

St. Joseph's Grammar School

Scoil Ghramadaí Naomh Iósaef



R.S.E Policy

2015 – 2016

Pastoral Vice Principal
Mrs A. Mc Gleenan

A Proud Past...
...A Better Future

Mission Statement

St Joseph's Grammar School is a Catholic educational community where students are nurtured, respected and guided in accordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ. We are fully committed to academic excellence for our students. We seek to inspire and guide them to become leaders who will promote Christian values and justice in their families, the Church and the wider community.

Rationale

RSE is an educational entitlement of all pupils and is an integral part of the Personal Development Programme. It is an important part of each pupil's emergence into adulthood. St. Joseph's Grammar School advocates the Personal Development approach where young people are given the skills to help them resist peer and media pressure and make informed decisions based on their own internal self respect and self esteem.

Northern Ireland has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in Europe, with approximately 1,700 babies born each year to young women under 20 years. The incidence of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) continues to rise.

We believe that much of the media's treatment of sexuality and relationships, in music, TV soaps, films and magazines, is contrary to, and often in direct conflict with, Catholic Church Teaching.

Morals and Values

In St. Joseph's Grammar School we are committed to an RSE Programme which upholds the Catholic ethos of the school and include it in all aspects of RSE teaching.

Aims and Objectives

Relationships and sexuality is a major issue for our young people. This policy is intended to provide a framework through which young people can develop the skills, attitudes and values necessary to deal with the challenges which they will meet in this very sensitive area.

- To ensure that the planning and delivery of RSE reflects the ethos and values framework of St. Joseph's Grammar School.
- To value and support school personnel involved in the planning and delivery of RSE.
- To ensure that RSE enables our pupils to develop and maintain safe, healthy and satisfying personal relationships.
- To prepare our pupils for adult life, so that they have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and concepts to make informed judgements and choices, in particular in the area of sexual activities, through the school's programme.
- To provide pupils with age appropriate factual information about sexual matters, in the context of Christian principles and loving relationships within a family.

- To seek to involve parents in the education of their children and where possible to assist them in providing the right relationships at home in which meaningful discussions can take place.
- To involve outside agencies as complementary parts of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme, providing medical advice/materials and professional personnel that can be used in the school and to encourage them in providing external support for pupils and families where necessary.
- To encourage personal responsibility in all forms of behaviour.

Outcomes

Desired outcomes are:

- enhanced self-awareness and self-esteem
- healthy and respectful friendships and relationships
- an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework
- responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions
- a sense of value for family life and marriage
- an appreciation of the responsibilities of parenthood
- appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth

Context

RSE provides knowledge and encourages young people to develop the skills, attitudes and values which will allow them to manage their lives in a responsible and healthy way.

a) Knowledge and Information

Pupils will be presented with the relevant information in a sensitive manner using a variety of approaches.

b) Values and Beliefs

As well as knowledge and information pupils will be encouraged to consider the importance of the following values;

- Respect and valuing of themselves and others.
- Understanding and sensitivity towards the needs and views of others.
- Responsibility for their own actions.

c) Skills and Abilities

Pupils will be helped to develop the following skills;

- Communication including the making and keeping of healthy relationships.
- Assertiveness and decision making.
- Recognising and using opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Responding to sensitive issues

In St. Joseph's Grammar School we recognise that, on occasion, certain sensitive issues may require consideration. When attempting to deal with these issues the following procedures will be adopted:

- **Pregnancy**
We aim to support any Young women who may become pregnant whilst enrolled at our school. Following consultation and agreement with the young mother to be, referral may be made to the SELB's SAM (School Age Mothers) Project.

In the event of a young woman informing the school that she is pregnant we will consider if child protection is an issue. Advice will initially be sought from the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection Mrs A McGleenan and if it is deemed necessary the school will follow its child protection guidelines.
- **'Risky' Children**
This term has been applied to children who display behaviours that may be harmful to other children. Whilst these children have a right to education the school has an obligation to ensure the well being of the entire school population. In order to do so we will carry out a risk assessment.
- **Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation**
We are aware that as young people are growing up they can experience sexual identity and orientation confusion. This may be temporary for some while for others it may become clear with time that their orientation is homosexual. It is vitally important that all curricular delivery advocates abstinence as the acceptable option for all young people. Bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation, is as unacceptable as it is in any other situation where someone is mistreated or bullied because of their differences from those who are perceived to be the majority. All issues relating to bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation will be dealt with appropriately in line with the general school Anti - Bullying Policy.
- **School absences for family planning issues**
Our school policy for permitting pupils to leave school during the school day will be applied to all requests. This includes requests for absences in relation to family planning issues. Parental permission will always be sought.
- **Child Protection**
If, for any reason, a young person is deemed to be at risk, then he/she will be informed that confidentiality must be breached, and the reasons for the breach. The young person will also be reassured that he/she will be supported throughout the process.
- **Role of Parents** –. The school will never attempt to assume the cloak of parental responsibility. Rather, we view parents as having prime decision making responsibilities. It is paramount that we work in partnership with parents, particularly in relation to these sensitive issues

- **Recording and Referral** – Clear and concise records will be kept pertaining to all issues outlined above.

Presentation

RSE is co-ordinated by the Pastoral Vice Principal, LLW co-ordinator and Year Heads.

A cross-curricular approach will be adapted, both to encourage cross-curricularity and to avoid unnecessary duplication. Where aspects of the specification are provided from outside the Personal Development Programme, every effort will be made to co-ordinate and sequence the work. Delivery of the programme is through:

- a) Planned aspects within Science, Religious Education, Home Economics and PD Curricula.
- b) Addressing moral or ethical issues which may arise from apparently unrelated topics in all Curriculum subjects.
- c) PSE or occasionally Assembly.
- d) Occasional visits from school nurse or visiting speakers, e.g. Love for Life, ACCORD.

In recognition of the fact that we all learn in different ways a range of learning styles and teaching strategies will be employed related to active/experiential learning to give pupils relevant information; to enable moral issues to be explored through discussion and to acquire appropriate skills. These approaches will emphasise group and collaborative strategies, maximising opportunities for pupil input, decision-making and problem-solving.

Generally RSE will be taught in mixed groups so that students are encouraged to work with each other and gain an understanding of each other's perspective. However, opportunities will be provided for single gender groups to discuss specific topics if required.

With regard to RSE, it is important that staff feel comfortable with the subject matter. Use will be made of external agencies in the provision of expert advice, materials and personnel where these are available. If in-service training is required and is available staff will be given the opportunity to attend.

Managing External Agencies (Appendix A)

In using personnel from outside the school, teachers must ensure that all visitors are aware of the values and ethos of the school and the way in which it has decided to deliver R.S.E. The case of suitably qualified and experienced outside visitors can greatly enhance a school RSE Programme. However staff should be careful that visitors are used in addition to, not instead of a planned RSE Programme.

Parents Right of Withdrawal

Parents will have the right to withdraw pupils for all or part of the RSE Programme as long as it is outside the National Curriculum. They will not be able to withdraw pupils from RSE which continues to form part of National Curriculum Science, nor from RSE comprised within other National Curriculum subjects, such as English, Religious Education (provided that such discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subjects concerned).

Confidentiality

In St. Joseph's Grammar School we recognise that it is not possible to offer confidentiality at all times. It is essential that at all times confidentiality operates within the boundaries of the school's Child Protection Policy. All teaching staff must follow the following procedures:

- Confidentiality must be discussed with pupils before beginning an RSE programme or one off session. Ground rules should be agreed with pupils.
- Pupils should be informed that there are instances when confidentiality cannot be held (for example in cases of suspected abuse). Pupils should be fully informed of action that will be taken.

Monitoring and Evaluation

St. Joseph's Grammar School recognises and accepts the importance of on-going monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the RSE Programme. The LLW co-ordinator, in partnership with the Pastoral Vice-Principal, Year Heads and all teachers involved in the delivery of the RSE programme will be involved, on an on-going basis, in monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and relevance of the programme. This group will take into account feedback received from pupils, teachers and parents. The aims of the RSE programme, as listed in this policy, will be at the forefront of any monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure the aims are being achieved.

Appendix A

Service Level Agreement for Use with External Agencies Working in St. Joseph's Grammar School

I/We have read the school ethos and policies of St. Joseph's Grammar and agree to formally adhere to their ethos and policies:

- in working with young people and
- in the delivery of the programmes outlined below:

I/We am/are, willing to provide *full* details of material content to:

- Senior Management, Teachers, Parents, Governors and other Appropriate Bodies.
- Agree to fully implement any changes deemed necessary by the above representatives.
- I/We accept the right of the school to withdraw the invitation issued to support the school in the education of our Young people.
- I/We formally accept the above terms of reference and in so doing I/We will acknowledge the agreement made.

Signed _____
(External Agency)

Dated _____

Countersigned: _____
(Principal/Board of Governors)

Dated _____