

St. Oliver Post Primary School

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy



September 2026

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ST OLIVER POST PRIMARY
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1. Introductory Statement

This Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy outlines the school's understanding of RSE, the aims of the RSE programme, its relationship with Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), and the organisation and management of RSE within the school. The policy was developed following a collaborative consultation process involving staff, the Board of Management, parent representatives, and student representatives.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all aspects of the teaching and learning of Relationships and Sexuality Education within the school. The RSE programme is supported by the wider curriculum, including subjects such as Science, Biology, Religious Education, Home Economics, CSPE and Social Education. It is therefore important that all teachers are familiar with and support the implementation of the RSE policy. This policy applies to all members of the school community, including teaching and non-teaching staff, students, the Board of Management, parents/guardians, visiting speakers and external facilitators involved in the delivery of RSE.

3. Mission Statement

St. Oliver Post Primary School is dedicated to providing a high-quality education that enriches students' lives and prepares them to meet life's challenges with confidence. We strive to create a caring environment characterised by good order and discipline, working in partnership with parents to support each student's growth. Our school community upholds the values of justice, mutual respect, equality and tolerance, promoting positive self-esteem and enabling students to reach their full potential.

Within this framework, our RSE policy reflects and reinforces these core values. It recognises the importance of holistic human development and supports students in developing the understanding, skills and awareness needed to build healthy, respectful and fulfilling relationships.

4. Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of relationships and sexuality. It is recognised that parents/guardians and families are the primary educators of young people in relation to relationships and sexuality, and the role of the school is to support them in this responsibility.

5. Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of the school's Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme and will be delivered in the context of a whole-school approach to wellbeing. The SPHE curriculum supports students' personal development and wellbeing and provides opportunities to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values necessary for healthy and respectful relationships and responsible decision-making.

SPHE and RSE are developmental in nature and are delivered in an age-appropriate and spiral manner, allowing students to build progressively on their learning and experiences throughout their post-primary education.

Within the SPHE programme, students are supported to develop skills relating to communication, self-awareness, emotional literacy, empathy, decision-making, resilience and relationship management. These skills underpin the effective delivery of RSE and support students in making informed, responsible and healthy choices.

RSE specifically provides structured opportunities for students to develop knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality in ways that are appropriate to their age and stage of development, and within the moral, spiritual, social and cultural ethos of the school.

The school recognises parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children in matters relating to relationships and sexuality. The role of the school is to support parents/guardians through the provision of a comprehensive, inclusive and developmentally appropriate RSE programme.

The school also recognises that the values promoted through SPHE and RSE are reflected throughout school life and in the interactions between students, staff, parents/guardians and the wider school community. Respect, dignity, care and inclusion are central to this whole-school approach.

6. Aims of the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme

Within the context of SPHE, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) aims:

- To help students develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships.
- To promote understanding of human development, sexuality and relationships.
- To support students in developing self-awareness, confidence and respect for themselves and others.
- To provide students with age-appropriate knowledge about relationships, sexuality and reproduction.
- To help students develop the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.
- To encourage values of respect, dignity, care and responsibility in relationships.

- To support students in reflecting on relationships and sexuality in line with the school's ethos and values.
- To promote wellbeing, healthy boundaries and respectful communication.

It is recognised that these aims are developed progressively over the course of a student's education and beyond.

7. Rationale for the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme

Under the Education Act 1998, our school must support the moral, spiritual, social, and personal development of students. While parents have the primary responsibility for RSE, the school plays a vital role through its structured Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme in meeting this requirement.

An RSE programme is an essential part of students' education as it helps them develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to build healthy, respectful relationships and make informed decisions about their wellbeing.

In today's world, young people are exposed to a wide range of messages about relationships and sexuality, particularly through social media and online platforms. These messages are not always accurate, appropriate or helpful. A school-based RSE programme provides a safe, structured and reliable space where students can explore these topics with accurate information and appropriate guidance.

It also supports students in developing the skills to navigate peer pressure, online influences and changing relationships in a safe and responsible way, while promoting wellbeing and respect in line with the school's ethos.

8. Guidelines for the management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school

8.1 Teaching the programme

The following guidelines outline how RSE is organised and delivered within the school.

Arrangements for the delivery of the RSE programme, including the allocation of teaching staff, are made by the Principal and Deputy Principal in consultation with relevant staff. RSE is delivered as part of the SPHE programme and will be taught by appropriately trained teachers.

SPHE is provided to all year groups at Junior and Senior Cycle level. Aspects of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are integrated throughout the SPHE curriculum, however, specific lessons relating directly to RSE are delivered at particular times during the school

year, typically beginning in January. A minimum of six class periods per year are allocated to RSE.

The programme will be delivered in a planned, developmental and age-appropriate manner, consistent with the SPHE curriculum and the school's ethos. The content is delivered using a spiral approach, allowing students to build on prior knowledge and experiences.

A student-centred approach will be used, employing active and participative teaching methodologies. Teaching will take place in a respectful, inclusive and non-judgemental environment, where students feel safe to participate and express their views.

The programme will support students in developing the knowledge and skills to engage critically with influences on relationships and sexuality, including media, peer relationships and online environments.

Teachers deliver the RSE units of learning in accordance with the school's SPHE department plan. The programme is subject to ongoing review and revision to reflect school needs and curriculum developments.

8.2 Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

A safe, respectful and inclusive classroom environment will be actively fostered. Ground rules (class agreements) will be established with students to promote:

- Respectful communication
- Active listening
- Sensitivity to the experiences of others
- Personal responsibility

Students will not be required or encouraged to disclose personal or private information in class discussions.

8.3 Informing and Involving Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are recognised as the primary educators of their children in matters relating to relationships and sexuality..

The school will support this role by:

- Providing access to the RSE policy via the school website or on request
- Sharing an information letter with parents/guardians about the RSE programme via school platform (Appendix 1)
- Providing an overview of content taught in the RSE programme on request

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents/guardians and values their input in the ongoing review of the policy.

8.4 Withdrawal from the RSE Programme

Parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the RSE programme, in accordance with Department of Education guidelines. Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the school, as outlined in the information letter available on the school website (Appendix 1).

Following such a request, the SPHE Coordinator will contact parents/guardians to outline the content and aims of the programme and to address any questions or concerns they may have.

Where parents/guardians still wish to proceed with the withdrawal request, the Principal will liaise with them regarding the practical arrangements for the student during RSE lessons, including collection from school as necessary, and will issue a digital request for withdrawal form for completion.

8.5 Managing Questions and Discussion

Teachers will respond to student questions in a respectful, age-appropriate and inclusive manner, in line with the RSE curriculum and school policy.

If a question is considered unsuitable for the classroom setting, the teacher may:

- Defer the question
- Address it at a more appropriate time
- Support the student in accessing appropriate sources of information

Teachers may seek guidance from the SPHE Coordinator, Guidance Counsellor or school management where necessary.

8.6 Confidentiality and Safeguarding

RSE classes are conducted in a safe and supportive environment; however, confidentiality is limited where there are concerns about a student's safety or wellbeing.

Where a student discloses information that raises such concerns, staff are required to act in accordance with the school's Child Protection Procedures and report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

All staff will adhere to national Child Protection Guidelines and school policies in responding to any safeguarding concerns.

8.7 Inclusive Practice

The RSE programme is inclusive of all students and recognises the diversity of:

- Relationships
- Family structures
- Sexual orientations
- Gender identities

Teaching aims to promote respect, empathy and understanding, and to challenge prejudice and discrimination. All content will be delivered in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner, in line with the school's ethos and curriculum guidelines.

8.8 Visiting Speakers and External Facilitators

In compliance with Department of Education Circular 0043/2018, external speakers are not used as stand-alone or substitute RSE instruction. Guest presentations are solely used to complement a broader, pre-planned lesson structure.

All external contributors must:

- Support and align with the school's ethos and RSE policy
- Be approved by the Principal and the Board of Management
- Comply with Child Protection Procedures
- Work alongside teaching staff

The SPHE teacher or tutor will remain present during any such visit.

8.9 Supporting Students with Additional Educational Needs

RSE will be delivered in an inclusive manner that takes account of the diverse needs of all learners.

Students with additional educational needs will be supported through:

- Differentiated teaching approaches
- Appropriate resources and methodologies
- Collaboration with relevant support staff

The aim is to ensure that all students can engage with the programme in a meaningful, accessible and developmentally appropriate way.

9. Ongoing support, development and review Training

All teachers involved in the delivery of RSE engage in ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and are encouraged to avail of relevant training opportunities as they arise.

While teachers are not required to be specialists, they bring professional skills, sensitivity and an ability to address topics in an open and respectful manner, and to refer students to appropriate supports where necessary.

The school supports staff in accessing further training, within available resources. An SPHE Coordinator is appointed annually to support the effective planning and delivery of the programme.

10. Resources

The delivery of RSE is supported by a range of appropriate and up-to-date resources, including materials accessed through the NCCA SPHE/RSE Toolkit, which provides links to a variety of approved teaching resources.

Teachers use professional judgement to select resources that are relevant, age-appropriate and aligned with the school's ethos and the SPHE curriculum.

Resources are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain current, inclusive and supportive of effective teaching and learning.

11. Links to other policies and Curricular/Extra-Curricular Activities

This RSE policy is implemented within the context of the overall school plan and is supported by related policies, including:

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Wellbeing Policy
- Bf Cineálta Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Guidance Plan
- Substance Use Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy

Links to Curriculum delivery

Aspects of RSE are delivered across the curriculum, through subjects such as

- Science, Biology, Religious Education, Home Economics, CSPE and Social Education.
- Art work displays around the school.

Links to Extra-Curriculum delivery

The school supports SPHE/RSE informally by creating a supportive school climate where the aims of the programme are modelled through our:

- Peer Mentor programme
- Prefect programme
- Student Council

12. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the RSE programme:

The school is committed to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the RSE programme.

This process will include:

- Student feedback
- Staff reflection and review
- Input from parents/guardians

The policy and programme will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant, effective and aligned with current guidelines and the needs of the school community.



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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Lú agus na Mí
Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

St Oliver Post Primary School
Policy Consultation and Ratification

Policy Name	RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION POLICY.
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Consultation Log

School Community	Date of Consultation	Proposed by	Seconded by
Students	2nd Sep 2026	Fergal Mulvaney	Olivia Costello
Staff	3rd Sep 2026		Geoff McKenna
Parents	3rd Sep 2026	M. V.	J. Buckley

Board of Management Meeting

Date of BOM Meeting	Proposed by	Seconded by	Confirmation included in the BOM Minutes of Meeting dated
09/09/2026	MARTIN O'REILLY	DEWIDE NOLAN	YES.
Signed:			Chairperson
Signed:			Secretary to the BOM

Scheduled Review Date

Date	September 2027
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14. Appendices

Appendix 1: Information Letter to Parents/Guardians re SPHE and RSE

Re: SPHE and RSE Programme

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to inform you about the school's Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme, which forms an important part of the post-primary curriculum. SPHE is delivered to all year groups from First Year to Sixth Year. The programme supports students' personal development and wellbeing and helps them to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to build healthy relationships and make informed decisions.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of the SPHE programme and is delivered throughout SPHE in an age-appropriate and developmental manner over the course of the school year.

In addition to this integrated approach, students will also participate in specific RSE lessons, with a minimum of six class periods allocated to RSE each year. The delivery of these lessons typically begins in January, as part of a planned programme of learning.

Further information regarding the school's Relationships and Sexuality Education programme can be found in the school's RSE Policy. Lesson content is based on the relevant curriculum specifications and can be made available to parents/guardians upon request.

In accordance with Department of Education guidelines, parents/guardians have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from all or part of the RSE programme. Any such request must be made in writing to the school before 01st October.

Please note that while the school will respect your decision, it cannot take responsibility for information relating to RSE that students may receive informally from their peers.

Further information and resources for parents are available from the HSE at the following links: www.sexualwellbeing.ie and www.healthpromotion.ie

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the programme, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,



Brendan Corcoran

Principal

