

St. Mac Dara's Community College Templeogue



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Adopted 29th April 2025 for 2025/26

St. Mac Dara's Community College, through a comprehensive education programme, provides as far as possible, educational opportunities to meet the needs of each individual student. It is a multi-denominational, co-educational college. The following is the Mission Statement of St. Mac Dara's CC.

Mission Statement

"We, the community this College, through a caring and collective approach, aspire to provide a broad-based education for all, to foster respect and dignity and to promote a safe and just environment by positively encouraging all to realise their potential."

As part of the DDLETB schools we also proudly endorse our school ethos which is underpinned by the core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Respect, Equality and Community.

DEFINITION OF RSE:

Having accepted the content of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum as laid down by the Department of Education & Science, the policy of the school is to develop caring, confident and moral individuals who would work together to form a responsible and just community. It is envisaged that the programme will be implemented:

- as a support to parents
- using age-appropriate materials.

Relationships and sexuality are key elements of healthy social and personal development in all our lives but particularly in the life of an adolescent.

RELATIONSHIP OF RSE TO SPHE:

The Social Personal and Health Education Programme aims to give students clear information, build up their self-esteem, help them to learn to communicate and make decisions and to express feelings in an appropriate way. Relationships should be an essential part of this programme and Sexuality Education should take place within this context. It aims to promote a positive attitude to one's sexuality and in one's relationship with others.

WHAT THE SCHOOL CURRENTLY PROVIDES:

The Wellbeing Programme Student in Junior Level will receive at least 6 classes per year as part of their weekly SPHE classes as underpinned in the 2016 and 2023 Specification

At Senior Cycle a SPHE Curriculum is currently being developed by the NCCA.

Senior students in 4th Year receive 6 classes per year. 5th Year students receive weekly RSE classes. 6th Year students receive a minimum of 6 classes per year.

Religious Education Programme - available to all students in the college.

Visiting Lecturers organised by the Career Guidance Dept., Home Economics/Science – where there are certain areas of overlap in these subjects.

THE AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME:

RSE aims to provide opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

RSE, which is located in the overall framework of SPHE, has as its specific aims:

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality
- To create awareness of consent, responsibilities, the law and diversity.
- To promote a positive attitude towards one's own sexuality and in one's relationships with others.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction, parenting, STIs and sexual health
- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To create awareness of life, health and responsibilities as the student matures into adulthood.

Organisation of RSE in St. Mac Dara's

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The RSE programme will be conducted in a spirit of confidentiality. Students will be advised to respect the privacy of others in the classroom in accordance with their class contract. They will also be given opportunities to talk to the teacher, or another member of staff, in confidence, should the need arise. However, if the teacher judges that, circumstances, a student is at risk, it may be necessary, in accordance with Child Protection Policies and the Law, to inform the DLP.

SPECIAL NEEDS - AEN:

Children with additional educational needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others. There is regular communication between the AEN Department, the Student Support Team and the DLP. Weekly meetings take place in a Student Support Team which supports all of these disciplines.

PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

This programme is a support to parents as primary educators of their children. All information in relation to the programme is available if requested. Should a parent choose to provide certain aspects of RSE at home, their rights will be respected. Parents may wish to withdraw a student from RSE Class and do not have to give a reason for withdrawal, however we would respectfully invite them to do so - allowing

us the opportunity to resolve any misunderstandings. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, in writing and forwarded to our Board of Management, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.

VISITING SPEAKERS:

Visiting speakers are seen as an asset, e.g. BelongTo, Jigsaw, Spunout, Oddballs (Testicular Cancer) and the community Gardai. However, the delivery of the school's programme remains the responsibility of the teacher. Any guest speaker will be in conformity with the school's policy on RSE. Visitors will be given advance notice of the composition of the class and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work. Students may on occasion prepare questions in advance so that the students may feel actively involved in the class. The Office should be informed of the date and the name of the visitor. The teacher will not leave the classroom unattended while the visitor is present in the classroom and under no circumstances will details of the child be given to the visitor.

LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY;

Teachers do not promote any one lifestyle as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that the LGBTQ+ Community will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning the LGBTQ+ Community is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussion of LGBTQ+ should be appropriate to the age of the pupils. Resource - Growing Up Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender.

CONTRACEPTION:

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way. Our aim is to increase student's awareness of the range of available contraceptive methods and to explore communication about contraceptive use in the context of an intimate relationship. Resource - What do you need to know about Contraception (HSE). Students will also be informed about abstinence.

RESOURCES:

The school follows the new Health and Wellbeing Course at Junior Level, currently using the Edco Resources, following the 2023 and 2016 Specifications. At Senior Level teachers are using resources prescribed by the department online toolkit.

www.sexualwellbeing.ie www.webwise.ie

www.b4udecide.ie. Teachers also have access to a combination of DVDs and Videos to support them in the classroom in delivering a successful RSE Class. They are also made aware of the RSE Policy and RSE Curriculum Guidelines. Senior Cycle students participate in promoting social and emotional wellbeing, i.e. Mind Out Programme.

ON-GOING SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT:

We agree with the Department of Education's view that parents and teachers should have on-going training and that as representatives of the Board of Management, parents and teachers we see the need for continued support and allocation of resources from the Department. All teachers are encouraged to go on regular Oide CPD in relation to sex education. At Junior Level if a teacher/tutor feels unqualified to deliver the RSE programme a Senior RSE teacher/SPHE Co-Ordinator will take the class. At TY training is delivered after Christmas by a trained RSE teacher, within their SPHE class. LCVP students are likewise accommodated after Christmas with the collaboration of their LCVP teachers. Further training includes:

- Senior Cycle SPHE
- Junior Cycle (JC) RSE
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- Mental Health 1, 2
- Anti-Bullying
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety (JC & SC)

MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING THE RSE PROGRAMME:

Regularly teachers of Senior RSE would have School Self Evaluations and discuss any possible weaknesses or strengths with the programme. Students also get an opportunity to assess their learning in class. Assessment in RSE should not simply focus on factual knowledge. It should provide opportunities to assess:

- An increase in knowledge (Before I only knew . . . now I also know .)
- An increase in understanding (I always knew . . . But now I can see how it connects to. . . and now I can see how I could use this in my life)
- A change or reconfirmation of a belief (I used to feel . . . but I now feel .)
- A richer vocabulary (before I would have said . . . but now I can say ..)
- Increased competence in skills (Before I didn't know how to . . . but now I know how to.)
- New strategies acquired (Before I wouldn't have known how to . . . but now I know new/more effective ways to.)

- An increased confidence (before I could/would say and do But now I feel I can say and do)
- Changed and challenged assumptions (Before I thought that ... but now I realise that was just a myth or a stereotype).

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This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 29/4/25.

Hannah Collins
Signed:

Chairperson Board of Management.

Signed: *[Signature]*
Principal.

Date: 29th April 2025

