



Dear Parents & Guardians,

As you may be aware, the SPHE (Social, Personal, Health Education) curriculum was updated in 2023. All students who enter First Year from 2023 onwards will follow the new specification from 1st – 3rd Year.

More information on the new specification can be found here:

https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/ca8f8975-50ca-4dc3-bba5-a04e25b4f978/JC_SPHE_Short_Course_2023.pdf

As educators and caregivers, we understand the importance of providing comprehensive and age-appropriate education to support your child's holistic development, including their understanding of relationships, sexuality, and personal well-being.

What is RSE?

RSE stands for Relationships and Sexuality Education. It is a curriculum designed to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make informed decisions about their relationships and sexual health. The program aims to empower students to develop healthy relationships, respect themselves and others, and make responsible choices regarding their sexual health.

Key Features of the 2023 Programme:

- **Updated Curriculum:** The 2023 SPHE RSE programme has been revised to reflect the latest research, best practices, and societal changes. The curriculum is designed to be inclusive, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive.
- **Holistic Approach:** The programme takes a holistic approach to health and well-being, addressing not only physical aspects but also emotional, social, and mental dimensions of sexuality and relationships.

- **Consent Education:** A significant emphasis is placed on understanding and respecting consent. Students will learn about the importance of communication, boundaries, and respect in all types of relationships.
- **Gender and Identity:** The programme explores gender identity, sexual orientation, and diversity in relationships. It promotes understanding, empathy, and acceptance of different identities and experiences.
- **Digital Citizenship:** Recognizing the influence of digital technology on relationships and sexuality, the curriculum includes lessons on digital citizenship, online safety, and media literacy.
- **Parental Involvement:** We believe that parents play a crucial role in their child's education about relationships and sexuality. The programme encourages open communication between parents and children, providing resources and guidance to support these conversations at home.

Topics Covered:

1st Years:

- Changes During Adolescence
- Reproduction & Sexuality
- Gender Identity & Expression
- Gender Stereotypes
- Sexual Orientation
- Healthy & Unhealthy Relationships
- Challenges in Relationships

2nd Years:

- Values and Healthy Behaviours
- Consent
- Sexting and Online Safety
- Female Reproductive Health – Menstrual Wellbeing
- Male Reproductive Health and Contraception

3rd Years:

- Social Media and Self-Esteem
- Gender Roles and Expectations
- Sexual Harassment
- The Influence of Pop Culture
- The Impact of Pornography
- Contraception
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Safer Sexual Practices and Making Decisions

The 2023 SPHE RSE programme aims to empower students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to navigate relationships and make informed decisions about their sexual health. By working together as educators, parents / guardians, and caregivers, we can support our children in developing healthy relationships, respecting themselves and others, and leading fulfilling lives. All resources used in the teaching of RSE has been approved by the Department of Education.

If you have any questions or concerns about the SPHE RSE programme, please do not hesitate to contact the SPHE co-ordinator Ms McGrotty by email at lillianmcgrotty@donabatecc.ie.