

Dear Parents/Guardians

We hope this letter finds you safe and well. As the primary educator of your child, we are aware of the significant role you play in the development of your child's outlook on life and on their attitudes and values.

As part of our curriculum delivery, we wish to inform you that your son/daughter will be participating in the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme as part of our senior cycle curriculum in the school. The RSE is a mandatory programme for all students.

The Relationships and Sexuality Education programme in school 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.

The RSE Programme is part of the wider Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme in Coláiste Iósaef. RSE is taught in SPHE up to 3rd year, however, the RSE Programme is taught in TY, 5th year (LCA 1) and 6th year (LCA 2) during Religious Education (RE).

Topics for RSE at Senior Cycle:

Human Growth and Development

- fertility and family planning.
- a deeper understanding of pregnancy and the developing foetus.

Human Sexuality

- treating women and men with equal respect.
- sexual harassment.
- sexual abuse, rape, legal right: voluntary and statutory agencies.
- making moral and healthy choices regarding sexual activity.

Human Relationships

- an awareness of what constitutes a loving relationship.
- the long-term commitment involved in marriage.
- parenting and family life.

If you have any queries or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact to us.

Yours sincerely,

Cathal McNamara

Cathal McNamara
RSE Co-ordinator

Noel Kelly

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Principal

RSE Information for Parents/Guardians

The content of RSE at senior cycle is described under three themes.

These themes are neither sequential nor discrete; they merge and overlap with each other.

Senior Cycle Themes

Human Growth and Development

This theme consists of an age appropriate understanding of the biology and psychology of the human life cycle from conception through birth and growth to death. This is accompanied by a rationale for responsible behaviour in relationships and sexual activity. It includes insights into physical well being, infection and disease. The topic of AIDS can be dealt with here in a way that supports the already existing AIDS education programme in the school. The theme of human growth and development provides a vocabulary for understanding the functioning of all parts of the human body and a psychological understanding of feelings and their appropriate expression.

Human Growth and Development Themes

- understanding the structure and function of sex organs
- awareness of fertility
- awareness of the importance and methods of family planning
- understanding of pregnancy and the development of the foetus
- appreciation of the importance of health care during pregnancy
- recognising the range of human emotions and ways to deal with these
- an understanding of the relationship between safe and sexual practice and sexually transmitted diseases with particular reference to HIV / AIDS.

Human Sexuality

This theme deals with human sexuality as including all aspects of the human person that relate to being male and female and being subject to change throughout life.

Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions. The theme offers opportunities to develop a holistic understanding of sexuality as contributing to the development of personal wellbeing, enhancing personal and family relationships and ultimately contributing to the well being of society.

Human Sexuality Themes

- understanding of what it means to be male or female
- consideration of male and female roles in relationships and in society
- awareness and understanding of sexual orientations exploration of some of the issues pertaining to equality
- understanding the concept of sexual harassment and its different forms
- awareness of sexual abuse and rape, including legal issues and the identification of help agencies in these areas
- skills for making choices about sexual activity
- Exploration of the range of attitudes, values and beliefs regarding sexual behaviour in modern society

Human Relationships

This theme focuses on the importance of relationships for health and well-being.

It examines how one relates to self and others – family, friends (significant and incidental) – and stresses the importance of self-esteem as a basis for worthwhile friendships and relationships. It looks at rights and responsibilities and how patterns and expressions of relationship change with time. It addresses issues such as communication, influence, intimacy, sexual attraction and sexual expression in relationships consistent with personal and moral integrity.

Human Relationships Themes

- understanding the nature of peer pressure
- developing skills for resolving conflict
- development of an awareness of the complex nature of love and loving relationships
- understanding marriage as a loving commitment
- deeper awareness of the importance of family life