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## **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

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

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

### **Section 1: Definition of RSE**

RSE provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality. They can learn this through processes which enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. Young people are given opportunities to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner. Students are provided with information and skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today. They are encouraged to make positive, responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives.

### **Section 2: Our School**

Loreto College is an all-girls voluntary Catholic Secondary School. Our Board of Management is appointed by the Loreto Trust Board. The members come from the following constituencies:

Loreto Trust Board	- 4 nominees
Parents	- 2 elected nominees
Teachers	- 2 elected nominees



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### **Section 3: School Philosophy and Mission Statement**

*Mission Statement:* In the Spirit of Mary Ward, Loreto College Foxrock is a caring, enabling, learning community where staff and students work together with mutual respect to fulfil their God-given potential with integrity, compassion, and a sense of humour in the generous pursuit of a just world.

The Loreto philosophy of education is centred in God and is rooted in Gospel values where truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy find expression.

In that spirit and tradition, the following basic principles underpin the Loreto Philosophy of education:

- Loreto schools offer a Catholic education which strives to liberate, empower and motivate students to use their individual gifts with confidence, creativity and generosity in a spirit of loving and responsible service.
- The Loreto tradition seeks to promote the moral, spiritual, academic, social and personal development of students in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit reflected in the Loreto philosophy of education.
- All students are cherished equally regardless of ability, gender, creed, class or ethnic background.
- We encourage a pursuit of excellence appropriate to each student so that she may develop to the full her particular gifts.
- A broad holistic curriculum is offered to enable students to reach their full potential and to develop a love of learning.
- Every opportunity is given to enable students to develop powers of critical reflection thereby building independence of mind as a means towards responsible citizenship.
- The nurturing of aesthetic sense through the creative arts and an appreciation of heritage and culture is central to the Loreto tradition.



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#### **Section 4: Relationship of RSE to Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)**

The SPHE programme promotes the health and well-being of young people by dealing with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills. Throughout all areas of S.P.H.E students are encouraged to act in a moral, caring and responsible way and are provided with clear information so that, in the context of their own lives they are able to communicate and implement informed decisions. Sexuality is a key area of development in the life of the adolescent so as well as the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers areas which would be relevant to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's relationship with others.

#### **Section 5: Aims of our RSE Policy**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is located in the overall framework of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and has as its specific aims as outlined by the Department of Education & Science RSE Guidelines for post-primary schools (1996):

- To help students understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To give them an understanding of sexuality
- To promote in them a positive attitude to their own sexuality
- To help them form a positive attitude to their relationships with others
- To promote knowledge and respect for reproduction
- To enable students to develop attitudes and values towards their own sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

It is acknowledged that in a course of limited duration these aims are aspirational.

#### **Section 6: What the school currently provides:**

Currently RSE is provided at Junior Cycle in SPHE and Senior Cycle in Health Education, allowing 6 classes per year. At Senior Cycle, RSE is also provided through the RE programme.



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### **Section 7: Guidelines for management and organisation of RSE:**

One teacher is assigned to coordinate the SPHE programme and another to coordinate the RE programme. Each incorporates RSE into the individual subject planning. The Loreto philosophy of education is underpinned by values seeking to promote moral, spiritual, academic, social and personal development of students. All students are cherished equally and every opportunity is given to enable students to develop powers of critical reflection thereby building independence of mind. Based on this, if controversial issues arise, teachers will aim to present facts while incorporating, where possible, the ethos of the school. All issues will be dealt with in a factual and balanced manner with emphasis on health, equality and correcting stereotypes. The Child Protection Guidelines as outlined by the Department of Education & Skills and adopted by the Board of Management of Loreto College Foxrock, will be adhered to at all times. In addition the school also operates safeguards as outline in the Loreto Trustees Child Protection Guidelines document.

### **Section 8: Ongoing Support:**

The school will ensure every effort will be made for teachers who teach RSE to receive training and support and commit themselves to do so in the Catholic ethos of Loreto College Foxrock.

Visitors/guest speakers can be arranged as the SPHE/RSE team deem appropriate. They will work with the class as per the SPHE handbook guidelines. Teachers will be present when a speaker is in the class.

### **Section 9: Resources:**

The school aims to keep up with the latest resources available. The Department of Education RSE resources and SPHE resources are used along with any other resources that the SPHE/RSE team deem appropriate.



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### **Section 10: Informing and Involving Parents:**

Parents are the primary educators of children and the RSE programme supports parents in this work. Parents are communicated with through parent-teacher meetings, through the school newsletter and a letter informing parents when the RSE module is to take place and what topics are being covered. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from RSE classes if they wish. The process is as follows:

- Parents are informed by letter when RSE is to take place.
- Parents are given a period of time to respond in writing.
- A meeting can be arranged with the teacher and/or principal to answer questions.
- Provisions outlined for student when out of RSE class.

### **Section 11: Assessment:**

Students keep a portfolio of work done throughout the year. At the end of the school year, students complete an evaluation sheet on the modules carried out as part of the SPHE programme.

Participating teachers meet at least once a term to evaluate and review programme. SPHE coordinator links with RE coordinator.

Confidentiality in relation to any issues that arise will be guided by the Child Protection Guidelines for post-primary schools 2004.

This policy document will be reviewed annually by the SPHE team.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 20 October 2010 and amended on 24 November 2010.

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