

Belmayne Educate Together Secondary School

Roll Number 68346 T

Belmayne Avenue

Dublin 13

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Our school mission statement:

We are dedicated to providing a co-educational, multi-denominational, inclusive, democratically run school where students and parents have a voice. We will maintain a positive, progressive learning environment where every student will reach their potential and be encouraged to open their minds and become life-long learners. The school will strive to create a safe, happy space where friendships are nurtured and leadership skills developed. The school will be built on the foundations of respect, equality and a culture of care.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education:

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This education is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media (sess.ie)

Rationale:

The Education Act, 1998 requires that all schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. In BelmayneEducate Together Secondary School, we believe that Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. We feel that the RSE programme will give students the opportunity to evaluate the wide range of information, opinions and attitudes and to form values and establish behaviours within a moral framework.

Aims of RSE:

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality

- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others

- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction

- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

- To enable students to make informed choices

Objectives of RSE:

- RSE should enable students to:

- acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships

- develop a positive sense of self-awareness and the skills for building and maintaining self-esteem

- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change especially during adolescence and to develop respect for difference between individuals

- understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility and sexually transmitted infections

- understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex role stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality

- value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood

RSE as part of Social, Personal, Health Education (S.P.H.E)

R.S.E., which is part of the overall framework of S.P.H.E., aims to:

- help pupils understand and develop friendships
- promote an understanding of sexuality
- promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationships with others
- promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- enable pupils to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy of the school
- provide opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way

Guidelines for Management and Organisation of RSE

RSE is required by all students in Junior Cycle as part of the SPHE programme. The module is delivered across six weeks as required by the Department of Education Circular M20/96.

The themes and topics are taken from the Interim Curriculum and Guidelines for Relationships and Sexuality Education [National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1996]

Informing Parents

Parents are the primary educators of their children and we consider their role in RSE as a very important one. At Belmayne Educate Together Secondary School, we strive to provide a supportive and complementary role in its provision of RSE.

As part of the national curriculum, RSE will be delivered during SPHE class. All parents will be informed in writing when the module is due to commence.

Withdrawal of Students:

It is a legal requirement of schools to provide RSE at junior and senior cycle. Each parent has a right to withdraw their child from some or all RSE classes. We do not ask for reasons for withdrawal although we invite parents to discuss their concerns with us so that we can provide any necessary support. If a parent wishes to withdraw a student from the RSE lessons, they must make provisions to collect and supervise their child at this time as the school will be unable to provide supervision.

Sample RSE Programme

	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
Human Relationships	Me as unique and different Friendship	Managing Relationships Peer Pressure and other influences	Relationships- what's important? The three R's- respect, rights and responsibilities Conflict
Human Growth and Development	Changes at Puberty The male and female reproductive systems	From Conception to Birth	Where am I now?

Human Sexuality	Images of male and female	Recognising and Expressing Feelings and Emotions Health and Personal Safety Making Decisions	Body Image

Guest Speakers

Much of the RSE Programme will be delivered by the teachers who students know and trust. However, guest speakers can sometimes enhance the quality of provision of RSE and can provide additional support to the school and our students.

In the case of a visiting speaker, a teacher from the school will be present at all times and all guest speakers will be approved by the principal.

Confidentiality:

All RSE modules will begin with a discussion regarding confidentiality. Confidentiality will be respected if private information is shared. However, if a teacher becomes aware that a student may be at risk, appropriate action should be taken (further details are available in our Child Protection Policy). It is important that students are made aware of the limits of confidentiality and that teachers do not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality.

The Child Protection Guidelines also state that, if the school becomes aware that a young person is sexually active under the age of consent, it has a responsibility to inform their parents. The legal age of consent in Ireland for girls and boys is 17, for both heterosexual and homosexual sex. All students should be aware of this.

Training:

Training will be provided for teachers of SPHE through the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). Continued Professional Development is provided in the areas

of SPHE as well as RSE. In the case where a teacher has not completed the relevant training, support will be provided by a teacher who has completed the training.

Resources:

The school will use approved Department of Education materials. Suitable materials are often provided for teachers at S.P.H.E. in-service training. The school may also source appropriate teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful. Such resources must be approved by the principal. Applying for resources is, as always, considered within the normal budgetary framework and as school funding will allow.

Evaluation:

We are committed to monitoring and reflecting on the effectiveness of the RSE Programme to ensure that students are provided with the best teaching and learning possible. Upon review of this programme, we will seek feedback from students, teachers and parents to identify areas for improvement.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

(March 2022)