>Form II</b> - List of foundational topics:</p> <div data-bbox="233 1283 746 1496"><p>From conception to birth<br/>Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions<br/>Peer pressure and other influences<br/>Managing relationships<br/>Making responsible decisions<br/>Health and personal safety</p></div> <p>2. List of other topics:</p> <div data-bbox="233 1529 746 1736"></div> <p>3. Topics added or subtracted from previous year and why?</p> <div data-bbox="233 1776 746 1982"></div> | <p>4. How is the RSE curriculum to be timetabled?</p> <div data-bbox="810 1283 1324 1496"></div> <p>5. Teachers involved:</p> <div data-bbox="810 1529 1324 1736"></div> <p>6. Any change in teaching methodology planned?</p> <div data-bbox="810 1776 1324 1982"></div> |
|--|---|

**1. Form II - List of foundational topics:**

From conception to birth  
Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions  
Peer pressure and other influences  
Managing relationships  
Making responsible decisions  
Health and personal safety

**2. List of other topics:**

**3. Topics added or subtracted from previous year and why?**

**4. How is the RSE curriculum to be timetabled?**

**5. Teachers involved:**

**6. Any change in teaching methodology planned?**

**1. Form III - List of foundational topics:**

Body image  
Where am I now?  
Relationships: what's important?  
The three R's: respect rights, and responsibilities  
Conflict  
Health and personal safety

**2. List of other topics:**

**3. Topics added or subtracted from previous year and why?**

**4. How is the RSE curriculum to be timetabled?**

**5. Teachers involved:**

**6. Any change in teaching methodology planned?**



**1. Form IV - List of foundational topics:**

Self-awareness and personal skills  
Relationship skills  
Sexual & Reproductive Health  
Sexual identity  
Parenting  
Sexual harassment  
Building health literacy

**2. List of other topics:**

**3. Topics added or subtracted from previous year and why?**

**4. How is the RSE curriculum to be timetabled?**

**5. Teachers involved:**

**6. Any change in teaching methodology planned?**

**1. Form V - List of foundational topics:**

Self-awareness and personal skills  
Relationship skills  
Sexual & Reproductive Health  
Sexual identity  
Parenting  
Sexual harassment  
Building health literacy

**2. List of other topics:**

**3. Topics added or subtracted from previous year and why?**

**4. How is the RSE curriculum to be timetabled?**

**5. Teachers involved:**

**6. Any change in teaching methodology planned?**

**1. Form VI - List of foundational topics:**

Self-awareness and personal skills  
Relationship skills  
Sexual & Reproductive Health  
Sexual identity  
Parenting  
Sexual harassment  
Building health literacy

**2. List of other topics:**

**3. Topics added or subtracted from previous year and why?**

**4. How is the RSE curriculum to be timetabled?**

**5. Teachers involved:**

**6. Any change in teaching methodology planned?**

**Other Areas**

**1. Are any External facilitators to be used? If yes, please give details and whether they have been used previously.**

**2. Is any external RSE program being used? If yes, please give details; indicate if it has been used before.**

**3. Any other points relating to the RSE Programme for the current academic year?**

**4. It the RSE Programme to be delivered consistent with the Middleton College RSE Policy?**

**5. Any points relevant to a review of the RSE Policy?**

Completed by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by BOM on \_\_\_\_\_