Coláiste Iósaef

RSE in CIK 2025/2026

Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

September 2025

Re: Update to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy and Curriculum

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In Coláiste Iósaef, our mission is the holistic education of the individual, enabling students to become responsible, caring members of society. As part of this commitment to our students' wellbeing and development, we are writing to inform you of updates to our Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy and curriculum for the academic year 2025/2026.

This policy has been updated following consultation with all relevant stakeholders to ensure it meets the latest national specifications.

New Curricular Specifications

The Department of Education has introduced new specifications for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), which includes RSE. Our school has implemented these changes as follows:

- **Junior Cycle (1st – 3rd Year):** In line with the **2023 Specification**, students now receive a total of **100 hours** of SPHE/RSE over the three-year cycle.
- **Senior Cycle (TY – 6th Year):** In line with the **2024 Specification**, all students (LCE, LCA, and LCVP) receive a minimum of **60 hours** of instruction over two years.

Key Areas of Focus

The updated curriculum is designed to be age-appropriate and addresses the modern challenges facing young people today. Key topics include:

- **Consent and Healthy Relationships:** Developing the skills to navigate relationships with respect, boundaries, and clear communication.
- **Physical Growth:** Learning about the reproductive system, puberty, and fertility in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner.

- **Digital Media Literacy:** Understanding the influence of the internet, social media, and online content on body image and sexual expectations.
- **Inclusivity:** Fostering a school environment that respects all sexual orientations and gender identities.

In addition, at Senior Cycle, there is a focus on the transition to adulthood, autonomy, and navigating more complex social and personal challenges.

- **Health and Wellbeing:** A deep dive into mental health awareness, emotional regulation, and learning how to access and appraise reliable health information and services.
- **Relationships and Sexuality (RSE):**
    - **Respectful Intimacy:** Exploring the complexities of modern relationships, including the legal and ethical aspects of consent.
    - **Safety and Protection:** Identifying and responding to domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence (DSGBV).
    - **Modern Influences:** Critically evaluating how digital media and pornography can distort expectations of body image, gender roles, and healthy intimacy.
- **Into Adulthood:** Preparing for life after school by exploring personal rights and responsibilities under the law, financial literacy, and building the skills needed to advocate for oneself and others against discrimination.

Parental Rights and Participation

All topics are introduced using NCCA-approved resources designed for the specific developmental stage of the students. We acknowledge that parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children. The curriculum is grounded in values of respect and equality, ensuring all students, regardless of gender, orientation, or background, feel represented and safe.

While we believe the RSE programme provides vital life skills, we respect your right to withdraw your child from some or all RSE classes.

If you wish to withdraw your child, please note the following:

- A written request must be submitted to the Principal in September of each year.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make suitable arrangements with the Principal for the student's welfare during these class periods.
- Where students are withdrawn, the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by others.

The full updated RSE Policy is available for review on our school website.

We welcome your continued partnership in supporting the healthy development of our students. At the end of the year, we hope to capture your feedback and would appreciate your involvement in this. Details will be shared nearer the time.

Yours sincerely,

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Mr. Noel Kelly	Ms Elaine Davern
Principal	**SPHE/RSE and Wellbeing Coordinator**