



Loreto College Cavan

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Rationale

The purpose of this Relationship and Sexuality (RSE) policy is to outline the reasons for including RSE in the curriculum of Loreto College Cavan.

In this policy document all references to gender are taken to be inclusive and the term 'parent' is taken to include 'guardian'.

Loreto College Cavan is a Catholic voluntary secondary school for girls under the trusteeship of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto).

As a Catholic school we dedicate ourselves to the education of the whole person. We, as a Christian Community, care for the faith and personal development of each student. We, like all Catholic schools, try to develop persons who are responsible and inner directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their conscience.

The College recognises that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children, including the area of Relationships and Sexuality (RSE). It is essential that a close partnership exists between school and home.

The spiritual is the hallmark of the ethos of the Catholic School. The spiritual is expressed specifically in liturgy, sacrament, prayer, worship and in faith formation with Christ as the model.

Relationships and Sexuality Education will be sensitively taught within this clear framework of morals and values.

Mission Statement

Our 'Mission' Statement states that: "We wish to promote self-esteem, self-discipline and the goal of self-fulfilment, and to promote in our students the virtues of courage, sincerity and truth." We believe that providing a balanced approach to R.S.E. is an essential element of the holistic education we aspire to.

DEFINITIONS

Relationships

The development of all relationships is a two-way process which enables pupils to interact/relate to friends, family, the wider community, the Church and God.

Sexuality

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to gender and is subject to change and development throughout life. It is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. Sexuality is a God given gift which shapes and nourishes the individual. It calls us into relationship with Christ. Our faith enables interpretation of this gift within moral structures and behaviour.

Morals and Values

Morals are linked with behaviour and are directly related to faith and/or conscience.

Values are the characteristics inherent in good moral behaviour, e.g. respect for self, others and the environment, honesty and self-discipline.

AIMS

The modern world conveys many conflicting messages, many of which are directed specifically at the young. The College aims to:

- Develop the whole person as a follower of Christ;
- Enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the young person;
- Help young people develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships;
- Foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and all relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework;
- Promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions;
- Help young people to value family life partnership and marriage;
- Prepare pupils to cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up;
- Appreciate the responsibility of parenthood;
- Promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

The school will address issues in the context of Relationships and Sexuality Education in a Catholic framework, whilst recognising the diverse nature of lifestyles today.

Marriage

Sex before Marriage

Sexual Orientation e.g. L.G.B.T.

Sacredness of Life/Abortion

Euthanasia

Contraception

S.T.I.

Sexual Abuse

In addressing these issues we will also be sensitive to the level of detail taught within the programme, the terminology used and the use of visiting speakers.

The College expects all staff to approach these issues within the context of Catholic teaching.

While maintaining Catholic ideals we also recognise the need for a strong pastoral dimension of care for those who may not uphold these ideals. As a school community our concern is not just to protect life, but also to celebrate the living of life in all its fullness.

Marriage

As a Christian community we respect the sacredness of married love, striving to protect, support and assist the family. Teachers will promote the qualities and values that will help to sustain family life.

Sexual intercourse of its very nature 'belongs' to marriage. Theory relating to the 'Family' and 'Marriage' is covered as part of the Leaving Certificate Home-Economics syllabus.

Sexual Orientation

The Catholic Church teaches that the most desirable result of a person's psychological development is the ability to enjoy a heterosexual relationship.

It also teaches that it is Christian to respect those of a different sexual orientation and include them in all aspects of society.

Teachers will endeavour to counteract prejudice and support the development of self-esteem and a sense of responsibility in every pupil, whether heterosexual or L.G.B.T.

Sacredness of life/Abortion

The Irish bishops in their pastoral letter, 'Human Life is Sacred' say:

'God's commandment---- is that no human being may deliberately take away innocent human life.

What life could be more innocent than that of the unborn child'?

As a school community we believe that the embryo or foetus possesses its fundamental right to life from the moment of conception. One of the foremost duties of Christians in society is to work to create conditions in which all children will be guaranteed equality of dignity and opportunity.

Euthanasia

The fact that a particular person does not have long to live or has life we judge to be more imperfect than our own, does not remove their right to respect as an individual.

Contraception

The College ethos requires us to choose to be unconditionally pro-life. Contraception is covered as part of the Leaving Certificate Biology syllabus. In Pastoral Care class information on all methods of Contraception is explained.

Sexual Abuse

In November 2005 the 'Board of Management' of Loreto College Cavan adopted the D.E.S. "Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools" as its official policy on child protection. The Board appointed the school Principal, Ms Angela McGarvey, as the school's D.L.P. (Designated Liaison Person) and the Deputy Principal Mrs Lucy Ó Mórdha as the school's Deputy D.L.P. All concerns regarding the welfare of children should be directed to the D.L.P. The Student Support Teacher is available to support students suffering stress or trauma of any sort. The Policy was amended at a Board of Management Meeting on 7th November 2011 in line with Circular 65/2011, "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools".

DETAIL TAUGHT

When teaching any part of the curriculum the age of the pupils will be taken into consideration. See Appendices for each year group.

USE OF VISITORS

Pastoral Care Teachers works as a team and at subject meetings arrange guest speakers to visit the school whenever they deem desirable. A local doctor addresses senior students on age appropriate topics. All visitors are carefully chosen.

IMPLEMENTATION

Monitoring and Evaluating

The implementation of the programme will be reviewed from time to time at SPHE planning meeting. All talks/speakers will be evaluated. Feedback will be taken from students in class from time to time via questionnaires and informal conversations.

Staff Training

DLP and DDLP – undergo/attend training when available

Teachers are provided with opportunities to attend Dept. of Education and Skills in-service subject to availability.

Induction of new teachers and at the 1st Staff Meeting of the year input on Child Protection will be provided.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed from time to time.

Ratified by Board of Management 11th June 2012