



*Relationship and Sexual Health (RSE),
Social, Personal and Health Education
Policy (SPHE)*

St. Bricin's College, Belturbet

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) /SPHE Policy

Mission Statement

St. Bricin's College is committed to providing a caring, inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student is valued, respected and encouraged to achieve their full potential. Central to our ethos is a commitment to the holistic development of the young person, recognising the importance of nurturing the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, moral and spiritual dimensions of each student's life. We strive to promote self-esteem, self-discipline, resilience, respect and personal responsibility, while fostering positive connections between the individual and their local, national and global communities.

As educators, we recognise that young people are growing up in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. It is therefore essential that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and confidence needed to make informed decisions, build healthy relationships and lead fulfilling lives. Through our wellbeing programmes, including Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), students are supported in developing an understanding of themselves and others, enhancing their personal wellbeing, and fostering respect, empathy and responsibility.

St. Bricin's College recognises Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) as a vital component of students' social, emotional and personal development. Our RSE programme is delivered in a balanced, age-appropriate and inclusive manner, reflecting the values and needs of our school community. The programme aims to provide students with accurate information and opportunities to develop the attitudes, skills and values necessary to form healthy relationships, make responsible choices, and safeguard their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

The school remains responsive to the cultural and societal realities that shape students' lives. Contemporary issues relevant to young people are explored sensitively and appropriately through SPHE and RSE. The programme is supported by trained teaching staff and, where appropriate, by external agencies and guest speakers whose contributions enhance and complement classroom learning. Through this collaborative approach, St. Bricin's College seeks to empower students to navigate life's opportunities and challenges with confidence, respect and integrity.

The SPHE / RSE Department comprises:

SPHE Co-ordinator: Mr J McMahon

RSE Teacher: Ms B Healy, Ms R Muldoon, Mr J McMahon

Principal: Mr J Ó Gallchóir (Designated Liaison Officer)

Deputy Principal: Mr S Smith (Deputy Designated Liaison Officer)

Guidance Team: Mr S Smith, Ms. C Delaney, Ms M Fitzpatrick

Wellbeing Co-ordinator: Ms E McKiernan-Reilly

Rationale of the SPHE Programme

St. Bricin's College recognises that Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) plays a central role in supporting the holistic development and wellbeing of all students. SPHE provides opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values necessary to navigate the challenges and opportunities of adolescence and modern life.

Through SPHE, students are encouraged to build positive relationships, develop resilience, make informed decisions, and take responsibility for their own wellbeing and that of others. The programme supports the school's commitment to creating a caring, inclusive and supportive environment where every student feels respected, valued and empowered to achieve their full potential.

SPHE contributes significantly to the school's Wellbeing Programme and complements the pastoral care structures already in place, including the work of tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, Wellbeing Ambassadors and the Student Support Team.

Aims

The aim of SPHE in St. Bricin's College is to promote the personal development, health and wellbeing of students and to support them in becoming confident, resilient, responsible and caring members of society.

Through the SPHE programme, the school aims:

- To foster and promote students' physical, emotional, social and mental wellbeing.
- To support students in developing positive self-esteem, self-awareness and self-confidence.
- To encourage resilience, self-discipline and personal responsibility.
- To equip students with the skills necessary to build and maintain healthy relationships.
- To provide students with the knowledge and understanding required to make informed and responsible decisions.
- To promote inclusion, respect, empathy and appreciation of diversity within the school community and wider society.
- To support students in developing organisational, communication, study and life skills.
- To encourage students to become active and responsible participants in their local, national and global communities.

Objectives

The SPHE programme seeks:

- To enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for effective and fulfilling participation in society.
- To promote self-esteem, self-confidence and personal wellbeing.
- To equip students with a framework for responsible decision-making and problem-solving.
- To develop students' communication, relationship-building and interpersonal skills.
- To provide opportunities for reflection, discussion and personal growth.
- To promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- To encourage healthy lifestyle choices and personal safety awareness.
- To foster respect for self and others and an appreciation of diversity.
- To support students in developing skills for managing change, challenges and transitions throughout their school journey.

Timetabling and Class Organisation

SPHE forms an integral part of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Wellbeing Programme in St. Bricin's College and is delivered in accordance with Department of Education guidelines and the school's ethos and wellbeing objectives.

- 100 hours across 3 years of Junior Cycle
- 60 hours across 2 years of Senior Cycle

SPHE is a core programme and is allocated a timetabled class period of 58mins each week for all Junior and Senior Cycle students. The programme is delivered by designated SPHE teachers and is complemented by relevant whole-school wellbeing initiatives, cross-curricular activities, guest speakers and educational workshops throughout the school year.

The programme is delivered to mixed-ability class groups using active teaching and learning methodologies that encourage participation, discussion, reflection and collaboration. A safe and respectful learning environment is promoted at all times. At the beginning of each academic year, class agreements are established with students to foster trust, mutual respect and positive engagement in learning.

The SPHE Coordinator oversees the implementation and ongoing development of the programme in collaboration with school management, teaching staff, the Wellbeing Team and external agencies where appropriate.

Confidentiality

St. Bricin's College acknowledges the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment in which students feel comfortable participating in SPHE lessons and discussing sensitive issues.

At the beginning of each academic year, and at regular intervals thereafter, students are informed that while respect for privacy is important, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Teachers have a duty of care to students and are required to follow the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Procedures.

Where a teacher becomes aware of information that gives rise to concerns regarding the safety, welfare or protection of a student, this information may be shared with the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP), or other appropriate members of

the Student Support Team in accordance with statutory child protection guidelines and school procedures.

Students will be encouraged to seek support from trusted adults where necessary, and every effort will be made to ensure their wellbeing and safety are prioritised at all times.

Whole-School Activities and SPHE

The promotion of wellbeing in mind, body and spirit is a fundamental aspect of life in St. Bricin's College. The school adopts a whole-school approach to wellbeing, recognising that all members of the school community play an important role in supporting students' personal, social and emotional development. SPHE, RSE and Wellbeing are supported through a range of initiatives, activities and programmes that foster positive relationships, inclusion, student voice and a sense of belonging.

The following are examples of how SPHE and Wellbeing are supported throughout the school:

- **Student Leadership and Peer Support Initiatives**, including the Wellbeing Ambassador Programme and other student-led activities, encourage students to take an active role in promoting inclusion, kindness and positive wellbeing within the school community.
- **A comprehensive first-year induction and transition programme** supports students in settling into secondary school and developing positive relationships with their peers and teachers.
- **A wide range of sporting, cultural and extracurricular activities** are available to students, providing opportunities for participation, teamwork, leadership, personal growth and the development of healthy lifestyles.
- **Whole-school wellbeing initiatives and awareness campaigns** are organised throughout the academic year. These may include events such as Wellbeing Week, Friendship Week, Anti-Bullying Awareness activities, Mental Health Promotion initiatives, Stand Up Awareness Week, and other themes relevant to student wellbeing.
- **Student voice is actively encouraged** through Student Council initiatives, wellbeing activities and opportunities for students to contribute to school life and decision-making processes.

- **Guest speakers, workshops and external agencies** are invited to support learning in areas such as mental health, internet safety, substance use awareness, relationships, resilience, study skills and personal development.
- **The school's pastoral care system**, including tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, the Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, AEN Department, Student Support Team and senior management, works collaboratively to support the wellbeing of all students.
- **Positive partnerships with parents and guardians** are encouraged through ongoing communication, information sessions and parental involvement in school wellbeing initiatives.

Through these activities and supports, St. Bricin's College seeks to create a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where all students can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Rationale for the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme

Young people today are growing up in an increasingly complex world and are regularly exposed to information and influences through social media, the internet, peer groups and wider society. They are faced with choices and challenges relating to relationships, identity, sexuality, consent, personal safety and wellbeing.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) provides students with opportunities to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think, act and make decisions in a responsible, respectful and informed manner. The programme promotes self-respect, respect for others, healthy relationships and positive decision-making. The RSE programme is delivered within the broader context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Wellbeing and forms an important part of the school's commitment to holistic education.

RSE in St. Bricin's College aims to provide a structured, student-centred and inclusive approach that supports young people as they navigate adolescence and prepare for adult life.

Aims of the RSE Programme

Relationships and Sexuality Education within the overall framework of SPHE aims:

- To help young people understand and develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality and human development.
- To foster a positive attitude towards one's own sexuality and relationships with others.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for human reproduction and fertility.
- To enable students to develop attitudes and values towards sexuality within a moral, social and personal framework.
- To promote respect, equality, diversity and inclusion within the school community.
- To develop students' understanding of consent, personal boundaries and respectful relationships.
- To equip students with the skills necessary to make informed and responsible decisions.
- To encourage students to value their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.
- To support students in recognising sources of advice, support and guidance when needed.

Objectives

The RSE Programme should enable students to:

- Develop healthy and respectful relationships with peers, family members and the wider community.
- Build self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Understand the physical, emotional and social changes associated with adolescence and adulthood.
- Develop respect for diversity and individual differences.
- Understand human reproduction, fertility and sexually transmitted infections in an age-appropriate manner.
- Explore issues relating to identity, gender roles, stereotyping and social influences.
- Understand the importance of consent, communication and personal boundaries.
- Become aware of the responsibilities associated with relationships and parenthood. [
- Develop strategies for dealing with peer pressure and influences.
- Develop skills to protect personal safety both online and offline.
- Critically evaluate information received through social media and other sources.
- Know how and where to seek support when faced with personal difficulties or concerns.

The school recognises that meaningful learning about relationships and sexuality extends beyond dedicated RSE lessons and may arise naturally throughout SPHE, Wellbeing, Guidance and other aspects of school life.

Delivery of the Programme

Relationships and Sexuality Education is delivered through:

- SPHE and Wellbeing classes.
- The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme.
- TY Personal Development (minimum 6 Hours)
- Senior Cycle Wellbeing and Guidance programmes.
- Relevant subject areas such as Science, Home Economics and Religious Education.
- Guest speakers and external agencies approved by the school and DoEY.
- Parental workshops presented by invited speakers and external agencies approved by the school and DoEY.
- Whole-school wellbeing initiatives and awareness campaigns.

Teaching methodologies may include:

- Group work
- Discussion
- Role play
- Brainstorming
- Case studies
- Multimedia resources
- Debating
- Project work
- Reflective activities
- Visiting speakers

A strong emphasis is placed on experiential and active learning, encouraging student engagement and participation.

Ethical Framework

The RSE programme is delivered within the ethos of St. Bricin's College and is informed by Department of Education and Youth guidelines, the SPHE curriculum and current best practice. The dignity, rights and wellbeing of every student are respected at all times.

The programme aims to provide factual, age-appropriate and inclusive information while encouraging students to develop personal values based on respect, responsibility, empathy and care for themselves and others.

Answering Questions

The school seeks to create a safe and respectful environment where students can discuss topics openly and appropriately.

Teachers will:

- Answer questions in an age-appropriate and professional manner.
- Use their professional judgement when responding to sensitive issues.
- Decline to answer questions that fall outside the remit of the curriculum or are inappropriate for the class setting.
- Remind students that personal questions directed at staff or classmates are not appropriate.

Students will be informed that some questions may be addressed at a later stage or through individual support where necessary.

Student Welfare and Support

The dignity, privacy and wellbeing of all students will be respected throughout the delivery of RSE.

Students:

- Will not be required to disclose personal information.
- Will not be compelled to participate in activities that make them uncomfortable.

- Will be encouraged to seek support from trusted adults where required.

Where concerns arise, students may be referred to appropriate supports including:

- Guidance Counsellor
- Student Support Team
- Year Head
- Deputy Principal
- Principal
- HSCL Coordinator
- External support services where appropriate

Confidentiality and Child Protection

While an atmosphere of trust and respect is encouraged within RSE classes, students will be informed that teachers cannot guarantee complete confidentiality.

Any disclosure relating to:

- Child protection concerns
- Risk of harm
- Safeguarding issues

will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Procedures.

Staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) where appropriate.

Parents and Guardians

St. Bricin's College recognises parents and guardians as the primary educators of their children and values their role in supporting relationship and sexuality education.

Parents are encouraged to engage with the school regarding any concerns or queries.

Parents/guardians who wish to withdraw their child from elements of the RSE programme should make a written request to the Principal. Appropriate alternative supervision arrangements will be discussed and agreed with the school.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Board of Management, school leadership, staff, students and parents to ensure compliance with Department of Education requirements and to reflect evolving best practice in Relationships and Sexuality Education.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy at reception on request.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

17/9/2026

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

17/09/2026