

Boherbue Comprehensive School Relationships and Sexuality Policy Statement

Relationship to Mission Statement:

‘Boherbue Comprehensive School, conscious of its position in the community, endeavours to give the best education and service to its pupils and community, based on Christian values that will help all who come in contact with the school to reach their full potential.’

Boherbue Comprehensive School is dedicated to providing a holistic education where the potential and uniqueness of each student is fostered and celebrated. We strive to create a caring environment based on mutual respect where personal, intellectual and moral maturity is nurtured.

RSE is a ‘lifelong process’ of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. Parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media deliver this education consciously and unconsciously.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

“RSE aims to provide opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way”. (Going Forward Together, The Department of Education and Science, 1997).

In the school setting, RSE will be taught as part of the wider SPHE programme. Elements of RSE are also incorporated into the Leaving Certificate Religious Education Programme.

The approach to teaching any of the SPHE topics involves the following:

- Giving students clear information.
- Enhancing their self-esteem.
- Helping them to learn to communicate.
- Assisting students to make decisions and express feelings in an appropriate way.

Current in-school provision:

Our school takes a cross-curricular approach to the teaching of SPHE and RSE. All Junior Cycle classes receive one period of SPHE per week.

- Elements of both SPHE and RSE are dealt with in subjects such as Science, Biology, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Career Guidance, Home Economics, Physical Education, Religious Education and Science syllabi.

- Counselling and Chaplaincy Services, Guest Speakers (e.g. Cura, Aware, Mental Health, Sexual Health), Personal Development Seminars and Year Heads also focus on some issues pertaining to SPHE and RSE.

Aims of Boherbue Comprehensive Schools RSE programme

While recognising that the parent(s)/guardian(s) are the primary educators of the child, the school aims to complement this role by formally implementing the RSE course at Junior and Senior Cycle levels.

The aims of our school with regard to teaching RSE are as follows:

- To help students to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of human sexuality.
- To promote a healthy attitude to one's own sexuality and to one's relationships with others.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.
- To enable young people to develop healthy attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our school:

Our aim for the future is to provide a whole-school approach to the development and the delivery of the RSE school programme.

The RSE co-ordinator and the SPHE co-ordinator will endeavour to achieve this goal.

Consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s)

- Our school is committed to working with parent(s)/guardian(s) and acknowledges that parents have, by law, the primary responsibility for the education of their children and that the home is the natural environment in which Relationship and Sexuality Education should take place.
- Parents have the right to be fully informed about the programme and to express their views about the programme. Also, parent(s)/guardian(s) may wish to exercise the right to have their child withdrawn from RSE. In such cases, the school must be specifically notified in writing by the parent(s)/guardian(s) if they wish their child to be withdrawn from part or all RSE classes. The school Principal will endeavour to put alternative arrangements in place. However, in these circumstances the school cannot be responsible for information subsequently passed on by participating pupils.

Training and resources

- The RSE programme will be based on the resource material for Relationships and Sexuality Education set out by the National

Appendix 1 – Guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE in our school

The following is a description of a list of topics that may be taught depending on the level of maturity of the class.

Junior Cycle: First Year

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| ♣ Me as Unique and Different | ♣ Looking at what makes us all different with special reference to masculinity and femininity |
| ♣ Friendship | ♣ Examining friendship as a basis for a wide range of relationships |
| ♣ Changes at puberty | ♣ Looking at the changes that take place during puberty – including psychological, social and physical. The latter would include issues relating to hygiene |
| ♣ The Male and Female | ♣ This involves the RSE and the biology teacher working together in order to give a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive system, and the concepts of fertility and conception |
| ♣ Images of Male and Female | ♣ Analysing how our concepts of male and female are formed and developed |

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| ♣ Respecting Self and Others | ♣ Looking at the importance of respect for self and others in relation to sexuality and morality, and in particular, how language may be used and abused |
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Second Year:

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| ♣ From conception to birth | ♣ Giving the students a clear understanding of human fertility and the development of the foetus from conception to birth. |
| ♣ Recognising and expressing feelings and emotion | ♣ Providing opportunities for developing an awareness of the feelings connected to a variety of relationships and the language needed to express these feelings. |
| ♣ Peer pressure and other influences | ♣ Examine the role of peer pressure and other influences in the area of sexuality. |
| ♣ Managing Relationships | ♣ Providing the students with opportunities to develop skills for establishing and maintaining relationships at appropriate levels. |
| ♣ Making responsible decisions | ♣ Focusing on the skills required for responsible decision making in the area of sexuality, consistent with a personal value system and within a moral framework. |
| ♣ Health and Personal Safety | ♣ An awareness of the potential of developing new relationships and the practical steps involved in keeping safe. This will include issues of health (eating disorders, |

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| | substance abuse, STD's, infection awareness) and personal safety (right to personal space, invasion of personal integrity, and the issues involved in sexual harassment and abuse). Help agencies are also identified. |
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Third Year:

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| ♣ Body Image | ♣ Helping students to develop a positive appreciation of self. |
| ♣ Where am I now? | ♣ A review of human growth and development with a view to the student identifying his/her own stage of development in the growth cycle. |
| ♣ Relationships – What's important? | ♣ Helping students to identify for themselves what is important in a mature relationship. |
| ♣ Respect, rights and responsibilities | ♣ Dealing with respect for self and others and the rights and responsibilities involved in a relationship. |
| ♣ Conflict | ♣ Identifying sources of conflict in context of relationships, and developing strategies for resolution. |

Senior Cycle

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| ♣ Values and Relationships | ♣ Helping students to identify what they value in a relationship and think critically about idealised images of relationships presented by media and other sources. |
| ♣ Personal Integrity | ♣ Looking at how affection is expressed in a variety of contexts, how to set boundaries and strike a balance within relationships in a way that protects personal integrity and respect for one's own sexuality. |
| ♣ Responsible parenthood | ♣ Using models of decision-making within a moral and spiritual framework to discuss fertility awareness, the menstrual cycle, family planning and the implications |

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| | and consequences of pregnancy and parenthood for both male and female. |
| ♣ Obstacles to responsible decision-making | ♣ Looking at the factors that impede responsible decision making e.g. alcohol, drugs, lack of assertiveness, peer pressure. |
| ♣ Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's) | ♣ Looking at the nature of STD's e.g. Aids, how they are contracted, the importance of early medical intervention and the location of appropriate medical support. |
| ♣ Gender Discrimination | ♣ Looking at the roles assigned to people in life situations and how they are coloured by our stereotyped views of what it is to be male/female. This might include issues of gender discrimination, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and pornography. |
| ♣ Personal Rights and Personal Safety | ♣ Discussing the right to privacy and personal space, and the consequences when space and privacy are invaded. The students will understand the invasion of personal integrity and issues of power and control involved in sexual harassment, abuse and rape. Help agencies are also identified. |
| ♣ Making, keeping and ending relationships | ♣ Developing and enhancing the skills necessary for making, keeping and ending relationships. |
| ♣ Commitment and Marriage | ♣ Helping students look at the various elements of marriage which helps support life-long love and family life. |

This policy was approved by the Board of Management of Boherbue Comprehensive School on 17th November, 2008.