

Calasanctius College RSE Policy

Policy Context

Calasanctius College is a Catholic, co-educational, voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST. Our aim is to work with parents and guardians in promoting the full and balanced development of our students, in a safe, caring and inclusive community. Calasanctius recognises that each student who enrolls is unique and has different gifts as well as diverse needs. We strive to nurture appropriate academic excellence in a 21st century learning environment and endeavour to develop the skills, knowledge and resilience needed to contribute in a meaningful way to Calasanctius and the wider community.

Aims

- To provide a holistic education in the Catholic tradition.
- To be open and accessible to all, welcoming students from all faith traditions in a warm, open, inclusive community.
- To enable each student to develop a positive self-image, creating a stable environment which will allow students to develop morally, emotionally, intellectually, physically, spiritually and creatively.
- To foster in our students a love for learning, enhancing their self-esteem and confidence, and preparing them for life.
- To enable each student to develop their abilities and gifts by having a broad and balanced curriculum with a variety of extra-curricular activities.
- To promote excellence in teaching and learning for the 21st Century.
- To give our students an excellent academic education which prepares them not only for State examinations but for Third Level Education, the world of work and life itself.
- To prepare and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and to be innovative.
- To respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person, showing special concern for those who are emotionally, materially and intellectually disadvantaged.
- To encourage staff, parents and students to work in partnership together with a shared vision and values.
- To maintain and develop links with the local Parish and wider community.
- To model the Christian values of compassion, justice, love, tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation in the way conflict is resolved.
- To foster in our students a sense of respect for themselves and others so that they may be aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights.
- To promote participation and support excellence in sport and to encourage physical exercise as a healthy habit for life.
- To foster in our students and in our school community an awareness of the environment and our responsibility as stewards to its preservation and improvement.

Calasanctius College is a Ceist (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust) School and the core values of Ceist underpin everything we do. (Appendix 1 – Ceist Charter)

The core values of CEIST are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our schools - students, staff and parents. These are the members of the school; their rights must be respected and their responsibilities should be performed in a manner which promotes the spiritual development of each person, achieves quality in teaching and learning, shows respect for every person, creates a sense of community and is founded on compassion and justice. These values can only be lived out if students, staff and parents work together for the common good of all.

These Core values are:

- Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a complex area of the SPHE curriculum. The Calasanctius College policy document provides guidelines for teachers, students and parents/guardians on the moral and ethical framework within which the programme is delivered.

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.

The RSE programme in both Junior and Senior cycle SPHE teaches the dignity and beauty of human sexuality through delivery of the curriculum and through a diversity of learning methodologies in an age appropriate way. Students learn to cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

Rationale for RSE

RSE seeks to provide young people with formal opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality through processes that will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Education about relationships and sexuality is delivered in both formal and informal settings by parents/guardians, teachers, peers, adults and the media. The school recognises that the primary providers of such education are parents/guardians and that the home is the natural environment for such education. Within the school, it is acknowledged that formal and informal processes of relationships and sexuality education take place as outlined in this policy.

RSE Programme

The RSE programme in Calasanctius College is based on the RSE modules at Junior and Senior Cycle as set out by the Department of Education and Skills.

Relationships and Sexuality Education takes place within the framework of Junior Cycle SPHE, as one of ten modules delivered in each year of the three-year cycle. Refer to Appendix 2 for outline of Junior Cycle Module Syllabus.

At Senior Cycle, Relationships and Sexuality Education is integrated into the school curriculum. Refer to Appendix 3 for outline of Senior Cycle Syllabus. RSE will have a minimum of 6 classes in Transition Year, 5th Year and 6th Year.

The *Policy Guidelines for RSE* (NCCA, 1997) state that Social, Personal and Health Education is ‘spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology’. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas that would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision-making skills – all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

Formal Provision of RSE

The formal provision of RSE means building on the primary school programme and providing young people with information and skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today, and so make positive and responsible choices about themselves and the way to live their lives.

Throughout the years, students are introduced to relationships and sexuality education in an age appropriate manner. 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 the difference between individuals.
- Understand human physiology, with particular reference to the reproductive cycle and human fertility.
- Understand sexual development and identity, and explore aspects of sexuality and sexual orientation, including sex role stereotyping and an introduction to gender issues.
- Value family life, the changing nature of the family, and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Develop strategies for decisions and actions, consistent with personal, moral integrity, and respectful of the rights and dignity of others.
- Develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety.

The role of Parents/Guardians

Calasanctius College acknowledges the role of parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The programme seeks to support parents in this challenging task.

Parents/guardians are informed by letter before the RSE module begins. (Appendix 4) If parents require further discussion/clarification, this is accommodated by the school.

All rights pertaining to parent/guardians and students in relation to the Education Act 1998 will be met. A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the sensitive issues process, as stated in the Education Act of 1998, will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves.

Parents are obliged to inform the principal, in writing, of their decision to withdraw the child from the sensitive issues classes. Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child is asked to discuss the concerns with the principal and how this may be facilitated. (Appendix 5 Template Letter for Withdrawal)

The Parents' Association may, as appropriate, support the SPHE/RSE programme by inviting appropriate visiting speakers.

Informal Provision of RSE

Through the school's catholic ethos, RSE helps to foster a sense of responsibility among the students, to promote high standards in personal behaviour, to ensure that uniqueness and difference is valued, to promote social and moral values while ensuring that attention is paid to the well-being of all members of the school community.

Ongoing Support, Development and Review of RSE

It is the policy of the school that staff teaching RSE should be appropriately trained. Support from school management for ongoing in-career development of SPHE/RSE teachers is vital for effective delivery of a relevant, informed and valuable RSE programme. This is provided by encouraging and enabling teachers to attend all relevant courses.

The RSE programme can best be discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by their students. However, Calasanctius College recognises that visiting speakers/facilitators play a valuable role in supplementing, complementing and supporting our programme.

The school is informed in this regard by Circular 0023/2010, Social personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools. (Appendix 6 – Circular 0023/2010)

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of this policy will be a matter for senior management in conjunction with staff, Parents Association, Students Council and the Board of Management.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Calasanctius College on the 8th February 2018.

E&OE

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Link to Ceist Charter

Appendix 2 – Link to Outline of Junior Cycle SPHE/RSE Module Syllabus

Appendix 3 – Link to Outline of Senior Cycle SPHE/RSE Syllabus

Appendix 4 – RSE Letter

Appendix 5 – Template letter for withdrawal from RSE classes

Appendix 6 – Link to Circular 0023/2010

Appendix 1

[Click here for Ceist Charter](#)

Appendix 2

[Click here for Junior Cycle SPHE Syllabus which include RSE](#)

Appendix 3

[Click here for Senior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework](#)

Appendix 4 Junior RSE Letter

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School Roll No: 63100I

Deputy Principal: Sarah Molloy
2017/18

Principal: Córa Ní Loinsigh
2017/18

Deputy Principal: Carmel Kelly
2017/18

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a very important element of the school curriculum. SPHE covers a wide range of topics such as self-identity, making decisions, citizenship and relationships, which equip our students with much of the skills and knowledge needed in today's world. As part of the SPHE programme we will be delivering the Relationship and Sexuality element of the programme, from 1st to 3rd Year students, during a minimum of six lessons beginning in date to be added.

RSE includes the learning, understanding and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy. We are giving you prior notice to allow time for you to discuss topics with your child and/or follow the appropriate procedure for opting out of the RSE programme.

The main aims of the RSE programme are:

- To enhance the personal development, wellbeing and self-esteem of each child
- To enable each child to gain an understanding of and respect for human love, reproduction and sexual activity in a sensitive and measured way
- To enable the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To develop and promote a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.

In 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year, the content of the programme falls under the following six headings:

- **Me as unique and different** - what makes us all unique and different and special reference to masculinity and femininity.
- **Friendships** - examining friendships as the basis for a wider range of relationships.
- **Changes at puberty** - the changes that take place at puberty – including psychological, social and physical.
- **The male and female reproductive system** - a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive system, intercourse and the concepts of fertility and conception.
- **Images of male and female** - analyse how our concepts of male and female are formed and developed.
- **Respecting self and others** - the importance of respect for self and others in relation to sexuality, sexual orientation, gender and, in particular, how language may be used and abused

Within this content, there are a number of sensitive issues such as conception and reproduction. We encourage you to talk to your child about what he/she will learn through RSE in a mature and respectful way.

The following guidelines have been put in place to ensure everyone is happy with the delivery of the RSE programme. These are taken from our RSE policy, which, along with all other school policies, is available to parents/guardians. Please read through the guidelines and do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries or comments.

- The sections within the RSE programme which have been identified as sensitive issues will be taught in SPHE lessons
- The programme is taught within the ethos of the school and contemporary issues/topics are dealt with by the teacher at a level appropriate to the age and stage of development of pupils.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education is an on-going process throughout life. A child's first experience of love, of intimacy and of relationships takes place in the family. Parents and the family are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children. We work in a supportive role with the parents/guardians, by complementing their role with a school based programme in RSE.
- All the content objectives of the RSE Programme will be covered by the time students leave sixth year.
- If a visitor or guest speaker is invited to a class to enhance the delivery of the RSE programme, the class teacher will remain present in the class. Parents/Guardians will be informed of such a visit and the content being addressed in advance of the visit. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to use this opportunity to discuss these topics with their children beforehand. Parents/Guardians are advised to inform childminders etc. that the sensitive topics are going to be discussed.
- A parent's/guardian's right to withdraw a pupil from RSE classes will be honoured on the understanding that the parent(s) is/are taking full responsibility for this aspect of education themselves.
- Parents/Guardians are obliged to inform the principal in writing of their decision to withdraw the child from the RSE sensitive issues classes (template letter available from Reception). Any parent/guardian who wishes to withdraw their child is asked to discuss the concerns with the principal and how this may be facilitated in advance of the RSE classes taking place.
- The school has no responsibility for any information which the pupil may receive outside the direct teaching of the RSE lessons
- Questions arising from curriculum content will be addressed by the teacher or by the visitor in a sensible, sensitive and age-appropriate manner. Questions arising outside of the curriculum will be referred back to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

We are very aware of the importance and sensitivity of teaching the RSE programme to our students and ~~we~~ thank you for your ongoing support in relation to this.

Yours sincerely,

Córa Ní Loinsigh

Principal

Board of Management 2017 - 2020

Siobhán Quinn (Chairperson), Tom Broderick, Bernard McHale, Virginia O'Mahony, Geraldine Brennan, Noel Greaney, Bernadette Collins, Geraldine Harkin & Córa Ní Loinsigh (Secretary to the Board)

Appendix 5

Withdrawal Template (available from reception)

Date:

Dear Ms Ní Loinsigh,

I/We wish to withdraw my child _____ from the RSE classes for this school year.

I/We are happy to come and meet with you to explain the concerns that I/we have. I/We will arrange an appointment, through the school secretary, in advance of the RSE classes taking place.

Yours sincerely,

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Appendix 6

[Click here to read Circular 0023/2010](#)