

# Written Submissions

Consultation on the Review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in primary and post-primary school



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## Written Submissions

Written submissions are an important part of the NCCA's consultation process. During the consultation, the NCCA received 65 written submissions in total, 57 of which are available for publication. They can be accessed through hyperlinks on the next page.

## Aighneachtaí Scríofa

Is cuid thábhachtach de phróiseas comhairliúcháin an CNCM iad na haighneachtaí scríofa. Le linn an chomhairliúcháin fuair an CNCM 65 aighneacht scríofa ar fad. Fuaireamar cead 57 díobh siúd a chuir ar fáil san fhoilseachán seo. Is féidir teacht orthu trí hipearnasc ar an gcéad leathanach eile.

# Organisation and group contributors

- Abortion Rights Alliance
- Accord, Dublin Catholic Marriage Care Service
- Amnesty International, Ireland
- Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI)
- Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS)
- Atheist Ireland
- BeLonG To
- Clare Haven Services
- Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA)
- Council for Catechetics and the Council for Education (Irish Bishops Conference) and the Catholic Schools Partnership
- Cybersmarties Ltd
- Diocese of Elphin, Sligo
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Royal College of Physicians
- Foróige
- Gender Orientation Sexual Health HIV, Limerick
- Inclusion Ireland
- Irish Society for the Prevention and Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)
- Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) LGBT group
- Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA)
- Irish Second-Level Students Union (ISSU)
- Joint Managerial Body (JMB)
- Joint Non-Government Organisation NGO submission (Spunout.ie, BeLonG To, ShoutOut, NYCI, USI, HIV Ireland, Teen Parents Support, ISSU, IFPA , Foróige)
- LGBT Ireland
- Lumen Fidei
- National Parents Council Primary (NPC)
- National Parents Council Post-Primary
- National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
- Professional Development Services for Teachers Health and Wellbeing Team (PDST) Primary
- ShoutOut
- SPHE Network
- SpunOut.ie
- Squashy Couch, Tusla Adolescent Health Waterford
- St. Cecilia's N.S
- Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI)
- The Sexual Health Centre, Cork
- The Iona Institute
- The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP)
- Transgender Equality Network of Ireland (TENI)
- Tusla Services for Sexual Violence
- Union of Students of Ireland (USI)

# Individuals contributors

- Ciara Fagan
- Dr Ciara Kelly
- Clare O'Callaghan
- Diarmuid Fitzgerald
- Gary Troy
- Julie Heslin
- Meryl Connaughton
- Michael Ryan
- Nollag M Ni Mhaoileoin
- Patrick and Anna Carr
- Richard Casey
- Dr Sarah Jane Flynn
- Shane Hogan
- Shauna Breathnach



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**Contributor**  
Abortion Rights Alliance



October 2018

**Relationship and Sexuality Education Programme: Consultation Response**

*The Abortion Rights Campaign (ARC) is an all-island grassroots movement for choice and change. We organise the annual March for Choice to demand free, safe and legal abortion access for all who need or want it. ARC was a founding member of the “Together For Yes” campaign which secured a resounding Yes vote in the recent referendum to repeal the 8th Amendment. We aim to ensure that the health and dignity of all reproductive rights-holders in Ireland are protected in line with international best practice and human rights standards.*

*ARC support relationship and sexuality education which is inclusive, evidence-based and autonomy-focused. All young people should receive the same standard of education, regardless of their school’s ethos or their teachers’ beliefs or preferences.*

**Context**

In the past year we have seen Ireland grow up in terms of acknowledging and respecting sexual and reproductive rights. The global “Me Too” movement and the campaign to Repeal the 8th Amendment led to many adults having their first real conversations about topics such as sexual assault, consent, abortion and bodily autonomy. The fact that these conversations were novel exposed the reality that most Irish people did not learn how to talk about these concepts during adolescence. There is still a long way to go to ensure everyone’s education includes the relevant information needed to live safe and healthy sexual lives.

Many elements of the Relationship and Sexuality Education programme (RSE) taught in schools around Ireland were developed over twenty years ago. There is widespread evidence that RSE is failing to consistently give all young people the knowledge and understanding they need in the areas of sex and relationships. We therefore welcome this National Council for Curriculum and Assessment review process. As an advocacy organisation primarily concerned with the expression of reproductive rights and bodily autonomy, we feel strongly that adolescents need to be well-educated about their bodies and their sexual and reproductive rights.

We support relationship and sexuality education which is inclusive, evidence-based and autonomy-focused. All young people should receive the same standard of education, regardless of their school’s ethos or their teachers’ beliefs or preferences.

## Current practice

We know that such education is not currently provided in Ireland. Repeated studies carried out by Ireland's Crisis Pregnancy Agency and the Departments of Health and Children and Youth Affairs reveal that adolescents and young people report failure on the part of teachers delivering RSE to discuss the practice of safe sex and broader social and emotional aspects of well-being and sexuality. Young people interviewed in these studies also demonstrated a lack of knowledge concerning sexually transmitted infections, contraception and how to negotiate healthy relationships.<sup>123</sup> This may well be due to the fact that under the current Education Act, schools are free to deliver RSE according to their own values, which are often conservative and religious. In many cases, schools in Ireland rely on abstinence-based curricula or omit certain topics altogether.

Research has consistently found that sex education based on 'abstinence only' premises is ineffective and harmful to young people.<sup>4</sup> Abstinence-only programmes have been shown to have no effect on the age young people first engage in sexual intercourse or their number of sexual partners, among other behaviours. In reality, many young people who intend to be abstinent do not remain so and are likely to engage in sexual activities without the necessary knowledge on contraception, consent, or sexual health in general.

The lack of a national monitoring and evaluation framework for RSE remains one of the chief barriers to accurately assessing equality of access and addressing how the curriculum could be improved to ensure it serves the needs of all children and young people. Equally important, there does not appear to be a working mechanism to hold schools accountable for instituting an all-school RSE policy and delivering the RSE programme despite the fact that the Department of Education recognized the provision of sexuality education as a rights obligation under the terms of Article 11.2 of the European Social Charter in a circular issued to post-primary schools.<sup>5</sup>

## Recommendations

In order to deliver high-quality RSE across Ireland, we believe that the education system should focus on principles of inclusion, consent, bodily autonomy, and evidence-based practice. Our specific recommendations are outlined in more detail below.

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<sup>1</sup> Hyde, A. & Howlett, E. (2004) *Understanding Teenage Sexuality in Ireland*. Dublin: Crisis Pregnancy Agency.

<sup>2</sup> Mayock, P. & Byrne, T. (2004) *A Study of Sexual Health Issues, Attitudes and Behaviours: the Views of Early School Leavers*. Dublin: Crisis Pregnancy Agency.

<sup>3</sup> Mayock, P., Kitching, K., & Morgan, M. (2007) Relationships and sexuality education in post-primary schools: Challenges to full implementation. Dublin: Crisis Pregnancy Agency/Department of Education.

<sup>4</sup> Santelli, J.S. et al. (2017) 'Abstinence only until marriage: an updated review of U.S. policies and their impact' *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 61(3).  
<https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2017/08/abstinence-only-until-marriage-updated-review-us-policies-and-programs-and-their>

<sup>5</sup> Department of Education and Skills (2010) 'Relationships and sexuality education', DES circular, 0037/2010 [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0037\\_2010.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0037_2010.pdf)

### *Inclusive education*

- All young people, regardless of their gender identity, should receive the same RSE. As adults, we need to understand and empathise with people of all genders and sexual orientations and we need the appropriate education to do so.
- RSE should be LGBT+ inclusive. This is important in order to destigmatise LGBT+ relationships, educate students on LGBT+ rights and support young LGBT+ people who may be struggling with discrimination in their personal lives.
- RSE should include factual information about different types of bodies, including trans and intersex people's bodies and disabled people's bodies. With the absence of representation of diverse body types in mainstream media, young people should be assured that there is no such thing as a "normal body".
- RSE should address different kinds of sex. Understanding that your sex life includes a broad range of acts with or without other people is important both for safeguarding young people and for supporting them.
- In order to deliver comprehensive and inclusive sex education to all, the Education Act must be amended. The Act should no longer allow schools to deliver sexuality education in accordance with a school's ethos and should not oblige the board of management to uphold the ethos of the school's patron (often the church).
- Additionally, the RSE programme should be extended to ensure access to sexuality information and education for marginalized adolescents and youth outside the formal education system. It is crucial that this consultation on RSE take into account the rights of those outside formal education. Failure to systematically provide these young people with comprehensive sexuality education will deepen the social exclusion they experience, and jeopardize their future lives and health.

### *Education focused on consent and bodily autonomy*

- Laws governing the age of consent must not infringe on young people's rights to receive sexuality and reproductive health information and education. Children and young people must learn about their right to make decisions about their own body. This can begin at a young age under the theme of "your body, your choice", where children are taught that they can accept or refuse physical contact, e.g. hugs. This is an example of an age-appropriate method of introducing the importance of consent.
- As children learn more about sex, consent must remain central. Lessons about sexual consent should cover what is consent, what does consent look like (mutual, unreserved, enthusiastic, continuous), situations where someone does not have the capacity to consent, the right to withdraw consent and what to do if consent is violated. Education about what constitutes a healthy or unhealthy relationship and where to go to get support should be included in this subject. Students should be given ample opportunity to reflect on and discuss consent.
- RSE should also include discussions of bodily autonomy. Contraception and abortion should form an important part of these discussions and should always be framed in a rights-based, patient-centred fashion, where the sexually active and/or pregnant person is the decision maker. Educating students on the human rights attached to bodily autonomy and an individual's right to privacy must form part of the curriculum.
- Education about consent should incorporate broader discussions of autonomy, such as skills in decision-making.

- Education on human rights should also pay particular attention to the ways in which the bodily autonomy of vulnerable groups (such as people with disabilities or undocumented migrants) is particularly negatively impacted through restrictions to bodily autonomy.

#### *Evidence-based education*

- All education must be based in facts.
- RSE should teach children and young people about safe sex and contraception, including how to access and use contraception. These discussions should also explain that no contraception is 100% reliable and provide realistic information about how and why contraception can and does fail, in order to maximise successful use. RSE should also incorporate realistic and unbiased discussions on sexually transmitted infections and their management. Conditions such as HIV are often the subject of heightened stigma due in large part to a lack of knowledge and information.
- Myth-busting around sexual and reproductive health and gender stereotypes is crucial, particularly in the context of widespread misinformation about relationships and sexuality.
- Comprehensive RSE should provide students with facts about puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, abortion and miscarriage. This should include information on how to recognise and date pregnancy. Students should also receive information on pregnancy and the law, such as under what circumstances abortion is legal and the international context around reproductive rights.
- It is important that any new RSE programme introduced in Ireland is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis in order to assess its implementation and effectiveness, and make improvements where necessary.

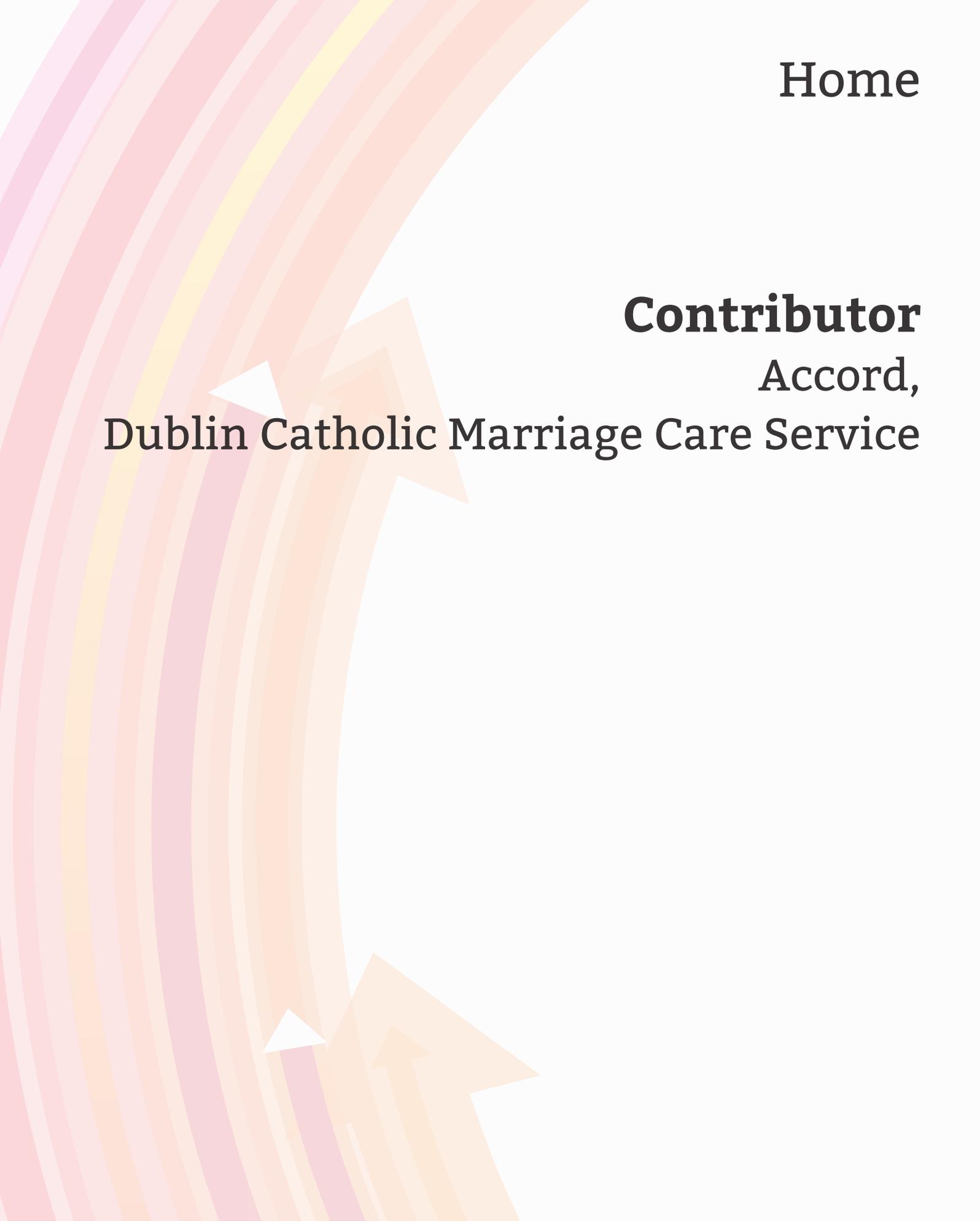
**For further information, please contact:**

**Abortion Rights Campaign,**

**105 Capel Street, Dublin 1.**

**Tel: 01 662 4325.**

**Email: [policy@abortionrights.ie](mailto:policy@abortionrights.ie)**

The background features a series of curved, overlapping lines in shades of pink, purple, and yellow, creating a sense of movement. Overlaid on these lines are several large, semi-transparent arrows pointing upwards and to the right. The overall aesthetic is modern and vibrant.

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**Contributor**  
Accord,  
Dublin Catholic Marriage Care Service

**SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT REVIEW BOARD OF  
THE RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS**

**BY**

**ACCORD DUBLIN**

**REQUESTED BY RICHARD BRUTON TD**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATIONS AND SKILLS**

**1. Introduction**

ACCORD Dublin is an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin whose remit is to support all aspects of marriage and relationships. ACCORD Dublin is the largest provider of marriage preparation programmes in the Diocese. ACCORD Dublin provides remedial counselling for couples experiencing problems and we offer a Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme to both primary and secondary schools. All ACCORD Dublin programmes are provided on a needs basis and not ability to pay.

ACCORD Dublin has been involved in the area of Relationships and Sexuality for over 50 years. The origins of the current RSE schools programme lie in the early 1990s, following invitations from several schools who identified a gap of provision in the area of relationship guidance for students and invited ACCORD to assist. Over the years the programme has grown and developed substantially in line with the guidelines issued by the Department of Education.

There is substantial demand from both primary and secondary schools for our RSE programme. ACCORD Dublin is invited to over 400 schools, within the Archdiocese of Dublin, annually. In 2017 31,250 students participated in the various programmes at primary and secondary level.

**2. ACCORD Dublin Schools Team - Qualifications**

The ACCORD Dublin Schools team comprises 14 people, 12 women and 2 men who are all professionally trained facilitators and counsellors. Facilitators have a Certificate in Marriage Education accredited by St. Patrick's College Maynooth and the counsellors have a Higher Diploma in Marriage and Relationship Counselling awarded by the Pontifical University in Maynooth and recognised by the National Association for Pastoral Counselling and Psychotherapy (NAPCP) and the

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP). It is a requirement of ACCORD Dublin that facilitators and counsellors must work in the area of either marriage education or counselling for a period of two before applying for selection for the schools programme teams. If selected, they will undergo an additional six months training focussed specifically on working as a facilitator in a schools environment. All members of the schools teams attend continuous professional development (CPD) as we deem it an essential on-going requirement for standard for professional facilitators. All CPD is delivered by accredited trainers and relevant outside agencies – these include BelongTo, Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI), Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) and the Irish Autism Society. Schools team members must also participate in continuous Child Safeguarding training and have current Garda Vetting.

### **3. ACCORD Dublin Schools Programmes**

#### **3.1 Primary School Programmes:**

The primary school programmes are one day programmes and offered to pupils in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class. ACCORD Dublin also offer an information talk for parents of these pupils in advance of their child/children taking part. Parents/Guardians of the primary schools students are made aware of the contents of the programme by the schools and must consent to their child/children participating in the programme.

Both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class programmes cover the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical development of the child. Among the methodologies used are facilitator input, storytelling, questionnaires, group discussions and interesting visuals

##### **3.1.1 5<sup>th</sup> class programme**

The aims of the 5<sup>th</sup> class programme are

- To prepare children in a reassuring way for all of the changes they will experience as they face puberty and adolescence.
- To encourage healthy, respectful relationships at an age appropriate level
- To enhance the skills necessary for decision making
- To encourage a healthy sense of self and give accurate information on body developments.

This is achieved through:

- Discussing the journey from dependence to independence
- Examining the connection between action and consequence
- Looking at the effect of hormones on emotions
- Examining appropriate ways of expressing emotions
- Looking at the differences and similarities of the expression of emotions between boys and girls
- Encouraging the child to be the best person they can be.
- Encouraging spiritual development by discussing empathy and respect for people irrespective of race, colour, religion or sexuality
- Explaining physical development by using easily understood information given in a sensitive child friendly manner looking at growth, body shape, body hair, sweat production, teenage spots/pimples, genital development, erections, sperm production, breast development, periods – what to expect and how to deal with the practicalities.

Throughout the programme the children are encouraged to ask questions. They are also given the opportunity, at the end of the programme, to submit written questions, anonymously which will be responded to by the facilitator in the group setting.

### **3.1.2 6<sup>th</sup> Class programme**

The aims of the 6<sup>th</sup> class programme are

- To give clear, correct information about the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical changes that occur at the transition from childhood to adolescence,
- To assist children build healthy relationships, help the students to develop a healthy positive attitude towards their emerging sexuality and to that of their fellow human beings
- To offer assistance with skills that will enable them make informed personal choices.

The programme is divided into 3 modules as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> module: Deals with the journey from childhood to adulthood and is an overview on how their lives are developing at this time. It looks at the pressures and worries that may surround these developments, conflict management and negotiating skills. Issues such as personal safety and the right to say “no” are included in this part of the programme. The use of technology and the internet is an important part of the programme which gives the

facilitator the opportunity to point out possible problems and to encourage discussion which often leads to greater understanding and awareness of their responsibility to themselves and others.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> module: Deals with emotional and spiritual development. This module examines the effect of hormones on the emotions, mood swings and the appropriate expression of their emotions. Facilitators discuss and promote diversity and encourage respect and understanding.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> module: Deals with physical development, revisiting the body developments as discussed in 5<sup>th</sup> class and explaining conception, pregnancy and childbirth.

Again the children are encouraged to ask questions and given the opportunity, at the end of the programme, to submit written questions anonymously, which will be responded to by the facilitator.

If it is a Co-Ed school the boys and girls will participate in the programme together as this encourages openness and the opportunity to hear each other. They are given time and choice at the end of the session for questions in a single sex group setting if they feel more at ease.

### **3.1.3 Parent talks for parents of primary school children:**

- Parent Talks are normally delivered in the evening approximately one week before the session for the children. These talks inform the parents of the content of the programme their children will participate in and it gives them an opportunity to discuss other issues and concerns regarding their pre-teens and teens.
- In the school year 2016/17 ACCORD Dublin delivered 71 Parent Talks, voluntarily attended by approximately 3,550 parents.

### **3.2 Secondary School Programmes:**

Secondary schools courses are offered to 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Transition Year, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students. The programme can be delivered over one full school morning or through three sessions of one and half hours duration delivered over three weeks. All workshops are highly interactive.

The aims of these programmes are:

- To reach a fuller understanding of all aspects of relationships
- To learn to deal with conflict more effectively
- To understand the impact of family of origin on relationships and to increase self-awareness

- To facilitate discussion on the impact of children, responsibility, commitment and expectations
- To give practical information on sex, reproduction and related topics such as sexually transmitted infections.
- To assist the students in making informed choices.

The course content varies depending on the year group. The students themselves decide the topics they would like to see discussed but these will always include modules on anatomy and sexual health. The topics most suggested by students are:

- **How to recognise and deal with abusive relationships.** In recent years, ACCORD Dublin facilitators have identified a worrying increase in the number of teenagers experiencing abuse in their peer-to-peer relationships. Often, the young person affected is sometimes involved in a relationship without fully realising that it is emotionally abusive. In some cases, physical abuse is also present in relationships between peers. ACCORD Dublin facilitators are trained to identify these problems for young people and in individual cases have equipped young men and women with the skills to recognise the problem and remove themselves from what can be a dangerous situation.
- **Consent** – Over the past 5 years ACCORD Dublin facilitators have identified the vital importance of clarity around the issue of consent in relationships. It is now a major part of class discussions for all ages in secondary school. We use a variety of external resources and questionnaires that help both young men and women to understand more clearly what can often be a confusing subject for them.
- Expectations of relationships, including sexual relationships.
- Effect of alcohol/drugs on relationships
- Pornography – effects on individuals and relationships
- Sexting
- Dealing with the end of a relationship “being dumped”
- Friendship issues – unhealthy or “toxic” relationships
- Family issues
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, + relationships
- Sex

- Emotional problems – caused by relationships, family and friends
- Stress
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted infections.

The students are encouraged to enter into discussions and to listen and respect other people's point of view.

#### **4. Course Evaluations**

At the conclusion of the programme students in secondary schools are requested to complete a programme evaluation form. This is anonymous to encourage an honest response. In general there is a 100% form return rate from students. The response to our programmes is overwhelmingly positive specifically in relation to the way the programme is delivered, facilitating open discussion among students. In our experience, the fact that facilitators are not personally known to the students gives them a certain level of personal comfort and freedom of expression.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The ACCORD Dublin RSE Programme is designed to help young people understand the nature of relationships and the responsibility of being in relationships. The programme works with young people to help them develop their own set of values which they can then apply in any relationship in which they are involved. There is a necessity for this programme as is evidenced by the constant demand from schools who appreciate the value of our programmes for young people at a crucial time in their lives.

#### **6. Recommendations**

1. We would strongly recommend the Review Group gives serious consideration to the value of availing of the services of professionally trained outside facilitators. An outside facilitator is not intended to be a substitute for a class teacher but rather enhance the work of the class teacher. One of the main areas of enhancement is the anonymity for the students and it also allows for discussions that a teacher may find difficult to address – this is extremely important to students

as our feedback confirms.

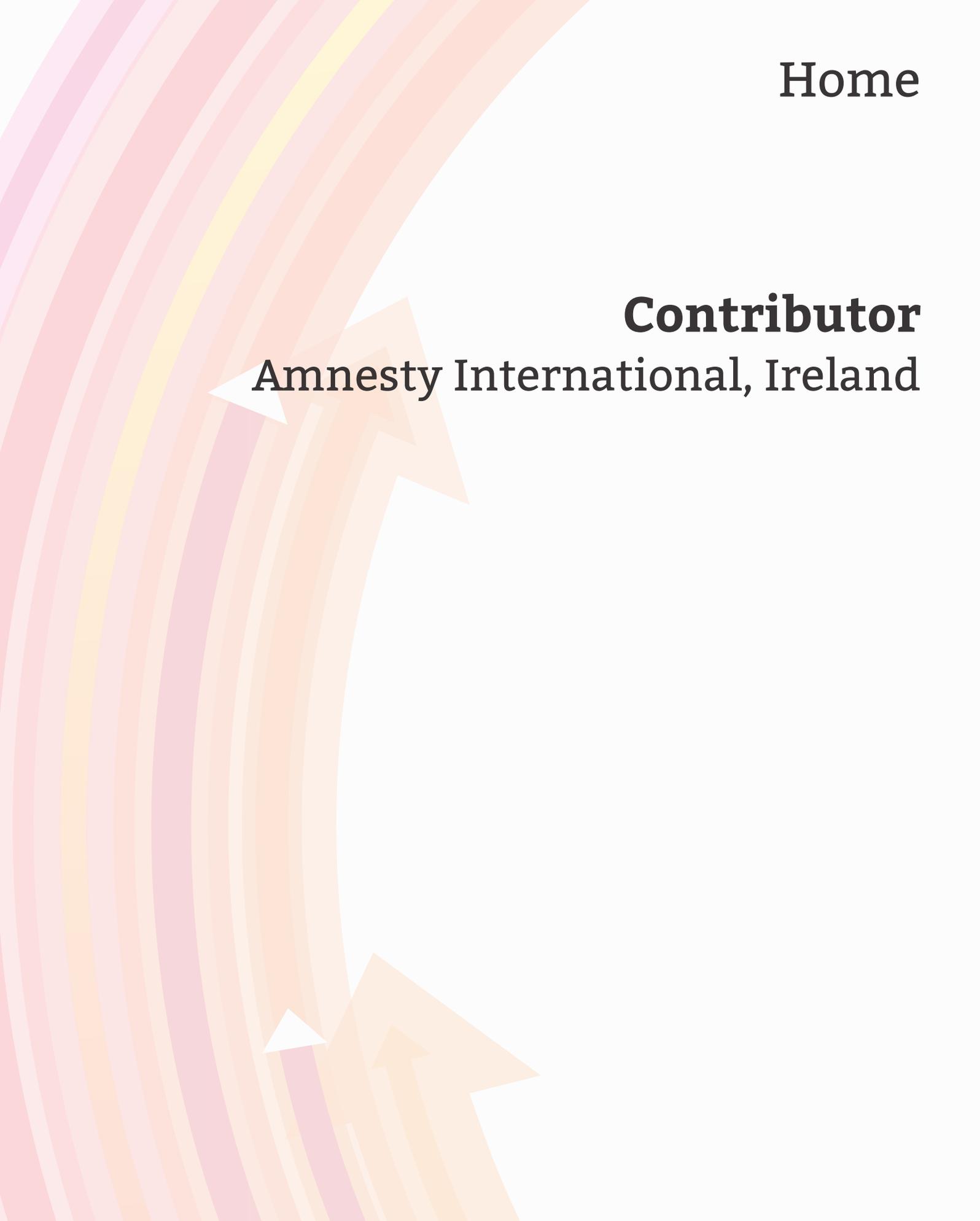
2. Current issues for young people which ACCORD Dublin have incorporated into their current programmes:

- **The impact of Social Media on children and teenagers** –issues of concern continue to be the inappropriate use social media by students and also the impact on children who have unrestricted and often unsupervised access on-line. For example, gaming addiction has been apparent in our classroom discussions for a number couple of years.
- **Pornography** – Easy access to pornography by young people, sometimes as young as 10 years old, is having an enormous impact on their sexual and emotional wellbeing. It is increasing pressure on both boys and girls regarding sexual activity and the expectations of their peers.
- **Dating sites** – In our experience on-line dating sites are having a negative impact on some younger people who are accessing them at a vulnerable stage in their development. Feedback from students would indicate that they feel judged on superficial attributes and are undermined by the disposable nature of the sites. Young people often have no understanding of the inherent risks to their personal safety by using dating sites. In recent years, ACCORD Dublin facilitators have encouraged open, informed discussion for young people to increase their levels of caution in this area.

We are delighted to have been given this opportunity by Minister Bruton to share the benefit of our experience and expertise with the Review Board. We would be happy to provide any additional material and information that may be required by the Board.

Anita Conlan  
School Team Coordinator





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**Contributor**

Amnesty International, Ireland



## Amnesty International Ireland submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme

### Respondent's details

Organisation: Amnesty International Ireland  
Date: 30 January 2019  
Email: [gwilentz@amnesty.ie](mailto:gwilentz@amnesty.ie)

This submission is made on behalf of Amnesty International Ireland. The contents of this submission relate to comprehensive sexuality education and information delivered at primary and post-primary levels, and in non-formal / out-of-school settings, as essential to realising human rights including the right of everyone to education and the highest attainable standard of health and well-being.

### Glossary

CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education
EU	European Union
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ITGSE	International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (inclusive and non-exhaustive)
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
RSE	Relationships and sexuality education
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

### Background

Amnesty International is a global membership-based human rights organisation of more than 7 million members globally. In Ireland we have 20,000 members. We are independent of any political, religious or other ideology.

As part of our global My Body, My Rights campaign, Amnesty International conducted research in different countries and regions examining situations where states deny or restrict people's rights to make decisions about their own bodies, lives, sexualities and reproduction. The campaign encompassed a broad range of issues, including freedom

from discrimination, access to safe abortion, to contraception, and to other sexual and reproductive health information, education and services.

In Ireland, the organisation's research, published in 2015,<sup>1</sup> focused on the negative impact of the criminalisation of abortion on the human rights of pregnant people.<sup>2</sup> Though the Irish dimension of this global campaign focused specifically on access to abortion services and information, Amnesty International believes that a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services and supplies, information and education is necessary to fulfil the sexual and reproductive rights of everyone, as affirmed by the UN treaty bodies and special procedures.

This approach was reflected in our submission to the Citizens' Assembly, made in December 2016, in which we underscored States obligations to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health information and comprehensive sexuality education. Access should be guaranteed to everybody, especially for children, adolescents and young people, which is currently not the case Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

The Assembly was tasked with developing a set of recommendations to the government around the Eighth Amendment<sup>4</sup> and any future abortion legislation; it was not explicitly asked to comment on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues more broadly. However, over the course of the Assembly's deliberations, members provided feedback indicating that they wanted to see wider policy issues reflected in their recommendations.<sup>5</sup> At the conclusion of their deliberations on the Eighth Amendment, members were surveyed on possible further recommendations, the top five of which were distilled into a set of ancillary recommendations included in the [final report](#). The first of these recommendations focuses on strengthening the provision of sexuality education in Ireland:

*Improvements should be made in sexual health and relationship education, including the areas of contraception and consent, in primary and post-primary schools, colleges, youth clubs and other organisations involved in education and interactions with young people.*<sup>6</sup>

Following this, a Joint Oireachtas Committee was formed to review the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly and develop its own [report](#). The Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International Ireland (2015), *She is Not a Criminal: the impact of Ireland's abortion law* (EUR 29/1597/2015).

<sup>2</sup> On observations relating to access to abortion, this submission alternates use of the terms 'women and girls' and 'pregnant people' in recognition of the fact that not everyone who requires access to abortion services identifies as female. Amnesty International Ireland advocates for the sexual and reproductive rights of all people.

<sup>3</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Ireland (2016). The Committee found a "severe lack of access to sexual and reproductive health education and emergency contraception for adolescents". It urged that a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents be adopted, and that sexual and reproductive health education be part of the mandatory school curriculum.

<sup>4</sup> The Eighth Amendment, or Article 40.3.3, was inserted into the Irish constitution in 1983 and imposed a near-total Constitutional ban on abortion in the state.

<sup>5</sup> Joint Committee on the Eighth Amendment (2017), *Ancillary Recommendations of the Citizen's Assembly Report*, para 9.

<sup>6</sup> First Report and Recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly: the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution, page 5.

not only supported the broadly human rights compliant recommendations of the Assembly, but went a step further in strengthening them. The Committee reiterated and strengthened calls made by the Assembly for improved sexuality education in Ireland.

*While the Committee notes the ongoing developments that are taking place in respect of relationship and sexuality education (RSE) and social, personal and health education (SPHE) in our schools, it has a specific concern in relation to what is happening at second level. The Committee's concerns can be summarised as follows. (a) For many schools, sex education is delivered as part of religious education and furthermore it is delivered on an ad-hoc basis, for example not being covered until late in the education cycle. (b) Many teachers are not comfortable teaching RSE and therefore it is left to a minority of teachers or it is outsourced to an agency. (c) As the Committee understands matters, such agencies and their use by schools are not regulated and those delivering the course are not required to have a teaching qualification. It therefore appears to the Committee that any person can set up as an agency to deliver sex education. (d) The ethos of the school can influence how RSE course content is delivered.<sup>7</sup>*

Amnesty International Ireland makes this submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) as an extension of our campaign for the realisation of sexual and reproductive rights in Ireland. As part of this, we seek to ensure the carefully considered recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment are implemented, so that the roll out of abortion services in Ireland is complemented and supported by measures aimed at the prevention of unintended pregnancy.

### **Defining comprehensive sexuality education**

Throughout this submission, we use the term 'comprehensive sexuality education' (CSE). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 'comprehensive' refers to the development of learners' knowledge, skills and attitudes for positive sexuality and good sexual and reproductive health.<sup>8</sup> Core elements of 'comprehensive' programmes include a firm grounding in human rights principles, and a recognition of sexuality as a natural and positive aspect of human development. To be considered comprehensive, programmes should be informed by evidence, adapted to the local context in which they are being delivered, and address and measure beliefs, values, attitudes and skills related to sexuality, with a focus on promoting health and well-being.

UNESCO's International Technical Guidance on sexuality education defines CSE as:

*A curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children*

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<sup>7</sup> Joint Committee on the Eighth Amendment (2017), *Ancillary Recommendations of the Citizen's Assembly Report*, para 3.19.

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO (2018), *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*, pg. 12 ,

*and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.<sup>9</sup>*

Accordingly, some of the basic principles of CSE include that it must be evidence-based and scientifically accurate, proceed incrementally in response to the evolving capacities of the young person; it must be included within a written curriculum to guide educators and learners; and it must support learners to develop the skills needed to enable them to make informed choices, be assertive and to communicate and negotiate in their relationships. It must also use a human rights-based approach and promote the realisation of gender equality through developing an understanding of how gender norms can influence inequality. It must also be ‘comprehensive’ in the sense that it integrates the full range of topics that are important for learners to know, even if some of these topics are deemed ‘challenging’ in some contexts.

### **International human rights standards and norms relating to comprehensive sexuality education**

The right to comprehensive sexuality education is firmly grounded in numerous international human rights treaties and instruments that include the right of everyone to education and the highest attainable standard of health. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the WHO Regional Office for Europe’s *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe*.

These rights have been interpreted to require comprehensive sexuality education in schools through numerous Concluding Observations, General Comments and reports by UN treaty-monitoring bodies and special procedures of the Human Rights Council. This includes Concluding Observations that UN treaty bodies have made directly to Ireland. During its last review under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2016, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Ireland:

*Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, with special attention to the prevention of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.<sup>10</sup>*

This was reinforced last year through recommendations from the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, calling on Ireland to:

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<sup>9</sup>UNESCO (2018), *International Technical Guide on Sexuality Education*, pg. 18,

<sup>10</sup> Committee on the Rights of a Child (2016), *Concluding Observations on the combined third and fourth period of Ireland, CRC/C/IRL/CO/3-4, para 58(c)*

*Integrate compulsory and standardised age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights into school curricula, including comprehensive sex education for adolescent girls and boys covering responsible sexual behaviours and focused on preventing early pregnancies; and ensure that it is scientifically objective and its delivery by schools is closely monitored and evaluated.*<sup>11</sup>

These built on previous recommendations to Ireland by both committees a decade before,<sup>12</sup> and concern that “adolescents [in Ireland] have insufficient access to necessary information on reproductive health”.<sup>13</sup>

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recently outlined how comprehensive sexuality education is an essential part of a package of education, information, services and supplies necessary to realising the right to make autonomous decisions about one’s sexual and reproductive health:

*Preventing unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions requires States to adopt legal and policy measures to guarantee all individuals access to affordable, safe and effective contraceptives and comprehensive sexuality education, including for adolescents, liberalize restrictive abortion laws, guarantee women and girls access to safe abortion services and quality post-abortion care including by training health care providers, and respect women’s right to make autonomous decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.*<sup>14</sup>

The power of comprehensive sexuality education to have a positive transformative impact on society and social norms was underscored in the 2010 report of the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, which highlighted that:

*States must ensure that they respect, protect and implement the human rights to comprehensive sexuality education, by acting with due diligence and taking all measures necessary to ensure its effective enjoyment, without discrimination, from the early stages of life. The absence of planned, democratic and pluralist sexual education constitutes, in practice, a model of sexual education (by omission) which has particularly negative consequences for people’s lives and which uncritically reproduces patriarchal practices, ideas, values and attitudes that are a source of many forms of discrimination.*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (2017), *Concluding Observation on the combines sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ireland*, CEDAW/C/IRL/CO/6-7, para 38(c), pg. 10

<sup>12</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2005), *Concluding Observations: Ireland*, A/60/38(SUPP) para. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2006), *Concluding Observations: Ireland*, CRC/C/IRL/CO/2, para. 51-52.

<sup>14</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2016), *General Comment No. 22, on the right to sexual and reproductive health (article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Right)*, E/C.12/GC/22 para 22.

<sup>15</sup> Special Rapporteur on the Right of Education (2010), *General Assembly Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education*, A/65/162, para 75, p. 19.

Finally, the Department of Education in Ireland has also recognised the provision of sexuality education as a rights obligation; a circular issued by the Department to post-primary schools stated that access to sex education is a right for students under the terms of Article 11.2 of the European Social Charter.<sup>16</sup>

We have provided a selection from the internal human rights framework, establishing the basis for the right to comprehensive sexuality education. However, this is by no means exhaustive. Further information on the human rights basis for the obligation to provide comprehensive sexuality education can be found in the documents listed in the section at the end of this document on ‘recommended further reading.’

### Meaningful youth participation

While the obligation to ensure equitable and universal access to comprehensive sexuality education rests with States, it’s vital that children, adolescents and young people are engaged in the design and development of laws, policies and programmes that impact their lives. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the right of all children, adolescents and young people “to express...views freely in all matters affecting [their lives and]... being given due weight in accordance with [the] age and maturity [of the young person]”.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) recognised the right of young people to participate in reproductive health programmes<sup>18</sup>. This was reinforced in the outcome of the 2012 Commission on Population and Development on the theme of adolescents and youth.<sup>19</sup> The value of youth participation is also supported by evidence. Studies show that involving young people in programmes and interventions aiming to reach them “increases the reach, attractiveness, relevance and effectiveness.”<sup>20</sup>

Meaningful youth participation in the review, revision and redesign of the curriculum is a human right, and is vital to ensuring the relevance and success of the curriculum. States should ensure that adolescents are involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of all programmes affecting their lives, at school and in the community.<sup>21</sup> Particular attention should be paid to engaging children, adolescents and young people who experience marginalisation and whose voices and perspectives are often underrepresented in decision-making.

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<sup>16</sup> DES circular 0037/2010: [http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0037\\_2010.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0037_2010.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (1990), Article 12.

<sup>18</sup> International Conference on Population and Development (1994), *Programme of Action*, para [6.15].

<sup>19</sup> Commission on Population and Development (2012), *Report of the Forty-Fifth Session: Adolescents and Youth*, E/CN.9/2012/8, para 31.

<sup>20</sup> Jennings, et al., 2006; SRHR Alliance, 2016; Villa-Torres and Svanemyr, 2015; IPPF, 2016 cited in ITGSE, 86.

<sup>21</sup> *Convention on the Rights of the Child (2016), General Comment No. 20 on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, CRC/C/GC/20*, para 23.

## Observations on priority areas outlined by the Minister for Education

In the NCCA's call for written submissions, it asked respondents to give specific consideration to the following topics which the Minister for Education has identified as priority areas for reform and strengthening of the curriculum. Brief observations on each topic are outlined below.

### o Consent

Comprehensive sexuality education forms one part of a transformative national strategy to end sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). One of the root causes of SGBV is unequal power relations between women and men. CSE can emphasise girls' and women's rights to bodily integrity and autonomy, impart information on existing laws governing sexual consent, and facilitate children, adolescents and young people to reflect on the role that attention to gender and power play in forming relationships based on equality and respect. CSE that adopts a human rights-based approach is both empowering and important as a preventative measure in the context of larger national strategies to end SGBV.<sup>22</sup>

UNESCO's *International technical guidance on sexuality education* (ITGSE) lists this as an 'essential topic' for any comprehensive sexuality education programme, and includes learning objectives for teaching about consent, privacy and bodily integrity, that are differentiated according to the evolving capacities for the young person. Helpfully, these provide guidance as to how to address and measure beliefs, values, attitudes and skills relating to consent, with a focus on the well-being of children, adolescents and young people.

### o Contraception

Repeated studies carried out by Ireland's Crisis Pregnancy Agency and the Department of Health reveal that many children, adolescents and young people report that RSE teachers failed to discuss the practice of safe sex, and broader social and emotional aspects of well-being and sexuality; young participants interviewed also demonstrated a continued lack of knowledge concerning sexually transmitted infections, contraception and negotiating healthy relationships.<sup>23</sup>

It is essential for adolescents and young people to receive information about the full range of modern contraceptives, including condoms. They need information on how to access a range of modern contraceptives. Including condoms, and how to use them consistently and correctly, as well as information on emergency contraception.

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<sup>22</sup> Campbell, Meghan. "Let's Talk About Sex Education And Human Rights". *OHRH*, 2019, <http://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/lets-talk-about-sex-education-and-human-rights/>. Accessed 22 Jan 2019.

<sup>23</sup> See Hyde, A. & Howlett, E. (2004) *Understanding Teenage Sexuality in Ireland*. Dublin: Crisis Pregnancy Agency also see Mayock, P. & Byrne, T. (2004) *A Study of Sexual Health Issues, Attitudes and Behaviours: the Views of Early School Leavers*. Dublin: Crisis Pregnancy Agency and Mayock, P., Kitching, K., & Morgan, M. (2007) *Relationships and sexuality education in post-primary schools: Challenges to full implementation*. Dublin: Crisis Pregnancy Agency/Department of Education.

Beyond sharing information about contraceptives, effective CSE programmes include information about how to access youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. This includes, but is not limited to, contraception; pregnancy testing; STI and HIV prevention, counselling, testing and treatment; safe abortion; HPV vaccination; FGM prevention and management of consequences; and menstrual health management.

This should including making children, adolescents and young people aware of their rights as patients, including their rights to informed consent, privacy, autonomy and confidentiality, and how existing legal frameworks hinder or support their ability to make decisions about their own health.

- **Healthy relationships**

CSE promotes healthy relationships through building an understanding of the right of all people to choose whether, when and with whom to have any form of intimate or sexual relationships, and the importance of respecting the choices of others in this regard. This includes the rights to abstain, delay or engage in sexual activity. It also supports young people to develop life skills to resist peer pressure and to make their own free, informed and autonomous choices in relationships. On a societal level, CSE helps to reinforce social norms that are grounded in respecting every individual's autonomy and choices.

Additionally, CSE addresses the ways that gender norms can influence inequality in relationships, and how these inequalities impact health and well-being. CSE also supports children, adolescents and young people to develop an analysis of how gender and power can contribute to increased vulnerability to HIV, STIs, unintended pregnancy and sexual and gender-based violence. States have an obligation to combat harmful gender stereotypes,<sup>24</sup> and effective CSE programmes can contribute to facilitating this aim.

CSE promotes gender equality by building understanding of gender diversity and by examining gender norms that have been shaped by societies and cultures. It also encourages the creation of respectful and equitable relationships based on empathy and understanding.

- **New media, safe use of the internet and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**

Comprehensive sexuality education programmes are increasingly recognising the need to equip children, adolescents and young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to help them make responsible choices and to consume media critically, especially in a context where the internet and social media play an increasingly important role in their lives. Information about sexuality and sexual images are widely available on the internet, and can be a young person's first exposure to sexuality. Additionally, according to a report from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, one in ten

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<sup>24</sup> United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1981), Article 5(a).

women over 15 years of age reported experiencing cyber harassment,<sup>25</sup> which has been shown to have a detrimental impact on mental health and well-being.<sup>26</sup>

New media and new technologies have the potential to be a tool in increasing access to accurate and positive information on sexuality, sexual health and healthy relationships. However, these tools can also be misused to spread inaccurate information and harmful messages, reinforcing gender stereotypes and even promoting violence. Comprehensive sexuality education should support children, adolescents and young people to develop media literacy skills and to critically analyse the messages they receive and to safely navigate the use of new media and technologies.

- **Inclusive sexuality education**

Often, sexuality education programmes omit relevant content for LGBTI+ children, adolescents and young people, including information about sex characteristics and biological variations which particularly affect intersex children, adolescents and young people.<sup>27</sup> LGBTI+ children, adolescents and young people are particularly impacted by discrimination, and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has stressed the importance of preventing discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) adolescents, noting that:

*Adolescents who are subject to discrimination are more vulnerable to abuse, other types of violence and exploitation, and their health and development are put at greater risk.*<sup>28</sup>

States are required to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity by public and private actors, in all fields, including in education and schools.<sup>29</sup> Comprehensive sexuality education provides a key opportunity to work to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, from the school environment.

While it's vital to ensure sexuality education in Ireland is LGBTI+ inclusive and that it promotes the equality and well-being of LGBTI+ people, inclusive sexuality education must extend to other traditionally marginalised groups as well. The Department of Education has recognised the right of students to access sexuality education; however, the emphasis on students' rights may exclude children, adolescents and young people who are outside the formal education system ('early school leavers'). It is important to ensure comprehensive sexuality education is delivered to all children, adolescents and young people, with specific strategies for reaching those who experience

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<sup>25</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2014. *Violence against Women, an EU-wide Survey: Main results report*. <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report> (Accessed 22 January 2019).

<sup>26</sup> Nixon, C. 2014. Current perspectives: The impact of cyberbullying on adolescent health. *Adolescent Health, Medicine and Therapeutics*, Vol. 5, pp. 143–158.

<sup>27</sup> UNESCO (2018), International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, pg. 25.

<sup>28</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2003), *General Comment 4: Adolescent Health and Development in the Context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC/GC/2003/4*, para. 6.

<sup>29</sup> UN Human Rights Committee (2003) *General Comment 28: the equality of rights between men and woman (article 3)*, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.10, para 31.

marginalisation, such as children, adolescents and young people with disabilities, those in care, young parents and young offenders, among other groups who may be receiving very limited sexuality education, or none at all.

Social determinants of health already place these children, adolescents and young people at greater risk of negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes.<sup>30</sup> Neglecting to provide marginalised children, adolescents and young people with comprehensive sexuality education will compound their marginality, deepen the social exclusion they experience, and put their futures, lives and health at greater risk.

## Teacher training

Finally, studies in Ireland have shown that teachers feel under prepared and insufficiently supported to deliver the RSE programme.<sup>31</sup> In order to adequately prepare teachers to deliver the programme, teachers must, through pre- and on-the-job training, receive values clarification and sensitisation training, as well as training in learner-centred CSE teaching methods.

Additionally, teacher training should help educators to distinguish between their personal values and the health needs of learners.<sup>32</sup> It should also ensure teachers are prepared to deliver the curriculum in full, and understand that core elements of the programme must be delivered.<sup>33</sup> This includes in situations where schools choose to engage external agencies in the delivery of CSE. School managers should provide ongoing support and guidance to support teachers involved in delivering the curriculum. Delivery should also be subject to regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure quality and consistency of programme delivery across the country.

## Key recommendations

- Implement the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment, so that the roll out of abortion services in Ireland is complemented and supported by measures aimed at the prevention of unintended pregnancy;
- Ensure the RSE programme adheres to the basic principles of CSE, including that it is evidence-based and scientifically accurate; it proceeds incrementally in response to the evolving capacities of the young person; it is included within a written curriculum to guide educators and learners; it supports learners to develop the skills needed to enable them to make informed choices, be assertive and to communicate and negotiate in their relationships; and it uses a human rights-based approach and promotes the realisation of gender equality through developing an understanding of how gender norms can influence inequality;

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<sup>30</sup> Mayock, Byrne, *A Study of Sexual Health Issues, Attitudes and Behaviours: the Views of Early School Leavers*.

<sup>31</sup> Department of Education and Skills (2015), *Life Skills Survey: Report on Survey Findings*, pg. 33-35

<sup>32</sup> UNESCO (2018), *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*, pg. 95.

<sup>33</sup> Teachers may be concerned about contravening the 'ethos' of the school, so it will be important to identify and address any concerns and fears teachers may have in relation to the patronage and ethos of their school and their ability to deliver CSE.

- Make meaningful youth participation a core part of ongoing review, revision and redesign of the RSE curriculum to ensure its relevance and success; particular attention should be paid to including children, adolescents and young people who experience marginalisation and whose voices and perspectives are often underrepresented in decision-making;
- Ensure the revised curriculum addresses and measures beliefs, values, attitudes and skills relating to consent, with a focus on the well-being of children, adolescents and young people;
- Ensure the revised curriculum includes information about the full range of modern contraceptives, including condoms and emergency contraception, information on how and where to access contraceptives, and how to use them consistently and correctly;
- Ensure the revised curriculum encourages the creation of respectful and equitable relationships based on empathy and understanding, and builds learners' understanding how gender and power can contribute to increased vulnerability to HIV, STIs, unintended pregnancy and sexual and gender-based violence;
- Ensure the revised curriculum supports children, adolescents and young people to develop media literacy skills and to critically analyse the messages they receive and to safely navigate the use of new media and technologies;
- Ensure the revised curriculum promotes a school environment where discrimination is not tolerated, and ensure that the RSE programme is inclusive of LGBTI+ youth, but also marginalised children, adolescents and young people including those with disabilities, those in care, young parents and young offenders, among other groups who may have traditionally received very limited sexuality education, or none at all;
- Ensure teachers receive pre- and on-the-job values clarification and sensitisation training, as well as training in learner-centred CSE teaching methods; ensure teachers are prepared to deliver the curriculum in full, and understand that core elements of the programme must be delivered;
- Ensure programme delivery is subject to regular monitoring and evaluation, to ensure quality and consistency of programme delivery across the country.

### Recommended resources

UNESCO's [International technical guidance on sexuality education](#) was developed to support education, health and other relevant authorities in the development and implementation of school-based and out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education programmes and materials. It is immediately relevant for curriculum developers, and is useful for the design, delivery and evaluation of sexuality education programmes, both in and out of school. The guidance includes 'key concepts' and detailed learning objectives for each, appropriate to varying age and developmental cohorts, coinciding with the priority areas outlined by the Minister.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) developed [Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe](#), which provide step-by-step instructions and a detailed matrix to support health and education professionals in their efforts to guarantee comprehensive sexuality education is delivered in an accurate and timely manner.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) developed [\*Operational Guidance for CSE: a focus on human rights and gender\*](#), which provides guidance on developing CSE programmes in schools. It also includes an assessment tool for school curriculums, and also for policy frameworks and the overall school environment.



Home

**Contributor**  
Association of Secondary Teachers of  
Ireland (ASTI)

## **ASTI Submission**

### **NCCA Consultation on Relationships and Sexuality Education, January 2019**

#### **1. Introduction**

The ASTI welcomed the decision of the Minister for Education and Skills to review the Relationship and Sexuality – RSE – in schools with reference to content of the RSE curriculum and support materials, and its delivery of the curriculum to students. Since its introduction almost twenty-five years ago, much has changed in Irish society and the curriculum needs to be updated with reference to:

- Consent, what it means and its importance
- Developments in contraception and reproductive health
- Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships
- Social media and its effects on self and social relationships
- LGBTQ+ - diverse genders and sexualities
- Pornography

Student wellbeing is increasingly to the forefront in education policy as our society responds to exponential social changes. Relationships and sexuality are intrinsic to human wellbeing and are of profound developmental importance to adolescents. Unlike previous generations, today's adolescents are making the transition from childhood to young adulthood in a culture which is always 'online' (1) and which is characterised by the pervasive sexualisation and commercialisation of young people – as was highlighted in the similarly-titled 2015 study by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2)

The ASTI believes that every student has a right to quality RSE irrespective of school ethos. At the heart of every educational project is the concept of respect for the learner, their agency and their needs. Young people need the information, skills and values to understand and enjoy their sexuality, to have safe and fulfilling relationships and to take responsibility for their own and others sexual health, safety and well-being. It should be of deep concern to policy-makers that research demonstrates that young people get most of their information on sexuality from the internet, including online pornography. (3) This reality of the lack of adequate education on sexualities and genders in schools is underlined in the 2017 consultation on the LBGT+ national youth strategy. (4) It is incumbent on the education partners to develop a new RSE programme which is firmly focused on the best interests of the young person, is comprehensive in its content and available in every school to every student in each year of their second-level education.

#### **2. What is the current situation?**

Relationships and Sexuality Education – RSE – was introduced in schools as part of a package of measures in the wake of the Report of the Kilkenny Incest Case (1993). RSE is part of the broader Social Personal and Health Education – SPHE – which became a compulsory

programme at junior cycle in 2003. While a draft curriculum framework for SPHE for senior cycle was developed in 2005, to date there is no requirement on schools to provide the SPHE programme at this level though they are required to provide RSE. The aims of the RESE programme are:

- to help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
- to promote an understanding of sexuality
- to promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationships with others
- to promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- to enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

It should be noted that while these aims remain educationally valid, they are limited in terms of areas of knowledge, skills and competences addressed and are, moreover, primarily structured as a curricular intervention rather than as a learning process spread over the duration of the student's time in second-level education. This 'add-on status' is confirmed by the one-class period per week – 40-minutes - time period recommended for RSE. In addition to SPHE, since the 1990s, second-level schools are required to implement the *"Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School"*. The latter framework was subsequently incorporated into the 2013 Guidelines for Youth Mental Health – *"Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools"*. The Wellbeing programme in the Framework for Junior Cycle supplements these whole-school approaches.

In summary, there is no dearth of guidance or policy frameworks for schools to support the holistic wellbeing of young people, including relationships and sexuality. However, as several Departmental and other evaluations have consistently demonstrated, students' access to quality RSE in post-primary is variable both across schools and within schools. (5) The background Research Paper prepared for the consultation confirms these findings. (6) In this submission, the ASTI will not reiterate these findings but, rather, will highlight some of the key concerns it has as regards the content and delivery of the current RSE programme.

### **3. Issues of concern to the ASTI**

#### **3.1 Students have a right to comprehensive and holistic relationships and sexuality education**

Education and curriculum policy is broadly focused on enabling the holistic growth of the child. Curriculum policy across the spectrum from early childhood to primary to second-level education is focused on to empower the child by developing his or her skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self- esteem and self-confidence. Relationship and sexuality education is, by definition, is integral to the achievement of this societal goal. However, as several national and international experts have highlighted, the manner in which relationship and sexuality education is provided is significantly influenced by the school ethos. (7) As recently as 2010, the Department of Education and Skills advised schools of their obligation to provide an RSE programme that is objective, based on contemporary scientific evidence

and does not involve censoring, withholding or intentionally misrepresenting information, for example as regards contraception or different means on maintaining sexual and reproductive health. (8) The ASTI does not accept that the ethos of the school, religious or otherwise, should determine the manner in which the RSE programme is provided to students. Students have right to objective and factual relationships and sexuality education regardless of the type of school which they attend.

**Recommendation 1: *School ethos should not serve as a barrier to the objective and factual delivery of the relationships and sexuality programme in second-level schools.***

### **3.2 The curricular context for RSE programme**

The current curricular context for the RSE programme is fragmented and as such, contributes to inconsistencies in students' learning experiences. While the RSE programme at junior cycle complements the Social Personal and Health Education short course within the Wellbeing programme, neither the 2015 Framework for Junior Cycle or the Wellbeing Guidelines provide a clear articulation of rationale and purpose of RSE as set out, for example, in Chapter 3 of the Research Report. The situation at senior cycle is even more inconsistent in that RSE is a stand-alone programme to be timetabled for six hours per annum. Curriculum is a complex concept and process. At its most general level, it refers to the totality of students' learning experiences in school, including the stated purposes of education and how it is to be delivered. Drawing on this definition, it is clear that RSE is very much an "added-on" course which is 'fitted into' the school timetable – as was evidenced in the 2013 Inspectorate report. There is a clear need for a clear and coherent statement of the purposes and contexts as, for example, set out in the 2010 World Health Organisation's *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe* (9) and in the 2018 UNESCO *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An Evidence-Informed Approach*. (10)

**Recommendation 2: *NCCA to develop a curriculum statement for RSE for both junior and senior cycle which provides the rationale, purposes and goals for RSE in line with the holistic sexuality education approach endorsed by UNESCO.***

### **3. 3 Teacher professionalism**

*Deployment of teachers to teach RSE:* All of the research on the implementation of the RSE programme identifies several problematic aspects in relation to the deployment and training of teachers. As regards deployment, the most common problem is that several teachers can be allocated RSE classes largely because of so-called 'gaps' in their timetables, confirming the 'add-on' status of RSE in the school curriculum. A more fundamental problem is the lack of opportunity for teachers to engage in RSE training. The latter arises not just because of lack of substitution for release of such teachers but also because of teachers' workload. Working an average of 40-hours each week, teachers simply do not have time to be absent from their classrooms. (11)

Another aspect of teacher deployment to teach SPHE and RSE is that frequently the most recently qualified teachers, who do not have full-time contracts, are allocated to teach the programmes. Principals resort to this measure in a genuine desire to "bump up" the young teachers' hours so that they have not only more experience of classroom teaching but also to

improve their salary. This is not an optimum situation. Arguably, the most suitable teachers to teach SPHE and RSE are those who are familiar with the school, its culture and its students and, of great significance, are sufficiently experienced in the facilitative methodologies which are the best way to promote learning in these areas. Foundational texts in education emphasise the role of the teacher to facilitate the transition of the student into an active learner in order to cultivate new knowledge. (12) This deep pedagogical expertise is particularly pertinent in the area of relationships and sexuality education.

*Lack of access to RSE education/training:* Lack of access to training has been identified in every evaluation as having a detrimental impact on the implementation of the RSE programme and on the quality of students' experience of the programme. The nature of training also needs to be completely re-examined. Teachers need to be able to access a range of learning activities in RSE in order to develop an adequate knowledge base and skills. The inservice model of one or two days out of school should be considered as a basic introduction to teaching RSE. Given the complex ethical, philosophical and sociological and complexities of the subject matter of RSE, - such as consent, pornography, and social media and gender identity – there needs to be a sustained programme of continuing professional development at Level 7 and upwards for teachers. Teachers should be seconded or released from school to engage in such training. All such training should be accredited.

Current Departmental Guidelines underline that all teachers are responsible for RSE. However, initial teacher education does not provide a foundation course in this area. This is a matter of concern because exposure to exposure to health education, including RSE, is critical to ensure that all newly qualified teachers are a strong understanding of their professional role. A study by UL Education Department academics in 2012 found that over three-quarters of final year students surveyed stated that they do not intend to teach SPHE or RSE. (13)

*Teacher autonomy:* A foundational aspect of teacher professionalism is their knowledge base which, allied with their autonomy, and sustains their classroom practice. Teachers' knowledge base is subject specific and that is why many teachers are uncomfortable teaching RSE: they simply feel that they do not have the knowledge base to ensure quality learning in this deeply complex area. At the same time, the research evidence shows that, by virtue of their pedagogical expertise and pre-existing relationships with students, are the most effective RSE educators are teachers. This research evidence underlines the need for a radical rethink of how to train more teachers to teach RSE.

**Recommendation 3: *The Department of Education and Skills, in conjunction with the Teaching Council, develop a programme for adequate and appropriate continuing professional development in RSE. Teachers should be facilitated to engage with this programme by measures such as substitution, secondment, financial assistance/no fees, accreditation and remuneration.***

### **3. 4 School leadership**

Wellbeing and related programmes such as RSE require strong collaborative school practices to be effectively integrated into the curriculum, student support structures and the overall culture of the school. Such practices can only be sustained by adequate leadership structures in schools. Circular 03/18 states that high quality leadership is crucial in establishing a shared purpose and vision for a school and to the achievement of high quality educational outcomes for students. Whole-school curriculum planning is totally dependent on effective in-school management. Successive ASTI Millward Brown and Red C surveys have demonstrated that the moratorium has negatively impacted on this vital area of school as well as significantly increasing the workload of individual teachers. The national and international evidence is unequivocal on the importance of whole-school approaches for viable and sustainable SPHE and RSE implementation.

***Recommendation 4: The number of school leadership posts should be increased to ensure that every school has a dedicated co-ordinator for the revised RSE programme.***

### **3.5 Group size must facilitate confidentiality, privacy and a safe environment for students**

Class size has a significant impact on the delivery of RSE-type programmes. (UNESCO, 2018: 96) Given that sexuality is a subject that can arouse strong emotions, reactions and feelings of anxiety, embarrassment and vulnerability, among others, it is important for students to have a confidential, private and safe environment to share their questions, learn and participate without feeling embarrassed or vulnerable. A sense of trust, confidentiality and a safe environment can only be achieved by ensuring small groups. It is simply not possible to do this in the traditional class size or 28-30 students. The most effective methodologies for teaching RSE happens in small groups. (14) Literature has shown that small group interventions in general can be an effective means of preventing many kinds of risk behaviours among adolescents. (15) Small group teaching opens up pedagogic spaces that are versatile, dynamic and responsive. It affords the opportunity to develop the skills of sensitive listening and watchful attentiveness to those who are perhaps less able to join in. The larger the group the group, the more complicated the dynamics and the likelihood that some remain silent. (16) This is particularly important in the context of the inclusive model of education focused on diversity of needs. Class size at second-level are high by international standards (17). Teachers are already reporting that large classes are inhibiting classroom practice of both teachers and students in the new junior cycle specifications. Class size has a particularly significant impact on the delivery of RSE-type programmes and allowance in the allocation of teachers need to be increased specifically to implement an effective RSE programme in schools. In conclusion Small groups offers students the opportunity to ask questions and make comments that are not normally accommodated by large group teaching contexts.

***Recommendation 5: The pupil: teacher ratio must be reduced to ensure that class size / group size in second level schools RSE/SPHE classes are in line with international recommendations, namely, 12-16 students per group, in order to implement an effective RSE programme in the context of S.P.H.E.***

## **Conclusion**

The ASTI would caution against adopting an alarmist approach to the state of RSE education in our schools in light of current and international issues in relation to sexual violence, consent and online culture. Schools are complying with Departmental requirements to a broadly satisfactory level. However, there is a need to review the range of issues included in the RSE programme. There is also a need to address the implementation challenges which schools face in providing quality RSE programmes to all students. The latter include teacher education; class size and school leadership. Critically, current policy and legislation needs to be reviewed to all schools, irrespective of their denominational or other status, to meet their obligations to provide comprehensive, non-judgemental RSE education to all students.

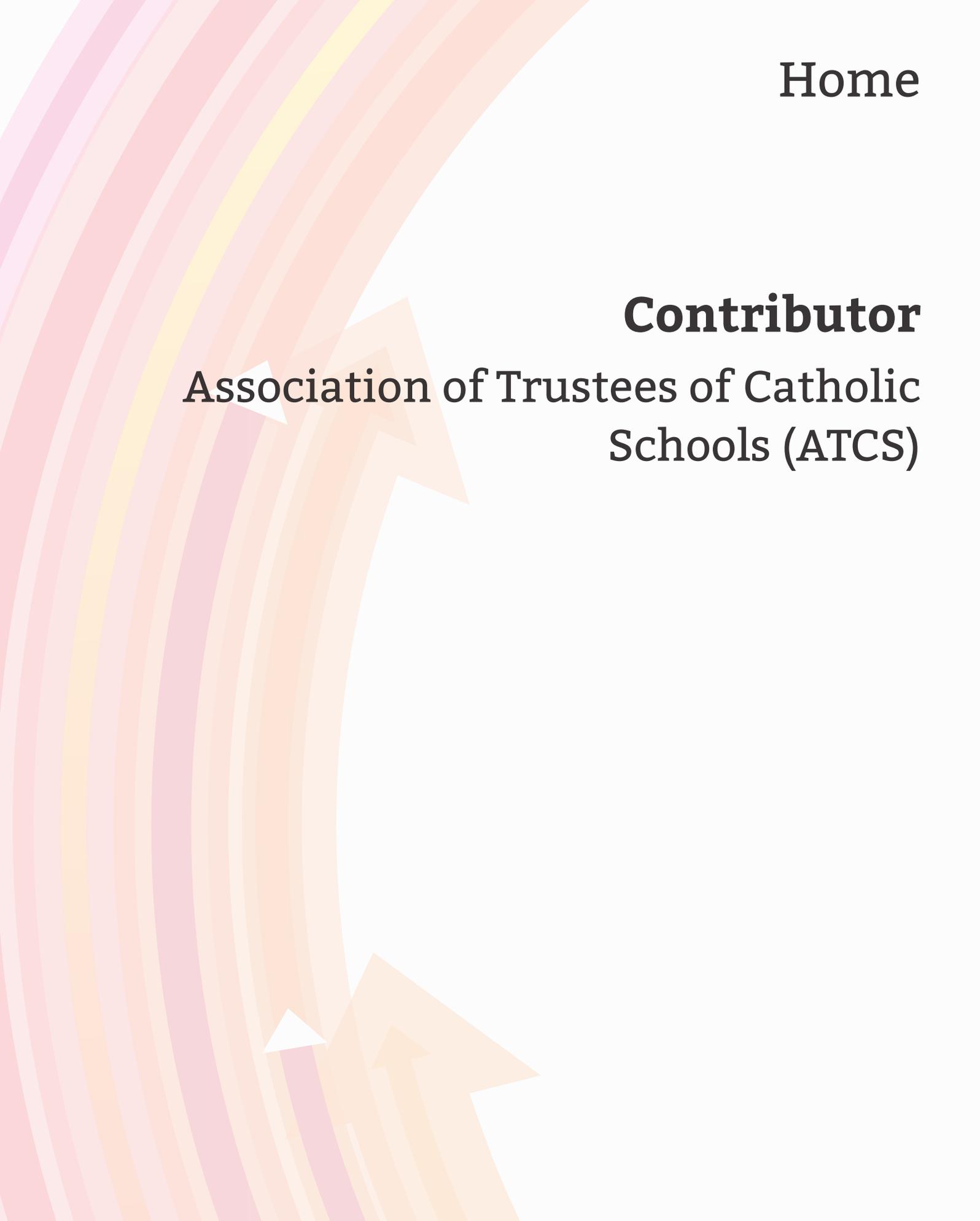
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Home

## **Contributor**

Association of Trustees of Catholic  
Schools (ATCS)

## **The Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS)**

The Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS) was established in 2009 to address the concerns of Trustees/Patrons and to promote best operational practice in the exercise of Trusteeship/Patronage on behalf of the Catholic Church. Currently, there are sixty-four Trustee bodies affiliated to the Association. ATCS is a locus for unity and inspiration, rooted in Gospel values, affirming and enabling Catholic schools Trusts/Trustees in the provision of quality education. Through a process of consultation and accountability, the ATCS acts as a leadership body and collective voice for the Catholic School Trusts in the exercise of their role.

**Contact Details:** Mr Declan Lawlor, Chairperson  
Dr Marie Griffin, Hon Secretary  
ATCS,  
New House,  
St Patrick's College,  
Maynooth,  
Co. Kildare

**Email:** [info@atcs.ie](mailto:info@atcs.ie)

## **Introduction**

The Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) as it undertakes the work of reviewing current provision for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) as part of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in primary and post primary schools in Ireland. The ATCS recognises the importance of this review.

On this point, the ATCS hopes that this review will not only concern itself with curricular provision but with an exploration of support materials for the delivery of RSE in schools as well as an examination of the delivery of the curriculum to students. The ATCS is conscious of the context in which this review is taking place, particularly its relationship to other work being carried out by the NCCA on wellbeing – this is a significant point for one to be aware of. The ATCS is hopeful that this review being carried out by the NCCA will lead to greater levels of support for parents and for teachers as they work together to help children and young people learn, at home and in school, about themselves, their friendships and relationships with others.

The ATCS offers its perspective on these matters in terms of some key principles outlined below. These principles are reflective of current practice, in the thinking presented by the NCCA and the Department of Education and Skills in the area of RSE to date and in other recent curricular developments and of course, in terms of the Church's own understanding of the importance of RSE in the lives of children and young people attending primary and post primary schools in Ireland.

### **The role of the school is subsidiary to that of the parents**

Article 42 of the Irish Constitution recognises parents as the primary educators of their child:

"1: The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children."

"4: The State shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation."

This important right is also enshrined in law in the Education Act, 1998. Section 9 requires that every school shall use its available resources:

"... to promote the moral social, spiritual, social and personal development of students and to provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents and having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school."

Furthermore, the White Paper on Education, *Charting our Education Future* (DES, 1995), which preceded the Education Act, 1998, outlines the role of schools in promoting the social, personal and health education of students. A useful perspective presented in this paper is that the provision of a relationship and sexuality education programme beginning at the early stages of primary education and continued as appropriate to all levels of students would "involve close co-operation with parents, support and complement the work of the home and in keeping with the ethos of the school" (p.173).

This perspective is reaffirmed by the Department of Education and Skills in their booklet, *Relationships and Sexuality Education, Going Forward Together, An Introduction for Relationships and Sexuality Education for Parents* (1997): "As a parent, you are the first teacher of your child. You hand on values and attitudes to each new generation of children. Your child's school aims to work together with you in this important job." Likewise, the DES places further emphasis on the importance of recognising parents as the primary educators of

their children in its *Guidelines for RSE for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (DES, 1997). In this document, one finds the very useful description of RSE provision as a “partnership between home and school.”

Since the introduction of RSE, as part of SPHE in the mid-nineteen nineties, the NCCA and the Department for Education and Skills has consistently emphasised that schools and parents should work together to ensure the best outcome for children and young people in the area of RSE. In Post Primary Schools, for example, Section 4 of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for RSE worked out in partnership with parents and a suitable RSE programme that reflects that policy in place for all students at both junior and senior cycle.

Department of Education and Skills Circulars to primary and post primary schools (e.g. M4/95, M20/96, M22/00 and M11/03) all emphasise the importance of the voice of parents in the area of RSE. More recently, Circular 0043/2018 stresses again the importance of parental engagement in the area of RSE. However, Circular 0043/2018 focuses on appropriate use of external facilitators in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned comprehensive approach to wellbeing promotion.

The rich educational rationale for this close partnership in the area of RSE is helpfully provided by the DES in the *Interim Curriculum Guidelines for RSE for Primary Schools*(DES, 1996):

“The involvement of parents and teachers in a genuinely collaborative process will be essential for the success of the RSE programme and can have many practical benefits.” (p.50)

These benefits, the document goes on to say, include, “consistency of language and approach that ensure that the messages children receive about sexuality and relationships are clear and unambiguous”. The document argues that “by working in this way, teachers and parents will gain a fuller understanding of each other’s’ concerns; mutual trust and respect will be deepened and the school climate for RSE will be enhanced”. The document also highlights how this local working out of a policy, (i.e. subsidiarity in action), is a richly collaborative approach that allows teachers and parents to “gain a richer understanding of each others’ concerns” and in this way “mutual trust and respect will be deepened and the school climate for RSE will be enhanced” (p. 51).

Further insight into the *why* of parental involvement in the work of RSE done in schools (and indeed in all areas of a child’s education) is provided by the White Paper which suggests that

because parents bring to the children's education “the unique expertise derived from intimate knowledge of the child's development, of her/his child's particular needs and interests and of circumstances outside the school, the parental role confers on them the right to active participation in their child's education” (p.11). As noted earlier in this submission, this right is enshrined in Article 42.1 of the Constitution.

Therefore, the ATCS are somewhat surprised to see the lack of engagement with the question of the rights of parents within the Research Paper underpinning the NCCA’s current review work. This deficit is acknowledged by the author themselves (NCCA, 2018, p. 5). It is to be hoped that as the NCCA’s work continues into 2019 and beyond where this deficit might be addressed. Equally, it is to be hoped that any future curricular provision and practical supports in terms of training for teachers (and arguably for parents) that might emerge in the area of RSE will continue to recognise the primacy of the parents’ voice in this important area of their children’s education if that ideal of partnership between home and school is to be realised. Over and above curricular provision and supports, the early promise of the NCCA’s work in the area of RSE in terms of the close collaboration between parents and teachers may also need to be looked at again and supported anew.

Finally, in terms of this first principle, for Catholic parents and for the Catholic schools to which these parents chose to send their children, the parent’s voice is obviously going to continue to be very important. Catholic schools stress that families are integral to an education that animates and transforms us towards such acts of love. The family is the place where “we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for local ecosystem and care for all creatures.” Our family teach us “how to ask without demanding, to say ‘thank you’ as an expression of genuine gratitude for what has been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm” (*Laudato Si*, n.213). Jesus taught us this attitude when he invited us to contemplate the lilies of the field and the birds of air, or when seeing the rich young man and knowing his restlessness, “he looked at him with love.” (Mark 10:21). Archbishop Eamonn Martin (Key note address to JMB/AMCSS 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, May, 2018) stressed the importance of the family context by saying that “the family remains for children and young people the privileged place of encounter and growth – parents are the first teachers, the home is the first “school of humanity”. Parents, he said, “turn to you (Catholic schools), as trusted fellow pilgrims, to accompany them and their daughters or sons” and they “rely” on the school’s “wisdom and experience”. This, of

course, reflects the very essence of partnership suggested by both the DES and NCCA documents cited above.

**RSE is retained as part of SPHE, SPHE is understood as part of Wellbeing and Wellbeing is presented as a whole school endeavour**

According to [www.pdst.ie/primary/RSE](http://www.pdst.ie/primary/RSE) Social Personal and Health Education aims:

1. To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfillment and living in communities
2. To promote self-esteem and self-confidence
3. To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making
4. To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
5. To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. (www.pdst.ie)

Within SPHE, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is understood as a “lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding, of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy within a moral, social and spiritual framework”. Mayock, Kitching, Morgan outline how the RSE Guidelines (NCCA 1997a, b) emphasise *relationships* rather than sexuality and outline a curriculum that is clearly oriented toward helping children to develop self-esteem and self-confidence within a moral, social and spiritual framework (DES, 2007).

This holistic vision underpinning provision for RSE as part of SPHE which seeks to provide time and space for students to engage with complex issues within a rich values based framework should be retained and indeed further supported. Such a values based approach is to be commended, particularly in the context of a whole school approach rooted in the school’s characteristic spirit. This approach does not suggest in any way the imposition of any one set of beliefs but rather seeks to invite students to engage deeply with key questions as they relate to their own lives. While it may be argued that an approach that focuses on the rich development of values, beliefs and attitudes with young people is now more necessary than ever as we seek to them as they navigate their way through very many highly complex issues relating to relationships and sexuality education.

The SPHE Curriculum for Primary schools also very helpfully highlights how,

“As children progress through an SPHE programme, they will encounter a wide range of issues. These will include substance misuse, relationships, sexuality, child abuse prevention, prejudice and

discrimination. The SPHE curriculum is structured in such a way that these issues are not explored in isolation; rather the emphasis is on building a foundation of skills, values, attitudes and understanding relevant to all these issues, with specific information provided where necessary.” (P.2)

And again, the importance of consultation with parents is deemed central to the planning for, implementation and review of provision for SPHE (P.4), as is an approach that is values driven.

Within this values frame, RSE as part of the SPHE curriculum will include age appropriate information, debate and discussion about contraception, sexually transmitted infections, same sex attraction and unions, and the full meaning of consent”. The Catholic school understands the importance of an approach that presents “the facts” but will always seek to do so in the context of an understanding of the human person inspired by the Gospels.

The NCCA’s recent work for post primary schools and at the other end of the educational system with preschools in the area of Wellbeing is also significant in terms of this review. The NCCA definition of student wellbeing aims to “take account of the multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing encompassing social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, environmental and physical wellbeing” (NCCA, 2014, p. 13). This rich understanding of wellbeing is also reflected in the NCCA’s work at preschool level. Here, Wellbeing is comprehended to include psychological well-being (including feeling and thinking) and physical well-being. The wellbeing material for Aistear describes a multi-faceted approach to welcome, encompassing home and school, care of self, others and the environment, care of self and creativity, as well as the spiritual dimension of wellbeing.

Children’s relationships and interactions with their families and communities contribute significantly to their sense of well-being. Children need to feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included. They also need to respect themselves, others, and their environment. They become positive about themselves and their learning when adults value them for who they are and when they promote warm and supportive relationships with them. Expressing themselves creatively and experiencing a spiritual dimension in life enhances children’s sense of well-being (NCCA, 2009, p. 3).

Furthermore, Wellbeing is very much seen as a whole school enterprise. In particular, the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines clearly demonstrate how all subjects, short courses and other learning areas can contribute to student wellbeing. Moreover, the Guidelines stress how wellbeing is enhanced through the values and school culture experienced on a day-to-day basis. In this context, “wellbeing can not only be taught through explicit curriculum components, but can be modelled by those working in the school as they show care, respect and consideration in their interactions with students.” In this way, it might be argued that

RSE, as part of SPHE, sitting within the curricular provision for Wellbeing should be understood as a whole school enterprise and not just the responsibility of the SPHE teacher.

This cross curricular and whole school approach to Wellbeing is easily illustrated in a Catholic school.

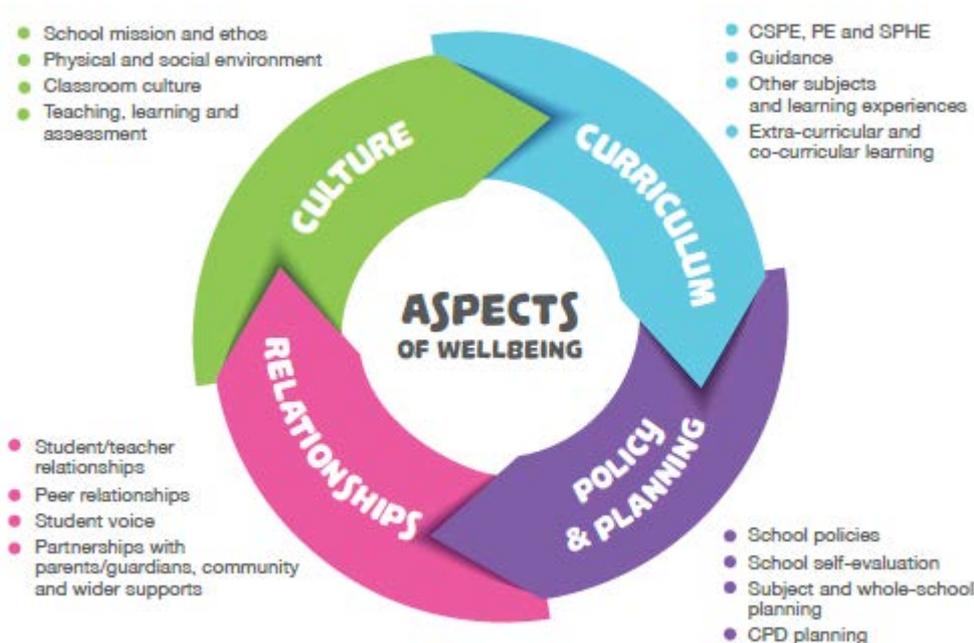
Firstly, in terms of a whole school approach to RSE, sitting as it does within SPHE (and at junior cycle within Wellbeing), RSE is understood in a Catholic school as an integral part of the curriculum. All teachers and the management team in a Catholic school seek to help students engage with questions and in learning around fairness, justice, right relationships, care for the poor, and care for those who are vulnerable. Catholic schools seek to imbue confidence and respect in their pupils so that these pupils throughout their lives will have the skills and disposition to relate with others in a way that is respectful and that brings joy to their lives. To use other words, in Catholic schools, the whole school community moves toward “acts of love which express our own dignity” (*Laudato Si*, n.211). The inclusive nature of Catholic schools is central to this attitude as “loving kindness builds bonds, cultivates relationships, creates new networks of integration and knits a firm social fabric” (*Amoris Laetitia*, n. 100). In this way, belonging is central to cultivating attitudes of loving kindness “for without a sense of belonging we cannot sustain a commitment to others; we end up seeking our convenience alone and life in common becomes impossible” (*Amoris Laetitia*, n. 100).

Secondly, in the context of RSE in Catholic schools that transcends curricular provision, a good Catholic school should be a community inspired by Gospel values and should be transmitting Gospel values. Such a school will inspire empathy for those who are less fortunate, like the homeless, migrants and refugees. The Catholic school will promote care for the earth and it will of course therefore have a particular care for those within its own community that are most vulnerable. There is no place for bullying, harassment, racism or homophobia, or any form of victimisation in a Catholic School. In particular, it is also important that Catholic schools also evaluate the support offered to students who are facing new and deep questions relating to their sexual identity as they mature. The words of Archbishop Diarmuid Martin articulate this rather well, “A pluralist education system in a pluralist Ireland must be one where battles of ideology are overcome and not reinforced.” Such a vision “must place children at its centre.” This revitalised openness to others transcends our differences and gives living expression to the words of Christ. Pope Francis

highlights that “Jesus himself spoke: “Take heart, my son!” (*Mt 9:2*); “Great is your faith!” (*Mt 15:28*); “Arise!” (*Mk 5:41*); “Go in peace” (*Lk 7:50*); “Be not afraid (*Mt 14:27*)” (*AL*, n.100). Francis states that these words are not ones that “demean, sadden, anger or show scorn” (*Amoris Laetitia*, n.100). Hence, Francis emphasises that we should not only learn from Jesus, but rather “learn to imitate Jesus’ own gentleness in our way of speaking to one another” (*Ibid*).

### **RSE and the Schools Characteristic Spirit**

As outlined above, there has been to date significant recognition of the importance of characteristic spirit as an aid to assisting schools – particularly in their engagement with parents – in the area of RSE. On this point, ethos is defined not only in terms of the school’s faith identity but also includes an understanding of the school’s history, and geographical and social context. The NCCA Guidelines on Wellbeing helpfully illustrate the interplay between ethos/culture, curriculum, policy/planning and relationships as follows (NCCA, 2014)



In addition, at primary level the importance of characteristic spirit is outlined in all relevant DES circulars relating to SPHE/RSE as well as in the Interim Guidelines for RSE and the SPHE Curriculum. Ethos provides a key reference point in helping schools work with parents in the development and provision of the school’s RSE programme. It supports

teachers in the classroom and outside the classroom (in terms of a whole school approach to RSE). However, clearly from Mayock, Kitching, Morgan (NCCA 1997a, b) and Keating, Morgan and Collins (NCCA, 2018) more support for some schools, faith schools included, is required around assisting these schools engage with ethos as it relates to RSE.

A very useful starting point for all schools in terms of this important exploration of the question of ethos, particularly as it relates to RSE centres on the understanding at the heart of the school's life of the human person. This anthropological question is central in the work all schools do.

A second important question for schools in terms of ethos and RSE centres on the type of community a school seeks to be. In terms specifically of RSE in a Catholic school, the Catholic school seeks to be a community inspired by Gospel values and transmitting Gospel values, including the dignity of every person; integrity, peace, tolerance, justice, honesty and truth; holiness, gentleness and compassion, mercy and forgiveness; purity and respect (Archbishop Eamonn Martin Address, JMB/ACMSS, 2018). As mentioned earlier in this submission, in Catholic schools, the whole school community moves toward "acts of love which express our own dignity" (*Laudato Si*, n.211). The inclusive nature of Catholic schools is central to this attitude as "loving kindness builds bonds, cultivates relationships, creates new networks of integration and knits a firm social fabric" (*Amoris Laetitia*, n. 100).

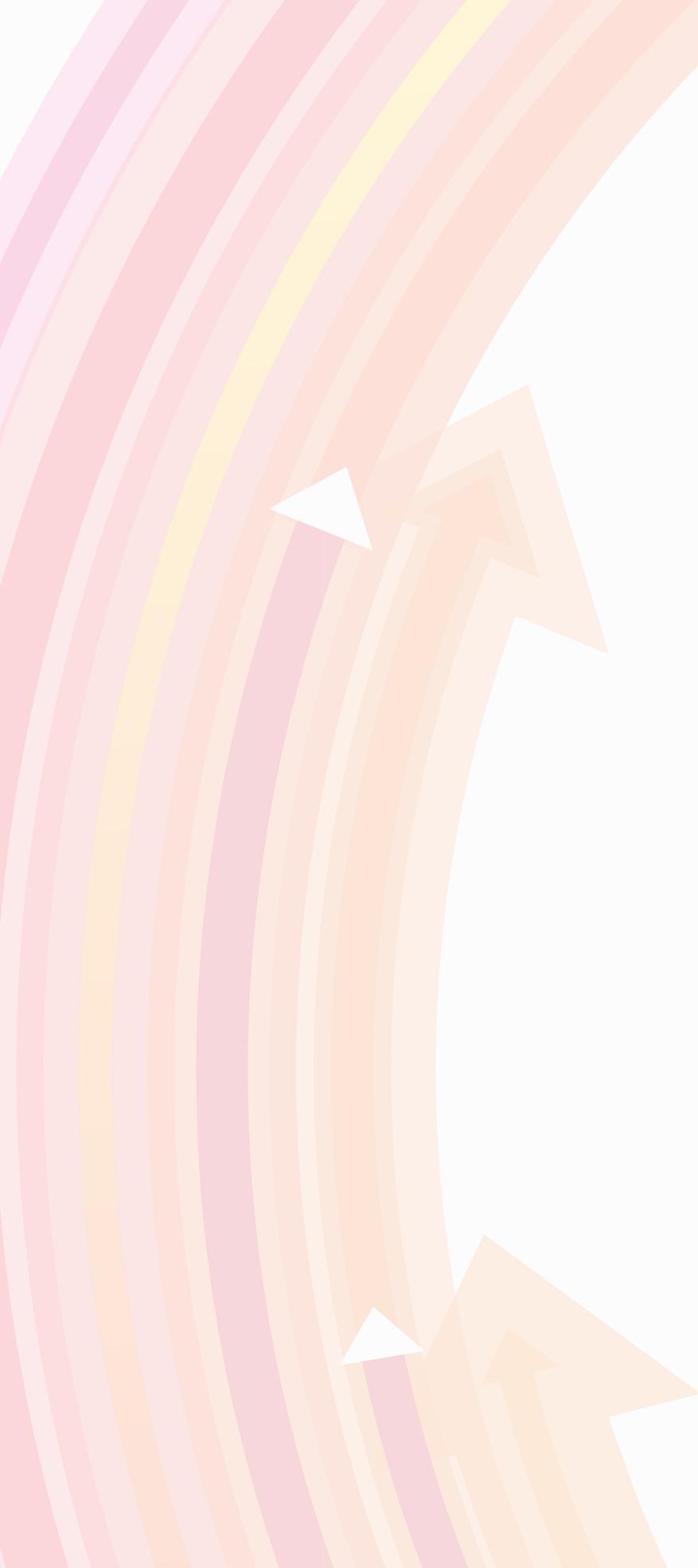
In any consideration of ethos in faith schools it is important to remember that faith schools exist, at primary and post primary levels, because there are parents who wish to have their children educated in accordance with their religious convictions. It is also important to remember that Catholic schools are inclusive schools – our classrooms are places of mutual respect, tolerance and care for one another. Catholic schools are recognised as places of inclusion and welcome that work in partnership with all parents, local communities, the Department of Education and Skills, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and others. It is important to note that all surveys demonstrate a very high level of parental satisfaction with the service provided by Catholic schools. These consistently high satisfaction ratings attest to the importance of ongoing partnership and cooperation among all stakeholders in our educational endeavours.

Children today inhabit a complex world. They are bombarded with messages dominated by a consumer focused and materialistic vision of life. Catholic schools seek to provide space, both intellectual and emotional, where pupils can explore and imagine a world with a broader

spiritual horizon. The invitation in terms of RSE is to provide this space to children and young people in an age and stage appropriate way. This indicates that there is the possibility, the invitation, of understanding the human person in solidarity with other people, especially those most in need, of being responsible for the world in which we live and being open to a relationship with others and with God. A curriculum that serves children in Catholic schools, and arguably all schools, will speak to this spiritual horizon and will seek to address the very real educational opportunities that can and do arise out of these needs. The DES holds that the SPHE programme reflects the unique ethos of each school. However, the attitudes, skills and values fostered in the SPHE classroom can only truly flourish in a school where all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the ATCS welcomes the opportunity to make the above submission to the NCCA as it undertakes the work of reviewing current provision for RSE as part of SPHE in primary and post primary schools in Ireland. The ATCS hopes that the NCCA take into account all of the following insights which have been outlined in detail above: [1] the centrality of the parental voice as the role of the school is subsidiary to that of the parents, [2] that RSE is retained as part of SPHE, as SPHE is understood as part of Wellbeing and Wellbeing is presented as a whole school endeavour, and [3] the importance of recognising the centrality of the characteristic spirit of schools to RSE. The ATCS looks forward to further consultation with the NCCA as part of this review.



Home

**Contributor**  
Atheist Ireland

# Atheist Ireland

## Submission to the NCCA on the Review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)



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### 1. Introduction to Atheist Ireland

Atheist Ireland is an advocacy group. We promote atheism and reason over superstition and supernaturalism, and we promote an ethical, secular society where the State does not support or finance or give special treatment to any religion.

Since being formed in late 2008, we have campaigned for a secular Irish Constitution, parliament, laws, government, and education and healthcare systems. We are partners in the dialogue process between the Government and religious and nonreligious bodies.

We have addressed various Oireachtas Committees, the Constitutional Convention, Citizens Assembly, United Nations Committees, the OSCE, Council of Europe bodies, and the Presidents of the European Union.

### 2. Overview of the Problem

As the vast majority of schools in Ireland operate under a Catholic ethos, children cannot access sexual and reproductive education that is free from the influence of the Catholic Church. Even some Education & Training Board schools have Catholic sex education.

The Constitution and Ireland's international obligations oblige the state to ensure access to objective sex education for all children. But instead the State absolves itself of this responsibility, and delegates it to private bodies whose mission it is to evangelise.

Publicly funded schools with a religious ethos (almost all of them Catholic) could still be able to provide Catholic sex education in the Religion class, for those students whose parents want to opt them in to such Religion classes.

Publicly funded schools would also have to provide objective sex education that would respect the convictions of parents who do not want their children's sex education to be influenced by the Catholic religion.

### **3. Recommendations**

Atheist Ireland supports:

- (a) The mandatory provision in Irish schools of sexual and reproductive health education targeted at adolescent girls and boys, as recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2016;
- (b) A single consistent curriculum for relationships and sexuality education across all schools, as recommended by the Ombudsman for Children in 2016; and
- (c) Scientifically objective, standardised, age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, as recommended by the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2017.

In the Dail debate on Solidarity's Objective Sex Education Bill in 2018, the Minister for Education acknowledged that young people have the right to get such factual information about sexual matters.

But having factual content is not enough, if that content is delivered through the religious ethos of a school patron body. As well as the content being factual:

- (d) The content must be delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner that avoids indoctrination, as part of the curriculum outside of optional religion classes, as recommended by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in 2015; while
- (e) Ensuring a neutral studying environment, including in denominational schools, outside the confines of optional religious instruction classes, as raised with Ireland by the UN Human Rights Committee in 2014.

In order for the content to be delivered objectively without religious influence, the law will have to be amended, because the NCCA has no legal power over how the curriculum is delivered. Instead the school patron bodies can choose to deliver the curriculum according to their own religious ethos.

- (f) The legal changes required include amending Sections 9(d), 15(2)(b) and 30(2)(b) of the Education Act, which have been identified as problems by the NCCA in 2017, and which are referred to in Solidarity's Objective Sex Education Bill in 2018.
- (g) Atheist Ireland supports Solidarity's Objective Sex Education Bill, which broadly proposes the approach that we recommend. It provides a solid framework for RSE at Primary and Second level.
- (h) The NCCA should acknowledge that it has no power over how the curriculum is delivered and cannot guarantee that any revised curriculum will be suitable for all students from various backgrounds.

It is the duty of the NCCA under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act to 'protect the human rights of the persons to whom it provides services'. It is therefore imperative that the NCCA acknowledge that it has not got the legal power to ensure that any revised curriculum on RSE is delivered according to human rights standards.

### **4. Catholic Church Guidelines on curriculum RSE**

The Catholic Church has issued Guidelines on how their religious ethos should be integrated into curriculum RSE, and in practice these Guidelines take priority over the rights of parents and their children. These Guidelines include: <sup>1</sup>

- *Everyone who is involved in the task of Relationships and Sexuality Education in a Catholic school should be guided by a number of basic principles.*
- *The human body is sacred – the visible image of God.*
- *Children should be taught from the beginning to recognise, at their own level, that sexuality is a gift of God.*
- *Any attempt to communicate ‘the facts of life’ as mere facts without reference to the religious and moral dimensions of human sexuality and without reference to the pupil’s need to grow in maturity would be a distortion.*
- *The Catholic school will be careful to give a positive attitude towards the gift of sexuality by showing its important place in God’s plan for human happiness.*
- *Married love – the only context which ‘aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul’ – is essentially oriented both to the loving unity of the couple and to cooperation with God in bringing new human life into the world.*
- *In Christian marriage, sexual union reflects the great mystery of the union of Christ and the Church. It becomes ‘an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves us’.*
- *The presence of sin in ourselves and in the world makes these truths less easy to discern. It is simply not reasonable to assume that parents want this type of Catholic sex education for their children, just because the only local publicly funded school that they can in practice send their child to happens to have a Catholic ethos.*

## **5. Catholic Preschool and Primary RE Curriculum**

The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (Irish Episcopal Conference) integrate religion into the RSE curriculum in publicly funded primary schools. This is what all parents and their children can expect if they want to access curriculum RSE education. It states that: <sup>2</sup>

- *Our bodies are good because God created them and will raise them up on the last day.*
- *The human body is sacred – the visible image of God.*
- *God created male and female in God’s plan for creation.*
- *The male and female body are, each in their characteristic way, made in the image and likeness of God.*
- *Life is precious and God-given from the moment of conception to natural death.*
- *Sex is a great gift of God who placed the ability to generate life in the human body, thereby sharing his creative power with us.*
- *Chastity is a spiritual power which frees love from selfishness and aggression for the sake of true self-giving realised in each person’s specific vocation.*

- *A Christian practises the virtue of chastity by cultivating decency and modesty in behaviour dress and speech.*
- *Conjugal love makes married couples capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become co-operators with God for giving life to a new human person*
- *Sexual intercourse is an act of love within marriage*
- *Christian respect life because life comes from God and every person has a right to life. Therefore, abortion is forbidden.*

## **6. Catholic Influence on State-run ETB schools**

Atheist Ireland has published several reports, based on documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, that show that ETB schools be just as Catholic as schools under Catholic Church patronage. The following are extracts from the RSE policy of Coachford College, Cork.

This is not seen as a separate element within the RSE programme, but is integrated throughout the whole school ethos.

- *The human body is sacred.*
- *The human body, since it is sexual, expresses the call of men and women to reciprocal love which is a mutual gift of self.*
- *Marriage is the natural context in which this self-giving love in its entirety is possible – because essentially it is orientated both to the loving unity of the couple and to cooperation with God in bringing new human life into the world.*
- *Young people thus will be encouraged to value the gift of chastity, and human sexuality which is also gift. It is simply not in the common good to continue to deny children access to objective sex education, whether they are in Catholic-run or State-run schools. We cannot continue to say to parents and children that they can have Catholic sex education or no sex education at all.*

## **7. Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission 2015**

The Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission does not believe that obliging schools to deliver the curriculum in an objective manner is unconstitutional. Delivering RSE in an objective manner to protect the human rights of all students is something that the NCCA should be promoting in any revised RSE.

In 2015, in its Observations on the Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2015, The Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission recommended: <sup>3</sup>

*“The Commission recommends that the new section 62(6) to be inserted into the Education Act should be amended to the effect that, in setting out the characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school, outside the specific context of faith formation and religious instruction which parents wish to avail of and where exemptions apply, regard shall be had to providing information in relation to religion in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner that avoids indoctrination.”*

## **8. Ombudsman for Children 2016**

In its Submission to the Department of Education Statement of Strategy 2016-2018, referring to the Schools Admission Bill, the Ombudsman for Children stated that: <sup>4</sup>

*“Although in theory Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) has been mandatory since 1996, in practice each school has the discretion to develop its own RSE policy in accordance with its own ethos. In addition to this, the policy is subject to the approval of the board of management. This leads to a significant inconsistency in the delivery of the RSE programmes throughout the country’s schools. It would be useful to consult with children and young people around their experiences of the RSE curriculum and in relation to what they would consider helpful in terms of curriculum content and delivery. Parents should also be consulted in this regard.”*

The Ombudsman for Children recommended that:

*“A single consistent curriculum for relationships and sexuality education should be developed and introduced across all schools. The standard curriculum should include sexual and reproductive health education at post-primary level. This curriculum and its delivery should be regularly evaluated.”*

## **9. United Nations Rights on Sex Education**

Our International obligations recognise that the right to health encompasses access to education and information on sexual and reproductive health. The UN has said that: <sup>5</sup>

*“Access to information includes “the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas concerning health issues... The Committee on the Rights of the Child has recognised that “State parties should provide adolescents with access to sexual and reproductive information, including on family planning and contraceptives, the dangers of early pregnancy, the prevention of HIV/AIDS and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).”*

*“Similarly, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has underscored the need to pay particular attention “to the health education of adolescents, including information and counselling on all methods of family planning. The Committee has further specified that health education for adolescents should address “gender equality, violence, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive and sexual health rights.”*

## **10. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2016**

In 2016, the Committee on the Rights of the Child concluded that Ireland should: <sup>6</sup>

*“(c) Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, with special attention to the prevention of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.”*

## **11. Atheist Ireland and UN CEDAW 2017**

In 2017, responding to a submission by Atheist Ireland, the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women made this Recommendation to the Irish State. <sup>7</sup>

*“...the narrow approach towards the provision of sexuality education, owing to the fact the content of the relationship and sexuality education curriculum is left to institutions to deliver according to their individual ethos and values and as a result it is often taught together with courses on biology and religion.*

*[Ireland should] Integrate compulsory and standardised age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights into school curricula, including comprehensive sex education for adolescent girls and boys covering responsible sexual behaviours and focused on preventing early pregnancies, and ensure that sex education is scientifically objective and its delivery by schools is closely monitored and evaluated.”*

## **12. UN Human Rights Committee 2014**

In July 2014 when Ireland appeared before the UN Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights they were asked:

*“How does the Delegation explain the compatibility with the Covenant of a state of affairs that allows private schools, which have a near monopoly in Ireland on a vital public service, to openly discriminate in admission policies between children on the basis of their parents’ religious convictions? I would appreciate, whether orally or in writing, the Delegation’s theory on this point, on this legal point. And whether the State believes or not that it is required to ensure a neutral studying environment in those schools, in denominational schools, outside the confines of religious instruction classes that can be opted out from?” The Irish State has never responded to this question. There is no neutral studying environment for sex education in Irish Schools, as the State does not oblige schools to deliver the State curriculum in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner.”*

## **13. Legal Limitations of the NCCA on Objective Delivery**

In the Dail debate on the Solidarity Objective Education Bill, both the Government and Fianna Fail referred to the role of the NCCA in designing a solution to this problem. But without the change in the law that Atheist Ireland recommends (and that are included in the Solidarity Bill), it does not matter what the NCCA decides, because the NCCA has no legal power over how the curriculum is delivered.

The NCCA recently addressed an issue with the exact same conflict, when it was asked to design a new course on Education about Religions, Beliefs, and Ethics. It identified, as problems to the objective delivery of the curriculum, the specific sections of the Education Act that Atheist Ireland recommends changing. <sup>8</sup>

*“The consultation brought to light many issues and systemic features that, while external to the development of curriculum and beyond the remit of the NCCA, have a significant impact on curriculum implementation in primary schools. The legislation underpinning our education system is one such feature. The Education Act (1998), while recognising the rights of the patron body, has the unintended effect of limiting what is achievable through a State curriculum in Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics. This challenge arises not from the patron bodies which have a legislative right to teach the primary curriculum in accordance with the ethos of their schools, but rather by the structure of the primary school system which is predominantly faith-based. The provision of Sections 9(d), 15(2)(b) and 30(2)(b), among others, are potential barriers to the type of ‘objective, critical and pluralist’ approaches advocated in the proposals for a curriculum in ERB and Ethics.”*

## **14. The Catholic Church opposes Objective Delivery**

The Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association both made written submissions to the NCCA consultation on Education about Religions, Beliefs and Ethics. <sup>9</sup>

These submissions make clear that the Education Act needs to be changed, as is proposed in the Solidarity Bill, if there is to be any chance of objective sex education happening in practice.

The Catholic Bishops said:

*“In the area of Relationships and Sexuality Education... it is explicitly acknowledged that the curriculum must be interpreted in the context of the characteristic spirit of the school. Similarly, NCCA proposals in areas such as religion and ethics should accord with the characteristic spirit of the school. The determination of the ethos or characteristic spirit of a school is not the function of the NCCA or the Minister but rests with the Patron.”*

The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association said:

*“Based on this, the development of NCCA proposals in areas impinging on religious education and the characteristic spirit of the school are of a different nature than other NCCA proposals. This is already acknowledged in the area of Relationships and Sexuality Education as part of the NCCA SPHE curriculum where it is explicitly acknowledged that the curriculum must be interpreted in the context of the characteristic spirit of the school. Education about Religious Beliefs and Ethics is another such area.”*

## **15. The Department of Education and Religious Ethos**

The Department of Education has made clear, in a 2015 research paper titled ‘Advancing School Autonomy in the Irish School System’ that the existing legal position places the power in the hands of the patron bodies. <sup>10</sup>

*“In all primary and post-primary schools, the school’s stated ethos (or characteristic spirit as it is termed in the legislation) is decided by the owners or patrons/trustees of the school and not by central government. Autonomy over ethos does not exist at the level of the school board, principal or teachers.*

*Indeed, one of the specific duties of a board is to uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school. Thus, depending on the unit of analysis, schools may be viewed as fully autonomous in respect of ethos, or partly autonomous if the unit of analysis is an individual school operating within a specific ethos.”*

## **16. Religious Ethos and the Primary School Curriculum**

In the Introduction to the Primary School Curriculum it states: (page 57) <sup>11</sup>

*“The approach to the SPHE curriculum is determined in the first instance by the school ethos and will be mediated to the child in three contexts: through a positive school climate and atmosphere, through integration with other subjects, and in specifically allocated curriculum time.”*

One of the specific aims of the Primary School Curriculum is

*“to enable children to develop spiritual, moral and religious values”.*

The General Objective is to

*“develop the capacity to make ethical judgements informed by the tradition and ethos of the school”.*

## **17. Conclusion and Repeat of Recommendations**

The Irish State has failed to protect the rights of parents and their children in Irish schools because of the deference it has shown over the years to the Catholic Church. The positive duty of the State to protect the rights of parents and their children has always taken second place to the right of religious institution to manage its own affairs and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes (Article 44.2.5).

The NCCA now have a legal duty to promote human rights under Section 42 of the IHREC Act. Any Revisions of the RSE curriculum must take cognisance of this fact and not ignore this duty.

Atheist Ireland supports:

- (a) The mandatory provision in Irish schools of sexual and reproductive health education targeted at adolescent girls and boys, as recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2016;
- (b) A single consistent curriculum for relationships and sexuality education across all schools, as recommended by the Ombudsman for Children in 2016; and
- (c) Scientifically objective, standardised, age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, as recommended by the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2017.

In the Dail debate on Solidarity's Objective Sex Education Bill in 2018, the Minister for Education acknowledged that young people have the right to get such factual information about sexual matters.

But having factual content is not enough, if that content is delivered through the religious ethos of a school patron body. As well as the content being factual:

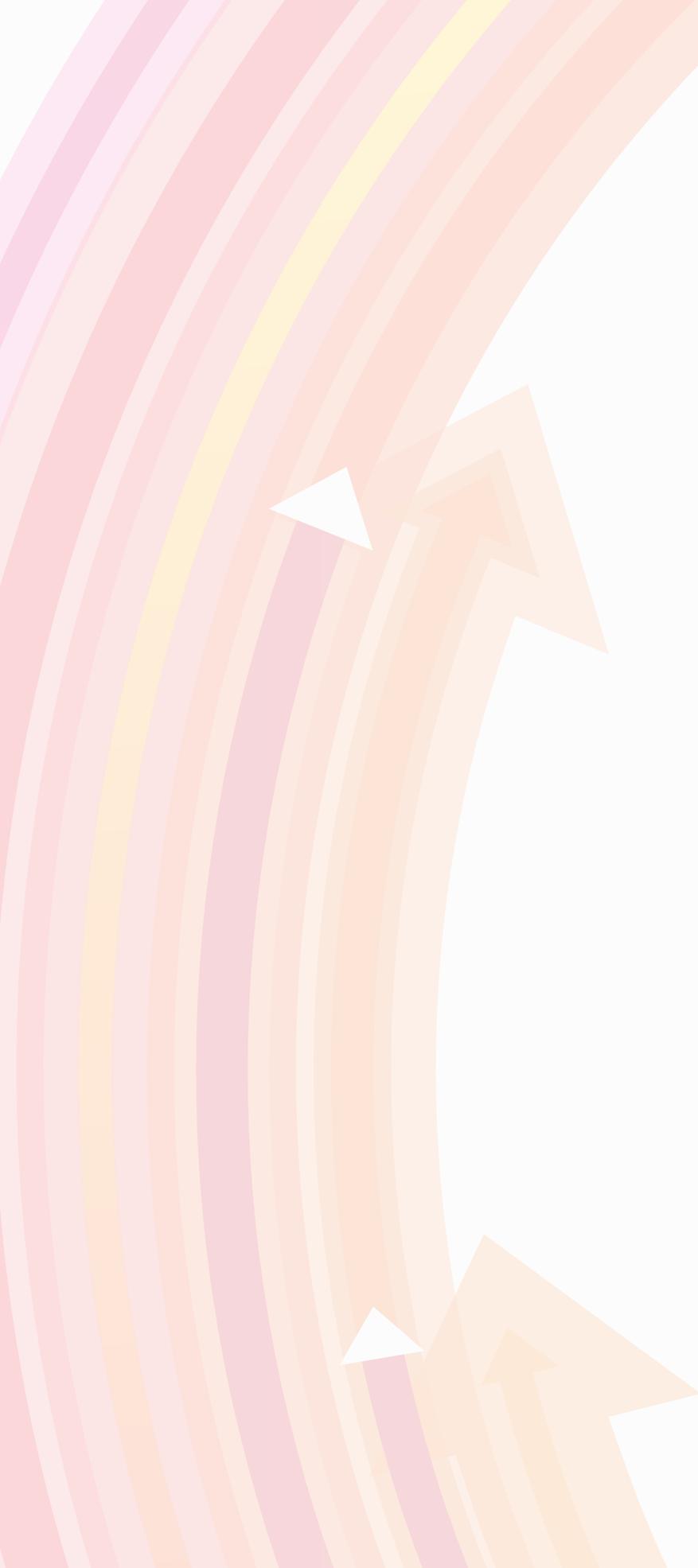
- (d) The content must be delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner that avoids indoctrination, as part of the curriculum outside of optional religion classes, as recommended by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in 2015; while
- (e) Ensuring a neutral studying environment, including in denominational schools, outside the confines of optional religious instruction classes, as raised with Ireland by the UN Human Rights Committee in 2014.

In order for the content to be delivered objectively without religious influence, the law will have to be amended, because the NCCA has no legal power over how the curriculum is delivered. Instead the school patron bodies can choose to deliver the curriculum according to their own religious ethos.

- (f) The legal changes required include amending Sections 9(d), 15(2)(b) and 30(2)(b) of the Education Act, which have been identified as problems by the NCCA in 2017, and which are referred to in Solidarity's Objective Sex Education Bill in 2018.
- (g) Atheist Ireland supports Solidarity's Objective Sex Education Bill, which broadly proposes the approach that we recommend. It provides a solid framework for RSE at Primary and Second level.
- (h) The NCCA should acknowledge that it has no power over how the curriculum is delivered and cannot guarantee that any revised curriculum will be suitable for all students from various backgrounds.

It is the duty of the NCCA under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act to 'protect the human rights of the persons to whom it provides services'. It is therefore imperative that the NCCA acknowledge that it has not got the legal power to ensure that any revised curriculum on RSE is delivered according to human rights standards.

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.religiouseducation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RSE-Guidelines-Rofl-for-web.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/media/wysiwyg/9781847306241.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> [https://www.ihrec.ie/download/pdf/ihrec\\_observations\\_on\\_education\\_admission\\_to\\_schools\\_bill\\_2015.pdf](https://www.ihrec.ie/download/pdf/ihrec_observations_on_education_admission_to_schools_bill_2015.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2018/01/Final-OCO-Submission-to-DES-Consultation-Paper-forwebsite.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/HealthRights.aspx>
- <sup>6</sup> <http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsvOufvUWRUJILHiLHKqpXZxUGOtzQF0l%2b37QzAKosbh7yc40d4J3lynFaWf0Egu6J99RK6Y%2fTHjjpged5r1H3f3LRo8YLqQDqUXOKO5uvru3V>
- <sup>7</sup> [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1071&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1071&Lang=en)
- <sup>8</sup> [https://www.ncca.ie/media/1898/consultation\\_report\\_erbe\\_february2017.pdf](https://www.ncca.ie/media/1898/consultation_report_erbe_february2017.pdf)
- <sup>9</sup> [https://www.ncca.ie/media/2827/erb\\_ethics\\_submissions.pdf](https://www.ncca.ie/media/2827/erb_ethics_submissions.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Advancing-School-Autonomy-in-Ireland/School-Autonomy-Research-Paper.pdf>
- <sup>11</sup> [https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/c4a88a62-7818-4bb2-bb18-4c4ad37bc255/PSEC\\_Introduction-to-Primary-Curriculum\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/c4a88a62-7818-4bb2-bb18-4c4ad37bc255/PSEC_Introduction-to-Primary-Curriculum_Eng.pdf)



Home

**Contributor**  
BeLonG To

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &  
Trans Young People in Ireland



Submission to

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on its review of  
sexual health and relationship education across primary and post primary  
schools

11 September 2018

### Background Information

BeLonG To is Ireland's national organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Non-Binary (LGBT+) young people. BeLonG To's youth services in Dublin and around Ireland provide vital supports to LGBT+ young people. BeLonG To also works with government and other partners so that Ireland will be safe, equal and welcoming for LGBT+ young people. Our work is cited internationally by UNESCO as 'good practice', commended by Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner and cited by the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights in their first global report on LGBT rights. We work with young LGBT+ people aged 14 to 24.

BeLonG To is pleased to make a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on its review of sexual health and relationship education across primary and post primary schools

### LGBTI + young people in Ireland

Ireland changed what it means to grow up LGBTI+ in Ireland in 2015 with a resounding Yes in the marriage equality referendum and with the Gender Recognition Act. However, recent Irish research confirms BeLonG To's experience from our frontline work with young people that anti- LGBTI+ stigma results in significantly higher mental health challenges for young LGBTI+ people. We have seen a doubling in the numbers of young people in crisis who have come to our services, especially those who are under-18. Our dedicated youth workers and our resilience programmes are working all-out to meet the need.

In March 2016, former President of Ireland, Dr Mary McAleese, launched a large groundbreaking report on the mental health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people in Ireland. *The LGBTIreland Report*<sup>i</sup> was funded by the HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention. It was conducted by Dr Agnes Higgins and colleagues in the School of Nursing, Trinity College, and had a special focus on LGBTI young people.

*The LGBTIreland Report found that:*

1. 56% of LGBTI who were aged 14 to 18 years had self-harmed, 70% had suicidal thoughts and one in three had attempted suicide.
2. In comparison, UCD/Headstrong's research found 21% of 17–25-year-olds overall engaged in self-harm<sup>ii</sup>.
3. The *LGBTIreland* report showed a link between a young person having experienced LGBTI-based bullying, isolation, fear of rejection and serious mental health difficulties.
4. 67% (of those in school now or in past 5 years) witnessed anti-LGBTI bullying. And, 50% of LGBTI students experienced bullying.
5. Those who had experienced anti-LGBTI bullying had much higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress and alcohol use. They were also more likely to self-harm or have suicidal thoughts.

In summary, compared to the wider population of young people in Ireland, LGBTI young people had:

- Two times the level of self-harm.
- Three times the level of attempted suicide.
- Four times the level of severe or extremely severe stress, anxiety and depression.

We know from the young people we work with that shame, mixed messaging, and too often silence surrounds the areas of gender, sexuality and relationships in many classrooms across Ireland. Irish young people receive inadequate information relating to sexuality, safe sex, STI's, consent, and reproduction. In many schools young people receive incomplete or no information on being LGBTI+ despite 'Growing up LGBT' being part of the SPHE (Social Personal Health Education) and RSE (Relationships and Sex

Education) curriculum in post primary schools. Growing Up LGBT: A Resource for SPHE and RSE<sup>1</sup> was developed by the Department of Education and Skills and the Health Service Executive through the Social, Personal and Health Education Support Service, in conjunction with BeLonG To Youth Services and GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) in 2013.

The young LGBTI+ people we work with, in our Dublin groups and that our colleagues work with throughout our National Network of LGBTI+ youth groups, have been calling for improvements to sex education for many years now. The issue has been raised in BeLonG To's regular surveys of young people who attend our services and most recently in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs consultations in 2017 for the [LGBTI+ Youth Strategy, 2018](#). Gay Community News (GCN) published their [Budding Burning Issues survey](#) in August 2017. The Budding Burning Issues was a survey of 565 young LGBT+ people nationwide and the second biggest issue identified by young people was the need to overhaul the way our education system approaches sexuality and relationships education to ensure it is inclusive of LGBTI+ people and issues.

Gay Community News (GCN) Budding Burning Issues<sup>2</sup>

70% of the respondents disagreed with the statement: "Schools in Ireland today are safe places and are fully inclusive of LGBT+ students." 39% highlighted a serious lack of inclusive sex education, and 25% said bullying and homophobia continues to be a problem.

Direct Quotes from young people re Sexual Health

What do you think is the most important issue for young LGBT people in Ireland?

- *Practically speaking sex education for lesbian and gay people is completely non-existent in most schools, Poor sex education, lack of education around gender and sexuality in school.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/LGBT%20English%20Print.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://gcn.ie/70-percent-of-lgbt-young-people-say-that-schools-in-ireland-are-not-safe-places/>

- *Little support from schools, teachers are misinformed and have absolutely no idea how to deal with and talk about LGBT+ issues and how to address people within the LGBT+ community.*
- *In all my school years there was no same-sex sex talk, no information on coping with realising you're LGBT+, no representation in school literature whatsoever. That struck me as a major issue because in a school of over 700 students there's absolutely no way all of them are straight!*
- *LGBTQI inclusive Sex Ed should be taught in schools And there should be less heteronormativity in school books in both primary and secondary schools.*
- *In school there is NO sex education for gay students or about STIs and using protection where it concerns gay people all u get is a two-minute notice in religion class and even then they don't really care about LGBT students*

## BeLonG To Recommendations

BeLonG To welcomes the NCCA's review of sexual health and relationship education across primary and post primary schools. BeLonG To is committed to an education system that supports young people to make healthy and respectful choices about their bodies and relationships. RSE and SPHE can help equip our young people with knowledge around sexual orientation, gender identity, safe sex and remove the stigma shrouding LGBTI+ topics in a classroom setting, but schools and teachers need to be supported to ensure it is taught.

BeLonG To submits that updating RSE resources is only one part of what needs to happen so that comprehensive information on sexual orientation, gender identity, and coming out can be provided to young people. In the absence of a staff member or management leadership committed to LGBTI+ issues in a school, it is our experience that the Growing Up LGBT curriculum is not taught to young people. We would submit that engagement with sexuality education must not be optional or determined by the ethos of a school board. We propose that teachers and other staff in schools need training on how to teach this part of curriculum as part of initial teacher education and as CPD, and that class time for RSE covering LGBTI+ issues must be timetabled for both junior and senior cycles in every school.

Moreover, as confirmed in the LGBTIreland report, 12 is the most common age for a young person to realise that they may be LGBT (however many begin to discover this

much younger) we propose that 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes in Primary schools should also be introduced to diversity, inclusion and equality around gender and sexual orientation. Alltogether Now<sup>3</sup> is a project that was developed by St Patrick's college DCU with the support of BeLonG To and the Department of Education, which can be implemented as part of the SPHE. The resources, lesson plans and full report for All Together Now were developed by Dr Bernie Collins, Dr Seline Keating and Prof Morgan from St Patrick's College (DCU) and are [now available to download](#) for primary school teachers.

For secondary schools BeLonG To has also produced resources such as [Safe and Supportive Schools](#) with the HSE<sup>4</sup>. This is a Whole School Community Model approach - a model that involved working with teachers, parents, students and the broader community to build a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBT young people. We also run [Stand Up](#) Anti Bullying<sup>5</sup> campaign annually. In 2017 42% of secondary schools participated. All of this work aims to ensure young people feel safe in school, to protect their well-being, make sure they feel they belong in school.

According to 2016 UNESCO research<sup>6</sup>, comprehensive sexuality education has positive effects including increasing knowledge about different aspects of sexuality, behaviours and risks of pregnancy or HIV and other STIs. Sex education results in reduced risk-taking behaviour and increased use of condoms and contraception.

BeLonG To strongly advocates that we need to transform how schools view and engage with sex education and LGBTI+ issues. We would recommend the inclusion of Growing up LGBTI+ issues in the core RSE curriculum, TRUST. Moreover, we believe that young people's sexual and mental health and well-being could be significantly improved through the integration of LGBTI+ issues and identities across all relevant subjects. In order to address stigma, social exclusion and bullying (major causes of mental health problems) as well as educate all our young people about their health and well-being, LGBTI+ identities should not be confined to one book and one subject. The research already outlined shows that 70% of LGBTI+ young people feel unsafe at school. The LGBTIreland report found that feelings of isolation and not belonging can have serious

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<sup>3</sup> <https://gcn.ie/new-primary-school-resource-all-together-now-tackles-homophobia/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/media/pressrel/lgbtsafesupportiveschoolsproject.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://belongto.org/professionals/stand-up-awareness-week/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002607/260770e.pdf>

impacts on the mental health of LGBTI young people. Protecting young people's mental health and well-being should not be optional. It is too important.

Back in 2015, Ireland said yes to marriage equality. BeLonG To is now calling for our education system to say yes to the inclusion of LGBTI+ identities in a real and meaningful way. On behalf of all the young people, parents and teachers that we work with, we are advocating for a school system where every young person has access to scientifically factual, up-to-date information about sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, STI's, safe sex, and consent. Learning about these topics is an essential life skill, and vital to realise young people's right to health and well-being.

In summary our recommendations are as follows:

1. Update Growing up LGBT RSE resources
2. Integrate Growing Up LGBT into main SPHE/RSE curriculum
3. Provide teachers with training as part of their initial teacher education and CPD, on how to teach Growing up LGBT to build their confidence and capacity to cover these issues
4. Include LGBTI+ identities across subjects to create visibility, value, inclusion and to highlight role-models for young LGBTI people
5. Timetable RSE lessons in every school inclusive of Growing Up LGBT
6. Resource Safe and Supportive Schools programme developed by HSE and BeLonG To so that it can be rolled out in second level schools nationally
7. Increases resources to reach more schools as part of Stand Up Anti Bullying campaign and provide sub cover to enable all teachers to attend the training
8. Resource Alltogether Now developed by St Patrick's (DCU) and BeLonG To so that is can be rolled out in 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes in primary schools nationally
9. Include Growing Up LGBT and anti-bullying programme in the whole school inspections

BeLonG To would be happy to provide an in-person briefing to the NCCA as part of its review of sexual health and relationship with a particular focus on LGBTI+ young people in Ireland.

Moninne Griffith, Executive Director,  
BeLonG To,  
13 Parliament Street, Dublin 2.  
087 229 0987 [moninne@belongto.org](mailto:moninne@belongto.org)

#### BeLonG To's Sexual Health Work

BeLonG To runs sexual health workshops with the young people who attend our youth groups. We also run 'In the Know' a 6-week personal development course aimed at young MSM (including trans people) aged 17-24, four times a year. Our young women's group, the Ladybirds are currently working on a sexual health campaign.

We run a weekly 'Monday Chats' service, which provides information, support and integration into peer support groups and external referral services for young LGBT+ people between 14-23 years old.

We are currently collaborating with Pieta House to provide young LGBT+ people at risk of self-harm or suicide with access to a LGBT+ youth friendly and experienced counsellor two days' a week within BeLonG To Youth Service Dublin.

We also provide young LGBT+ people with access onsite to the only designated LGBT+ drugs outreach/education worker in Ireland. This worker delivers an outreach service to many 'hard to reach' young LGBT+ people on the streets in Dublin, providing information on drugs and alcohol harm reduction, sexual health as well as mental health and well-being.

BeLonG To Youth Service has long established positive history of collaborating with Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS) to target MSM (men who have sex with men), 16yrs – 24yrs of age. This work included a dual-way referral system of young men and our joint project at Dublin Pride 2018, where we distributed over 3,000 Sexual Health and Wellbeing resource packs (condoms, lube, GMHS Services Information Cards, HIV Testing Information, LGBT Helpline information, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol harm reduction information and messaging) to target 'hard to reach' young people attending Pride. We are currently also developing our partnership with the GUIDE clinic in St James Hospital.

In August 2016, BeLonG To conducted an online survey of young people in relation to our youth services to help us make decisions about how best to meet young peoples'

needs following a 100% increase in the number of young LGBT+ people using our services post the historic Marriage Equality referendum win in May 2015.

261 LGBT+ young people participated in the survey. The findings identified a clear gap within the area of sexual health. Sexual Health support was named as the number one new service, LGBT+ young people want BeLonG To provide.<sup>7</sup> This clearly highlights the importance of the need for BeLonG To and stakeholders in the sexual health field to collaborate and provide LGBTI+ youth friendly clinics, as identified by this vulnerable cohort.

We know that STI infections amongst the general population of young people has increased steadily. We do not have access to data in relation to LGBTI+ young people in particular, however based on our 15 years of frontline experience and international research we believe that they may be at an increased risk.

International research has also found that young Lesbian and Bisexual women are at an increased risk of unplanned pregnancies<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>i</sup> Higgins, Agnes, Doyle, L, Downes, C; Murphy, R; Sharek, D; DeVries, J; Begley, T; McCann, E; Sheerin, F & Smyth, S (2016). ***The LGBTIreland report: National study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & intersex people in Ireland.*** Dublin: [www.glen.ie](http://www.glen.ie) , [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

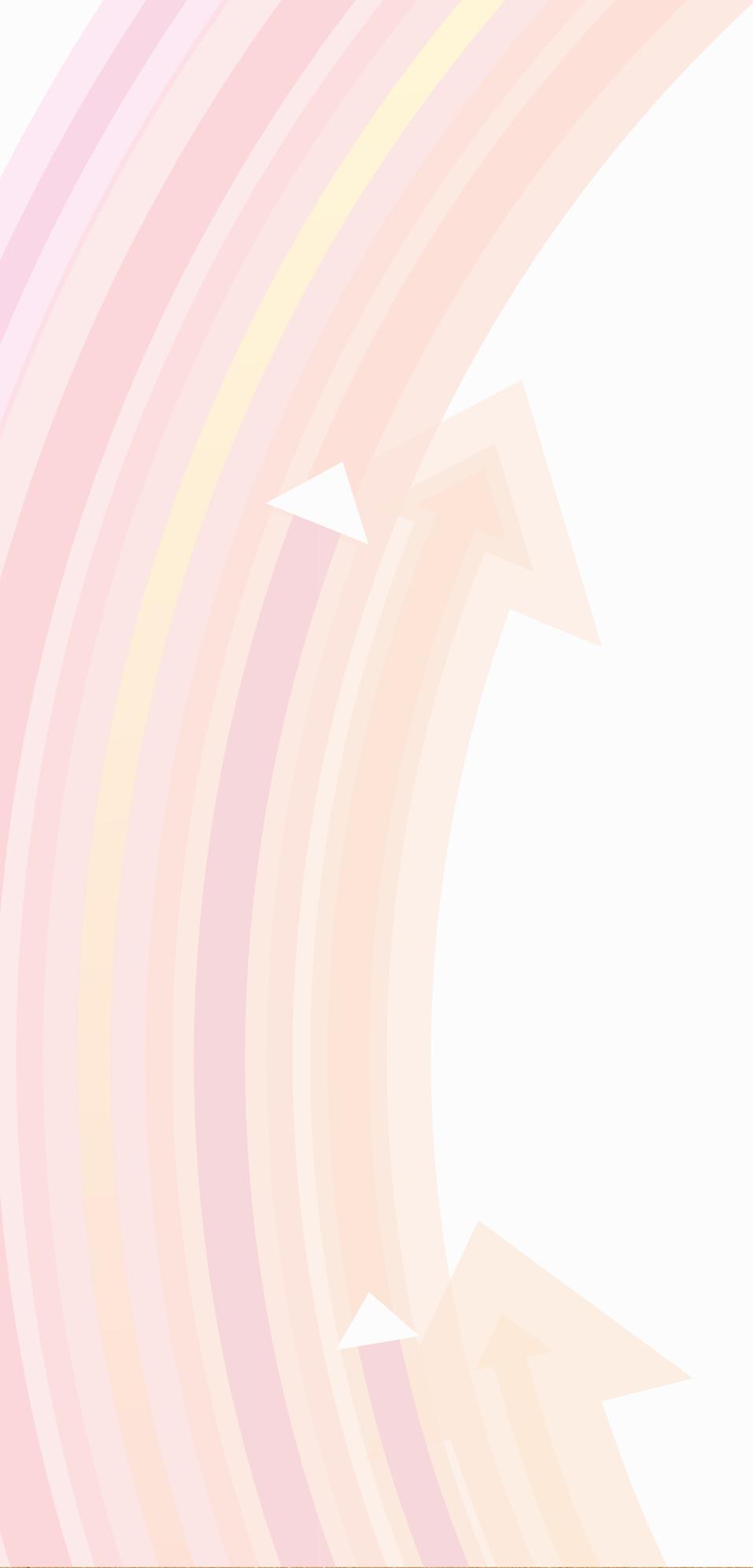
<sup>ii</sup> Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012, *My World Survey. National Study of Youth Mental Health.*

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<sup>7</sup> Suicide prevention support and mental health support were named as the top two existing services needed.

<sup>8</sup> Julie Mooney-Somers Rachel M. Deacon Jude Comfort, Women in contact with the Perth gay and lesbian community: Report of the Women's Western Australian Sexual Health (WWASH) Survey 2010, WA Centre for Health Promotion Research at Curtin University, 2012

'Australian research suggests that unplanned pregnancy among younger same-sex attracted women is much higher than among their heterosexual peers, (20, 21) a disparity echoed by international research. (22, 23) The nature of LBQ women's sexual relationships with men is not well understood, and high rates of unprotected sex may suggest sex is unplanned and that LBQ women may not have the necessary negotiation skills to protect themselves against STIs in these situations. → Those designing STI prevention programs need to be aware that a significant proportion of women who do not identify as heterosexual are having sex with men and consider the reach of their programs; LBQ women may not respond to health promotion campaigns directed at assumed heterosexual audiences. → STI prevention programs need to address skill development among LBQ women to support successful negotiation of safe and satisfying sexual relationships with all sexual partners.' P.38.



Home

**Contributor**  
Ciara Fagan

# Relationships and Sexuality (RSE)\* Review

## Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Ciara
<b>Surname</b>	Fagan
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Primary School Teacher
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	28/10/18
<b>Email</b>	██████████

Is this response a personal view or made on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including the cover page\*?

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**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable)**

N/A

**What are you or your organisation's experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I have been teaching in primary school for 15 years. I have taught RSE in Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> Class, 4<sup>th</sup> Class, 5<sup>th</sup> Class and 6<sup>th</sup> Class. I have been involved in revising my school's RSE policy. I have participated in RSE training by PDST and I have made submissions previously to PDST and NCCA about my concerns about the current RSE programme, and resources and training offered.

Following on from the publication of the Anti Bullying Procedures, I was one of the developers of the 'Different Families Same Love' poster published by the INTO LGBT Teachers' Group, that was launched by the Minister for Education and mentioned in the revised Stay Safe Programme. The resource includes research on the effects of homophobic and transphobic bullying on young people in Irish schools, current practice in primary schools in prevention of bullying, lesson ideas suitable for primary school students to become aware of different families, guidelines for primary schools to be more inclusive of LGBT families and students, and a glossary of child-appropriate language for teachers to describe people who are LGBT and the issues that affect them.

I also assisted in the drawing up of "Respect: Inclusive Guidelines for primary schools" to aid teachers in implementing the new anti-bullying procedures in collaboration with Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN).

As a course facilitator with INTO on Inclusive Schools: Combatting Homophobic, Transphobic & Cyber-Bullying, I facilitated discussion, presentations and workshops on creation of inclusive classrooms and schools and supported teachers in preventing and tackling homophobic, transphobic and cyber bullying.

I have created and presented drama workshops on gender stereotypes & diversity in families for schools addressing homophobic and transphobic bullying.

I presented Different Families Same Love and resources at the 'Inclusive Schools' conference in November 2014, Feilte in 2015 and 2016 and PDST training in 2016.

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**The Minister of Education has requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

#### **Current heteronormative interpretation of RSE and SPHE curriculum**

I would like to ask that when you are reviewing the RSE programme that you ensure there is no ambiguity around same sex relationships and LGBTQ+ headed families. Looking at the current RSE and SPHE curriculum it appears quite inclusive, it talks about different families and different relationships. However in my experience and in the experience of many of my colleagues, it appears that people's heteronormative interpretation of these guidelines and some of the accompanying advice from PDST (Guidelines for Sexual Orientation) mean that in the majority of Irish schools, teachers do not feel that they can discuss gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people within Relationships and Sexuality Education. This is in direct conflict with the Anti Bullying Guidelines 2013 and the revised Stay Safe Programme 2016.

#### **Religious ethos**

As over 90% of primary schools in Ireland are under religious control, it is important that all schools have a directive from the Department of Education about what topics must be covered by all schools regardless of religious ethos. It should not be up to individual teachers, principals, chairpersons, or Board of Managements to pick and choose what Relationship and Sexuality

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Education the students in their school receive. All children and young people in Ireland should get the same education so they are equally prepared for what life brings.

In many RSE policies in Irish schools, including my own, this statement is directly quoted:

*All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum. Certain topics are not in the primary RSE/SPHE programme and will not be discussed i.e.: abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception.*

This statement was also on literature at RSE training days in 2016, and colleagues have told me that upon enquiring about discussion of LGBT+ families during RSE training, the advice was to be careful about the school's ethos. On a personal level, I was explicitly told that because of that statement in our RSE policy, I had to keep all discussion of family as "traditional" and strictly "mother and father". I was instructed not to implement preventative homophobic and transphobic anti-bullying strategies because they conflict with our school's RSE policy and the Catholic school's ethos. At that time in 2016 I was teaching a class that came from diverse families (single parent families, foster families and LGBT families) and I felt I was doing them all a disservice. I was also concerned for my students who may have realised then or in later years that they are LGBT and themselves and their classmates had not been given the opportunity to hear the words gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender in a correct and positive way. I felt I was leaving them vulnerable to homophobic and transphobic bullying as I could not implement any preventative strategies to educate them. The most common age that children realise they are LGBT is 12 years old, therefore children in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class are realising their LGBT identity in primary school and some children are much younger. Children can identify as transgender in Junior Infants or earlier. Children may have two mams or two dads in Junior Infants. Teachers feeling like they are unable to talk about homosexuality means that children or young people who are LGBT+ are learning about families and relationships, but LGBT+ people are invisible in those conversations. Positive mental health and well-being is being encouraged in schools while at the same time LGBTI young people have 2 times the level of self-harm, 3 times the level of attempted suicide and 4 times the level of severe stress, anxiety and depression because of exclusion, bullying, discrimination and harassment. Therefore I really believe there cannot be ambiguity on this issue. Children need to be given the opportunity to talk about sexual orientation and gender

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identity in a safe, non-judgmental, and age appropriate way all the way through their primary school life.

### **Abortion, masturbation, contraception**

The above statement also caused problems in the lead up to the abortion referendum in May 2018 where children were coming to school upset and confused about the posters they were seeing. Teachers felt unable to reassure them or explain in an age appropriate way. Not being able to discuss masturbation poses a problem particularly with children with additional needs who may need extra discussion around personal touches. Also it is important that young people know that it is normal to be curious about their own bodies. Young people are aware that people have sexual intercourse without the intention of making a baby and they are curious as to what contraception is. They have heard the names of some contraceptive methods, a simple explanation can inform them of what they need to know.

### **Protecting our students from inappropriate online material**

In my own teaching experience, after I teach the sensitive areas of RSE in 6<sup>th</sup> Class, I do a Question Box, the most common questions that come up are in relation to contraception, condoms, lesbian and gay sexual intercourse, miscarriage and more recently abortion. We underestimate what our 10-12 year olds are ready to hear. When we were children, if we wanted to find out what something meant we looked it up in a dictionary or encyclopaedia. In this digital world, our students need only to switch on their phones after their RSE lesson and google their unanswered questions. The information (images, videos, websites) they find will be uncensored, unsuitable for their age and could create unrealistic expectations for them. Children should be given correct, factual information in an age appropriate way so they don't feel the need to go searching for answers. Sadly, many of our students will have already been exposed to pornography and child abuse material before they learn about Relationship and Sexuality Education in a factual, objective way. This makes it all the more important that when children are learning about sensitive areas in school that they get the full facts in an age appropriate way.

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### **An inclusive RSE curriculum**

Going forward, with experience of teaching the sensitive areas of RSE in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class, I believe the revised curriculum should include these topics in an age appropriate way, and that the information given is factual, balanced, objective and scientific

- different families including families led by same sex couples
- gender identity
- gender equality
- positive body image
- puberty
- masturbation
- positive mental health and well being
- different relationships including LGBT+ relationships
- what healthy relationships look like
- detailed anatomy of internal and external sex and reproductive organs
- making healthy choices
- respect and consent
- sexual harassment and abuse
- online safety and digital footprints
- sexual intercourse – between a man and a woman, between a man and a man, and between a woman and a woman
- conception
- contraception
- prevention of sexually transmitted diseases
- miscarriage and abortion
- female genital mutilation

Updating the Busy Bodies resource to include these topics, and having appropriate quotes to describe some of the sensitive topics in one sentence so that children and young people get the information they need where an in-depth discussion or video is not needed i.e. abortion. I have previously found *It's Perfectly Normal* (for ages 10 and up) and *It's So Amazing* (for ages 7 and up)

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by Robie Harris and Michael Emberley to have excellent age appropriate ways of describing such topics accurately and succinctly.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

The biggest challenge I believe is the influence of religious patrons in RSE policies and the teaching of RSE. I believe worldwide research in the area of RSE, expert opinion, and the experience of educators should take precedent over religious doctrine in state run schools. What must be made clear by the department of Education and Skills, NCCA and PDST, that regardless of school's religious ethos, all aspects of RSE curriculum should be taught by the teachers or any outside agencies that are brought in to teach the RSE programme.

I think there are great opportunities in this review to hear children's voices in what they believe they need as part of their Relationship and Sexuality Education. Parents' voices are also very important in this discussion. As the previous referendums and census results are showing, Ireland is changing and is becoming much more diverse and inclusive in its views.

Updating the resources (posters, books, video) so that young people can relate to them means having a proper budget for good graphic designers, programmers and animators. There are lots of great examples online of RSE resources that children and young people enjoy.

**If you have any comments or observations, please respond here.**

I look forward to the revised RSE programme in the hope that all children and young people in Ireland get the education they need in primary school and it continues in secondary school.

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Home

**Contributor**  
Clare O'Callaghan

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

## Review

### Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Clare
<b>Surname</b>	O'Callaghan
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Primary School Teacher and Parent of two young children
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	31/01/2019
<b>Email</b>	

**Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?**

Personal  Yes Organisation

**Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?**

Primary  Yes Post-primary  Both

**Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?**

Yes  No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I have taught the RSE programme at primary level and I believe that for the most part it is working well and covers important areas of human and social development.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

**Opportunities**

Teaching children about the safe use of the Internet is very important to avoid children being bullied/groomed online etc. Learning about social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem will be an important part of a child's education.

**Challenges**

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There are certain topics that are being considered in the upcoming RSE programme that are very controversial.

No RSE programme can be 'values free' in the way that teaching maths, Irish, English etc. is 'values free'.

One of the topics for consideration in the new RSE programme is **consent**. Consent is the minimum requirement for sexual activity to take place. Just because consent is present, this does not mean that a person is ready to engage in sexual activity. Who will decide or give advice to pupils as to when they are 'ready' for sexual activity and what kind of values will pupils be asked to think about before they engage in 'healthy, sexual expression'? There are no objective criteria for this; values, beliefs and personal views come into play here.

Another of the topics that is being considered in the revised RSE programme is: '**Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**'. Who will decide what a 'healthy, positive sexual expression' is? Some might believe that as long as there is consent, that is the only thing that matters when engaging in sexual activity. Others believe that there should be some commitment to the other person before there can be healthy, positive sexual expression. Still others believe that marriage is the best place for healthy, positive sexual expression to occur because sexual expression is not for bonding and pleasure alone, but is also for the creation of children.

With such wide-ranging views among parents, it is essential that schools be given the freedom to implement an RSE programme that is in accordance with their characteristic spirit and ethos. The State cannot and should not dictate to schools what they must teach when it comes to such sensitive topics.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

**Supports**

1. Parents need to be informed of what topics will be covered with pupils and given an overview of what is proposed to be taught to their children.

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2. Parents need to be given an opt-out if they believe that certain topics that will be taught are contrary to their own beliefs and those they wish to impart to their children.
3. Schools must be allowed to teach the RSE programme according to their ethos. Many of the proposed new topics to be covered in the RSE programme are controversial, with parents having wide ranging views and opinions on these topics. Parents must be allowed to have their children educated on these topics according to the ethos of the school that they have specifically chosen to send their children to.
4. Teachers need to be given an opt-out of teaching topics that may violate their conscience e.g. if required to give value judgements on certain issues.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

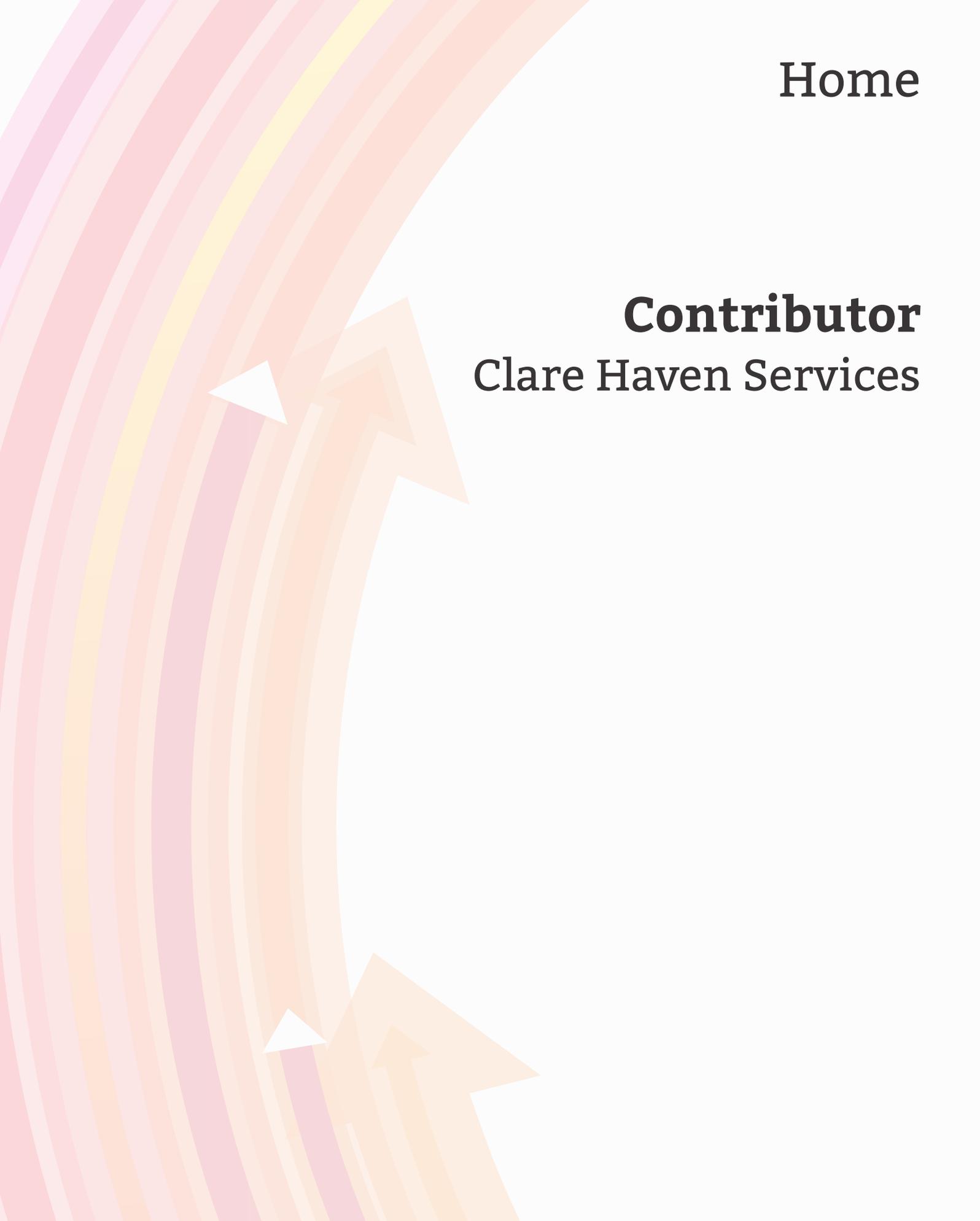
**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

### **Data Protection**

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**Contributor**  
Clare Haven Services

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## *Respondents details*

<b>Name</b>	Siobhán
<b>Surname</b>	O'Connor
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Client Care Co-Ordinator
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Clare Haven Services
<b>Date</b>	15 January 2019
<b>Email</b>	

**Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?**

Organisation

**Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?**

Both

**Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?**

Yes

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

Clare Haven Services was set up in 1993. It is a voluntary organisation providing 24 Hour residential refuge accommodation to women and children experiencing domestic abuse. It has an extensive range of support services to meet the needs of each individual and each family situation

–

**24 HOUR CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE**

Clare Haven operates a 24 hour confidential help line – 065 6822435 offering support, empathy and understanding, as well as information on options available to women experiencing domestic violence.

**DROP-IN CENTRE**

Clare Haven operates a drop-in centre in Ennis where we provide one-on-one support for women. Women can drop in at any stage for a chat or for information or support.

**OUTREACH CLINICS**

Clare Haven runs outreach clinics in Shannon, Kilrush, Killaloe, Scarriff and Ennistymon where women can avail of one-to-one support from a support worker.

**COURT AND OTHER ACCOMPANIMENT**

We offer court accompaniment to women who are seeking Protection, Safety or Barring Orders, or who need to access family law matters. We also offer to accompany women to legal aid, doctors, social welfare etc.

***EDUCATION AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAMMES***

***Clare Haven Services believes that one of the most effective ways to help reduce and eliminate domestic abuse in our society is through preventative education and awareness raising and training. Clare Haven regularly gives awareness raising talks on domestic abuse to second-level schools and training centres.*** We also provide training and give awareness talks to voluntary and community groups; statutory agencies and professionals working in front-line services.

**INTERAGENCY WORK AND REFERRALS**

It is difficult for one agency on its own to address all aspects of domestic abuse. Many other agencies and organisations also have a role to play in preventing domestic abuse, protecting and supporting survivors of domestic abuse and holding perpetrators accountable. Clare Haven works closely with other statutory and voluntary groups to provide a holistic service to women and children.

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## What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?

As stated above we are often requested by schools in Clare to supplement the education of their students by delivering our **Healthy Relationships** Programme. This looks briefly at issues of Healthy/Unhealthy, what it is, how it manifests, what supports are there for women and children who experience it, how to recognise it e.g. controlling relationships, the “2 into U” campaign on dating abuse amongst others.

Also, some of our staff are currently being trained in the **Manuela Programme** and will be rolling it out to Secondary Schools in Clare. They have to date completed it in one secondary school. This too will be a supplement to what teachers are currently offering in schools. This is a six session, 12 hour classroom-based educational programme to create discussion, debate and learning around the issues of healthy relationships, sexual consent along with the context, consequences and attitudes to influences of alcohol and drugs, social media, boundaries and internet/pornography within a group of friendships.

Our staff is also trained in **BodyRight** – A Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Programme for Young People. It is participative and experiential. It raises awareness and informs the young people concerning the facts, the law, the meaning of “consent” and the impact of sexual violence.

## The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

## What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?

One issue that needs to be addressed is the background of those delivering the RSE programme. Our staff, based on their background of working with victims and survivors of abuse add a context to what is being delivered in the classroom and can answer the very real questions our young

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people have with real, lived experience rather than in a hypothetical or hearsay way.

We believe one of the challenges faced by the current RSE programme is that it is not being delivered consistently and the material does not encompass all that meaningful *Relationships and Sexuality Education* entails. Much of the content that our young people require is already collated and developed into appropriate resources and methodologies within our Healthy Relationships and programmes such as *Manuela* and *BodyRight*. We believe these programmes should be utilised and integrated with any newly developed and expanded RSE programme. We think that the DES should harness the wealth of experience that is already on the ground working with young people in our sector.

Consideration should be given by the DES to mainstream programmes such as those we are delivering already to address the identified issues of consent, what it means and its importance, as well as healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Outside of the patron bodies of schools and the teaching staff cohort there is a wealth of knowledge in the community and voluntary sector to address the Minister's specifically considered issues. This knowledge has been imparted to our young people in a non-judgemental, factual and impartial way for years. However it has been done in an ad hoc way, on the basis of invitations extended & accepted as well as resources & capacity available. A streamlined approach utilising what is already available in the community would be a worthy endeavour. To exploit what is already there rather than reinvent it in a different form seems a more efficient exercise.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

We at Clare Haven would be delighted to share our knowledge and expertise with the review group. We believe this material is too important to be dependent on availability, resource deficits within the community sector or a lack of awareness by educators of the wealth of material that is available in the community. Furthermore, we stand over the programmes we deliver and are hopeful to see them expanded in the wider educational sector.

**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

**Data Protection**

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## **Contributor**

◀ Council for Catechetics and the  
Council for Education (Irish Bishops  
Conference) and the Catholic Schools  
Partnership

## **Submission to NCCA on Relationships and Sexuality Education**

### **The Council for Catechetics and the Council for Education (Irish Bishops Conference) and the Catholic Schools Partnership**

#### **Introduction**

The Council for Catechetics, the Council for Education and the Catholic Schools Partnership welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) as it undertakes the work of reviewing current provision for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) as part of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in Primary and Post Primary schools in Ireland.

We understand that this review is an important one. The review sits within other work being done by the NCCA particularly in terms of Wellbeing; this is significant. We hope that this review by the NCCA will lead to greater levels of support for parents and for teachers as they work together to help children and young people learn, at home and in school, about themselves, their friendships and their relationships with others.

This submission is rooted in an attitude of “deep amazement at the human person’s worth and dignity” (John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 10) and out of an understanding that every human person is made in the image and likeness of God – that everyone has inalienable dignity and worth, that each person has a value in and of themselves, and that every person is sacred and loved unconditionally by God. This dignity invites us to live well, to flourish and to love and respect others as we are loved.

We also offer this perspective out of a desire to listen to the lived experience of people, to their joys and hopes, grief and anguish (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*). All children and young people in a Catholic school, in all schools, have a right to have their stories heard and their questions answered. Equally, all parents who send their children to a Catholic school have a right for their voices to be heard in terms of what values and what ideals they wish to have shared with their children in the area of relationships and sexuality education.

Out of these perspectives, we offer the following reflection in terms of the following four key principles:

- The role of Parents is crucially important
- RSE as a holistic educational experience that places values education at the centre
- RSE as a whole school experience
- RSE and the school’s ethos.

These principles are reflected in a great deal of current practice, in much of the thinking presented by the NCCA and Department of Education and Skills (DES) in the area of RSE to

date and in other recent curricular developments, and of course, in terms of the Church's own understanding of the importance of RSE in the lives of children and young people attending Primary and Post Primary schools in Ireland.

### **The Role of Parents is centrally important**

Parents/guardians are the first educators of their children. This role obviously continues to be centrally important once children begin school and throughout their whole education. In the area of RSE this is also, and indeed even more particularly, the case. It is therefore somewhat surprising to see the lack of a much more thorough engagement with the question of the rights of parents within the Research Paper underpinning the NCCA's current review work. This deficit is acknowledged by the authors themselves (NCCA, 2018, p. 5).

In the document, *Going Forward Together; An Introduction for Parents to Relationships and Sexuality Education*, the DES states clearly to parents,

As a parent, you are the first teacher of your child. You hand on values and attitudes to each new generation of children. (DES, 1997, p.3)

It is vital that this NCCA review attends to and respects this fundamental principle.

A child's right to Social, Personal and Health Education was enshrined in law in the Education Act, 1998. Section 9 requires that every school shall use its available resources,

to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and to provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents and having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

The *White Paper on Education, Charting our Education Future* (DES, 1995), which preceded the Education Act, sets out the role of schools in promoting the social, personal and health education of students. One of the helpful perspectives outlined in the White Paper is that the provision of a relationships and sexuality education programme beginning at the early stages of primary education and continued as appropriate to all levels of secondary students would "involve close co-operation with parents, support and complement the work of the home and in keeping with the ethos of the school." (p.173)

The central importance of the parents' perspective is also reflected in the Department of Education and Skills *Guidelines for RSE for Primary and Post Primary schools* (DES, 1997). Here RSE provision is very helpfully described as a "partnership between home and school".

Indeed, since the introduction of RSE, as part of SPHE, in the mid-nineteen nineties, the NCCA and the Department for Education and Skills has consistently pointed out that schools and parents should work together to ensure the best outcome for children and young

people in the area of RSE. In Post Primary Schools, for example, Section 4 of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for RSE worked out in partnership with parents and a suitable RSE programme that reflects that policy in place for all students at both junior and senior cycle.

Department of Education and Skills Circulars to Boards of Management and Principals of Primary and Post Primary schools (e.g. M4/95, M20/96, M22/00 and M11/03) all emphasize the importance of the voice of parents in the area of RSE. More recently, Circular 0043/2018 stresses again the importance of parental engagement in the area of RSE this time in terms of the proper use of external facilitators in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned comprehensive approach to wellbeing promotion.

This parent and child centred approach is a sensible approach to RSE. There is also a rich educational rationale for this close partnership between home and school in the area of RSE as outlined by the DES in the *Interim Curriculum Guidelines for RSE for Primary Schools* (DES, 1996),

The involvement of parents and teachers in a genuinely collaborative process will be essential for the success of the RSE programme and can have many practical benefits. (p.50)

These benefits, the document goes on to say, include, “consistency of language and approach that ensure that the messages children receive about sexuality and relationships are clear and unambiguous”. The document stresses that by working together, “teachers and parents will gain a fuller understanding of each other’s concerns; mutual trust and respect will be deepened and the school climate for RSE will be enhanced” (p. 51). Such a collaborative approach needs to be properly supported across all schools to ensure the best possible outcome in terms of RSE provision for children and young people.

Further insight into the *why* of parental involvement in the work of RSE done in schools (and indeed in all areas of a child’s education) is provided by the White Paper which suggests that because parents bring to the children’s education “the unique expertise derived from intimate knowledge of the child’s development, of her/his child’s particular needs and interests and of circumstances outside the school, the parental role confers on them the right to active participation in their child’s education” (p.11). This right is enshrined in Article 42.1 of the Constitution.

Not surprisingly then, recent research (Catherine Conlon’s research ([2018]) quoted by Morgan, Keating and Collins (NCCA, 2018), p. 39) supports parental involvement as an important feature of the current Irish RSE programme and suggests that this feature should be retained and strengthened in any future iterations. It is to be hoped that any future curricular provision and practical supports in terms of training for teachers (and arguably for parents) that might emerge in the area of RSE will continue to recognise the primacy of the parents’ voice in this important area of their children’s education if that ideal of partnership between home and school is to be realised. Over and above curricular provision and supports, the early promise of the NCCA’s work in the area of RSE in terms of the close

collaboration between parents and teachers may also need to be looked at again and supported anew.

For Catholic schools we recognise that all families are integral to an education that animates and transforms us towards love. The family is the place where “we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures.” Our family teach us, as Pope Francis tells us in *Laudato Si*, his Encyclical on care of our Common Home,

how to ask without demanding, to say ‘thank you’ as an expression of genuine gratitude for what has been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm (213).

It makes sense then that there is, to echo the Department’s own recommendation, as seamless a connection as possible between home and family in the area of RSE as part of SPHE.

The parent’s voice is obviously going to continue to be very important. Archbishop Eamonn Martin (Key note address to JMB/AMCSS 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, May, 2018) stressed the importance of the family context by saying that “the family remains for children and young people the privileged place of encounter and growth – parents are the first teachers, the home is the first “school of humanity””. Parents, he said, “turn to you (Catholic schools), as trusted fellow pilgrims, to accompany them and their daughters or sons” and they “rely” on the school’s “wisdom and experience”. This, of course, reflects the very essence of partnership suggested by the DES and NCCA documents cited above and needs to be retained and further supported if the rights of parents are to be respected.

### **RSE as a holistic educational experience that places values education at the centre**

Holistic education is concerned with the development of a person's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potentials. A holistic approach is based on the view that teaching is a social activity; within the classroom, between teacher and learner, between learners and between learners and their families, communities and social networks. Such an approach also obviously engages with wider societal realities, particularly as they impinge on the lives of the student. In a holistic paradigm,

The teacher is assumed to want to develop the learner as a critical, confident, independent learner and provide the holistic learner with critical faculties that enable action in real situations. (Patel, 2003).

In addition, in a holistic approach to education, providing space for students to engage with values, to develop these, to interrogate them, to assimilate them, to be challenged by them, and to learn about the values of others is of central importance.

That holistic approach to education rooted in a values framework, particularly in the context of RSE, is important. It is clearly echoed in, among other DES documents, *In Looking at our Schools, 2016 - A Quality Framework for Primary Schools* (DES). Here a holistic approach to teaching and learning emphasises the need for pupils to “develop a broad range of skills, competences and values that enable personal well-being, active citizenship and lifelong learning” (DES, 2016, p. 3). In other words, in RSE, education about the facts can never be sufficient; much more than that is required.

This understanding is also reflected in the definitions of SPHE and RSE presented below. For example, [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) outlines the aims for SPHE:

1. To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfillment and living in communities
2. To promote self-esteem and self-confidence
3. To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making
4. To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
5. To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. ([www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie))

The *SPHE Curriculum for Primary Schools* also very helpfully highlights how,

As children progress through an SPHE programme, they will encounter a wide range of issues. These will include substance misuse, relationships, sexuality, child abuse prevention, prejudice and discrimination. The SPHE curriculum is structured in such a way that these issues are not explored in isolation; rather the emphasis is on building a foundation of skills, values, attitudes and understanding relevant to all these issues, with specific information provided where necessary. (p. 2)

Within SPHE, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is understood as a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding, of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy within a moral, social and spiritual framework. (DES, Circular M4/95)

In the context of these definitions of SPHE and RSE, Mayock, Kitching, and Morgan (DES, 2007) outline how the RSE Guidelines for Post Primary schools emphasise relationships rather than just sexuality education. This emphasis is helpful and is reflected in curricular provision at all levels currently. The fact that the focus is on supporting young people to live with others, as friends, in families, as communities, in romantic relationships and in the future, for many, in married life, is important and it means that the RSE curriculum, of necessity, has a richness that would not be there if the emphasis was simply on sex education rather than on relationships education.

This emphasis needs also to be reflected in review work being undertaken by stakeholders in the area of RSE. Obviously in this context, simply asking students ‘what they think they need to know’, as if facts alone were the only determinants in helping students make their minds up on very important matters related to human relationships and sexuality is not

enough. A fact-based approach is essential but rich engagement around students' values and beliefs is also obviously required to equip them with all that is necessary for their life as relational beings. Such an approach should be retained. Put differently, while young people clearly express a desire to be taught the 'facts' in a clear and unambiguous way, they also want space to engage with the bigger questions, with their own dreams and hopes for friendships and relationships. Of initial reviews done on RSE, Keating, Morgan and Collins write,

Another important message of these studies was the perceived need for RSE to adopt an approach that went beyond just providing biological information. It was evident that knowledge regarding sexual matters needed to be complemented by social and personal skills to enable young people to manage the situations in which they found themselves. (NCCA, 2018)

Young people need space to explore their own values, and those of their peers; they want to do this together as a community of learners supported by their trusted teachers and their schools. They want to feel heard in their schools. These expressed desires around RSE are also clearly reflected in Maynock, Kitching and Morgan's review in 2007. Therefore, RSE as part of the SPHE curriculum will of course include age and stage appropriate information, debate and discussion about contraception, and information about sexually transmitted infections. RSE will also provide rich space for the 'bigger questions' that will help children and young people engage with their own realities and the lives of others in a compassionate, inclusive and live giving way. In this context, the presenting, and nurturing of values is key.

Similarly, the Catholic school understands the importance of an approach that presents 'the facts' but will always seek to do so in line with the holistic vision of education rooted in the kind of values-framework based approach suggested to date by the NCCA and DES. An approach that focuses on the rich development of values, beliefs and attitudes with young people is now more necessary than ever as we seek to help them navigate their way through very many highly complex issues relating to relationships and sexuality education.

In a Catholic school, a values-framework based approach will be marked by four important qualities. Such an approach will firstly be invitational. Secondly, it will engage with the real-life experiences of the young people in the school. Thirdly, it will seek to help young people change behaviours that do themselves or others harm. Fourthly, it will look to share a rich understanding of human life, relationships and sexuality at the heart of the Church's vision of the person, knowing it can only successfully or credibly do this if the first three qualities are clearly visible in the approach suggested to RSE by the school.

Firstly, in terms of an approach that seeks to be invitational. It is important to say that a values-based approach does not suggest the imposition of any one set of beliefs but rather seeks to invite students to engage deeply with key questions as they relate to their own

lives. In a Catholic school this will mean providing space for young people to encounter and engage with a Gospel rich understanding of the human person and of life. The approach to such an encounter is always invitational.

Secondly, presenting in a Catholic school a Gospel centred understanding of the human person in line with the school's characteristic spirit, means engaging in a real way with the lived experience of the students in the school. In any given classroom in Ireland there are children and young people asking questions and needing answers about their lives and about the lives of others. But not all children and young people ask the same questions at exactly the same moment in their lives; this also has to be remembered. For every child there is a different reality; a different set of life experiences, different hopes and dreams. The local school, with its own particular characteristic spirit and its own local reality, supported by Patrons/Trustees, is therefore the place where the working out of a school's RSE policy and the implementation of the RSE policy through a programme can and should take place in partnership with parents.

Thirdly, as well as acceptance and respect, in a Catholic school, and in other school types, there will also of necessity be voices that challenge young people to perhaps think and behave differently in order to show love and respect to others. Young people will be encouraged in the correct use of their freedom, they will be asked to be respectful of others' boundaries, they will be informed about and learn the importance of consent. They will be taught tolerance, compassion and empathy. In addition, as Keating, Morgan and Collins themselves very helpfully suggest, in all schools, young people's assumptions and attitudes which may reflect wider societal biases and stereotypes should be challenged (Keating, Morgan, Collins, 2018, p. 34). It is therefore somewhat disappointing then to see that while the approach to RSE called Holistic Sexuality Education (HSE) appears to be grounded in a "pedagogical process that comprises knowledge, skills and values" (NCCA, 2018, p. 28) it does not seek to change behaviour. In any school, such an approach should be treated with significant caution. The role of education is, at times, to seek to change behaviour, to challenge, to invite children and young people into ways of behaving worthy of their own dignity and the dignity of others. In the area of RSE, this should surely and maybe even more especially be the case.

Fourthly, everything that the Church teaches about human sexuality and relationships, it teaches out of a sincere desire to share something beautiful about the nature of the human person. It is precisely because of our dignity, for example that the Church teaches the values of purity and chastity. It is precisely because of our inherent dignity that the Church teaches the value of human life from conception to natural death. In a Catholic school it is these values that will be proposed, not imposed, to children and young people. But sharing these and other values, will only make sense in partnership with parents, in the context of the school's lived ethos and in encounters that are respectful and that listen and attend to the lived experiences of children and young people who come to our schools.

Therefore, in terms of a values framework, it is the Catholic Schools' Partnership and Catechetics Council's view that the rich understanding of what the RSE curriculum aims to achieve and the acknowledgement of RSE as an educational endeavour that seeks to help students develop holistically should be retained.

In this context, pre-service and continuous professional development are vitally important in terms of meeting the above aims and making RSE a lived reality in all schools. Our own consultation engagements with teachers and principals highlighted how teaching that takes place in an RSE setting is obviously different to the kind of teaching that happens in other subjects. Teachers at second level identified, in particular, staffing of the subject as perhaps the greatest barrier to the current curriculum's implementation. The reviews conducted by Keating, Morgan and Collins (2018) and previously by Mayock, Kitching and Morgan (NCCA 2007) also point to serious deficits in this regard and the inevitable impact in schools, in terms of teaching and learning in RSE is very significant. Indeed Keating, Morgan and Collins (2018) clearly identify the unfortunately recurring nature of this issue across a number of reviews conducted by NCCA/DES in the area of RSE (pp. 8 – 10 and p. 14f). If all partners in education are really serious about RSE provision for our children and young people, these significant deficits should now be addressed, in partnership with all stakeholders, through pre-service training and a significant overhaul of current provision for CPD for RSE/SPHE for teachers.

### **RSE as a whole school experience**

The NCCA rightly holds that it is important that RSE is retained as part of SPHE, that SPHE is increasingly understood as part of Wellbeing (for example, at Junior Cycle) and that Wellbeing is presented as a whole school endeavour. Put simply,

RSE is an integral part of SPHE and SPHE is taught through school atmosphere and culture, integration and discrete teaching time. (RSE Policy and Education Guide, [www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/RSE%20Policy%20Guide.pdf](http://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/RSE%20Policy%20Guide.pdf))

The NCCA's recent work for Post Primary Schools and at the other end of the educational system with Preschools in the area of Wellbeing is very significant in terms of this review. The NCCA's definition of student wellbeing aims to

Take account of the multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing encompassing social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, environmental and physical wellbeing (NCCA, 2014, p. 13).

This rich understanding of wellbeing, as having an explicit curricular and an implicit whole school reality, is also reflected in the NCCA's work at Preschool level. Here Wellbeing includes psychological well-being (including feeling and thinking) and physical well-being. The wellbeing material for Aistear describes a multi-faceted approach to wellbeing

encompassing home and school, care of self, others and the environment, and creativity, as well as the spiritual dimension of wellbeing.

Children's relationships and interactions with their families and communities contribute significantly to their sense of well-being. Children need to feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included. They also need to respect themselves, others, and their environment. They become positive about themselves and their learning when adults value them for who they are and when they promote warm and supportive relationships with them. Expressing themselves creatively and experiencing a spiritual dimension in life enhances children's sense of well-being. (NCCA, 2009, p. 3)

Wellbeing is clearly seen as a whole school enterprise. The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines in particular clearly demonstrate how all subjects, short courses and other learning areas can contribute to student wellbeing. More than that, the Guidelines stress how wellbeing is enhanced through the values and school culture experienced on a day-to-day basis. In this context,

Wellbeing can not only be taught through explicit curriculum components, but can be modelled by those working in the school as they show care, respect and consideration in their interactions with students (NCCA, p. 27).

The Wellbeing Guidelines describe very well the kind of school environment that needs to be created to support Wellbeing (with SPHE/RSE as part of that). An important element of that care is carefully listening to and engaging with the lived experience of students; not presuming to rush in with answers to questions that have not yet been asked or seeking to avoid engagement with questions that are being asked. If we do not take the complexity of young people's lives into account in our approach to sexuality education, we are in danger of risking irrelevance for many students. (Keating, Morgan, Collins, NCCA, 2018, p. 33)

In the Guidelines for Wellbeing it is clear that every person in the school, the Guidelines stress, has a role to play in caring for others and helping others to realise their full potential.

Again, this cross curricular and whole school approach to Wellbeing is easily illustrated in a Catholic school.

RSE is understood in a Catholic school as an integral part of the curriculum. All teachers and the management team in a Catholic school seek to help students engage with questions in a variety of different curriculum areas around fairness, justice, right relationships, care for the poor, and care for those who are vulnerable.

The inclusive nature of Catholic schools is central to this experience of inclusion. Catholic schools show how "loving kindness builds bonds, cultivates relationships, creates new networks of integration and knits a firm social fabric" (*Amoris Laetitia*, n. 100). In this way, belonging is central to cultivating attitudes of loving kindness "for without a sense of

belonging we cannot sustain a commitment to others; we end up seeking our convenience alone and life in common becomes impossible”(*Amoris Laetitia*, n. 100).

Therefore, in the context of RSE in Catholic schools that transcends curricular provision; a Catholic school should be a community inspired by Gospel values and should be transmitting Gospel values. Community is an essential quality that defines Catholic education.

Community is also at the heart of a school’s provision of RSE/SPHE. Such a school will inspire empathy for those who are less fortunate, like the homeless, migrants and refugees. The Catholic school will promote care for the earth. The Catholic school will of course therefore have a particular care for those within its own community that are most vulnerable, who are struggling in any area of their lives. In such a school, there is no place for bullying, harassment, racism or homophobia, or any form of victimisation in a Catholic School. In particular, it is also important that Catholic schools also evaluate the support offered to students who are facing new and deep questions relating to their sexual identity as they mature. These students are loved unconditionally by God and therefore should be loved and accepted in their schools.

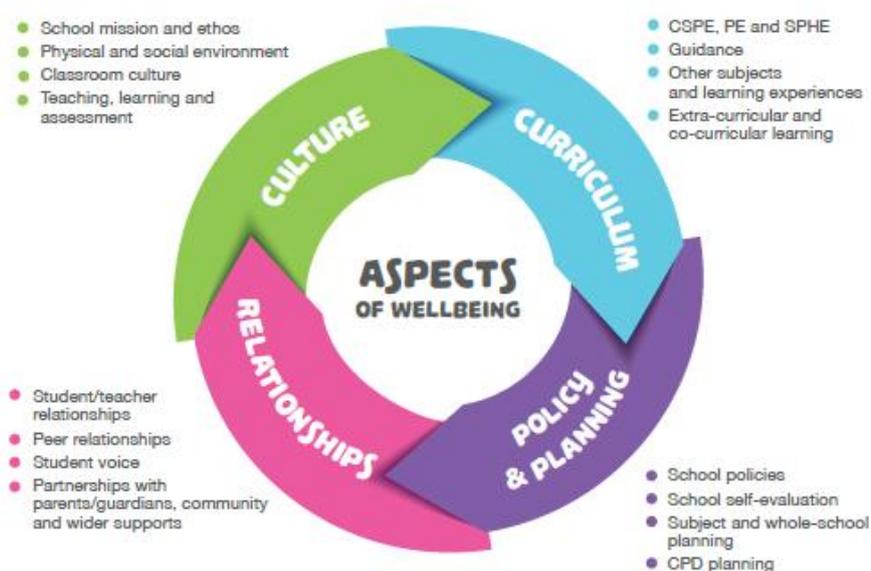
In turn, Catholic schools seek to imbue confidence and respect in all of their pupils so that these pupils throughout their lives will have the skills and disposition to relate with others in a way that is respectful and that brings joy to their own lives and to the lives of others. Teachers and principals in Catholic schools get to know their students by listening to them and engaging with their reality. All students have their own stories, hopes and struggles. These have to be attended to; they matter to the student and they matter therefore to the school. Catholic schools always strive to accept and care for their students as the gifts they are to the life of the school and in the life of their family and community. Archbishop Eamonn Martin (JMB/AMCSS Address, Galway 2018) described how, in this way, a good Catholic School becomes part of the ‘extended family’ for each of the pupils. He says to the teachers in these schools,

You will journey with these young people through some of their most formative years, as they develop physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually; you will help them relate to the world and explore the great questions of today; you will guide them as they begin to form their personal attitudes and values, setting down for themselves principles and foundations for life; you will comfort and encourage them as they learn to cope with the complexity of relationships, and as they discover who they are as a person.

The Catholic school, therefore, is a privileged place of encounter, with RSE an essential space in a Catholic school for that encounter.

## RSE and the school's ethos

As outlined above, there has been to date significant recognition of the importance of characteristic spirit as an aid to assisting schools – particularly in their engagement with parents – in the area of RSE. In all schools, ethos has a very positive role to play in the delivery of RSE as part of SPHE. Ethos here is defined not only in terms of the school's faith identity but also includes an understanding of the school's history, and geographical and social context. The concept 'ethos' therefore applies obviously to all schools. The NCCA *Guidelines on Wellbeing* helpfully illustrates for schools the interplay between the four key elements of wellbeing; ethos/culture, curriculum, policy/planning and relationships as follows (NCCA, 2014. P. 26)



At primary level also, the importance of characteristic spirit is outlined in all relevant DES circulars relating to SPHE/RSE and in the Interim Guidelines for RSE and the SPHE Curriculum. It should be noted that characteristic spirit remains an important tool for all schools in engaging with a whole range of other NCCA curricular initiatives.

In terms of RSE, ethos provides a key reference point in helping all schools work with parents in the development and provision of the school's RSE programme. It provides a locus for real conversations that hear real needs and hear real life experiences. It also supports teachers in the classroom and outside the classroom (in terms of a whole school approach to RSE). However, clearly from Mayock, Kitching, Morgan (2007) and Keating, Morgan and Collins (NCCA, 2018) more support for some schools, faith schools included, is required around assisting these schools engage with ethos as it relates to RSE. Rather than seeing ethos as a block to the delivery of RSE, it should be seen as a very helpful and necessary tool but one that requires support. Our own work with schools in the area of RSE

will continue, in collaboration with Patrons and Trustees, to provide additional support to schools as required.

A very useful starting point in terms of this important exploration of the question of ethos, particularly as it relates to RSE centres on the understanding at the heart of the school's life of the human person. This anthropological question is central in the work all schools do and answers to this question have already been suggested in this paper.

What then is the vision of the human person that underpins a Catholic education? As stated above, in a Catholic school, children and young people are understood to be gifts. Each and every one of them – without exception – is made in the image and likeness of God and each and every one of them – without exception – is loved unconditionally by God. Those among them who are struggling in any way are particularly important in a Catholic school because they call from their teachers, principals and fellow students the kind of care and compassion that God wishes to have bestowed on them. In their vulnerability, however it is experienced or expressed they warrant the best care that a school can give them. This is a very rich and challenging ideal for schools but one we believe, with the right supports from all partners involved in education, is attainable.

A second important question, related to this anthropological question, centres on the type of community a school seeks to be. As stated above, in terms specifically of RSE in a Catholic school, the Catholic school seeks to be a community inspired by Gospel values and transmitting Gospel values, including the dignity of every person; integrity, peace, tolerance, justice, honesty and truth; holiness, gentleness and compassion, mercy and forgiveness; purity and respect. (Archbishop Eamonn Martin Address, JMB/ACMSS, 2018). In such a community there is, of course, room for diversity. In fact, it could be argued that diversity is an essential element in a Catholic school because it reflects on the Catholic school as welcoming and inclusive. If the family is a 'school of humanity' so too is the Catholic school.

In any consideration of ethos in faith schools, it is also important to remember that faith schools exist, at primary and post primary levels, because there are parents who wish to have their children educated in accordance with their religious convictions and in line with the vision of the human person and the school community outlined briefly above. Catholic schools work in partnership with all parents, local communities, the DES, the NCCA and others. It is important to note that all surveys demonstrate a very high level of parental satisfaction with the service provided by Catholic schools. These consistently high satisfaction ratings attest to the importance of ongoing partnership and cooperation among all stakeholders in our educational endeavours.

In terms of the care offered to children and young people in Catholic schools, there is an important recognition that children today inhabit a complex world. They are bombarded with messages dominated by a consumer focused and materialistic vision of life. The emerging issues and concerns (e.g. consent, developments in contraception, safe use of the internet and so on) raised by the then Minister for Education, Mr. Richard Bruton TD in

2018, when he requested the NCCA review RSE provision, reflect the complexity of the world in which our children and young people live.

All these issues warrant attention in our schools and Catholic schools take seriously their responsibility in this regard. None of the various issues listed by the Minister should be avoided; all should be explored in RSE in an open, values-rich, student centred and age and stage appropriate way in line with the expressed wishes of parents.

Therefore, precisely because of the complex world in which we all live, Catholic schools seek to provide space; intellectual and emotional, spiritual and psychological, where pupils can explore and imagine a world with a broader horizon. The invitation in terms of RSE is to provide this space to children and young people in an age and stage appropriate way.

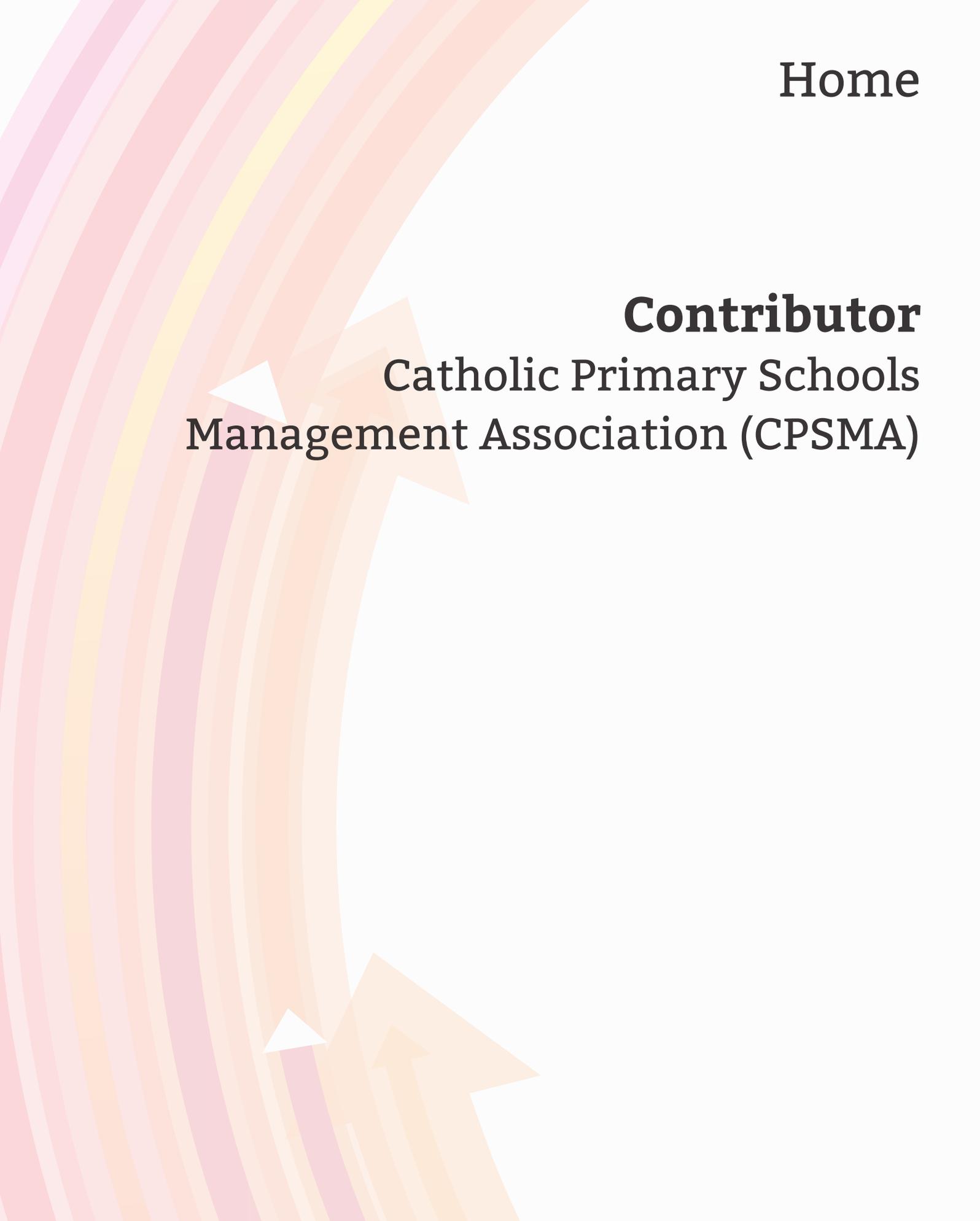
## **Conclusion**

There is a general recognition that very significant progress has been made in terms of the implementation of SPHE and RSE in the majority of Post Primary schools and in the vast majority of Primary schools in Ireland (Keating, Morgan, Collins, DES, 2018, pp. 15, 16, 19). It is therefore important to acknowledge with gratitude, and in a spirit of partnership, the very good work being done in schools in the area of RSE in schools across the country. In particular, the efforts of teachers in their work to educate and support children and young people should be applauded. Schools' sincere efforts at engagement with parents as partners should also be commended.

The Council for Catechetics, the Council for Education and the Catholic Schools Partnership suggest that much of what is contained in the Research Paper helpfully presented for this review by Keating, Morgan and Collins (NCCA, 2018) highlights key practical concerns held in common by many stakeholders and partners working in this area, particularly in terms of supports for teachers, principals and parents. In many cases these concerns are unfortunately historic. They include of course the need for greater and more systematic and integrated support structures for teachers, and greater assistance for schools in their planning for and delivery of RSE in the context of a whole range of school types. The Council for Catechetics, the Council for Education and the Catholic Schools Partnership would also seek greater engagement with parents as the primary educators of their children in its future work and asks that the NCCA continue to engage with all of its partners in this most important of areas in the lives of children and young people.

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The background features a series of curved, overlapping lines in shades of pink, purple, and yellow, creating a rainbow-like effect. Overlaid on these lines are several semi-transparent arrows pointing upwards and to the right, with white arrowheads.

Home

**Contributor**  
Catholic Primary Schools  
Management Association (CPSMA)

**Submission by Catholic Primary  
Schools Management  
Association on the National  
Council for Curriculum and  
Assessment's review of  
Relationships and Sexuality  
Education**

4th February, 2019

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## Introduction

CPSMA welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) as it undertakes the work of reviewing current provision for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), as part of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in primary and post primary schools in Ireland.

CPSMA (Catholic Primary Schools Management Association) provides advice and support for chairpersons and principals of Boards of Management in over 2,800 schools. We collaborate with other management bodies and negotiate on behalf of these schools with the Department of Education and Skills and other education partners.

CPSMA provides a telephone query line which responds to over 8600 queries from principals and chairs of boards of management every year on a wide range of topics from HR issues to parental complaints and child protection issues. This service, as well as the face to face contact time during training means that CPSMA has a unique insight into the multifaceted challenges facing Irish Primary Schools.

CPSMA welcomes current review being conducted by the NCCA as does the wider Catholic Educational Community.

Indeed, last year (3<sup>rd</sup> of May) Archbishop Eamon Martin called for a review of RSE programs stating that *“I agree that a review of relationships and sexuality education in all schools, including our Catholic schools, is essential if we are to help young people cope with the risks to their health and well-being presented in both the virtual and real worlds they inhabit.”*

## The Importance of Relationship and Sexuality Education

As the work of George Vaillant and the Grant Study<sup>1</sup> have amply demonstrated it is the quality of our relationships which determines the quality of our lives. Or as he memorably put it, *“Happiness is love. Full stop.”*

It is therefore only right that schools should support the work of parents to help children and young people to learn about themselves, their friendships and their relationships with others.

RSE currently forms an integral part of the broader SPHE curriculum which aims to:

1. To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities;

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<sup>1</sup> Begun in 1938, the Grant Study of Adult Development charted the physical and emotional health of over 200 men, starting with their undergraduate days. Vaillant G. Mukamal K. Successful Ageing *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 2001: 158:839–847

2. To promote self-esteem and self-confidence;
3. To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making;
4. To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion; and,
5. To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. (www.pdst.ie).

It is important that relationship and sexuality education is not only seen as sex education, but is understood as;

*lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding, of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy within a moral, social and spiritual framework. (DES, Circular M4/95)*

This view is strongly supported in Catholic Educational thinking.

For example, in *Amoris Laetitia* chapter seven, Pope Francis questions whether we have yet taken seriously the challenge of developing what the Second Vatican Council called “a positive and prudent sex education” with “due weight being given to the advances in psychological, pedagogical and didactic sciences” (AL 280).

“It is not easy”, he adds, “to approach the issue of sex education in an age when sexuality tends to be trivialised and impoverished. It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving.”

In this, Pope Francis is repeating the long held view of many educationalists and parents that relationships and sexuality education should not be reduced to the imparting of so-called “objective” information, dissociated from a morals and values framework or from the totality of relationships communicated via the ethos or characteristic spirit of any school, Catholic or otherwise.

As Pope Saint John Paul II said;

“Sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person – body, emotions and soul – and manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love” (FC 37).

CPSMA is delighted to see that this view is shared by the authors of the NCCA research paper who wrote;

*Another important message of these studies was the perceived need for RSE to adopt an approach that went beyond just providing biological information. It was evident that knowledge regarding sexual matters needed to be complemented by social and personal skills to enable young people to manage the situations in which they found themselves. (NCCA, 2018)*

## The Critical Role of Parents

The Irish Constitution states that;

42."1: The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.

This constitutional imperative is strongly supported in the Department of Education document *Going Forward Together; An Introduction for Parents to Relationships and Sexuality Education* which states;

*As a parent, you are the first teacher of your child. You hand on values and attitudes to each new generation of children. (DES, 1997, p.3)*

The child's right to Social, Personal and Health Education is enshrined in law in the Education Act, 1998. Section 9 requires that every school shall use its available resources;

*"to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and to provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents and having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school."*

The White Paper on Education, "Charting our Education Future" (DES, 1995), which preceded the Education Act, sets out the role of schools in promoting the social, personal and health education of students. The White Paper outlined that the provision of a relationships and sexuality education programme beginning at the early stages of primary education and continued as appropriate to all levels of students would *"involve close co-operation with parents, support and complement the work of the home and in keeping with the ethos of the school."* (p.173)

The central importance of the parents' perspective is also reflected in the Department of Education and Skills Guidelines for RSE for Primary and Post Primary schools (DES, 1997). Here RSE provision is very helpfully described as a *"partnership between home and school"*.

Indeed, since the introduction of RSE, as part of SPHE, in the mid-nineteen nineties, the NCCA and the Department for Education and Skills has consistently pointed out that schools and parents should work together to ensure the best outcome for children and young people in the area of RSE.

Department of Education and Skills Circulars to primary and post primary schools (e.g. M4/95, M20/96, M22/00 and M11/03) all emphasise the importance of the voice of parents in the area of RSE.

More recently, Circular 0043/2018 stresses again the importance of parental engagement in the area of RSE this time in terms of the proper use of external facilitators in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned comprehensive approach to wellbeing promotion.

This parent and child centred approach is also of practical benefit as outlined by the DES in the Interim Curriculum Guidelines for RSE for Primary Schools (DES, 1996);

*“The involvement of parents and teachers in a genuinely collaborative process will be essential for the success of the RSE programme and can have many practical benefits.” (p.50)*

These benefits, the document goes on to say, include, *“consistency of language and approach that ensure that the messages children receive about sexuality and relationships are clear and unambiguous”*. The document stresses that *“by working in this way, teachers and parents will gain a fuller understanding of each other’s concerns; mutual trust and respect will be deepened and the school climate for RSE will be enhanced”* (p. 51). Such a collaborative approach needs to be properly supported across all schools to ensure the best possible outcome in terms of RSE provision for children and young people.

Further insight into the why of parental involvement in the work of RSE done in schools (and indeed in all areas of a child’s education) is provided by the White Paper which suggests that because parents bring to the children's education *“the unique expertise derived from intimate knowledge of the child's development, of her/his child's particular needs and interests and of circumstances outside the school, the parental role confers on them the right to active participation in their child's education”* (p.11).

Not surprisingly then, recent research (Catherine Conlon’s research (2018)) quoted by Morgan, Keating and Collins (NCCA, (2018), p. 39) supports this important feature of the current Irish RSE programme (parental involvement) and suggests that this feature should be retained and strengthened in any future iterations.

Therefore, it is somewhat surprising to see the lack of a much more thorough engagement with the question of the rights and duties of parents within the Research Paper underpinning the NCCA’s current review work.

This deficit is acknowledged by the authors themselves (NCCA, 2018, p. 5). It is to be hoped that as the NCCA’s work continues into 2019 and beyond, this deficit might be addressed.

Equally, it is to be hoped that any future curricular provision and practical supports in terms of training for teachers (and arguably for parents) that might emerge in the area of RSE will continue to recognise the primacy of the parents' voice in this important area of their children's education if that ideal of partnership between home and school is to be realised.

## **The Catholic View of Education**

There has been a great deal of ill informed commentary recently on Catholic schools, and in particular Catholic attitudes to RSE which seeks to portray Catholic schools as somehow hostile to RSE education, or as places of indoctrination rather than education.

CPSMA therefore thinks it both useful and necessary to set out some of the underlying principles of Catholic education.

As stated above Catholic Education recognises (as does the Irish constitution) Parents as the primary educator of the child and the schools' role as being to support the work of parent in that regard.

Catholic Education is not concerned with indoctrination but with the holistic development of the child.

In *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis states that, "*Education includes encouraging the responsible use of freedom to face issues with good sense and intelligence. It involves forming persons who readily understand that their own lives, and the life of the community, are in their hands, and that freedom is itself a great gift.*" (AL 262)

Furthermore, Pope Francis cautions against being "obsessive" in wanting to control children's every experience and movement (AL 261). Much more important, he says, is "*the ability to lovingly help them grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy*".

Or, as Saint Paul puts it, "*For freedom Christ has set us free ... you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence ... Live by the Spirit – the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*" (Galatians 5)

Responsible freedom is more than the capacity to choose this, or that. It includes the instinct to weigh up what is right and wrong, what is wholesome and healthy, what is in harmony with our long term happiness and the happiness of others.

Catholic schools assist parents and families by helping young people find moral reference points, by offering a morals and values framework, or roadmap, to guide them.

Such a framework is centred on the Gospel, and especially on the principle of loving God and loving our neighbour as ourselves.

The Catholic school ought therefore to be a community inspired by Gospel values and transmitting Gospel values, including: the sacredness of human life; the dignity of the person; integrity; peace; tolerance; justice; honesty and truth; holiness; gentleness and compassion; mercy and forgiveness; purity; respect.

Just as the family home introduces children to the process of socialisation and awareness of others and the needs of the world; the school builds upon this, ensuring that young people learn to relate to, and understand the needs of others, helping them realise that when you take account of others, sometimes you have to postpone, or wait for your own needs or desires.

*Amoris Laetitia* puts it well;

*“The task of education is to make us sense that the world and society are also our home; it trains us how to live together in this greater home. In the family we learn closeness, Care and respect for others. We break out of our fatal self-absorption and come to realise that we are living with and alongside others who are worthy of our concern, our kindness and our affection.” (AL 276)*

A litmus test of Catholic school ethos is how its most vulnerable members are treated. Pupils with disabilities or other special educational needs will be given particular attention and support, and the school must work to overcome all kinds of exclusion which would deny any young person the opportunity to receive quality education. Therefore, there is no place for bullying, harassment, racism, homophobia, or any form of victimisation in a Catholic school.

## **RSE and Catholic Schools**

As mentioned above Archbishop Eamon Martin, himself a former school principal, gave a major speech last May calling for a review of RSE education and outlining the attitude of the Catholic Church to such a review.

His speech was a crisp and concise articulation of the challenges facing such a review and the attitude of Catholic Educators to such a review.

Among the key points he made were:

- Learning to form healthy and life-giving relationships is an essential aspect of all education, firstly at home, and then supported by schools.

- Relationships and sexuality education in Catholic schools is situated within a morals and values framework that is derived ultimately from the life and teaching of Christ and transmitted through the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Catholic schools should seek to promote a positive self-image and attitude to our bodies, an appreciation of the gift of sexuality. They should help educate young people in taking responsibility and making well informed decisions regarding their choices, including being aware of their own values and those of others who may differ from them.
- This questions and challenges facing young people in living their lives today should not be ignored or skimmed over. A sound relationships and sexuality programme, developed in consultation with parents, will include age appropriate information, debate and discussion about contraception, sexually transmitted infections, same sex attraction and unions, and the full meaning of consent.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education ought therefore to be an integral part of the curriculum in a Catholic school. It should present the positive, yet challenging, Catholic vision for relationships, chastity, marriage and the family.
- In light of much public discussion about LGBT and gender issues, it is important that Catholic schools, also evaluate the support offered to students who are facing new and deep questions relating to their sexual identity as they mature.
- All young people must be treated with compassion and be helped to understand that they are loved by God and their inherent human dignity is valued and respected.
- Given that many Catholic schools have already been sensitively offering support to pupils who are beginning to express same sex attractions or raising personal questions about gender identity, it is timely to identify, develop and disseminate best practice in this area across all our Catholic schools.
- At all times, the needs and views of parents should be fully considered in such a review and resources and methods should be developed which reflect and enhance the characteristic spirit of a Catholic school.

### **Some Observations on the current RSE Programme**

In preparing this submission, CPSMA consulted with individual principals and chairpersons of Boards of Management and held a meeting with 50 principals and chairpersons.

Among the key findings from the consultation:

- In general, the current RSE programme is seen to be working (while it may need some updating it has the buy in of parents and schools);
- CPSMA was disturbed by the low level of awareness amongst principals and teachers of the review and the opportunity to engage with the consultation
- There is a value for external providers to handle some aspects of the programme in some schools as this encourages children to ask questions they might not ask of their class teacher;
- Principals value a measure of flexibility in delivering the programme which allows them to tailor it to the age and maturity of their pupils. A one size fits all model is not desirable or practical;
- There was a strong sense that schools based programmes will not address all of the issues facing children – for example mobile phone usage is a matter for parents - but parents need support and advice on many of these emerging issues.
- The main weakness identified in the current programme was the lack of effective CPD for teachers in this area.

Furthermore, despite the sensitive nature of the material covered in RSE it does not generate calls to CPSMA's query line. In general, any issues generated are dealt with at a local level between the school and parents without the need for outside intervention.

It should also be pointed out concerns about CPD are not confined to the RSE programme but are evident in discussions regarding Aister, and the New Language Curriculum. There is a general sense that insufficient training is provided to support changes to the curriculum.

As the 2009 DES Inspectorate report noted the RSE programme is being implemented in the majority of schools. There were a number of features that facilitated implementation. These included agreement on a whole programme and the associated language that was to be used. Also important, was the circulation of the school's sex education programme to parents prior to the more sensitive lessons being taught. The Inspectorate report did note difficulties with full implementation in a minority of schools, but given the lack of investment in appropriate CPD this is hardly surprising.

### **Some Observations on the NCCA Research Paper – Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Primary and Post Primary Irish Schools**

CPSMA would have some concerns regarding the research paper as presented by the NCCA.

For example the paper is dismissive of abstinence only programmes but fails to offer the same level of interrogation to the Comprehensive Sexuality or Holistic Sexuality Education Approach.

In point of fact, Comprehensive Sexuality Programmes do not seem to be noticeably more effective than abstinence programmes.

A 2017<sup>2</sup> article in Psychology Today noted that American Journal of Public Health had published a supplement devoted entirely to evaluations of non-abstinence-only teen pregnancy prevention programs around the United States. The 15 studies evaluated roll-outs of programs that had appeared promising in previous pilot studies. The results were, at best, disappointing:

- Only two (13%) showed any decrease in teen sex or pregnancies—and those decreases were small, on the order of 2%.
- Two more (13%) showed equivocal results—no fewer pregnancies among white and African-American teens, but a slight decrease among Hispanic teens.
- Eleven (74%) showed that comprehensive sex education programs have no impact on teen sex, pregnancies, or STIs.

The two studies that showed a slight decrease in pregnancies in some teens:

- University of Louisville scientists evaluated a sex education program that enrolled 1,448 teens in 23 community-based programs in Louisville (e.g. Boys and Girls Clubs). After six months, participants were slightly less likely to have sex and slightly more likely to use birth control.
- A researcher at California Baptist University in Riverside compared pregnancies among teens in six school districts across Southern California—2,483 who took a comprehensive sex education class versus 1,784 who did not. Participants showed slight behaviour changes—intercourse delayed a few months and a bit greater likelihood of using birth control.

The two studies that showed equivocal results:

- Boston researchers evaluated a three-year teen pregnancy prevention program taught to 1,344 middle-school youth around Massachusetts. It had no impact on teen sex or pregnancies, except in Hispanic girls, who showed a slight decrease.
- University of Colorado researchers assessed the effectiveness of a text-message-based pregnancy prevention program on 852 members of eight Boys and Girls Clubs around

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/all-about-sex/201703/teen-pregnancies-fall-school-sex-ed-doesn-t-work-huh>

Denver. After four years, there were no significant differences, except among Hispanic youth, whose pregnancies dropped 2 percent.

And the 11 studies that showed no benefit:

- Cambridge, Massachusetts, researchers evaluated a 12-month program attended by 1,808 teen girls at sites across Minnesota, Tennessee, and Florida. It had no effect on their sexual activity.
- The same researchers tracked 12-month outcomes among 2,689 high school students in 150 sex education classes in St. Louis, Missouri; Austin, Texas; and San Diego, California. Compared with youths who did not participate, the program "was unsuccessful in changing sexual behaviour."
- The Cambridge group also evaluated a six-month sex education class aimed specifically at Hispanic youth—2,169 Latino teens who did or did not participate at schools across Arizona, California, and Massachusetts. Participants became more knowledgeable about STIs and birth control, but "these changes did not translate to improvements in teens' reported sexual risk behaviours."
- South Carolina researchers recruited 3,143 teens in 24 schools across the state who either did or did not participate in a comprehensive sex education program. After one year, the program showed no benefit.
- New Orleans researchers compared outcomes among teens who either did or did not participate in a sex education program over three summers as part of a jobs program. "We found no statistically significant difference in self-reported frequency of sex or condom use."
- University of Texas researchers enrolled 1,437 Texas high school students in a pregnancy prevention program. After three school years, compared with controls who did not participate, there were "no differences in pregnancy rates."
- Hawaii scientists surveyed the sexual knowledge and behaviour of 2,203 students at 36 middle schools across Hawaii and then presented a culturally sensitive sex education program. After 12 months, students knew more, but the knowledge "did not lead to detectable changes in behaviour."
- Princeton researchers presented a sex education class at seven Chicago middle schools but not at seven others. After one school year, students who received the program knew more about STIs and contraception, but the two groups did not differ in sexual behaviour.

- University of Chicago researchers presented a pregnancy prevention program to 1,455 students at 14 Indiana high schools. After a year, “no statistically significant differences were observed for reported sexual intercourse.”
- Scientists in Louisiana and Rochester, New York, the compared pregnancy rates of 5,739 teens who did or did not participate in a comprehensive sex education class. “We found no differences between the intervention and control youths on delay of sexual onset.”
- Finally, the largest study: Researchers around the country analysed the Teen Outreach Program (TOP), one of the nation’s most popular teen pregnancy prevention efforts. They tracked 35,000 teens at 193 high schools in 190 cities in 35 states. After two years, “there was little evidence of effectiveness in reducing teen sexual risk-taking.”

The two studies that showed equivocal results produced benefits so scant that, for all practical purposes, they must be considered failures. The author notes that these two studies show that comprehensive teen sex education classes produce a slight decrease in teen sex and pregnancies (13% of trials), and 13 that show no persuasive benefit (87%).

Nor is this lack of success confined to the US. The author of a 2016 Cochrane Systematic Review<sup>3</sup> the first review of its kind to look at measurable biological outcomes, researchers studied eight trials involving more than 55,000 participants from sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Europe stated;

*“As they are currently designed, sex education programmes alone probably have no effect on the number of young people infected with HIV, other STIs or the number of pregnancies,”*<sup>4</sup>

Given the notable lack of impact of Comprehensive Sex Education on young people’s sexual behaviour one might be forgiven for a degree of caution regarding Holistic Sexual Education which is as yet a relatively new and untested concept.

The paper also does not seem to acknowledge that there might be a value in delaying the onset of sexual activity for young people or the importance of positioning sex within the context of a long term meaningful relationship.

This poses the interesting and relevant question how will we measure the success of any new or revised RSE programme.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD006417.pub3/full>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2016/research/sex-education-review/>

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

CPSMA welcomes both the review of the RSE and the opportunity to make a submission on the review to the NCCA.

CPSMA does not believe that school ethos is a barrier to the delivery of effective RSE programmes nor has any evidence being presented to suggest that it is.

In fact, CPSMA would contend that the strong community values of Catholic Primary Schools are a positive support to the delivery of an effective programme. Furthermore, the emphasis in Catholic Primary Schools on the need for the holistic development of the child supports the delivery of an effective RSE programme.

CPSMA believes that broadly speaking the current RSE programme while in need of updating is working and enjoys buy-in from schools and parents.

The greatest challenge for the successful implementation of the current or any new programme is the lack of investment in effective CPD for teachers.

The key to success for any RSE programme is the partnership between parents and schools. Parents are the primary educators of children, and their role and voice must be respected.

The key to that partnership in primary schools is consultation with parents and the clear acknowledgment that the content must be age and stage appropriate and that parents and teachers have a degree of flexibility in the delivery the programme to ensure that it is.

Finally, CPSMA would urge caution around the expectations of what an RSE programme can deliver – no schools based programme can address on its own the many issues now facing young people.

Policymakers should not think, for example, that the ill-effects of the digital revolution can be managed through courses in primary school.

The solution to every social ill is not the creation of a new or a revised course in primary schools, particularly when the resources needed to deliver the course are often inadequate.



Home

**Contributor**  
Cybersmarties Ltd

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Diarmuid
<b>Surname</b>	Hudner
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	CEO
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Cybersmarties Ltd
<b>Date</b>	28/01/2019
<b>Email</b>	

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes  No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

Cybersmarties.com is the First Safe Educational Social Network developed specifically for Primary School children. Through in-built behavioural technology and SMART Negative Content filters, CyberSmarties.com allows kids to use social media in a locked down, supervised and safe environment. It is the first social network to authenticate all children on its system as real children through their school and no adults are allowed on the system. Cybersmarties.com has won numerous awards both nationally and internationally and most recently has been awarded the An Garda Síochána Patent for Safety, which is the first private company in the history of the State to have been awarded the patent. Cybersmarties has co-hosted Anti Bullying Week UK in 2016 and 2017 and were a contributor to the Green Paper on Internet Safety presented by Cybersmarties at Westminster in February 2018. We hold no data on any child and do not know their identity.

Cybersmarties was developed in November 2015 and is headquartered in Limerick, Ireland. It was beta tested on 5000 children in 2016. Following testing, we developed further behavioural technology and launched in January 2017. Currently there are over 80,000 children using Cybersmarties in Ireland.

Cybersmarties.com addresses the critical issue of Cyber-Bullying Education in all its forms by using behavioural technology to educate positive online behaviour. Cyber-bullying is now seen as a 'subtler' form of bullying where a little negative commentary can have maximum impact on the victim.

Currently we have over 80,000 users on our system since January 2017 with a 95.4% reduction in online inappropriate behaviour as a result of wellbeing technology, making it the safest social network for kids. Everything on Cybersmarties is positive and as a result we specialise in how group behaviour reacts and adapts to negative behaviour. We use behavioural technology to instil RPR's (Reflex Positive Responses) so that children react to negative behaviour in a positive manner by automatically reporting the issue, the emotional reason behind it and as importantly, guiding the offender to behave appropriately online. We use UBP's (Unconscious Behavioural Patterns) which means children are unaware that their behaviour is consistently becoming more positive, instilling positive behavioural habits for the future.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Cybersmarties.com currently has over 80,000 users on its platform and monitors through its AI system and monitoring team in excess of 24,000 messages per day. As the system is locked down, safe and operates in and outside of school hours, children feel free to communicate with each other

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openly and thus we see on a daily basis “Live Feed” of the issues affecting children today. From our findings, children at primary school age seem to be greatly affected by the opinions of their parents, siblings, their teachers and their peer group and as their world is more sheltered at this point in their lives. Childrens perception of social rights and wrongs are largely not their own as they have not yet formed the cognitive ability to determine strong personal opinions. Social opinions can range dramatically from one school to the other, from rural to urban schools and from province to province. Equally however, it is the perfect environment to instil positive behavioural habits which we have found with great success with respect to online positive behaviour and positive wellbeing behaviour through our online tools built specifically for this purpose. Our experiences on the platform specifically in relation to Relationships and Sexuality are as follows:

- Childrens friendship circle is quite small with “best friends” generally reduced to a maximum of 3 individuals. Boys seem to maintain these relationships longer and are stronger despite more frequent disputes than girls. Girls “best friend” circles can change more frequently and are a lot more peer related than boys. Girls can be “dropped” from the “best friend circle” a lot faster than boys and for individual girls, this can have a dramatic effect on their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Up to the age of 9, boys and girls seem to display very polarized opinions of each gender with boys considered “smelly, rough” etc by girls and boys tend to ignore girls in general however in social games, both genders can interact positively.
- By the age of 10 and upwards both boys and girls develop more traditional opinions of each other and develop emotions and feelings. Both girls and boys are highly influenced by the opinions of their parents and older siblings and tend to mimic or say words they hear without fully understanding their meaning. Boys especially tend to call other boys negative names such as “gay, homo, lesbian, faggot” without really understanding the meaning of the words, their influence on the recipient and often are said without malice but are not always picked up by the “victim” as such.
- As we monitor group behaviour on our social media platform, we develop intervention tools to create more understanding and acceptance of others. We do this by “leading” the child to a positive cartoon based videos which deals with issues affecting children of their age group such as anxiety, relationships, isolation, fear etc. These short 2 to 3 minute videos have proven to be very effective with individual users returning to the same video whose topic they identify with. We see the advice given in the video replicated in the messages or

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behaviour from there on. Relevant engaging videos have proven to be the best form of education rather than text or verbal based learning as children now seem to use Youtube as a means of acquiring information.

- Group behaviour on social media is largely learnt behaviour. We have found that the more positive posts/news/videos etc we put on the system, the more positive children behave online. Since the vast majority of children of primary school age will not have had access to mainstream social media networks, their perception of how to behave online is largely taught by us which is wholly positive in nature. Cybersmarties is fortunate in that it can cover a very broad range of issues direct to a particular audience and age group as appropriate and we work closely with child psychologists for our content.

We have extensive research conducted in this area and are willing to share our research should you find it useful

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

The greatest challenges for Relationship and Sexuality Education in my opinion is that the information communicated to children is done in a manner which a) is child appropriate b) communicated in a manner which a child of today understands and c) is repeated often so that a behavioural habit is instilled. We have found that traditional means of transferring information to

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children such as through talks or books, though useful, is not how children are learning today. This is an online generation and their offline and online perceptions of themselves and others can be very different. As opinions are often generated through group peer pressure, it is important that the learning mechanism or intervention is carried out with this in mind.

I believe there is a great opportunity to use a platform such as Cybersmarties to deliver relationship and sexuality education direct to children through a medium they understand. It is important that research into the effectiveness of the intervention can be carried out to a large audience quickly and that the statistical evidence collated can be seen “live” and every day. It also allows intervention methods to be tweaked where necessary within 24 hours to ensure that it is effective and again monitor the statistical evidence daily.

Our own research has proven that if early intervention methods are implemented at primary school then they will have long lasting effects into teenage years. Often to try and change an existing opinion or behavioural habit in a teenager is far more difficult than to instil a positive one at an early age.

We would be willing to work with the relevant members of the NCCA in pilot testing Relationship and Sexuality education on our platform based on the work and experience we have already gathered over the last 3 and half years.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

A pilot group would be selected. Content based videos, posts etc would be developed with experts in this area and our own development team. An evaluation team may elect to work with our monitoring team to daily assess the effectiveness of these education tools. This evaluation Team would remain in place for the duration of the pilot scheme. The main IT Team would manage the system and work closely with the Monitoring and Evaluation Team. Consultation in advance of pilot scheme with an education team or team of primary school teachers would be useful in anticipating potential cultural, economic and language issues. The practical steps are:

- Identification of pilot scheme of participating schools and students
- Develop relationship and sexuality pilot curriculum content
- Hire and train evaluation team preferably with education or psychology background

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

- Participating Primary Schools would sign-up to the pilot scheme online to begin the authentication process of students.
- Schools decide whether they want Cybersmarties to operate in their school only or to communicate with other schools
- Cybersmarties issues teachers with username's and passwords which they can distribute to the students in their school. Only teachers hold the data as to which child matches each username. Cybersmarties holds no identification data.
- Children can log in on their mobile, tablet or pc to access Cybersmarties.
- The Evaluation Team has full access to statistical data on a daily basis to evaluate participation and results, liaising closely with the IT Team. This team carries out research on the "live data" gathered from the instant messaging function, video engagement and post engagement of users for analysis

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

We would welcome the opportunity to present a demonstration of how Cybersmarties works to the NCCA and discuss possible means of developing effective and practical intervention tools for Relationship and Sexuality Education.

**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

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Home

**Contributor**  
Diarmuid Fitzgerald

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## *Respondent's details*

<b>Name</b>	Diarmuid
<b>Surname</b>	Fitzgerald
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Learning Support teacher
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
<b>Email</b>	

**Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?**

Personal  Yes Organisation

**Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?**

Primary  Post-primary  Both  Yes

**Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?**

Yes  No

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Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

I am a learning support teacher in a primary school.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

As a classroom teacher I have taught the RSE programme as part of SPHE in the classroom. I have taught the Busy Bodies programme for sex education at 5<sup>th</sup> class level, I have taught RSE at 3<sup>rd</sup> class level in particular about pregnancy, I have taught about the body parts in RSE at a 1<sup>st</sup> class and 2<sup>nd</sup> class level appropriate to the level of the class.

In my experience the RSE programme is lacking proper scientific grounding and takes a narrow biological focus. It does not cover enough of the feelings a person could have in regards to relationships, sexuality and gender identity.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

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There are a number of challenges for educators to implement a proper RSE programme. As the research paper that accompanies this consultation states a holistic sexual education programme should be the basis of RSE.

The main challenge is how to specifically teach a holistic RSE programme that emphasis a positive role for sex and sexuality in schools. Teachers would find this challenging to teach about this in a way that is respectful and informative. Many teachers feel poorly trained in this area and some might object about teaching RSE and may consider it a parental matter and not a school matter.

The next major challenge is the ethos of schools in particular the Catholic ethos of school. Since 92% of primary schools and 52% of secondary schools are Catholic they follow in theory a very narrow programme regarding RSE. The Catholic Church objects to things such as contraception, LGBTI sexuality and has a very narrow view on sexual relationships. This view is not supported by modern science and by fact based evidence. Most people in modern society ignore the Catholic churches views on sexuality. However due to the mismatch between patronage and modern society many schools are left with an out of date RSE programme that reflects the narrow Catholic church ethos. The current RSE is not reflective of modern society today.

Another challenge are parents especially those who are conservative in mind-set. In my school 75% of the children are EAL and the parents tend to be conservative on matters such as contraception, LGBTI sexuality and sex education in general. It would be difficult to persuade them the importance of a more modern and inclusive programme RSE.

Another challenge and I believe this is common to all schools is the area of online bullying and social media. Many parents, businesses, schools and other institutions struggle with this. There is a need for a very comprehensive programme in this area with extensive training. Parents are the ones to lead in this area but they require a lot of support in this area. We should seek to develop our own programmes to deal with social media and online bullying. This goes well beyond the scope of a school to deal with this one.

There are opportunities here as well. First of all any RSE programme needs to be fact based and holistic in its view. It should emphasis more about feelings, identity and relationships at its core. It should not be narrowly focused on the biological aspects of sex, thought that is important in itself. A new RSE should cover contraception. It should have consent at the corner stone of a healthy sexuality. Ireland could follow the Dutch model of sexual education which begins at the age of 5 and is science lead and fact based. Due to the success of the Dutch model teenage pregnancy is at an all-time low as are rates of abortion in that county. We should seek to emulate their success.

Finally a new RSE should be inclusive of LGBTI people and sexuality. The current RSE programme

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does not include LGBTI people at all. It is very heterosexual in its bias. A new RSE needs to teach about LGBTI sexuality in the classroom and affirm their identities. There needs to be proper training and resources in this area.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

In terms of supports teachers need proper training in RSE. This training should be mandatory for all teachers similar to training around child protection. However the training should be face-to-face as teachers will need to be able to ask clarifying questions and tease out the issues a new RSE programme will bring. No doubt there will be teachers out there who would be opposed to a more inclusive programme but this should not stop it. The PDST could lead the training in this area similar to the training they gave regarding the new language curriculum. Teachers need training on how to explore sexuality, how to teach it in an age appropriate manner, how to teach LGBTI sexuality and how to cover challenging topics in the classroom.

The Department of Education inspectors need to have more of a role in RSE. As part of every WSE and incidental the inspectorate should be asking if a school is actually implementing a new RSE programme in full and that there is evidence to back up that all areas of the RSE have been taught. If a school falls short in its RSE provision then this should be reported in the public WSE and incidental reports.

There needs to be more resources for schools. The INTO LGBT Teachers' Group created the Different Families, Same Love poster and lessons to introduce diverse family types into the school. This poster should be Department of Education funded with their logo. There needs to be more resources like the Walk Tall programme and handbook, which is a very good programme though it is a little dated. The Department should issue every teacher with a similar handbook to the Walk Tall book on sexuality for every teacher at a primary and post-primary level. The PSDT and the TES should create more resources or have them created for them on their behalf.

There is also the issue of the timetable. SPHE and RSE are competing with other subjects in an overloaded curriculum. There is the allotted 30 minutes a week for SPHE but that is not enough time to cover every aspect of the RSE programme not to mind the entire SPHE programme. I believe that the time given to Religion should be reduced so that more time is given to a new RSE programme.

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**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

The new RSE programme should be underpinned with legislation so that schools are clear that they have a legal obligation to teach an inclusive fact based sexual education programme. At the moment there is a bill before the Dáil Éireann, the Provision of Objective Sex Education Bill 2018. Hopefully this bill will pass. Such legislation would make it clear that a school's religious ethos cannot be used as a barrier to a modern and inclusive RSE programme.

All schools should be required to teach evidence based sex education that is inclusive of all sexuality especially LGBTI sexualities and no school should have the right to opt out or refuse to do so. Penalties should be attached to any school that refused to implement in full any fact based and inclusive RSE.

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Home

**Contributor**  
Diocese of Elphin

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

## Review

### *Respondent's details*

<b>Name</b>	Kevin
<b>Surname</b>	Doran
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Bishop
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Diocese of Elphin
<b>Date</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
<b>Email</b>	

**Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?**

Personal  Organisation

**Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?**

Primary  Post-primary  Both

**Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?**

Yes  No

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**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

The RC Diocese of Elphin covers much of Co. Sligo and most of Co. Roscommon, with some parishes in Co. Galway as well as West Athlone which, though geographically in Roscommon, is administratively in Westmeath. There are thirty seven parishes in the Diocese and the Catholic population is just under 90,000. There are 112 parish primary schools under the patronage of the bishop. There are fifteen second level schools (of which three are under the direct patronage of the bishop and five more under the patronage of other Catholic trusts).

The Diocese provides significant professional support for school management, for school principals, for primary teachers as well as for RE teachers and chaplains at second level.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

While RSE is not a part of Religious Education, it would be true to say that our Religious Education curriculum and programmes contribute significantly to an integrated understanding of relationships. Matters such as consent, mutual respect (including respect for physical space and emotional space), family relationships, mutual care and the avoidance of bullying are just some of the elements of RSE which, in addition to more specific Church teaching on matters of sexuality, form part of the RE curriculum.

As various NCCA documents, DES Circulars and Church guidelines all indicate, the RSE policy, which guides the approach to RSE in the school, must be rooted in the characteristic spirit (or ethos) of the school. This is not about defining people. Rather it is a statement of who we are as a school community. Catholic Schools actively promote inclusivity and, as the statistics show, welcome children from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds. Inclusion in the Classroom was the subject of an important position paper published by the Catholic Schools Partnership in 2015.

The Diocese takes seriously the responsibility of ensuring that school boards understand their responsibility to have an RSE policy in place and to oversee its implementation. Discussion of RSE forms part of our periodic training of school management personnel. Our understanding of the

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human person and of the meaning of human sexuality is appropriately reflected, not only in the manner in which Relationships and Sexuality Education is taught, but in the way in which positive respectful relationships are promoted in every aspect of the life of the school.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Our view, in general, is that Relationships and Sexuality Education must be factual while at the same time value based. A significant element of learning and of supporting the growth of a capacity for informed decision making is the development of coherent values and attitudes about relationships and sexuality.

**Consent:** Consent is an expression of subjectivity and where the need for consent is ignored, people are objectified. Equally, of course, consent does not always mean that actions are appropriate or risk free. We agree that young adults should be taught specifically about the importance of consent in relation to physical sexual acts. They should be helped to understand that consent cannot be assumed. They will also need to be aware that indications of consent or lack of consent are not always as clearly understood as might be expected, given the highly sexualised nature of our culture. Intimacy is the capacity to engage in close relationships which appropriately respect boundaries. Personal space is a concept that needs to be understood.

We would point out, however, that consent is an important dimension of relationship in all its aspects and should never be assumed to refer only to physical sexual acts. Education in seeking and giving consent should begin with the ordinary everyday activities of childhood.

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**Developments in Contraception:** Young people need to know clearly how pregnancy occurs and to understand how the possibility of becoming pregnant can be increased or reduced. While recognising the reality of sexual activity outside of committed relationships, our priority is to promote faithful, respectful and committed relationships. Family planning has its place within such relationships. We prefer to speak in terms of family planning, because within the Catholic ethos, conception and childbirth are seen as positives rather than negatives.

**The Safe Use of the Internet:** The Internet, like so many good things, is open to abuse. Its safe use depends to some extent on the age of the user. Nonetheless, we are conscious of the rise in levels of addiction to pornography among the adult population, which seem to be related to the relative (or apparent) anonymity of the internet. The use and abuse of the internet needs to be presented in terms of respect, both for others and for oneself.

**Social Media:** Our comments here flow naturally enough from the previous heading. The word “virtual” can be misleading. Young people need to understand that real people are victims of pornography (including child pornography) as well as stereo-typing and bullying via social media. While the safe use of the internet is a concern in the area of relationships and sexuality, it extends to a much wider field. It can be greatly assisted by the formation of healthy habits in childhood and this is an area in which cooperation between home and school is crucial.

**LGBTQ+ Matters:** No young person should ever be picked out, bullied or in any way made to feel less loved and respected at school because of his or her sexual orientation / identity. In keeping with our ethos, Catholic schools present RSE in a manner which reflects the Christian vision of sexuality and this includes recognising that there are men and women who experience same-sex attraction. We distinguish between feelings (which are amoral) and actions (which do have moral content). We recognise that it can be challenging for teachers, as it is for parents, to achieve the appropriate balance. We would want teachers in our schools, to communicate, in word and by example, that the Church, far from judging people because of their same-sex attraction, cherishes and respects them as sons and daughters of God.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

**Consent:** Our Diocesan policy on education in Catholic Schools, as articulated in the pastoral letter of Bishop Kevin Doran, “*A Future Full of Hope*” (2014) envisages the school as acting in support of parents who are the primary and natural educators of their children. This policy is consistent with the rights of parents as expressed in Article 42.1 of *Bunreacht na hEireann*. One aspect of modelling consent is that, especially in an area such as sexuality which relates to the humanity of the child at

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a profound level, there should be put in place appropriate structures for consulting with parents regarding the nature and content of RSE.

**Electronic Media:** Electronic media are more widely used in our classrooms today and can often be very helpful in expanding the resources available to the teacher. When it comes to RSE, electronic media may be very effective in teaching facts, but we are conscious that facts are never taught in a context that is entirely value free – nor should they be. When it comes to the presentation of values, the teacher is crucial, both in choosing resources and in teaching around them. We believe that, RSE teachers, who may or may not also be teachers of RE, as part of their preparation for teaching RSE, need to be formed to understand the ethos of the school specifically in relation to questions which arise in RSE.

**Internet:** As mentioned above, we would suggest that a review of RSE would make specific provision for the development of a shared approach to the management of internet use between the home and the school.

**LGBTQ+ Questions:** It is our view that, in the area of LGBTQ, but also in the wider area of sexuality generally, schools may be challenged to offer support to young people if, as a result of matters raised in RSE, they have questions or anxieties of a personal nature. This could equally be the case in other subject areas, but relationships and sexuality do touch on the very core of our being.

As we have said above, the parents are the primary educators. However, once the school becomes involved in opening up questions, then the school would appear to have a responsibility for contributing to the pastoral care of individuals who may be affected by what they have seen and heard. It would be important to clarify whose responsibility this is and how they might be formed to carry out that responsibility.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

We appreciate the opportunity to feed into this dialogue on the basis of our long-established partnership with the civil authority in the service of parents and their children.

Our understanding is that the Bishop, as Patron, is the guarantor of the ethos or characteristic spirit of the Catholic school, on behalf of parents who have chosen to send their children to those schools. It is a ministry of service rather than of imposition. It follows that, if the majority of parents in a particular school no longer wished the school to operate according to a Catholic Ethos, then it would cease to be a Catholic School.

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The Diocese of Elphin would, however, be very concerned at any attempt to unilaterally impose an approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education, which would not be consistent with the ethos of the school. Such an attempt would show scant regard for the rights of parents and children, or indeed, of teachers.

We believe that parents should be periodically briefed about Relationship and Sexuality Education.

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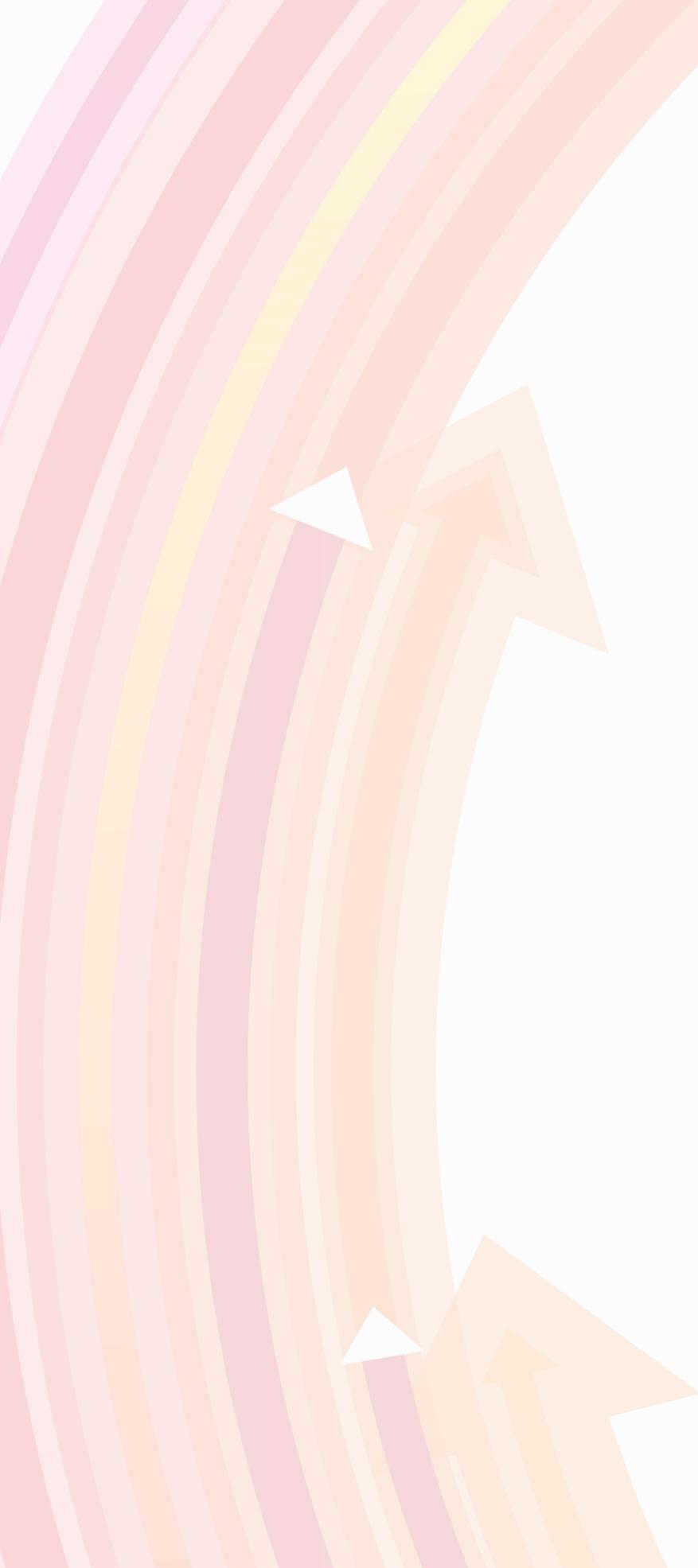
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**Contributor**  
Dr Ciara Kelly

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondents details

Name	Ciara
Surname	Kelly
Position (if applicable)	Doctor and Broadcaster
Organisation (if applicable)	Newstalk FM
Date	30/01/2019
Email	[REDACTED]

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal

Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary

Post-primary

Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes

No

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).

I am a GP with 17 years experience of working with children, adolescents and young adults as a GP and dealing with all kinds of issues related to relationships and sexual health.

I now work as a broadcaster on a national radio show that highlights social issues.

And i believe that sex education is something that we are not getting right and that needs to be reformed

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I have spoken extensively to young people about their sexual health and treated them for STIs, unplanned pregnancies, contraception etc and I think they are woefully ill informed.

RSE should be seen as an opportunity to properly inform our young people for what lies ahead, and for what they may be experiencing right now.

The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I think the challenges are in overcoming our own prudishness and squeamishness.

There is no mention of pornography there just a vague allusion to the internet ... but porn is something that almost every primary school boy has seen by the time he graduates 6th class

We need to be bolder in how we speak to kids about the issue.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

We need to remove religious ethos influence from RSE curriculum.

We need RSE to be mandatory so schools have to deliver it.

We need teachers properly trained to deliver it.

The curriculum needs to focus on what kids are actually doing and seeing not focussed on what we'd like them to be seeing and doing

We also need to talk openly about sex, and how it is a pleasurable experience - not something we need to be at all prudish about. Talk about orgasms. Talk about the mechanics of sex. It's not something to be ashamed of

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

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Home

**Contributor**  
Dr Sarah Jane Fynn

**From:** Sara Jane Flynn [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday 20 September 2018 15:53  
**To:** info  
**Subject:** RSE review

To whom it may concern

Following a tweet by Moninne Griffith on September 11th stating that questions of views may be submitted regarding the review of the RSE module in school, I wish to submit the following.

I refer to the review of the Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE) module which was announced by Minister Richard Bruton on April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018. I am a chartered educational psychologist and the views stated here are mine alone and do not represent any governmental body, agency or policy.

The decision to review this module, its content, support materials and delivery is commendable and timely considering the introduction and initial establishment of RSE in 1997, but also because it reflects the inclusive and contemporary society that Ireland now is and the environment our society is creating for our up and coming generations. In the past five years we have embraced and recognised homosexual love and commitment and chosen to allow women control and rights to their own bodies. Both these issues have connections to relationships and sex and now we have an opportunity to create RSE content and deliver it in a manner which will give our children and teenagers the knowledge and skills to manage their personal life experiences which will encompass these above –mentioned rights and a myriad of other intimate engagements.

In my opinion, there is a need for a broad range of factual information relating to the mechanics of sexual intercourse, the biology of reproduction and contraception and these should form core content in the updated RSE module. Consent is the buzz word of the moment but careful consideration of the factors that influence an individual's ability to ask for and give consent is necessary. A major influencer on a teenagers and children's ability to do this is their exposure to, and ability to critically analyse, internet accessed pornography. I mention children because research suggests that our children are now being fed sexually explicit material with the average age of a child seeing pornography being 9. Following on, the average of a child (most commonly males) actively seeking it is 11. It's shocking to think of our little 9, 10 and 11 years olds seeing this content. Shocking for us, but scary, confusing and simultaneously exciting for them. At such a young age, many will have no prior intellectual knowledge of what sex is, and consequently no emotional skills to deal with the material they are seeing. We are already seeing "unusual" sexualised behaviour here in Ireland in our early teens such as the rape list in a Mallow school (April 2018) and the murder of young Ana Kreigle (May 2018) being explored for sexual motive with the accused being a 13 year old boy.

Statistics suggest that in 2015, Pornhub, one of the top 50 most viewed websites worldwide, that Ireland was 4<sup>th</sup> in the world with per capita page views. (Which country info, 2015)  
In many cases, pornography is educating our youth about sex and relationships and we should be aiming to allow for discussion of the meaning and relevance of what they see to reality and actual sex and relationships. In a culture where we don't talk about sex, permission or consent openly, porn and media present youth with common "scripts" for how to behave in unfamiliar situations such as romantic relationships. Research shows that these pornographic "scripts" lead to males expressing that they felt insecure about their ability to perform sexually, while females expressed insecurities about their physical appearances (Martenson & Mansson, 2010). Both of these issues can lead to poor self-esteem and issues with overall wellbeing.

Without discussion and mentoring around these and related topics, we are knowingly allowing children and young teens to access direct lessons from pornography. They are not sophisticated enough to differentiate fantasy from reality, to filter the graphic images they see and they have no concept for irony or exaggeration. They learn that sex is divorced from relationships (Paul in Stoner & Hughes(2011), the opposite to what we want them to learn and understand.

The degradation of women is overtly portrayed and celebrated in the majority of internet pornographic videos. What we are seeing in our society is a misogynistic vernacular that is used in an overly familiar manner, as was evident in the casual degrading conversations that the accused and their male friends in the Belfast rape case engaged in. Increasingly more violent sexual attacks on women are being reported to the Rape Crisis Centre. Both of these themes are ubiquitous in Pornography. Some research suggests that mainstream pornography is a gateway to child pornography (Dines, 2010).

Enda Kenny, while Taoiseach in 2016, wisely stated that we need to have a national discussion about pornography. The heading in the newspaper article was "We need to talk about porn". This is the collective WE. If we talk about it, we empower our youth to critically analyse pornography and understand what it is (fantasy, acting, degrading, encouraging human trafficking and violence towards women) and what it is not ( part of a loving relationship, reality, representative of the how the majority of females think about sex).

As schools are regularly outsourcing the teaching of RSE (Maycock *et al.* 2007) to unregulated agencies (Vries, 2009), this practice suggests a discomfort by teachers at having to address this content with their students (Maycock *et al.* 2007; Vries, 2009;). When asked, some Irish students commented that RSE is selectively addressed by classroom teachers and the topic of sex seen as taboo by teachers (Maycock *et al.* 2007). The teacher-student relationship is one generally based on authority and respect and consequently it is difficult for either party to set aside this dynamic for intermittent periods to discuss intimate aspects of human relationships. Although the majority of RSE literature explicitly requires teachers to make a distinctive shift in teaching methods from that of the teacher as instructor to teacher as facilitator, the reality of this happening is questionable and has been shown in official reports (OFSTED , 2005) and Irish based studies (Maycock *et al.* 2007; Vries, 2009) to be unrealistic. This is the culture at present and must not be disregarded when thinking about the most appropriate individuals for delivering this material. The heavy, somewhat sensitive nature of the content needs to be facilitated by individuals comfortable with the topics, who have innovative and creative facilitation skills, who can impart and elicit information in a factual yet informal manner, who allow students to identify with and hear what is being communicated, but also to ask questions. The skills base of the facilitators should allow for opinions and questions to be gathered in an anonymous manner and then discussed as a group. Peer educators have been found to espouse these above described qualities (Forrest *et al.*, 2002) and lead to increased student satisfaction and acceptability over teacher-led programmes. Materials used should include online resources such as the videos on web wise relating to sexting, models of the body for communicating mechanics and games for gathering opinions and generating discussion. These mediums are what teens like, and appeal to all learning styles. The informal nature of the module delivery is key to allow students to engage. The discussion format is key for this content delivery, due to the entirely subjective experience that relationships are for each and every individual. Lecturing young people on a prototype relationship forces those who have not had positive relationships models to become further isolated and breeds shame. In the age of the blended family, relationships need to be explored in an open and discursive manner. The Foróige REAL U programme addresses many of the above mentioned areas in an informal and fun manner.

Once children and young people have access to the internet, pornography has access to them. I am strongly in favour of the updated RSE module including relevant material on safe use of the internet but strongly opposed to parents having the choice to opt their children out of attending the classes. It is unclear to me why parents can choose to disempower their children by not allowing them access RSE content, yet the study of the Irish language in mainstream school, which has little implication for their overall wellbeing, is so closely policed by The Department. By giving them access to screens, parents are giving their children access to sexual content. If they can also choose to remove the child's access to standardised information on these topics, then this allowance considers the wellbeing of the parent, but not the wellbeing of the child. For the parents who don't give access to screens to avoid this exposure, their attempts are futile once their children leave their sides and spend time with their friends whose parents may not have been so vigilant and they watch internet content together.

The announcement on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018 by the Law Commission of the possible reform of law related to rape which would require an individual to ensure a sexual partner has consented would require young people to realise that the images they see in internet pornography are not representative of how consent is sought in reality, yet if this is how young people are receiving much of their sex education their level of "honest belief" is questionable (Keena, 2018).

The minister stated in his announcement of this RSE review that he wants a module that is fit for purpose and meets the needs of young people today in modern Ireland. The systems and bodies that have been used to date to instruct our nation about sex and relationships have succeeded by ensuring that the population was instructed as opposed to guided on what they should do, and that shame was an integral part of this education. That ethos is outdated, and if we truly wish to empower and bolster the overall wellbeing of those who we have been entrusted to care for and educate, let's be wise and address the hard issues.

Do you have children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews?...if so,... this article is about them and their safety...whether you choose to believe that is the case, or not.

Dr. Sara Jane Flynn CPsychol



Home

**Contributor**  
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

# Relationships and Sexuality (RSE)\* Review

## Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Noeline
<b>Surname</b>	Blackwell
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	CEO
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
<b>Date</b>	December 20 <sup>th</sup> 2018
<b>Email</b>	

Is this response a personal view or made on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including the cover page\*?

Yes  No

\*By ticking this box you consent to the NCCA to publish the submission online including the details submitted on the cover page, in line with GDPR regulations. For more information please see our privacy statement at [www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement](http://www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement)

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable)**

The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC) is a non-governmental organisation which aims to prevent the harm and heal the trauma of rape and sexual abuse in Ireland. We have provided crisis counselling and long-term therapy services to adult women and men who have experienced rape, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse and have provided our expertise and experience for policy and advocacy purposes for almost 40 years. Our services include a national 24-hour helpline, one-to-one counselling and support and accompaniment services for those reporting to An Garda Síochána or attending court. We make policy interventions and carry out public awareness campaigns to prevent sexual violence. Our training programmes include *BodyRight* developed by the DRCC, aimed at teachers, Youthreach staff, youth workers and those working with young people in alternative education settings, to raise awareness about sexual violence among young people and to assist in its prevention. We also deliver training to many agencies and individuals who encounter the impact of sexual violence on those with whom they work. We work directly with students in universities and through school talks.

**What are you or your organisation's experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

In our work in Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, we see the often life-long consequences of the trauma and harm caused by sexual violence of all kinds. We also know from our experience that much of this harm is caused by people's lack of knowledge and capacity to cope with their society. This is particularly true for children and young people of every gender.

In 2007, we received funding from the Department of Justice to allow us develop and deliver a pilot Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Programme. The ideas and contributions from the young people who took part in the focus groups influenced the design, content and methodology of the programme. Further funding from Cosc, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence enabled us to develop the *BodyRight* programme further.

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The *BodyRight* programme is not intended as a standalone programme but should be integrated into an already existing social, personal, health, relationships and sexuality programme. The aims of the *BodyRight* programme include:

- To increase awareness of the importance of respecting other people and their integrity including physical integrity;
- To develop an understanding of what is meant by sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexualised bullying;
- To provide information on the law on sexual violence in Ireland;
- To consider the meaning of consent to a sexual act, and the importance of all sexual activity being consensual;
- To increase awareness of the impact and consequences of sexual violence;
- To introduce young people to mindful self awareness as a tool to understand and manage their own experience;
- To increase the ability of young people to protect themselves and to avoid harming others by developing their awareness and capacity to resource themselves;
- To change attitudes that lead to sexual violence and compound its impact through increased self awareness and self reflection;
- To raise awareness among young people of the potential harm of some of the behaviours of themselves or their peers, and their ability to question and challenge these.

DRCC provides a 4-day training for school and youth work staff to equip them to facilitate the programme with young people. We have trained in excess of 550 facilitators to date.

The DRCC also contributed to the process whereby the Manuela Riedo Foundation with the collaboration of 16 Rape Crisis Centres developed the Manuela Programme for use in transition year in schools. The DRCC is one of four RCC's hosting a project worker who will pilot the programme over the next two years in collaboration with Túsla.

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Please make your submission to [RSEReview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEReview@ncca.ie)

**The Minister of Education has requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Consent Opportunities:

- Education about consent is essential for building healthy and respectful relationships and shouldn't be limited to just consenting to sexual activity;
- It's vital that children and young people know about their rights and that nothing should happen to them without their consent;
- Children and young people have a right to learn about bodily autonomy, their rights, and how to respect the rights of others;
- Younger children can learn about trust, respect and communication and then these ideas could be tied into a greater understanding and awareness of sexual consent as young people progress through the education system;
- But where it does relate to sexual activity it is important for young people to know and understand that even if they consent to a sexual act, they are absolutely free to change your mind before the activity or at any time before it ends.

Consent Challenges:

- How much consideration is given to the cultural and/or faith dimension of the setting in which the programme is being delivered;
- Parental and Board of Management support and co-operation;
- Appropriate timetabling of RSE within the curriculum;
- Buy-in and engagement from teachers;
- Adequate initial and ongoing training for teachers;
- The availability of up-to-date, accessible, age appropriate resources.

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#### Contraception Opportunities:

- Decisions that young people make can impact their health and well-being for the rest of their lives;
- They have the right to lead healthy lives and the education curriculum has a part to play in preparing young people by providing them with comprehensive sexual health education that gives them the tools they need to make these decisions;
- It is not enough to include discussions about abstinence and/or contraception to help them avoid unintended pregnancy or disease, they also need to be provided with fact based, age-appropriate information which allows them take personal responsibility for their health and wellbeing.

#### Contraception Challenges:

- How much consideration is given to the cultural and/or faith dimension of the setting in which the programme is being delivered;
- Parental and Board of Management support and co-operation;
- Appropriate timetabling of RSE within the curriculum;
- Buy-in and engagement from teachers;
- Adequate initial and ongoing training for teachers;
- The availability of up-to-date, accessible, age appropriate resources.

#### Healthy, Positive Sexual Expression and Relationships Opportunities:

- A well thought out, age appropriate relationship and sexuality education programme should provide young people with an opportunity to explore and develop positive beliefs and values around sex and reproductive health;
- Any relationship and sexuality education should be based not just on biological facts around sex but one that also provides an opportunity to put forward the positive aspects of intimate relationships which are based on equality and mutual respect;
- Young people's participation in a relationship and sexuality education programme should empower them to take responsibility for their own decision-making and behaviours and how their choices can affect and impact on others;

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- The last comprehensive prevalence study: the Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) Report found that one in four adults experience sexual violence in their lifetime<sup>1</sup>. In light of this knowledge the RSE programme needs to aim concretely and specifically to prevent future generations from having similar negative experiences. Thus, an understanding of sexual abuse and violence, explaining what it is, how to recognise it and what to do about it, including how to access support, should be integrated into the programme;
- Ultimately, a relationship and sexuality education programme that covers sexual health and risks, as well as teaching children and young people about consent and understanding boundaries, what a healthy relationship looks like and how to stay safe in the real world and online, will ensure they have a good foundation of knowledge on which to make informed decisions.

#### Healthy, Positive Sexual Expression and Relationships Opportunities:

- How much consideration is given to the cultural and/or faith dimension of the setting in which the programme is being delivered;
- Parental and Board of Management support and co-operation;
- Appropriate timetabling of RSE within the curriculum;
- Buy-in and engagement from teachers;
- Adequate initial and ongoing training for teachers;
- The availability of up-to-date, accessible, age appropriate resources.

#### Safe use of the internet Opportunities and Challenges:

- New digital technologies and widespread internet access has shaped the ways in which young people learn about many things including sex, and can pose new and different risks for them;

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<sup>1</sup> The SAVI Report (2002) *Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland* Hannah McGee, Rebecca Garavan, Mairéad de Barra, Joanne Byrne and Ronán Conroy. <http://www.drcc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/savi.pdf>

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- The role that education plays in online safety can complement the role that parents play in informing and protecting children and young people and vice versa,
- One of the benefits to including education which guides the safe and responsible use of the internet is that it both highlights the benefits that can be derived from the internet but it also prepares children and young people for the potential risks and threats;
  - Children and young people can get enormous benefit from the internet in terms of browsing information, sometimes for study, other times to socialise and playing games;
  - But all too quickly and easily those environments can become unsafe when they are misused by others so it is really important that children and young people are aware of this so that they can keep themselves safe online.

Social Media and its Effects on Relationships and Self-esteem Opportunities and Challenges:

- Widespread internet access has transformed the way children and young people communicate with each other on smart phones in particular;
- One of the challenges is that the online contacts of many young people tend to expand rapidly and often without much filtering. But again the opportunity of including social media is that it presents the opportunity to raise awareness and understanding about the use of the privacy and security settings on the sites they use;
- Another way in which children and young people communicate is by sexting: the sending of sexual photos, messages, videos. While sharing such images might appear harmless to some young people, sexting can have serious social and legal consequences and the importance of knowing about those consequences cannot be underestimated;
- Raising awareness and understanding is key to not only influencing young people's attitudes and values to prevent potentially harmful behaviour but it can also diminish the likelihood of their well-being and self-esteem being undermined.

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In addition to the main BodyRight programme the DRCC also developed an additional sexting module, piloted by a number of our BodyRight facilitators. Their feedback has shown that the module works really well in raising the issue with young people and allowing them to consider the impact of how, once a picture has been sent they cannot be sure where it may end up. Worrying feedback that arose was how children as young as 11 and 12 years of age are sexting which highlights the need for those in our primary schools to know why and how important it is, to stay safe online. The module has also been used to raise awareness among parents and school staff.

Psychologically and emotionally, sexting can take its toll on children and young people. Once the image has been shared, things can quickly spiral out of control -

- the young person may no longer know who their picture might have been forwarded to;
- the not knowing, the not being in control of the situation can leave them feeling completely overwhelmed;
- this in turn can have a detrimental effect on their health and well-being leading to feelings of anxiety, depression, self-harm and in the worst cases – suicide;
- it also increases the risk of victimisation where they can be harassed, intimidated even blackmailed for sending such material - often referred to as ‘sextortion’ or webcam blackmailing. The more accurate terminology being referred as online sexual coercion and extortion of children<sup>2</sup>.

From researching the sexting module, we are aware of some excellent resources that are available including Webwise<sup>3</sup>, and Say No! (Ireland) - A campaign against online sexual coercion and extortion of children<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/crime-areas/child-sexual-exploitation/online-sexual-coercion-and-extortion-of-children>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.webwise.ie/lockers/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6o2Ygv-zpk>

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Sex creates curiosity, which leads to exploration. Many young people are learning about sex through the medium of pornography, which can really compromise their ability to manage intimate sexual relationships. Notwithstanding their ability to effectively use online technologies, children and young people still need protection from content that can harm their development. Viewing pornographic material can skew their view of acceptable behaviour at a crucial time of development-

- being exposed to pornography can impact on a young person's development of their own sexuality and sexual identity;
- the person being viewed is portrayed only as a sexual object;
- in the mind of the young person that object can sexually arouse them;
- it can also lead to unrealistic expectations and compromise the young person's understanding of consent because pornography doesn't give a clear message about the necessity of consent, the result of which is that they end up confused and/or misinformed about the importance of this issue;
- Young people need to be educated to be critical and informed consumers of online content including gendered and sexualised advertising and media and pornography.

Bringing us right back to the significance of providing age-appropriate sex and relationship education in schools, dealing with issues including online pornography and sexting so that young people have the information they need to keep themselves safer online. Pornography is a poor and potentially harmful sex educator.

LGBTQ+ matters Opportunities:

- One of the key messages from the youth consultation process of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy<sup>5</sup> was the importance of LGBTI+ inclusive education.
- Every young person needs to feel accepted, understood and included and providing all young people with inclusive relationship and sexuality education is a key way to do it;

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<sup>5</sup> LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 LGBTI+ young people: visible, valued and included. Department of Children and Youth Affairs

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- When a young person sees themselves reflected in what they are learning, it isn't just providing or equipping them with the information they need to make safe and informed decision, it also helps them feel that they belong.

#### LGBTQ+ matters Challenges

- How much consideration is given to the cultural and/or faith dimension of the setting in which the programme is being delivered;
- Parental and Board of Management support and co-operation;
- Appropriate timetabling of RSE within the curriculum;
- Buy-in and engagement from teachers;
- Adequate initial and ongoing training for teachers;
- The availability of up-to-date, accessible, age appropriate resources.

#### **What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

- A whole of school approach to the development of a school policy on relationship and sexuality education that involves the Board of Management, parents, student councils and other key stakeholders is essential;
- Ensure that the policy reflects the needs of the diverse groups of children and young people within the school e.g. young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, disabled, travellers, from ethnic minorities, etc.
- In tandem with school policies, all staff should have sufficient training to allow them recognise the importance of the RSE programme and empower them act to appropriately in whatever situation presents;
- The role and profile of relationship and sexuality education must be elevated within the curriculum, even if it is competing for time and space with examinable subjects because the consequences of not doing so are too serious;

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- Teachers are one of the key constituents influencing quality implementation of RSE programmes;<sup>6</sup> so they need to have the appropriate training and time to provide that education;
- In order to train educators who can deliver comprehensive relationship and sexuality education in schools, in youth groups, and in many other and varied settings, sufficient resources must be made available;
- It is also important that the materials are kept up-to date and accessible to optimise the children and young people’s learning;
- Monitor the implementation of the RSE programme on an ongoing basis and evaluate the actual programme at agreed intervals.

**If you have any comments or observations, please respond here:**

The brief outline above of our *Bodyright* programme outlines work that we do with second level students in schools, youth work and alternative education settings. We also believe that children at primary level need to learn how to build the concepts of respect and consent into their young thinking and vocabulary. It is important to start such conversations at an early age, to build consistently on the information provided so that children and young people grow up understanding everyone’s right to bodily autonomy – including their own. Providing basic information at a young age establishes the foundation on which more complex knowledge can be built up over time.

Most children spend a significant portion of their developing years in a school or other educational setting. It is essential that a child’s right to develop to their fullest potential, in accordance with Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>7</sup>, is enshrined at the heart of and underpins all school programmes including the RSE programme.

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<sup>6</sup> WHO 2017 *Training matters: A framework for core competencies of sexuality educators*.

<sup>7</sup> Article 29 States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

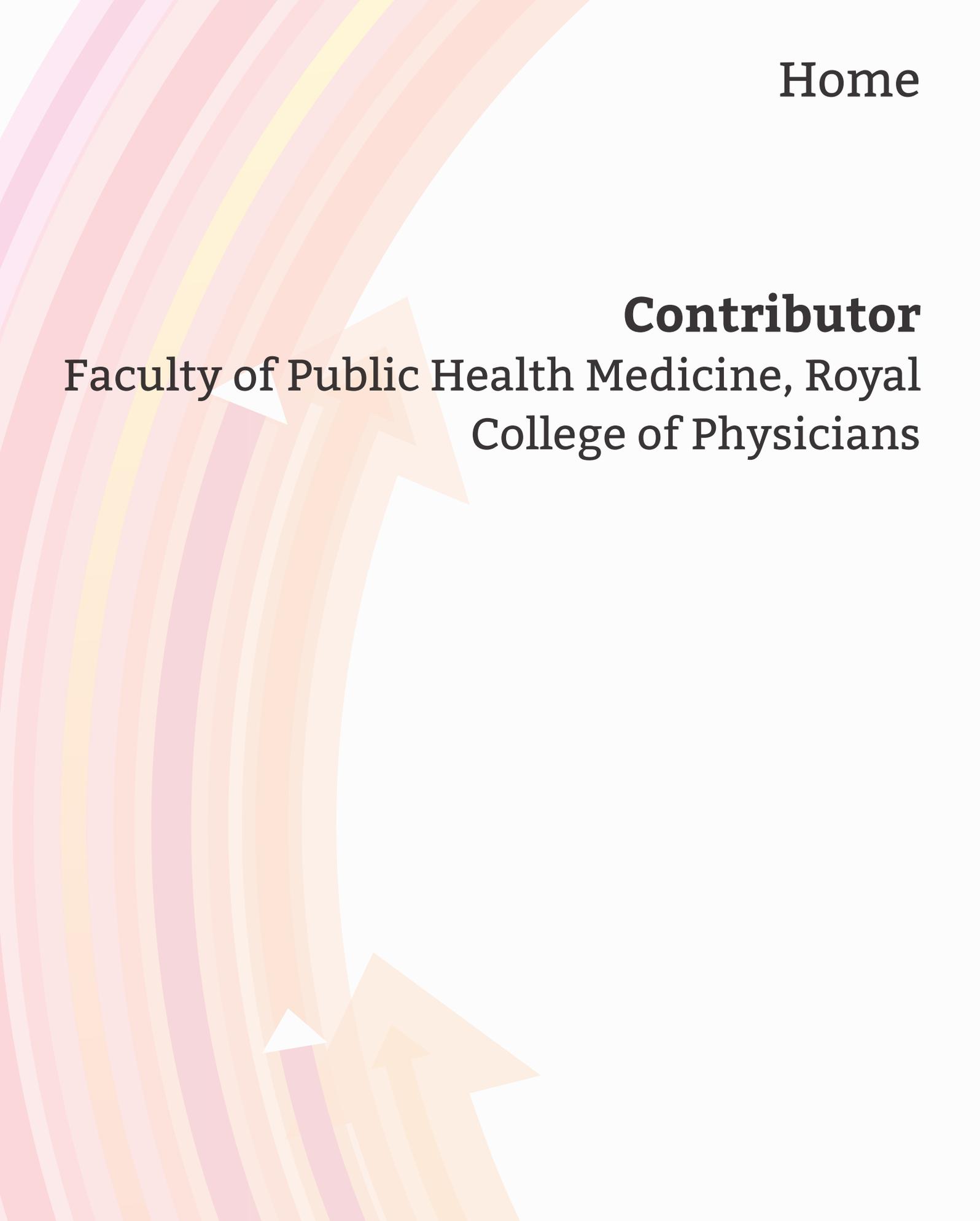
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School-based sex education should be viewed as education that has a lifelong impact: providing children and young people with the knowledge, understanding and skills to develop positive attitudes towards sexuality; to take care of their sexual health; and to enhance their interpersonal relationships, now and into the future.

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Home

**Contributor**

Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Royal  
College of Physicians



## **FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICINE**

ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

Submission to the National Council for Curriculum and  
Assessment (NCCA)

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education Review January 2019**

Prepared by:

Dr Fionnuala Cooney, Specialist in Public Health Medicine, member of the STI HIV Special Interest Group and member of the Consultants in Public Health Medicine Health Improvement Group

Dr Derval Igoe, Specialist in Public Health Medicine, member of the STI HIV Special Interest Group

Dr Phil Downes, Ph.D., Surveillance Scientist, member of the STI HIV Special Interest Group

Dr Caroline Mason-Mohan, Director of Public Health and Chair of the STI HIV Special Interest Group and member of the Consultants in Public Health Medicine Health Improvement Group

Dr Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health and Chair of the Consultants in Public Health Medicine Health Improvement Group

Dr Breda Cosgrove, Acting Specialist in Public Health Medicine

Dr Louise Hendrick, Specialist Registrar in Public Health Medicine, medical secretary of the STI HIV Special Interest Group

Prof Emer Shelley, Dean, Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Emer
<b>Surname</b>	Shelley
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Dean
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
<b>Date</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2019
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:FPHM@rcpi.ie">FPHM@rcpi.ie</a> <a href="mailto:emershelley@gmail.com">emershelley@gmail.com</a>

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes  No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

The remit of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland relates to specialist training, lifelong education and advocacy to promote the health of the population. The Faculty is the post-graduate body accredited by the Medical Council of Ireland for Higher Specialist Training in Public Health Medicine. The Faculty Professional Competence Scheme is also accredited by the MCI. The Faculty's Standing Orders include:

- To advance the science, art and practice of Public Health Medicine in Ireland.
- To promote education, study and research in Public Health Medicine for the public benefit.
- To act as an authoritative body for consultation on matters of educational or public interest concerning Public Health Medicine.
- To represent Fellows, Members and Diplomate Members interests on matters of education and public interest concerning Public Health Medicine.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

This submission has been prepared by personnel working in Public Health in Ireland who are active and supportive of work in the surveillance, control and prevention of adverse sexual health outcomes in our population. Our work involves activities in relation to policy and research, and also includes interaction with a wide range of stakeholders such as frontline clinicians, advocacy groups as well as patients and members of public. Through this work we are aware that there are significant knowledge deficits within our population in the area of relationships and sexuality. Our experience indicates that RSE has not adequately reached all school going children and we advocate that this issue be addressed as a high priority with a view to improving sexual and mental health and wellbeing in our population.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

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**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

**Challenges:**

1. To effectively deliver this important programme to all children within the busy school schedule.
2. Reaching the children who have most to gain from this education and utilising a holistic approach that includes a range of behaviours that have an important impact on health.

It is known that the highest age-specific sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates in Ireland in recent years are in those aged between 20 and 24 and the most recent report on crisis pregnancy found that those aged 18 to 25 are most likely to report a pregnancy as a crisis.<sup>1</sup> Of particular risk are people who experience early sexual initiation before the age of 17 as this is associated with a range of negative sexual health outcomes, including STIs and crisis pregnancy. Young people in care are known to be particularly vulnerable to early sexual initiation and the attendant negative sexual health outcomes.

It is important in the implementation of the programme that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are reached, including early school leavers and poor attenders who may not benefit from the college-based sexual health promotion programmes. There is a growing body of research that identifies the harmful effects of adverse childhood experiences on health throughout life.<sup>2</sup> A recent systematic review quantified this and reported a strong association for sexual risk taking, mental ill health, and problematic alcohol use (odds ratios (ORs) of more than three to six). The strongest association was with problematic drug use and interpersonal and self-directed violence (ORs of more than seven).<sup>3</sup> These adverse outcomes are interrelated and therefore it is recommended that a holistic approach is used that includes a range of behaviours that have an important impact on health and future parenting.

Reaching the children who have most to gain from RSE education is important. In Ireland we have evidence of an association between socioeconomic deprivation and risk of STI. Using routine surveillance data it was demonstrated that among females in the greater Dublin area, younger women compared to older women (35 years and over) were three times more likely to have a diagnosis of chlamydia and five times more likely to be very deprived.<sup>4</sup>

Chlamydia is the most common bacterial sexually transmitted infection in Ireland. In 2018 the notification rate of chlamydia in HSE-East among 15-17 year olds was 1/1,000. The rate was higher in females at 72.6/100,000 compared to males at 27.4/100,000.<sup>5</sup> Surveillance demonstrates that there is a steep increase in notifications from age 18 years which indicates the importance of effective education in the school setting.

3. Raising of awareness about HIV transmission and HIV testing availability

There is evidence of a lack of knowledge regarding HIV transmission and STIs among young men who have sex with men (MSM)<sup>6</sup> and a recent paper showed that young MSM with poor knowledge were less likely to test for HIV.<sup>7</sup>

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## Opportunities

1. The curriculum should be in keeping with the national policy for health including *Healthy Ireland*, the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of our population which focuses on prevention and keeping people healthier for longer.<sup>8</sup> The curriculum should also be compatible with the *National Sexual Health Strategy 2015–2020*.<sup>9</sup> The HSE Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme is well placed to provide evidence and expertise in relation to sexual health in the population.

Successful delivery of this programme provides an excellent opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of young people which can benefit them not only throughout their life-course, but also could have positive intergenerational benefits through positive parenting in this area.

2. There is an opportunity to blend the teaching of RSE with other subjects and activities at school to influence behaviours that impact on physical and psychological health and wellbeing. An important aim would be to develop an integrated, sustainable and holistic approach to enable positive sexual health and wellbeing.
3. There is an opportunity to strengthen further parental involvement particularly for ‘hard to reach’ children and school communities where RSE teaching may be restricted.
4. Development of a supplementary online restricted access platform with a suite of resources e.g. videos including real-life situation such as issues around consent, access contraception, health issues etc.
5. There is an important opportunity to raise awareness among children and young people about the importance of the reliability of information about sex and relationships, especially that which is available on the web. Also awareness can be raised about the trusted sources and up-to-date information that is available, such as the HSE site at [sexualwellbeing.ie](http://sexualwellbeing.ie)
6. Suggest careful consideration of the Junior Cycle programme to ensure that early school-leavers and those with poor attendance, who may benefit the most from this, have received core elements of the teaching. Consideration to be given to the addition of increased mental health teaching element in the Junior Cycle.
7. Given the importance of the topic, consideration should be made for making this an examinable area/subject or establishing a merit/award on successful completion of the course.

## References

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9. Department of Health, *National Sexual Health Strategy 2015–2020 and Action Plan 2015–2016*. 2015, Department of Health: Dublin.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

1. A strong framework for ongoing evaluation of the curriculum and implementation of the programme against pre-determined success criteria/performance indicators.
2. An advisory and a steering group to review and monitor the programme to ensure that the content and its delivery are appropriate to pupils' needs, which an agreed process for

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necessary changes.

3. The curriculum should be devised to be adaptable in order to ensure it is culturally appropriate and inclusive, with due consideration of the varied religious beliefs, social background, cultural norms within society in modern Ireland.
4. The undergraduate and postgraduate education programmes for teachers should be in line with the philosophy and content of the curriculum and could include expert external facilitators who could also contribute in the development of online support materials
5. Universal delivery of this programme is very important, and participation and learning should be formally evaluated, recognised and rewarded by a means best decided by educationalists (such as state examination or assessment for a merit/award etc)

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

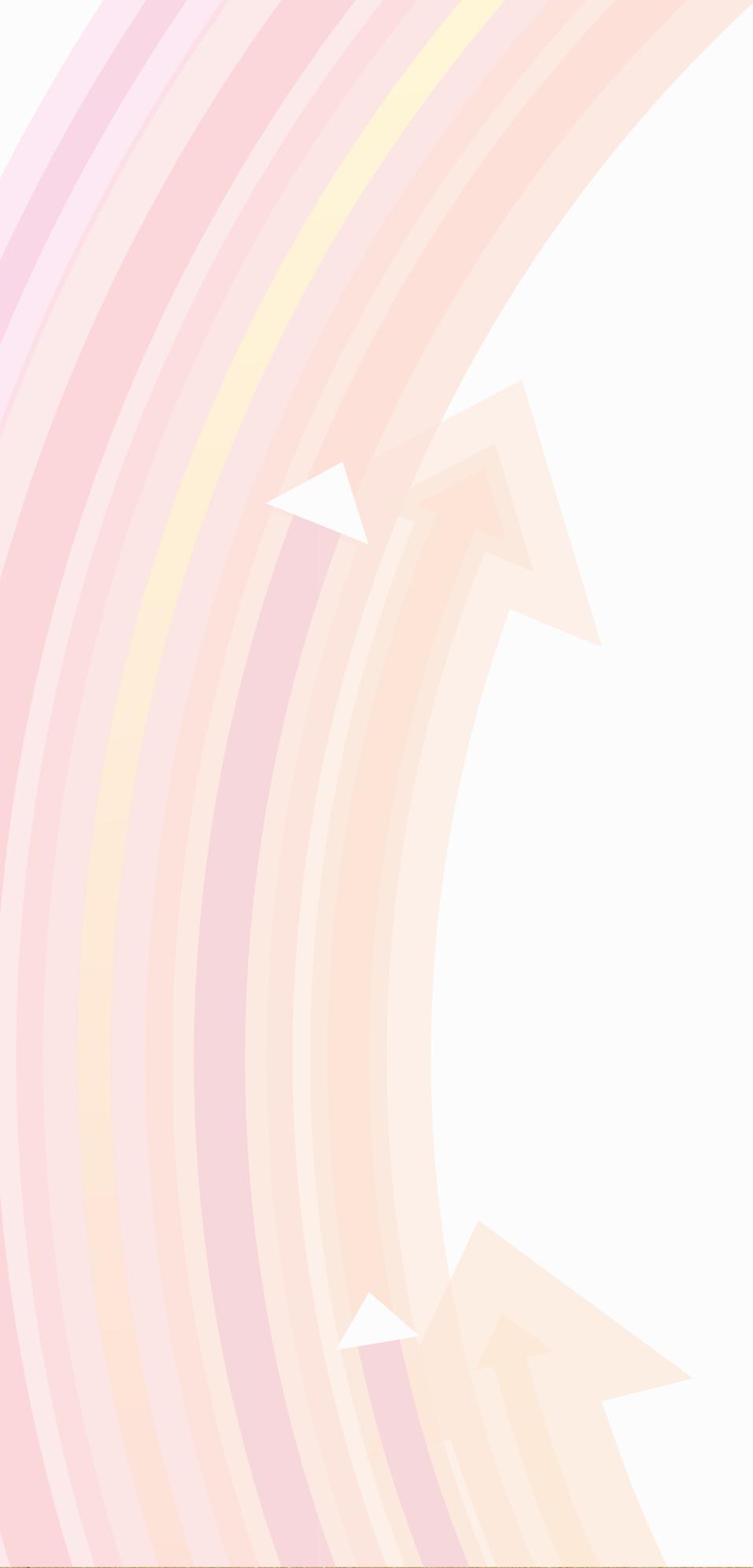
**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

### **Data Protection**

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Home

**Contributor**  
Foróige

Mr Richard Bruton T.D.  
Minister for Education and Skills  
Marlborough Street,  
D01 RC96



2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

Dear Minister,

Foróige welcomes your recent commitment to reviewing the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) within schools. We recently submitted our recommendation to the Oireachtas Committee which detailed that the Department of Education and Skills (DES);

1. Name Foróige's Relationships Explored and Life Uncovered (REAL U) programme as the RSE programme in Irish schools.
2. Allocate a budget to each school to engage trained community expertise to deliver this relationships and sexuality education programme to students.

The REAL U programme is now ready for rollout in Irish schools. The current, and increasing, network of skilled and trained REAL U facilitators nationally, coupled with, the comprehensive evidence based resource of the REAL U programme would enable schools to provide students across Ireland with access to a comprehensive relationships and sexuality programme that meets their needs.

Foróige have been providing relationships and sexuality education to young people across Ireland since its inception in 1952. In 2012, we utilised this expertise to develop our REAL U manualised programme with the needs of modern Irish young people at the core. REAL U topics include; healthy positive relationships, reproduction, gender and sexuality, emotional well-being, understanding boundaries, body image, deciphering media messages, alcohol and drugs, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and negotiating consent.

Over the last six years we have developed a vast network of trained facilitators from a large number of organisations and disciplines as facilitators of the REAL U Programme who are running the programme with young people and service users nationwide.

Please see attached:

1. The comprehensive REAL U facilitator's manual resource for your review.
2. Further information on Foróige's expertise and the REAL U Programme.
3. The REAL U Programme evaluation, NUI Galway UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre.

Furthermore, Foróige would like to request a meeting with you to discuss our recommendations and our REAL U programme further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seán Campbell".

Seán Campbell  
CEO, Foróige

# **Foróige's Relationship Explored and Life Uncovered (REAL U) Programme**



## **1. Introduction**

Foróige is Ireland's leading youth organisation, providing a broad range of services and programmes to young people, families and communities across the country. Foróige works with over 50,000 young people (over 10% of the youth population) and engages over 5,500 volunteers. It employs over 400 professional youth workers. Foróige's purpose is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of society. Foróige works to meet the needs of young people within their own communities.

Foróige works with young people in communities across Ireland through volunteer-led youth clubs and staff-led youth projects. Our programmes focus on building skills, resilience, belief and aspiration in young people. The benefits of these programmes are far reaching. Our work is a unique partnership between young people, parents, volunteers and the wider community.

Foróige believes that youth work in general and in particular Foróige can offer the education system a) decades of expertise in enabling and equipping young people to develop the skills, confidence and knowledge to develop healthy relationships b) a comprehensive, evidence based relationships and sexuality programme (Foróige's REAL U programme) that could be delivered in schools through a network of skilled and trained facilitators.

## **2. Programme Overview**

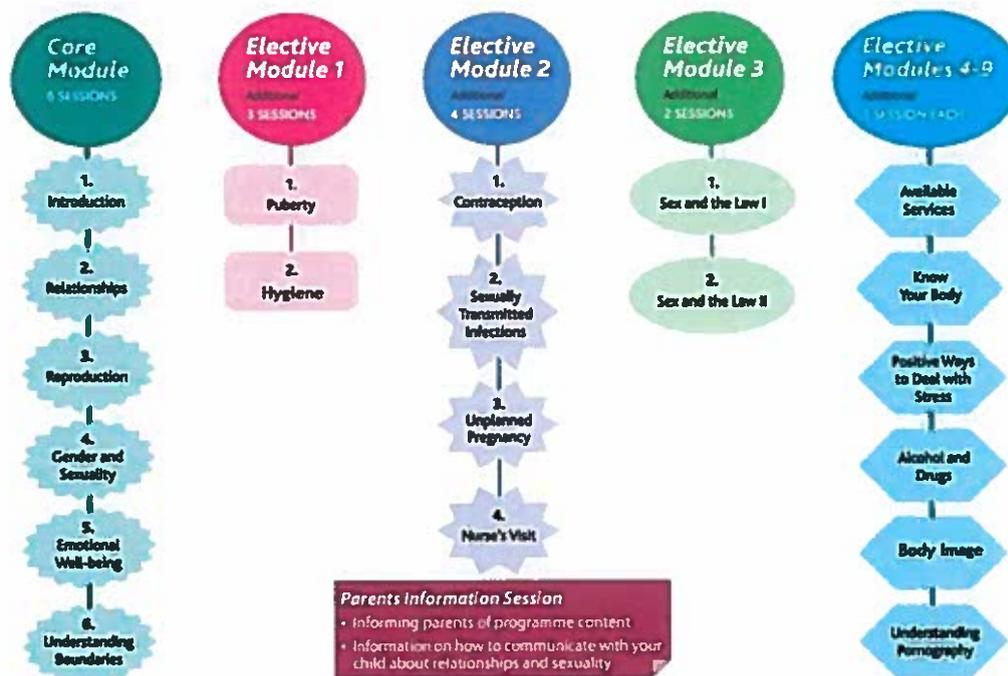
The REAL U programme is more than just a sex education programme. It is a personal development programme that aims to equip young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to develop healthy relationships, make responsible decisions in relation to their sexual health and ultimately delay the onset of early sexual activity.

Foróige have been providing relationships and sexuality education to young people across Ireland since its inception in 1952. In 2012, we utilised this expertise to develop our comprehensive manualised programme REAL U with the needs of modern Irish young people at the core. Due to the wide range of topics covered by the programme, we reached out to a number of professional organisations for input, namely BeLong To, Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI) Crisis Pregnancy Programme (CPP) and the Marie Keating Foundation.

REAL U facilitates the development of key competencies in relation to decision making and communication to promote positive well-being and confidence in relationships. Topics include: healthy relationships, reproduction, gender and sexuality, emotional well-being, understanding boundaries, body image, deciphering media messages, alcohol and drugs, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and Sex and the Law (consent).

Modules are selected based on the needs of the young people taking part in the programme. The materials provide accurate, up to date information, offer age appropriate activities and are culturally sensitive. REAL U recognises the importance of parental/guardian engagement in young people's relationships and sexuality needs. As part of the programme a parent/guardian information session is provided along with supporting resources both at the beginning and throughout the programme.

The below graphic details all the modules delivered in the REAL U programme.



### 3. Programme Delivery

Over the last six years, Foróige has trained staff from a large number of organisations and disciplines as facilitators of the REAL U Programme, who are running the programme with young people and service users nationwide. These include staff from the following organisations:

*Aislinn Aftercare Service, Youthreach, Ballybough Youth Service, Ballymun Anseo, Ballymun Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force, Ballymun Regional Youth Resource, Barnardos, Bradóg Youth Service, CBF Wellness, Central Remedial Clinic, City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDET), Clay Youth Project, Clonmel Community Resource Centre, Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services, Cosy Youth Cafe, Crosscare Youth Services, Community Substance Misuse Team (CSMT) Limerick, Donnycarney Youth Project, Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service, Emagine Training & Development, Extern, Foróige, Garryowen Community Development Project, Gender Orientation Sexual Health HIV (GOSHH), Garda Youth Diversion Projects, Hillview Community Resource Centre, Home Again Residential Care, Health Service Executive (HSE), National Forensic Mental Health Service, Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC), Just Ask, Kilmore West Youth Project, Lesbians in Cork (LINC), Mallow Youthreach, Monsignor McCarthy Family Resource Centre, Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth & Family Project, New Horizons Partnership LTD, North Tipperary Leader Partnership (NTLP), Novas, Oberstown Children Detention Campus, Orchard Children's Services, Poppintree Youth Project, Positive Care, The Probation Service, Rape Crisis North East, RehabCare, Respond! Support Ltd., Rialto Youth Project, Ringsend and Irishtown Youth Service, School Completion Programme, Southside Partnership, Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland, St Michans HSE Residents Association, Step by Step, SWICN Clubhouse, The Soar Foundation, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Walkinstown Greenhills Resource Centre, Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service (WSTCYS), Woodale Youth Justice Project, Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland and Youth New Ross.*

#### **4. Programme Evaluation**

Foróige's REAL U programme was evaluated in 2014 by NUI Galway (NUIG) UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. A combination of qualitative and quantitative measures were used in the study. The study highlighted that the REAL U programme is seen as effective in engaging young people, responding to their needs and impacting on their knowledge and attitudes in this area.

Baseline data indicated that there was a need for the REAL U programme, with misinformation regarding sexual knowledge and prejudicial attitudes evident among the young people.

Outcomes data showed statistically significant effects for the young people who had taken part in REAL U in relation to attitudes to LGBT and knowledge about sex. Young people rated the programme highly, with 98% rating it as good, very good or excellent, while 84% said that they would recommend the programme to other young people.

Qualitative data highlighted that young people found the programme to be relevant, fun and insightful and participants said that it made them better informed and more aware of the consequences of their actions. A survey of staff trained in the REAL U programme indicated that all respondents believe the programme is effective in meeting its objectives. Please see the NUIG evaluation report attached.

In February and April 2018, two REAL U trainings were evaluated by an Independent Social Researcher, Dr. Louise Kinlen, on behalf of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Children and Young Services Committee (CYPSC) capturing 23 participants. Dr. Kinlen's evaluation measured confidence in two areas on a scale of 1 -10 and the results showed: (Baseline/ Pre evaluation : Post evaluation)

1. Confidence in up to date knowledge on information around sexuality and healthy relationships; Mean: 6.1:8.9
2. Confidence in discussing relationships and sexuality topics with young people; Mean: 6.7: 9.3



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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UNESCO Chair in  
Children, Youth and Civic Engagement  
Ireland

CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH CENTRE



Foróige's  
Youth Development Programmes

# Relationships Explored and Life Uncovered

A Briefing Paper on the Foróige **REAL U** Programme Evaluation





'Here you feel more confident to talk'...

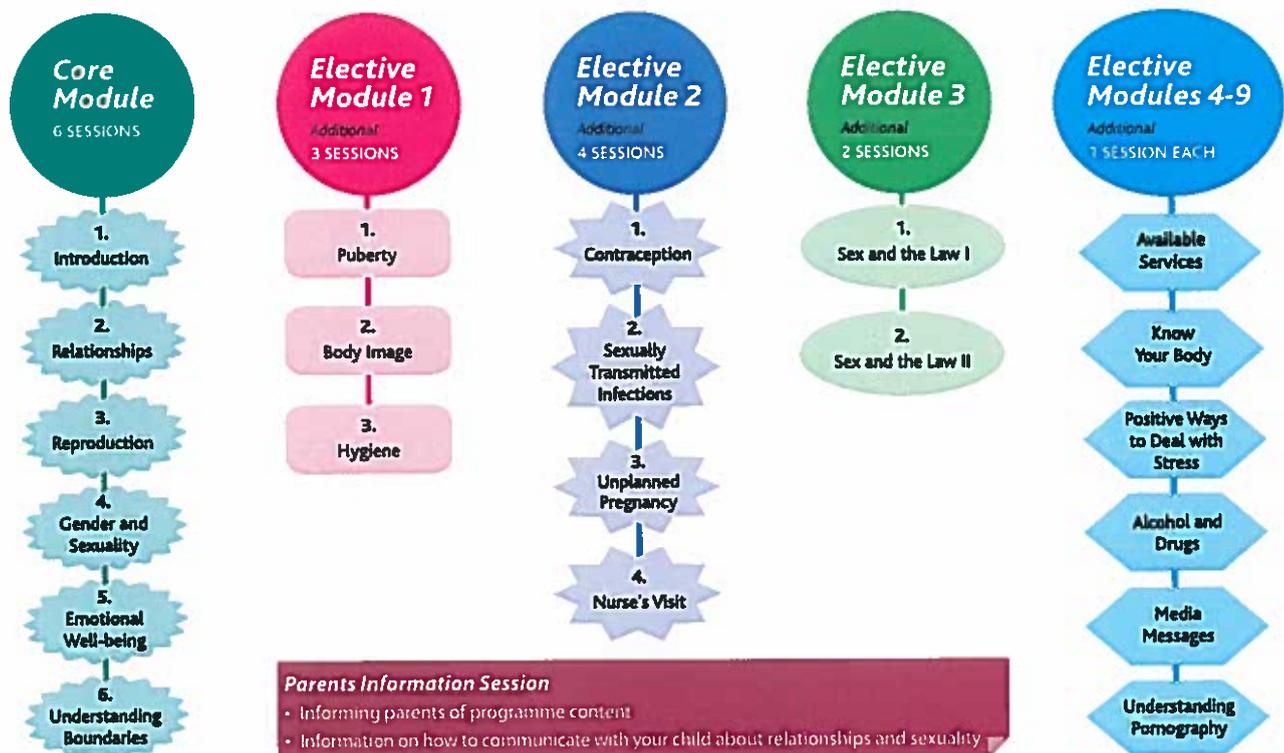


## Introduction

Foróige is an Irish national youth organisation which aims 'to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of society'. In 2011, Foróige developed the REAL U: Relationships Explored and Life Uncovered programme, a relationships and sexuality programme for delivery to young people aged 12-18 years in youth work settings. The programme was developed in response to a need identified both in research (CPP, 2012) and among Foróige staff for new models of relationships and sexuality education for young people to enable the provision of factual information and opportunities to discuss the moral, social and emotional issues associated with sex and relationships. Many of the young people involved with Foróige's services are socially and economically disadvantaged, a group that has been identified as at greater risk of missing out on adequate relationships and sexuality education (Fullerton, 2006). This document summarises the findings of an evaluation of the REAL U programme undertaken by the UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre at NUI, Galway.

## Description of the REAL U programme

The REAL U programme aims to engage young people aged 12-18 years in developing and building positive relationships. The programme is set out in a comprehensive manual, designed for use by a trained facilitator leading a group of 10-15 participants aged between 12 and 18 years old. It is recommended that the programme be delivered over 12 weeks for one hour and 30 minutes every week, drawing on modules appropriate for younger and older age groups. Two days training in delivery of the REAL U programme is provided by staff of the Foróige Best Practice Unit for youth workers both within and outside of Foróige. Foróige received funding from the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme to fund the design, print and roll-out of the manual beyond the Foróige organisation over a three-year period.





YOUNG PEOPLE LEADING  
HAPPIER, HEALTHIER  
& MORE FULFILLED LIVES



## Aims and methodology of the study

The key aims of the study were to assess the outcomes for young people taking part in the programme and to explore the perspectives of stakeholders regarding the programme, its implementation and outcomes. The evaluation was mixed methods, with a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods used to address the research questions.

Outcomes from the programme were assessed using a quasi-experimental strand, whereby quantitative data were collected from youth participants in the REAL U programme over three time periods (between September 2012 and March 2013). A total of 231 young people completed online surveys at one or more times. The survey included questions in relation to: attitudes to relationships, attitudes to sexualities, mental and social well-being, assertiveness, sexual assertiveness and knowledge of issues related to sexuality. There was also scope within the online instruments to provide feedback in relation to the programme. In order to gather qualitative feedback from young people in relation to their views on the REAL U programme, four focus groups were held throughout Ireland. In addition, a total of 110 practitioners trained in REAL U programme (51% of total) completed a survey as part of the evaluation, while youth workers throughout Ireland also took part in focus groups.



## Key findings



**There is a need for the programme:** Baseline data gathered from young people indicates that there was a need for the programme, with misinformation regarding sexual knowledge and prejudicial attitudes evident among a minority of the participants. The need for the programme was also highlighted strongly by youth work practitioners.

**There was evidence of effectiveness in two key areas:** Outcomes data showed statistically significant effects for the young people who had taken part in REAL U in relation to attitudes to LGBT and knowledge about sex. No significant findings were evident in relation to assertiveness, attributes of a partner or mental and emotional well-being.

**Young people value and enjoy the REAL U programme:** Young people rated the programme highly, with 98% rating it as good, very good or excellent, while 84% said that they would recommend the programme to other young people. Qualitative data highlighted that young people found the programme to be relevant, fun and insightful and participants said that it made them better informed and more aware of the consequences of their actions.

**Youth workers believe the programme is effective:** A survey of staff trained in the REAL U programme indicated that all respondents believe the programme is effective in meeting its objectives. Asked if they felt the REAL U programme is effective in what it sets out to do, 100% of survey respondents (staff) felt that it was. This view was also expressed in staff focus groups and young people's focus groups. The reasons for effectiveness identified were as follows:

- The programme is 'perfectly pitched' to the needs, interests and concerns of young people and scenarios are easy for them to identify with. They therefore engage fully and maximise their learning from the programme.
- It encourages openness around sexuality among young people & dispels myths.
- It is considered an excellent resource for facilitators as all the information needed is provided. An attractive ring-bound manual allows for relevant sections to be taken out as needed.
- The content can be adapted based on needs and interests of particular age groups.
- The programme supports staff to address difficult topics such as pornography, STIs, contraception and negotiating consent.
- It places sexual health in a broader context of holistic well-being, particularly emotional health and relationships.



While participants in the research indicated a high level of satisfaction with the programme, some minor suggestions regarding improvements to the programme were made.





## Conclusions

The study found that the REAL U programme is filling a gap with regard to relationship and sexuality education for young people in Ireland. The REAL U programme is seen by practitioners as effective in engaging young people, responding to their needs and impacting on their knowledge and attitudes in this area. The availability of a comprehensive, flexible programme of this nature in youth work settings represents an important development in the move towards comprehensive sex education for young people in Ireland.

The full evaluation report can be accessed at [www.foroige.ie](http://www.foroige.ie)



## Quality Assurance Statement

*This is by way of confirmation that the independent evaluation of the Foróige REAL U: Relationships Explored & Life Uncovered Programme was conducted to a high level and reviewed by subject matter experts. The results accruing from the study indicate a rigorous evaluation of the programme and are presented in a fair and unbiased manner.*

### Research team:



Dr Bernadine Brady\*  
Dr Saoirse Nic Gabhainn\*\*  
Dr John Canavan\*  
Mr Jakub Gajewski\*\*

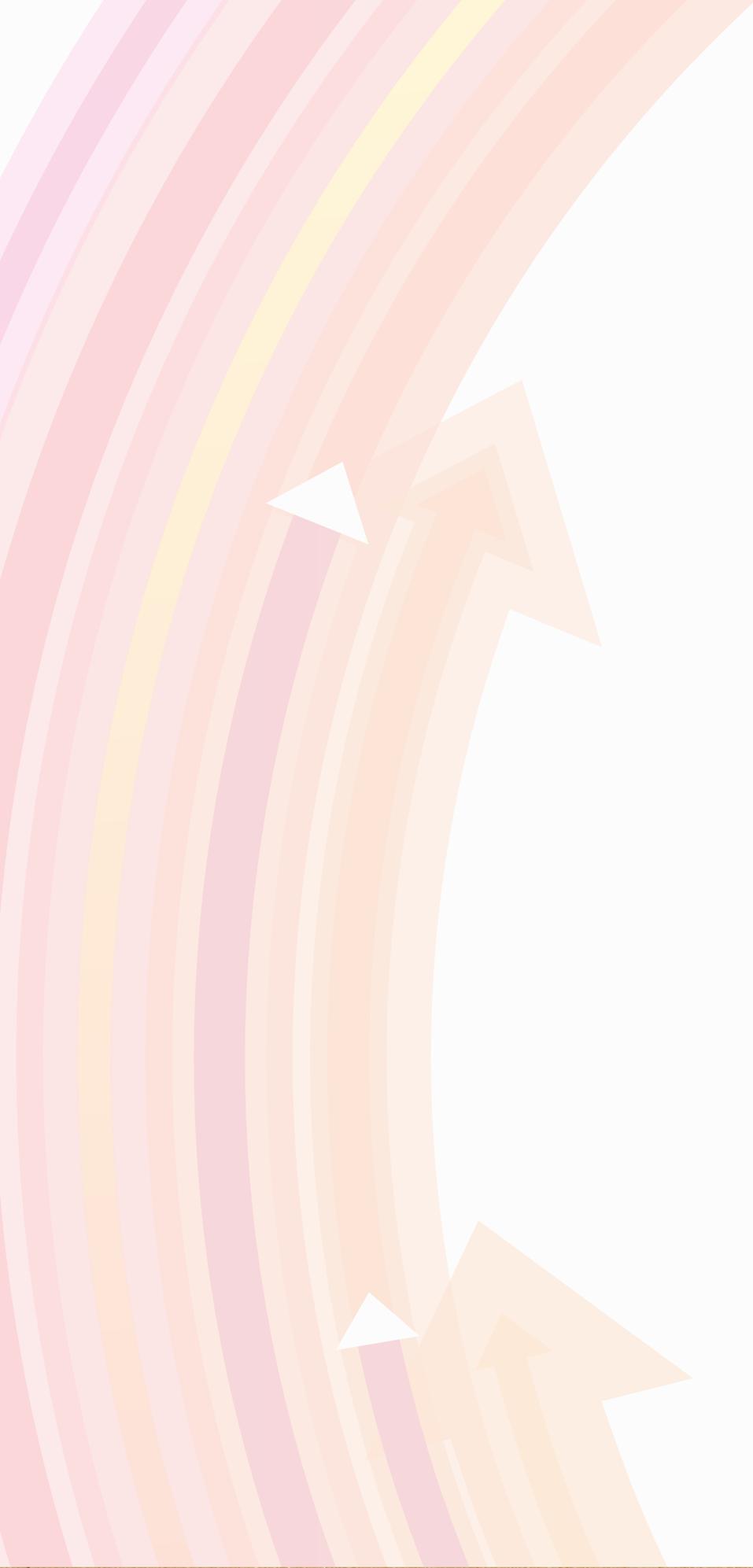
- \* UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre, NUI, Galway
- \*\* Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI, Galway



**Foróige**  
Block 12D, Joyce Way  
Park West  
Dublin 12

Phone: +353 1 630 1560  
Fax: +353 1 630 1568  
Email: [info@foroige.ie](mailto:info@foroige.ie)





Home

**Contributor**

Gary Troy

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondent's details

Name	Gary
Surname	Troy
Position (if applicable)	Primary School Teacher
Organisation (if applicable)	
Date	8-11-18
Email	

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes  No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

I am a primary school teacher working in Dublin. I have been teaching for 7 years. I am an active member of the INTO and Atheist Ireland. However, I am making this submission in a personal capacity and my views are not necessarily the views of those organisations mentioned.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

As a teacher I have used the Department of Education's resource materials for relationships and sexuality as part of SPHE lessons for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class. I found them to be useful but I feel that the programme can be updated as the resources and manuals are now 20 years old.

I have been teaching 5th and 6th classes in the last 3 years. I have sat at the back of the classroom when 2 counsellors from ACCORD came into the school to give their RSE talk to the children. I was able to see first-hand how biased and subjective the programme they provide is. ACCORD is primarily a catholic marriage counselling service. In the teachers' manual of the Catholic 'Grow in Love' programme, RSE learning objectives include: "Sexuality is good because it is a gift from God" and "The use of sexuality reaches its full meaning when it expresses the personal giving of man and woman even unto death."

3 years ago, I was in a 5th class teaching position when a pupil made a disclosure to me that they identified as the opposite gender. Nowhere in the ACCORD programme do counsellors discuss LGBTQ+ issues, sexual health, contraception, consent, etc. I can only presume that the child that made this disclosure must have felt so isolated in the school's ACCORD talk.

As a result of this disclosure, I attended the INTO learning summer course on Inclusion of LGBTQ+ student. We had presentations and discussions with young guest speakers from BelongTo, Outhouse, Transparency International Ireland, and Transgender Equality Network Ireland. Apart from the bullying the speakers spoke about from their own experience in school, they also commented critically of the school's RSE programmes, mostly given by ACCORD.

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I understand that at the end of the day it is individual schools' choice, in line with their ethos. I personally feel that RSE (if taught externally) should be taught by HSE personnel or other healthcare professionals providing an external service to schools. I also feel that we do an educational disservice to children by not providing them with an objective, factual and inclusive RSE programme, but by leaving it in the hands of catholic church agencies to educate our young people in relationships and sexuality. This does not reflect society in 2018.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I believe all areas mentioned above are of vital importance and should be included in the broad scope of RSE.

**Ethos:**

The greatest challenge in my opinion is challenging the ethos of the school. As the vast majority of Irish primary schools are owned by the Catholic Church issues on LGBTQ+ issues, contraception, etc. these issues rarely get addressed. Most schools employ the services of ACCORD to give talks in RSE

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in line with the school's ethos. The rights of the child to factual, objective and inclusive RSE should take precedent over ethos.

**Qualified medical personnel:**

Another challenge is to have qualified medical personnel give talks on RSE if the school's wish is to have an external body take on the role. HSE staff or other qualified professionals should be the ones undertaking this responsibility in my view.

**Teacher CPD:**

Most teachers are happy to allow external agencies like ACCORD in to the school to discuss RSE as they would feel embarrassed or not competent enough to do so. If teachers wish to teach RSE within their own schools, then objective, age appropriate CPD courses should be provided to teachers by PDST. Schools could make arrangements internally to allow a teacher (other than the class teacher) undertake the RSE programme with a given class. A male teacher could speak with the boys and a female teacher with the girls.

**Language:**

As a society, we should be embracing the use of scientific and biological terms from an early age. Words like penis and vagina should not be left until 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> class to be mentioned. Children as young as infants or 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> class should be taught these biological terms as to take any negative connotations away from them. Then we won't need to deal with any immature giggling at the words in 6<sup>th</sup> class.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

As mentioned briefly above:

- External RSE talks provided by qualified HSE or other medical personnel.
- Objective and age appropriate teacher CPD courses provided by PDST.
- Updated materials – Dept. of ED. RSE programme for SPHE is 20 years old.

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- Use scientific and biological terms early in a child's life.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

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Home

**Contributor**

Gender Orientation Sexual Health HIV,  
Limerick

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

## Review

### Respondents details

Name	Ann
Surname	Mason
Position (if applicable)	Manager
Organisation (if applicable)	GOSHH
Date	31.01.2019
Email	[REDACTED]

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes  No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

**GOSHH – Gender Orientation Sexual Health HIV** is a voluntary, non-profit organisation which provides care and prevention services relating to LGBT, HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Sexual Health issues to people in the Mid-West of Ireland. We strive to ensure that people have access to local services which match and exceed those available in the rest of the country. We provide a safe, confidential, welcoming environment for everyone we work with.

Our office is based in Limerick City and we work throughout the Counties of Limerick, Clare, and North Tipperary. We focus on the promotion of equality and wellbeing of all with a positive and respectful approach to sexual orientation and gender diversity.

Formed in 1989, Limerick AIDS Alliance operated until 1994 when the name changed to Red Ribbon Project reflecting the breadth of sexual health services provided throughout the Mid-West of Ireland.

Gay Switchboard Limerick was founded in 1986 and became Rainbow Support Services in 2001 reflecting the wide variety of identities supported throughout the Mid-West of Ireland. Both projects joined together in 2013 and became GOSHH in 2014.

GOSHH provides a confidential supportive environment in order to:

- Provide person-centred sexual health promotion services;
- Provide age appropriate sexual health education and training;
- Care and support for those living with HIV and their families;
- Meet the support needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community, their family and friends.
- Provide counselling services for all the above.

The populations we work with include:

- People living with HIV (PLHIV) and people affected by HIV;
- People living with Hepatitis B/C and people affected by Hepatitis B/C;
- Men who have sex with men (MSM);
- Young people;
- Sex workers;
- People who have questions or concerns about their sexual health.
- Individuals who identify as LGBT
- Families and friends of those who identify as LGBT.
- Parents of LGBT children.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

## What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?

GOSHH has many years' experience of developing and delivering Relationships and Sexuality Education Programmes to children and young people in the school settings in the Mid – West region.

We work with schools in the following ways:

- Development of school policies and procedures, including anti-bullying policies and procedures and RSE policies.
- Staff support and training in the areas of sexual orientation and gender (through tailored LGBT training) and sexual health (through the Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion)
- Delivery of RSE programmes and workshops
- Support for LGBT students

We provide workshops for schools in areas such as consent, contraception, sexuality, STI's, gender, sexual orientation, relationships and self-esteem.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

GOSHH considers that all of the above areas are important and a comprehensive RSE programme should include all of these areas. Our submission will focus on the broader delivery and content of the programme.

- The new RSE programme must be inclusive of all genders and orientations. It is vital that there is space within the RSE programme for diversity, difference and variance.
- The RSE programme must be consistently inclusive, diverse and equitable and that there is space to explore the many different sexualities and ways of being.
- The RSE programme and its content must be representative of all young people's lives, inclusive of situations/scenarios that they can relate to so that they can see themselves in the programme, in both the primary and post-primary settings. Case studies or scenarios used in materials to support the delivery of the programmes must ensure that they are inclusive.
- Any new RSE programme needs to be proofed/checked by young people and by organisations who work with minority groups of young people to ensure it is representative and relevant to young people's lives.
- Training for schools and teachers and those supporting schools to deliver the programme needs to be comprehensive, consistent, neutral (no extra discussion given to one way of being) and experiential.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

- A comprehensive programme of training and support for those responsible for delivering relationships and Sexuality Education in order to develop their skills, confidence and capacity.
- Clear school policies in order to support teachers and other educators to deliver the RSE programme
- A robust, comprehensive and inclusive RSE policy which meets the needs of all, including children and young people of diverse genders and orientations.
- Sufficient resources must be made available to support schools to deliver the RSE programme.
- Supports for sexual health and other related services linked to the RSE programme.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

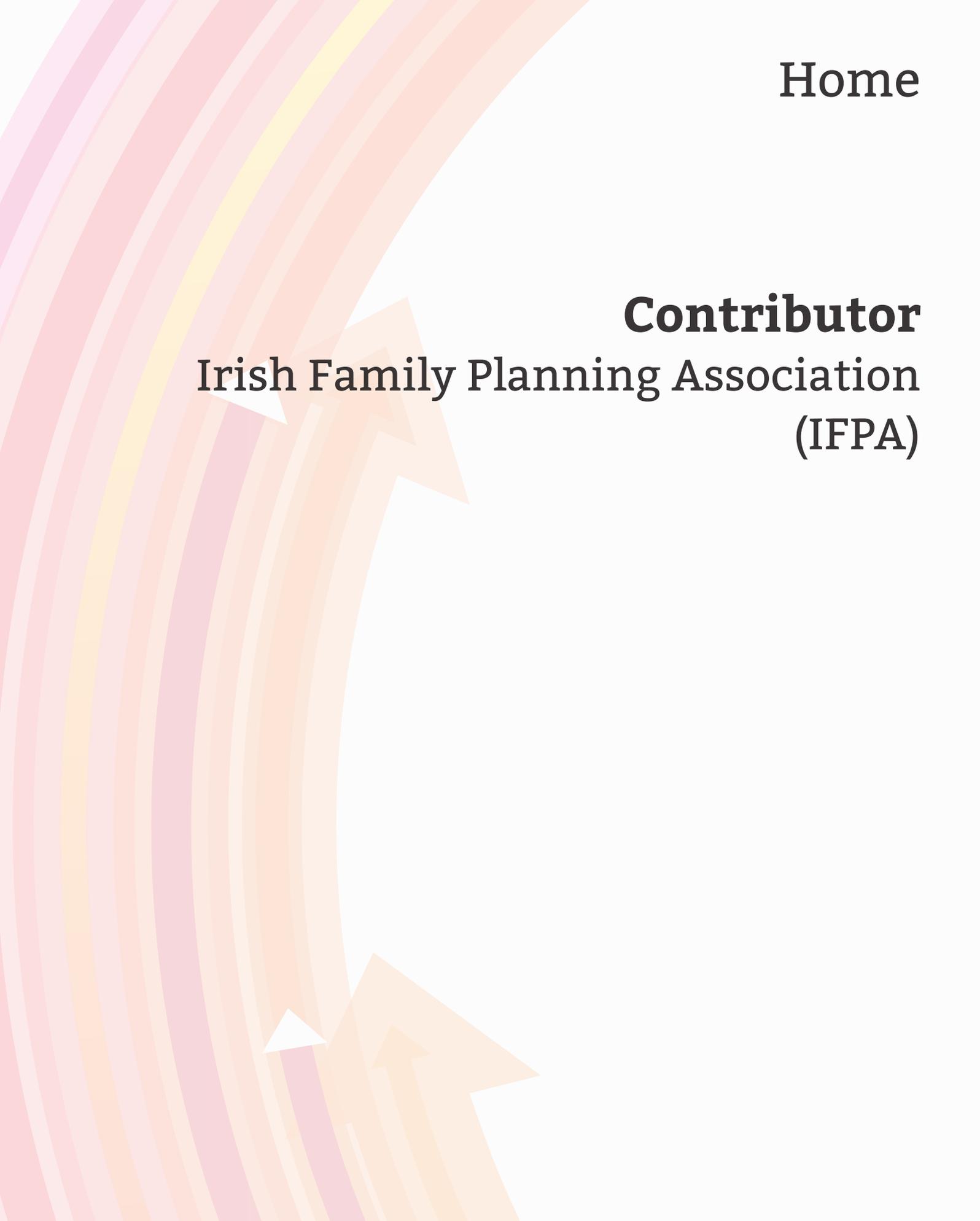
**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

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Home

**Contributor**  
Irish Family Planning Association  
(IFPA)

## Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)\* Review

<b>Name</b>	Alison
<b>Surname</b>	Spillane
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Policy Officer
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA)
<b>Date</b>	February 2019
<b>Email</b>	[REDACTED]

**Is this response a personal view or made on behalf of an organisation?**

Organisation

**Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?**

Both

**Do you consent to this submission being posted online including the cover page\*?**

Yes

\*By ticking this box you consent to the NCCA to publish the submission online including the details submitted on the cover page, in line with GDPR regulations. For more information please see our privacy statement at [www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement](http://www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement)



## **Irish Family Planning Association submission to the NCCA review of Relationships and Sexuality Education**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) plays a critical role in preparing young people for a safe, productive and fulfilling life by providing them with the means to protect themselves from the risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies, gender-based violence and gender inequality. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN specialised agency for education and the education sector, defines CSE as, “a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.”<sup>1</sup>

CSE facilitates the development of accurate and age-appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills. It promotes positive values, including respect for human rights, gender equality and diversity. It fosters attitudes and skills that contribute to safe, healthy, positive relationships. It provides an important opportunity to reach young people with scientifically accurate information before they become sexually active. And, it offers an incremental, culturally relevant, transformative and structured environment of learning within which to do so.<sup>2</sup>

Evaluations of CSE programmes show that they can help young people delay onset of sexual activity and increase condom and contraceptive use. Sexuality education – in or out of schools – does *not* increase sexual activity, sexual risk-taking behaviour or STI/HIV infection rates.<sup>3</sup> CSE has positive effects, including increasing young people’s knowledge and improving their attitudes related to sexual and reproductive health and behaviours.<sup>4</sup>

Conversely, preventing comprehensive discussion of sexuality and relationships is harmful and exposes young people to risk. Abstinence-based curricula are generally lacking in information about contraceptive options and abortion, have been found to be ineffective in their stated aims of delaying sexual initiation, reducing the frequency of sex or reducing the number of sexual partners and are potentially harmful to young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights.<sup>5</sup>

Accurate and comprehensive sexuality education is a human right of young people. Such information and education should enhance the independence and self-esteem of young

people and provide them with the knowledge and confidence to make informed choices. As Ireland's leading sexual health charity, the Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) is deeply concerned at the public health impact of inadequate, inconsistent and poor quality sexuality education in many schools. The IFPA thus supports this comprehensive review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and hopes it will result in the necessary curriculum changes in order for young people to fully realise their right to comprehensive sexuality education.

Furthermore, RSE continues to have a low status within the education system and is not properly incentivised or resourced, creating systemic barriers to implementation that go beyond curriculum content. The IFPA therefore believes that, in addition to curriculum content, a review of RSE must be accompanied by adequate structural, legal and policy changes to ensure that successful implementation and positive change is sustained at every level. This includes, but is not limited to, leadership from the Department of Education to increase the status of RSE, a policy mandating that all schools, regardless of ethos, teach RSE according to UNESCO's definition and characteristics of comprehensive sexuality education, and finally, that teachers and external educators are properly vetted, trained and supported in the delivery of the RSE curriculum.

## **1. PLEASE PROVIDE SOME BRIEF BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON YOUR ORGANISATION.**

The Irish Family Planning Association submits these remarks on the basis of our many years of experience as a provider of sexual health services and educational programmes. Since 1969, the IFPA has worked to promote and protect basic human rights in relation to reproductive and sexual health, relationships and sexuality. The IFPA provides the highest quality reproductive healthcare at its two medical clinics in Dublin and ten counselling centres across Ireland. Our services include non-directive pregnancy counselling, contraceptive and abortion services, medical training for doctors and nurses and educational services. In 2017, the IFPA medical clinics provided over 11,000 sexual and reproductive health services. The IFPA also has many years of experience developing and delivering sexuality education and training programmes to young people, parents, teachers, youth workers and carers; the details of which are outlined below.

The IFPA is committed to the provision and promotion of quality youth friendly services which are available, accessible and acceptable to all young people irrespective of their age, sex, or financial situation. We are dedicated to promoting, protecting and upholding the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all young people; including the right to comprehensive information and education on sexuality and sexual health.

## **2. WHAT ARE YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION'S EXPERIENCES OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE)?**

The IFPA is experienced in developing and delivering sexuality education and training programmes, and was at the vanguard of sexuality education prior to the development of the RSE curriculum for schools. The IFPA currently provides a range of training programmes, including three-hour sexual health sessions which can be delivered as part of the RSE curriculum in secondary schools, and a one-day sexual health training. These training programmes include information on confidentiality, capacity, consent, STIs, contraception,

pornography and the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. They are discussion and activity-based, grounded in the premise that education must address knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skill-building in order to be truly comprehensive and impactful for young people.

The IFPA also runs a programme called 'Speakeasy' which is designed to provide parents, guardians or carers with the information, skills and confidence needed to talk to their children openly about sexuality. Over the course of several weeks, adults receive sessions on changes that occur during puberty, sexuality education in the context of family life, responding to the needs of youth as it relates to sexuality, social and cultural attitudes towards sex, contraceptive options, STIs, strategies for keeping youth safe, and finally, understanding sexuality education policy within schools. Our 'Speakeasy Plus' programme focuses specifically on parents, carers and other service providers working with children who have disabilities or extra support needs. The IFPA has also published a handbook on Sexuality and Disability for primary healthcare providers and has worked extensively in the design and delivery of sexuality education programmes for young people with intellectual disabilities.

In 2018, the IFPA provided quality sexuality education to over 580 young people in secondary schools, over 100 parents, staff and caregivers through the Speakeasy and Speakeasy Plus programmes, and over 60 people in the one-day sexual health training. Although the IFPA has the skills and expertise to deliver sexuality education, a continuous challenge has been meeting the demand from schools in a context where our programmes are generally funded through once-off initiatives or short-term projects, rather than the continuous and consistent resourcing this vital area of education requires.

### **3. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES WHEN CONSIDERING THESE AREAS IN THE REVIEW OF RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE)?**

#### **A. CONSENT: WHAT IT MEANS AND ITS IMPORTANCE**

Consent education is a vital part of positive youth development, and is essential for building healthy and respectful relationships, encouraging good sexual health and protecting potentially vulnerable people from harm.<sup>6</sup> Young people are becoming more aware of how important consent education is to their lifelong health and well-being, as highlighted in a survey conducted by the Irish Second-Level Students' Union: in the study, young people ranked consent as the most important topic to address within the RSE curriculum at 42.3%; ahead of sexual health, contraception, sexuality and identity.<sup>7</sup> Even so, 65% of participants said they had not yet learnt about consent. As a fundamental element of comprehensive sexuality education, and given its importance for general well-being, this gap in consent education is problematic.

Oftentimes consent is taught strictly within the context of abuse. This limited approach misses out on the opportunity to build youth voice in a positive and empowering manner. Instead, consent can be taught as a healthy, learned practice of ensuring mutual agreement, and asking clarifying questions of one another. If young people are only told how to say 'no' to sexual interactions, they are unlikely to understand the nuances of consent communication, nor have the confidence to seek sexual experiences that bring them

pleasure.<sup>8</sup> According to UNESCO, quality education on consent should strive to support young people in assessing risks and protecting themselves from situations that may lead to unwanted sexual practices, and should help them develop the knowledge and confidence to seek positive relationships with other individuals.<sup>9</sup>

Consent is not a standalone concept, but rather, a set of skills that can and should be integrated into all levels and areas of a young person's educational journey, from primary cycle onward. Consent can be practiced using both risk assessment and negotiation skills. UNESCO highlights that risk assessment skills "help learners identify their susceptibility to negative or unintended sexual and reproductive health outcomes and understand the implications of HIV, other STIs and unintended pregnancy, among other issues."<sup>10</sup> Additionally, negotiation skills enable young people to "put into practice protective behaviours such as delaying the age of sexual initiation; responding to peer pressure to engage in sexual practices; and increasing condom use and use of modern contraception when they do decide to become sexually active."<sup>11</sup> They also provide children and young people with the tools to navigate conversations on sexuality, come to agreements and settle differences with others.<sup>12</sup>

Schools have a particularly important opportunity and responsibility to supervise safe spaces in which young people can practice asking for and receiving consent. Given that consent education relies heavily on skill-building, in addition to providing factual information such as how to report sexual assault and where to seek professional support, testimonials, simulations and role playing have all been found to be useful practices in the classroom. Through training youth on this topic, the IFPA has found that it is essential for young people to observe examples of healthy and consensual interactions (as perhaps demonstrated by their educators), but it is also critical for them to practice using their own voices and to create scenarios of their own. A strong understanding of what consent is and how it is used is a matter of practice, built over time.

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## B. DEVELOPMENTS IN CONTRACEPTION

According to the Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, 27% of 15-17 year olds reported ever having sex, an increase from 2010 (23%). Of those who reported ever having had sex, 33% reported use of the oral contraceptive pill as a form of contraception at last intercourse, and 73% reported condom use as a form of contraception at last intercourse.<sup>13</sup> While contraceptive use other than the condom and the pill were not included in this research, these statistics demonstrate the need for young people who plan to have, or are already having sexual intercourse, to receive information about the full range of modern contraceptive methods, including the dual protection against pregnancy and STIs provided by condom use. A key goal of sexuality education should be contraceptive use at first sex. This requires young people understanding the specific risk and protective factors that affect particular sexual behaviours and skills to manage situations that might lead to STIs, unwanted or unprotected sexual intercourse or violence.

Providing information about the full range of contraceptive methods must also include dispelling myths, and addressing medical concerns. When it comes to contraceptives, young people utilise a variety of sources to inform their understanding and decision-making processes, some of which lack credibility. Thus, addressing contraception in an evidence-informed manner will reassure youth of their efficacy, address concerns related to side

effects, and ultimately empower young people to pick a method that works best for them as an individual.

In addition to education on the range of modern contraceptive options, young people must also learn how to access them. Thus, it will be critical for RSE curriculum to offer the most up-to-date information so that young people can access the sexual and reproductive healthcare they want and need. This includes contraceptive services, pregnancy counselling, testing and treatment for STIs/HIV, abortion and post-abortion care.

Finally, the law regulating access to contraceptives for adolescents is very unclear because the age of medical consent is 16 but the age of sexual consent is 17. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the law does not explicitly prohibit healthcare providers from delivering services to girls under the age of 16. These legal ambiguities can give rise to scenarios such as medical professionals refusing to provide sexual health services (including emergency contraception) to young people or doctors violating principles of confidentiality by contacting the young person's parents against their express wishes. It is the IFPA's experience that many young people are acutely conscious of these scenarios.<sup>14</sup> The IFPA is aware of cases where young people are refused sexual health treatment by medical professionals. We are also aware that other young people choose to avoid sexual health services altogether, and risk unplanned pregnancies and STIs, rather than consult with their parents on contraception and sexual health services.

Those young people who do avail of sexual health services do so under threat of being reported to their parents or the Gardaí. Doctors who provide sexual health services do so in a legal vacuum risking legal action by parents or guardians.

It is worth noting the experience of the United States, where adolescents are legally entitled to some level of confidentiality. A study undertaken by the Guttmacher Institute found that one in five young people would choose to have unsafe sex rather than have their parents notified before they could receive a prescription for contraception. Only one percent said they would stop having sexual intercourse rather than have their parents notified, according to the same study.

As a part of RSE, it is imperative to inform young people about the current laws that impact their access to health. Even more critical, however, is legislative and policy reform to fully support young people's health and wellbeing, including the availability of free contraception.

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### C. HEALTHY, POSITIVE SEXUAL EXPRESSION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Sexuality refers to a broad range of topics, including, "sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual preference, and the way these things interact with emotional, physical, social, and spiritual life. Sexuality is shaped by family, friends, community and the social norms of society."<sup>15</sup> In addition to content on reproduction, sexual behaviours, risks and prevention of ill health, it is critical that RSE curricula provide an opportunity to present sexuality in a way that includes affirming aspects, such as love and relationships based on mutual respect and equality. Additionally, CSE should be sex-positive, meaning, educational materials should demonstrate a positive attitude towards sexuality and sexual enjoyment and clarify that sexual pleasure is important for personal well-being and happiness.<sup>16</sup> Sexuality education should also promote the right to choose when and with whom a person will have any form of intimate or sexual relationship, the responsibility of these choices, and

respecting the choices of others in this regard. This choice includes the right to abstain, to delay, or to engage in sexual relationships.<sup>17</sup>

Young people face increasing pressures regarding sex and sexuality, including conflicting messages and norms. On the one hand, sex is seen as negative and associated with guilt, judgement and fear, but through the media and friends it may be portrayed as positive, desirable and encouraged. Such pressures, perpetuated by a lack of accurate information, awareness and skill-building, can influence how young people engage with their identity, one another and society at large. For example, as the IFPA knows from our sexuality education trainings, young people are particularly vulnerable to adopting language used to manipulate and shame others without fully understanding their meaning and consequence. Additionally, without a comprehensive understanding of the differences between and fluidity of gender identities, gender expressions, biological sex and sexual attraction, youth are prone to ill-informed judgements and biases. A new, comprehensive RSE curriculum provides the opportunity to present young people with proper information and dialogue about a diversity of identities, positive sexual expression, and the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, so that young people feel more empowered in their identities and decision-making, and express tolerance for others to do the same.

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#### D. & E. SAFE USE OF THE INTERNET; AND SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS EFFECTS ON RELATIONSHIPS AND SELF-ESTEEM

In a context where young people have greater exposure to sexually explicit material and inaccurate health information via the internet and social media, there has never been a greater need for high quality, comprehensive sexuality education. The IFPA knows from our training and education programmes that young people tend to uncritically accept social media imagery, language, information and portrayals of sexual behaviour as fact. Their expectations, attitudes and language can be unwittingly shaped by pornography, fantasy and misinformation and they may be unable to distinguish between healthy relationships and unhealthy relationships or accurate and inaccurate information. We also know that parents and teachers tend to be unaware of just how much sexually explicit material young people are exposed to on social media. If limited education about digital literacy is happening at home and at school, young people will continue to be misinformed by the media, and will lack an understanding of where to find reliable sources related to sexuality, relationships and their health.

It is imperative then that digital literacy is a compulsory part of the RSE curriculum at both primary and secondary levels. School settings offer students the space to discuss, reflect, debate issues, clarify information, address concerns, ask questions, and develop relevant skills, which online platforms are not designed to do. Additionally, comprehensive education that includes digital literacy, provides an opportunity for young people to learn about the aspects of sexuality that are absent from pornography, such as emotional intimacy, negotiating consent and discussing modern contraception.<sup>18</sup> Finally, given that young people are bombarded with the input of others on the internet, school-based education can provide them the space to develop their own identity and opinions.

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## F. LGBTQ+ MATTERS

The RSE curriculum has a responsibility to present information in a culturally relevant way, which celebrates, rather than excludes or diminishes, the diversity of identities and experiences of young people. Among the populations that are most often excluded from accessing relevant and comprehensive sexuality education and services are young people who identify as LGBTQ+. The majority of LGBTQ+ young people are healthy and well-adjusted, although they are unjustly affected by stigma, oppression and bullying that results in significantly higher mental health challenges, among other negative health outcomes.<sup>19</sup> Research indicates that young people who are taught positively about LGBTQ+ matters are much more likely to feel part of their school community and are much less likely to be bullied.<sup>20</sup>

If the RSE curriculum is to effectively serve all young people equally, both the content and delivery must be inclusive of all gender identities and sexual orientations and should reflect the ways that society has developed including marriage equality and gender recognition. This includes, but is not limited to, broadening explanations of all the ways in which pregnancy can occur (i.e. IVF, surrogacy, etc.), dispelling myths about the LGBTQ+ community, and offering depictions of healthy relationships using a diverse range of genders, family structures and relationships. A truly comprehensive RSE curriculum is inclusive of LGBTQ+ matters, and avoids providing education through a heteronormative lens. It is critical that LGBTQ+ matters are integrated into lessons, rather than discussed as separate lessons, to avoid further isolating any LGBTQ+ young people.

### **4. WHAT SUPPORTS NEED TO BE CONSIDERED WITH REGARDS TO THESE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REVIEW OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE)?**

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#### INCREASED TRAINING FOR TEACHERS AND USE OF EXTERNAL EDUCATORS

Studies suggest that many RSE teachers do not feel sufficiently trained or supported to teach the subject matter. According to the 2015 Lifeskills survey, a majority of primary schools find teaching RSE either challenging (62%) or very challenging (12%).<sup>21</sup> And a majority of post-primary schools reported that teaching RSE is either challenging (62%) or very challenging (16%). Youth reach centres ranked RSE as the second most challenging subject to teach—only mental health is considered a more challenging subject than RSE. Young people surveyed by Dáil na nÓg in 2010 recommended that teachers be better trained to deliver RSE, citing concerns that some teachers do not take the subject seriously or are afraid or embarrassed to talk about sex.<sup>22</sup>

It is recommended that continuing professional development (CPD) be provided to teachers to enhance confidence and competence in the areas identified as difficult, such as RSE, substance misuse, and mental health.<sup>23</sup> In order to produce a more robust and confident team of well-trained teachers in the school system, the continuing professional development trainings and supports provided by the SPHE Support Service may need to be revised. Additional solutions may require that all schools appoint a dedicated RSE lead with protected hours and access to resources, or that RSE specialist pathways in initial teacher education are created.

It is also imperative the Department of Education has a mechanism by which external organisations and educators are vetted, and parents/guardians are informed of their attendance. Given the current variety of educators that provide trainings at schools across the country, young people are receiving inconsistent, and possibly incomplete or inaccurate information. Organisations such as the IFPA provide comprehensive sexual health information to young people. However, conservative Christian agencies, which advocate abstinence from sex until marriage and do not provide comprehensive sexuality education, also deliver presentations in schools. In addition to potentially conflicting messaging from external educators, the textbooks on which staff rely to deliver RSE may also contain the same biases. It has been reported that some schools use textbooks have been produced by individuals or organisations that focus exclusively on heterosexual relationships and wish to promote abstinence until marriage.<sup>24</sup>

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## SUBSTANCE USE & MENTAL HEALTH

The Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum at large contains lessons on drug and alcohol use, as well as mental health, however, there is a specific need within RSE to address how these topics intersect with sexual decision-making, healthy and unhealthy relationships, and self-identity. As it relates to mental health, young people should be given proper information and skill-building opportunities to develop coping mechanisms, including how to deal with the ending of a relationship, how to support themselves or a peer in a crisis situation, how to identify abuse in a relationship and how to converse with family and friends about their sexuality, among others. As it relates to substance use, there is need for honest dialogue about the influence of drugs and alcohol on sexual decision-making. A 2014 study conducted by NUI Galway and the Rape Crisis Network revealed that most Irish young people drank alcohol before sex, did not feel equipped to negotiate consensual sex, and did not feel confident reporting unwanted sexual experiences.<sup>25</sup> A UNICEF study reiterates this finding, reporting that 4% of Irish youth involved in the research used drugs, and 38% consumed alcohol, before having sex for the first time.<sup>26</sup> Research draws a connection between drug and alcohol intoxication and increased sexual risk-taking behaviour. Most specifically is decreased condom use, consequently increasing the likelihood for STIs and unintended pregnancies.<sup>27</sup> As is the case for all RSE topics, it is imperative that both substance use and mental health be addressed in a manner that is proactive and approachable, rather than reactive and isolating, in order to build trust and empower young people.

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## REACHING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Not only is there a responsibility to reach young people within the school setting, but RSE must also be available to those in institutional or non-formal environments. Young people in care (YPIC), a term used to describe a heterogeneous group of young people living with foster carers, relative carers or in residential care settings, have the same right as their peers to access comprehensive sexuality education.<sup>28</sup>

A 2016 assessment of sexual health and sexuality needs among YPIC indicates that adequate RSE must be underpinned by emotional security, stability and self-esteem, along with skills to safely negotiate sexual encounters. Among the topics to explore include emotions and readiness for sex, consent and consent-related skill building, the potential long-term impact of STIs and specific attention to sexual health needs of young men. YPIC

survey respondents specifically requested opportunities for self-directed and skill-based learning that improves individual development and confidence. Additionally, they asked for greater support for attending school, provisions for privacy while maintaining safety, and access to non-judgemental clinical services, among others.<sup>29</sup>

Among the service-providers of YPIC, respondents asked for clearer guidelines in relation to dealing with the provision of RSE and contraception, as well as the reporting of non-abusive sex, to those under the age of 17. Additionally, they asked for more consistent training opportunities to equip staff in meeting RSE needs. Carers of foster children similarly requested increased training and support to deliver age-appropriate RSE, including clarity regarding reporting requirements and access to services.<sup>30</sup>

The IFPA works extensively with parents, carers, youth workers, and young people with intellectual disabilities. It is through these interactions that we have concerns about the inadequate levels of preparation and support for carers in many settings to understand and address the sexual and reproductive health needs of vulnerable young people in institutional care settings, particularly LGBTQ+ young people. As the International Planned Parenthood Federation suggests, “failure to provide marginalized young people with comprehensive sexuality education will deepen the social exclusion that many experience, limit their potential, and put their health, futures and lives at greater risk.”<sup>31</sup>

Across the board, carers of all type recommended a stronger understanding of the sexual and reproductive health-related legal and policy barriers that impact those they serve. For example, legal barriers remain with respect to the sexual and reproductive rights of people with intellectual disabilities. The recent repeal of Section 5 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993, which made it an offence to have sex with a “mentally impaired” person outside of marriage, is a welcome development. However, it is of concern that the new Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 failed to take a disability neutral approach and instead categorises someone with an intellectual disability as a “protected person”.<sup>32</sup>

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## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

If we are serious about meeting the sexual health needs of young people, the quality of sexuality education that young people receive in both school and non-formal settings should be assured through curriculum design, training, monitoring and evaluation, as well as robust systems of accountability. The IFPA recommends incorporating monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance into existing structures. Among the areas to evaluate include, but are not limited to, the benefits of external educators versus the increased responsibilities and trainings for school teachers, the experience of students of RSE across different school types, and the validity of teaching resources, such as the textbooks, used in the classroom. Evaluations of RSE reveal important information about how the programme is operating, and where change is needed. For example, a 2013 study on the implementation of RSE found that practices and procedures to support planning for senior cycle RSE were not effective in the majority of schools – there were evident weaknesses in programme planning for senior cycle RSE in 62% of the 63 post-primary schools inspected.<sup>33</sup> Earlier studies have also identified problems with the implementation of RSE at senior cycle level.<sup>34</sup> Research also indicates that the time allocated to RSE decreases substantially once students reach third year of junior cycle.<sup>35</sup>

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## RSE SCHOOL POLICY

The Department of Education requires that all schools have a policy regarding the teaching of RSE and that it is taught from the beginning of primary school to the end of secondary school. According to the Department, the RSE policy should reflect a school's core values and ethos as outlined in its mission statement. While no aspect of the RSE programme can be omitted on the grounds of school ethos, the Department has stated that all elements of the programme "can and should be taught within the ethos and value system of the school as expressed in the RSE policy".<sup>36</sup> In practice, this means that not all schools provide comprehensive information on the full range of contraceptive methods.<sup>37</sup> Due to the departmental requirement, the provision of sexuality education is hugely varied and depends on the ethos and value system of individual schools.

We know from our training and education services that, while parents and teachers tend to be supportive of sexuality education, school ethos does create significant barriers to the delivery of an adequate level of information. Parents are frequently unaware that Boards of Management define school policy on this issue and that schools may not cover all aspects of sexual and reproductive health. For example, the IFPA has many times been obliged to turn down requests from schools to deliver sessions, because we are asked to omit references to contraception. We frequently encounter young people who require sexual and reproductive health services in our clinics, but who have not received basic education on matters of sexual health. And the specific RSE needs of LGBTQ+ young people are rarely addressed in any adequate manner in schools.

We recommend that a whole school approach, involving Board of Management, parents, student councils and other key stakeholders, and in consultation with experts in sexual and reproductive health, is used. Through this informed and collective process, RSE school policies would better serve the needs of young people, and be less constrained by school ethos.

### **5. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR OBSERVATIONS, PLEASE RESPOND HERE.**

A young person's right to health, and their right to education, are interconnected. To ensure positive health outcomes for young people, we must support their access to scientifically accurate, incremental, age-and developmentally-appropriate, curriculum-based, comprehensive, human-rights based, and transformative sexuality education. The IFPA believes that if all young people in Ireland are to realise their sexual and reproductive rights, commitment and advocacy on all levels, from the Department of Education and Skills, to teachers and parents, to non-governmental organisations, is critical.

It is with these remarks in mind, that the IFPA makes the following recommendations to improve RSE:

1. Guarantee the right of all young people to receive factual and objective information on relationships and sexuality regardless of school ethos.
2. Ensure that the relationships and sexuality education curriculum be revised to align with UNESCO's definition and characteristics of comprehensive sexuality education.
3. Introduce RSE topics gradually and deliver incrementally in an age-appropriate manner that is responsive to the changing needs and capabilities of the child and the

young person as they grow. A minimum number of hours per term should be allocated to sexuality education programmes in schools.

4. Design a clear set of goals and indicators for sexuality education that are established within the curriculum, including contraceptive use at first sex as a goal, with indicators measuring delivery of information about pregnancy, contraception and STIs.
5. Develop a quality assurance framework for comprehensive sexuality education to ensure that implementation of sexuality education in schools and in non-formal settings can be robustly monitored and evaluated.
6. Encourage a whole school approach to the development of school policy on sexuality education involving Board of Management, parents, student councils and other key stakeholders, and in consultation with experts in sexual and reproductive health.
7. Train and resource specialist sexuality educators—including, but not limited to primary and secondary level teachers—who can deliver comprehensive sexuality education in schools, youth groups, care homes and other settings.
8. Ensure that any external educators and organisations are properly vetted and parents/guardians are informed of their attendance prior to providing any lessons in the schools.
9. Take measures to ensure that RSE is available, and delivered by trained sexual health educators, to young people in care, including incarcerated young people and young people with intellectual disabilities, in their care setting, as well as at school.
10. Provide a network of non-formal settings, such as Youth Cafes, where young people can access sexual and reproductive health information and services.
11. Remove the legal barriers to access to contraception by young people.

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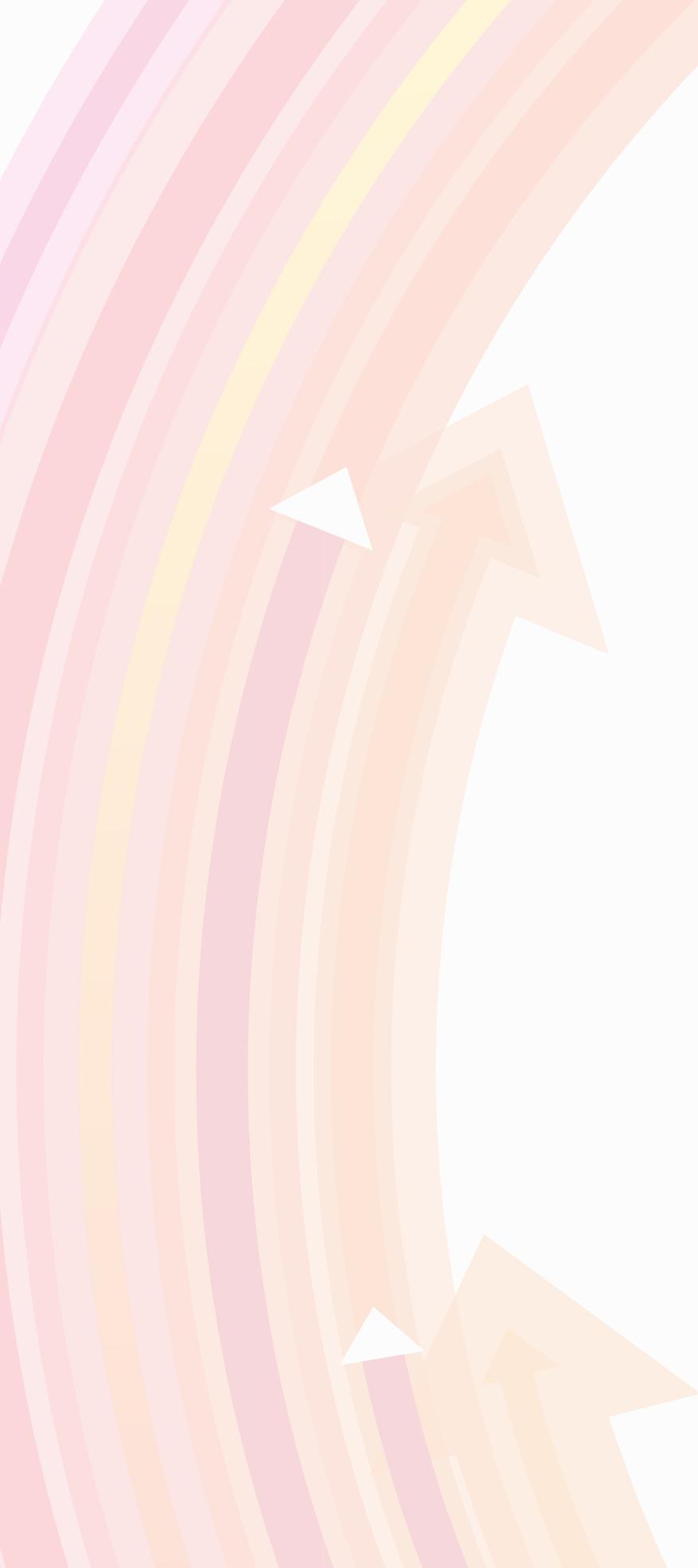
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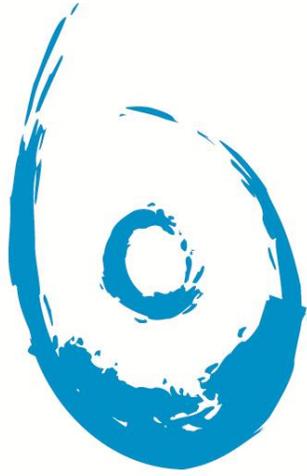
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**Contributor**  
Inclusion Ireland



**INCLUSION IRELAND**

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

# **Submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment**

**On sexual health and relationship education**

**January 2019**

**This document is written in font 12 Verdana in line with Inclusion Ireland plain English guidelines.**

## **About Inclusion Ireland**

Established in 1961, Inclusion Ireland is a national, rights based advocacy organisation that works to promote the rights of people with an intellectual disability.

Inclusion Ireland uses a human rights-based approach to its work. This recognises persons with an intellectual disability as rights holders with entitlements, and corresponding duty bearers and their obligations. Inclusion Ireland seeks to strengthen the capacities of persons with an intellectual disability to make their claims and of duty bearers to meet their obligations.

The vision of Inclusion Ireland is that of people with an intellectual disability living and participating in the community with equal rights as citizens, to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential. Inclusion Ireland's work is underpinned by the values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy and autonomy.

## **Introduction**

Inclusion Ireland welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. The area of sexual relationships has formed a significant part of Inclusion Ireland's work over many years as we recognised that the paternal and over-protective attitudes and legislation were creating a harmful rather than protective environment for people with intellectual disabilities.

In the following submission, Inclusion Ireland wishes to briefly point out some of the barriers for people with intellectual disabilities in accessing good-quality sexual education and make some recommendations for change.

## **Relationships, Sexuality and Intellectual Disability**

Sexuality and intellectual disability has been an area that has been surrounded with taboo and paternalistic attitudes.

Much of the discussion around sexuality for people with intellectual disabilities is focussed on protection. The idea that people with intellectual disabilities are 'eternal children' devoid of the same desires as any other adult is a damaging preconception that has the potential to cause significant harm. The thought that people with intellectual disabilities would like the possibility of exploring and enjoying their sexuality often seems to be considered an alien concept.

Major research conducted by the HSE<sup>1</sup> on sexual health promotion for people with intellectual disabilities showed that many staff working with people with intellectual disabilities are reluctant to provide sufficient sex education for fear of reprisal from parents or the organisation and concerns around capacity of the individual.

Until recently, our Criminal Law strongly reinforced this fear and the idea that people with intellectual disabilities should not have sexual relationships. Section 5 of the 1993 Criminal Law Sexual Offences Act, which was recently repealed made it a crime for a person to have sex with a person who is “mentally impaired” unless they are married to each other. ‘Mentally impaired’ was defined so broadly as to potentially include all men and women with an intellectual disability and mental illness.

Although the legislation has been repealed, it has caused untold damage over the 25 years or so that it was on statute. There were few convictions under this law but instead created a ‘chilling effect’ where individuals, their families and those who work with people with intellectual disabilities were afraid to discuss sexual relationships for fear of promoting criminality or reprisals. The potential criminal aspect represented a major barrier to delivery of sexual education.

Through our advocacy work, Inclusion Ireland has been contacted many times by workers involved in providing RSE in a variety of educational and training environments and the question is often asked “am I promoting the commission of a crime” or “will I be held responsible for this”.

Disappointingly, the law that replaced the 1993 Act<sup>2</sup> continues a trend of ‘categorising’ people with disabilities by creating the ‘protected person’ definition, which many people with disabilities could fall into. This approach is likely in violation of Article 23 on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding respect for home and the family which requires the elimination of discrimination against persons with disabilities in all matters relating to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships, on an equal basis with others. 5

Without the change in the Criminal Law, change in culture is unlikely. When the mere discussion of relationships and sexual relationships is a taboo, the chances of a high quality education system is essentially nil. That fear has meant a knock-

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<sup>1</sup> HSE - “Friendships and Taboos” 2009

<sup>2</sup> Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

on effect of a generation of people with intellectual disabilities having received inadequate or no relationship and sexual education.

We know that people with intellectual disabilities do have sex however and they form relationships and families and they should enjoy the same rights to each. People with disabilities and women in particular do not get the support they need in supporting these rights.

### **People with Intellectual Disabilities & Sexual Health**

Research has shown that persons with intellectual disabilities engaging in sexual activity are at high risk of Sexually Transmittable Infection (STI)<sup>3</sup> and that the aforementioned attitudes to sexual activity among people with intellectual disabilities can compromise the level of sexual health support received<sup>4</sup>.

People with intellectual disabilities are less likely to receive general education and information which in turn means that there is often insufficient knowledge to ensure safer sex. In addition people with intellectual disabilities often have limited access to affordable care should they contract an STI.

A report by the World Health Organisation has shown that children and adults with disabilities are more likely to experience violence, including sexual violence than their non-disabled peers and those with intellectual disabilities are most at risk.

Accessing healthcare can be difficult in general and accessing contraception can be a problem for many people with disabilities where they may need support to attend a GP. Women with disabilities are also more likely to be adversely affected by the Constitutional ban on abortion with travel out of reach for many reasons including poverty<sup>5</sup> and access to travel options and accessible information.

For people with intellectual disabilities who become parents, the Child Care Law Reporting Project by Dr Carol Coulter notes that of the principal reasons noted for care application, the largest single number (20%) were because of the mental illness or intellectual disability of the parent, usually the mother, higher than the statistics for abuse or neglect.

### **Sexual Education & Intellectual Disability**

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<sup>3</sup> HSE 2009

<sup>4</sup> Department of Health, National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020

<sup>5</sup> More than double the general population

Sexual education is critical for sexual health and for individuals who are most at risk of sexual ill-health, infections, crisis pregnancies and assault it is especially important.

Research however shows that the majority of people with intellectual disabilities receive little sex education<sup>6</sup> despite evidence that the provision of accurate education actually makes people with intellectual safer from exploitation.

As it currently stands, there is no specific Relationship and Sexuality Education programme for young people with an intellectual disability within the Irish school system although there are Curriculum guides on Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) for intellectual disabilities developed by the National Council on Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

Many people who attend 'Special Schools' attend until they are 18 and do so under the umbrella of Primary Education with some 16% of people with intellectual disabilities finished school at primary level (compared to 5% of the general population). This means for those people they do not receive RSE or SPHE beyond a primary level.

It is neither appropriate nor respectful to presume that a primary-level relationship or sexual education is sufficient for young people with an intellectual disability approaching adolescence or adulthood and accessible materials relating to sexual education should be developed for this cohort.

The Curriculum guide for Primary schools (which include those Special Schools) has a heavy focus on personal care skills and relationships rather than sexuality itself. At post-primary level, the curriculum guide is for 'mild' intellectual disability and the Syllabus module concerning friendship and relationships and sexuality is given the working title "You've got a friend".

Where Special School's do deliver RSE it can be mixed and one Special School has a publicly available Policy on Relationships and Sexuality, which focuses on the HSE 'Stay Safe' policy aimed at establishment of healthy personal relationships and the prevention of child abuse. The school policy lists behaviours that are 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' (including Holding hands, Hugging, Kissing) and a procedure which focuses on redirecting the child, verbal reprimand and intervention. There is no focus within the policy of the benefits or positives of intimate relationships and how to foster these relationships in a positive manner

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<sup>6</sup> Irish Sex Education (2006)

## **Conclusion**

A significant culture change is needed in Ireland in the ways that relationships and sexual education is delivered and this is especially so where so-called 'vulnerable' groups are involved.

There are signs that attitudinal change is beginning to take place, a survey by the National Disability Authority into Public Attitudes to Disability showed that 78% of people thought that people with intellectual disabilities had the same right to fulfilment through sexual relationships as everybody else. Although this figure is lower than that for physical or sensory disabilities, it is an increase from 2011 when the figure stood at 51%. This shows that there is still room for improvement but that a remarkable swing in attitude could be in train.

There is a responsibility now for legislators, policy makers, the media and advocacy organisations to take proactive steps, using the UNCRPD to continue the improvement in the public perception of disability and to campaign for a future where people with disabilities are not seen as 'eternal children' but rather as citizens who require the tools and education to access the rights to privacy, intimacy and sexual relationships in the same way as their peers.

## **Recommendations**

- Ireland has recently ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and must perform an audit of existing laws & policies for compliance, including the Articles relating to the right to equal status, privacy and family life.
- A review of laws and in particular the Criminal Law relating to sexual offences should take place with the UNCRPD as a guide.
- A review of approaches to relationship and sexual education for people with intellectual disabilities is urgently needed.
- Teaching training should include the use of easy to read materials and methodologies which engage young people with disabilities.
- A relationship and sexual education programme for young people, in easy to read and understand format should be developed.
- A training programme of education for so-called vulnerable adults who have left school must be introduced. This could be made available on a

community-based level and through service providers such as disability service-providers where appropriate.

- The relationship and sexual education training programmes must be delivered in a neutral fashion. This is especially important as many disability service-providers are voluntary organisations (former religious orders) and ethos should have no impact on fact-based sexual education.
- Education programmes for parents (particularly mothers) with disabilities around parenting should be considered in response to the high numbers of children being taken into care on the grounds of disability should be advanced.

The background features a series of curved, overlapping stripes in shades of pink, purple, and yellow, resembling a rainbow. Overlaid on these stripes are several large, semi-transparent arrows pointing upwards and to the right. The overall design is modern and vibrant.

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## **Contributor**

Irish National Teachers Organisation  
(INTO) LGBT group

**From:** INTO LGBT Teachers' Group <intolgbtgroupsecretary@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday 1 October 2018 14:03  
**To:** info  
**Subject:** Submission: RSE provision review in primary and post primary schools

INTO LGBT Teachers' Group,  
Irish National Teachers' Organisation  
35 Parnell Square  
DO1 ET35

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you on behalf of the INTO LGBT Teachers' Group. This is a subgroup of the wider INTO union and so consists of LGBT+ primary school teachers in schools all around the country. We were happy to hear of the Minister's announcement that RSE provision in primary and post primary schools would be reviewed and were eager to make a submission based on our daily experiences teaching in Irish primary schools.

Below is a summary of our comments and suggestions.

Firstly, the reference to the review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) 'curriculum' is somewhat confusing. While RSE is undoubtedly a part of the SPHE curriculum, as far as we are aware, there is no such thing as an 'RSE curriculum'. Indeed the RSE support materials themselves specify that 'They are not prescriptive, rather they provide a menu of options for classroom lessons from which teachers can choose in accordance with their school RSE Policy' and 'It is the responsibility of those who are drawing on these resources to satisfy themselves that the content of materials which they use is appropriate to the needs of students and in line with their school RSE Policy and Programme'. As such, what exactly is it that we are talking about? Is it a review of the RSE materials, a more whole-scale review of the SPHE curriculum or the introduction of a specific RSE curriculum?

Regardless of what exactly the NCCA plans to do, there are certain principles which we hope will be part of it:

- The current materials (as illustrated in the quotes above) leave a lot of options for schools to 'opt out'. RSE is a vital part of a child's education and whether or not a child receives a full education should not be left up to chance or a lottery based on what school they are attending. We would hope that the revised materials would not include these 'opt out' clauses.
- The current RSE materials are almost twenty years old and are such are limited in their scope with regard to inclusion. We would hope that any new materials/curriculum would have explicit reference to same-sex headed families and more diverse forms of family structure. Representation of LGBT+ families should explicitly be named in the document e.g. "Paul's dads spoke to him." This may spark some discussion around LGBT+ relationships and create a space where LGBT+ identities are normalised and thus more accepted. School should also be instructed to update their policies to include LGBT+ and gender inclusive terminology. Naming relevant organisations that the teacher can contact or refer parents to would also be helpful e.g. the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland (TENI), BeLonGTo etc.
- Teaching about RSE should be facilitated by the class teacher. The use of external educators or agencies means that the topics covered in these lessons are somehow then seen as separate from their other learning and questions at a later date then less likely. To ensure that this teaching is of good quality, teachers should receive continuing CPD and professional development with regard to RSE and LGBT+ inclusion, as well as an emphasis being placed on the importance of SPHE/RSE as part of the child's holistic development.
- Children should learn about all aspects of puberty together. Segregating them on the basis of sex only leads to confusion and misunderstanding and contributes to topics like menstruation to being seen as somehow taboo. The separation on the basis of male/female should be explicitly discouraged in the new materials/curriculum.
- While we recognise that teaching about same-sex sexual relations is unlikely in primary school, all pupils should have received a full and comprehensive sexual education before leaving second level school. This should include LGBT+ inclusive sexual education.

- Gender stereotyping has negative impacts for every child. Challenging gender norms and stereotypes needs to be overtly addressed in the syllabus from infants upwards. In infant classes children are already absorbing information and messages about gender e.g. “only girls are nurses”/“that’s a toy for boys”. Gender stereotypes limit all children and through challenging these stereotypes a school becomes a more welcoming place for transgender and gender non-conforming children, as well as a more equal school overall. We would recommend deconstructing gender stereotypes as a lesson within the RSE program because how you perceive your own gender impacts on your interactions and relationship with others.
- Gender non-specific language should be used when referring to pupils within the writing of the document. Using “their” as a gender-neutral third person singular (instead of his/her) is inclusive of non-binary students.

This review is coming at a pivotal time in the development of the Irish education system. The current curriculum is almost twenty years old and the decisions we make now will likely have a significant impact upon the lives of future generations of school children. As President Mary McAleese noted in 2016, “The children who are in cots and buggies today, who will discover their sexual identity in twelve or so years time, have the right to grow into mentally healthy and well-adjusted teenagers. What we do now can help ensure that no bully and no homophobic, biphobic or transphobic culture will too easily deprive them of that right.” All children’s needs (including LGBT+ children or children who will later identify as LGBT+) should be considered in the design of any future curricula.

Additionally, the LGBTI Youth Strategy, launched by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in June 2018, explicitly highlights the education system as an area in need of significant improvement. Goal 1, Objective 1(a) specifically recommends that schools (including primary schools) develop a whole-school policy to ensure the inclusion of LGBTI lives in the teaching curriculum, Objective 1(b) refers to the need to review professional development supports for teachers in this area and Objective 1(c) calls for an evaluation of SPHE (including RSE) to examine how issues of different types of sexuality and the different types of gender are treated. This strategy is due for completion within three years and so immediate action must be taken if we are to meet these targets. The creation of an LGBT+ inclusive RSE curriculum/materials would be a good first step.

As a group of LGBT+ teachers, we feel that we understand both the need for LGBT+ inclusive content and also have the pedagogical knowledge of how to do this in a child-friendly and age-appropriate way. As such, a member of our group would be happy to speak with the committee to further discuss any of the recommendations we have included here in our submission.

With kind regards,  
 Cecelia Gavigan (Chairperson)  
 INTO LGBT Teachers’ Group



Home

## **Contributor**

Irish Society for the Prevention of  
Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)



**Never give up on a child. Ever.**

ISPCCC submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on its review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in primary and post-primary schools.

July 2018



**Never give up on a child. Ever.**

## 1. Summary

The ISPCC (Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) appreciates the opportunity to input into the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on its review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in primary and post-primary schools.

As the national child protection charity, providing support services to children and families, including Childline, Ireland's only 24-hour listening service for children the ISPCC is well placed to comment on the specific issues arising for children in relation to this matter.

The ISPCC is clear from a recent in-house case review that children in Ireland today lack an awareness of the most appropriate and safe way to express their sexuality, where they can be negatively influenced by images and behaviours they view online. Increasingly the viewing of pornography is obscuring children's notions of acceptable/appropriate sexual behaviour/expectations.

The ISPCC has previously inputted into the Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs' work on the cybersecurity of children and young adults in 2017/2018, and some of the inputs to that submission are reflected in this.<sup>12</sup>

The ISPCC believes that the revised RSE should be grounded in the themes of child protection; internet safety, and mental health and well-being, built on a foundation of children's rights and age-appropriateness to reflect children's lives today. Livingstone and Mason in their paper on *Sexual Rights and Sexual Risks among Youth Online* (2015) suggest that '... education about pornography could start later in adolescence, but educational lessons about consent, inappropriate touching, harassment, gender equality and staying safe online could start around

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_children\\_and\\_youth\\_affairs/2017-02-22/2/](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_children_and_youth_affairs/2017-02-22/2/)

<sup>2</sup>

[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_children\\_and\\_youth\\_affairs/submissions/2017/2017-02-22\\_submission-on-children-and-cyber-safety-ispcc\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_children_and_youth_affairs/submissions/2017/2017-02-22_submission-on-children-and-cyber-safety-ispcc_en.pdf)

age nine.<sup>3</sup> This sentiment is echoed in the UK's *Internet Safety Strategy – Green Paper*<sup>4</sup> and is a point the Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs its report on *The Cybersecurity of Children and Young Adults* mentioned it would like explored in an Irish context.<sup>5</sup>

The ISPCC supports the recommendation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in their *Concluding Observations on the Combined Third and Fourth Periodic Reports of Ireland* that Ireland 'Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum...'<sup>6</sup>

The ISPCC's key recommendations to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) when drafting its report are:

**Recommendation One:** Children need adequate and early education in relation to relationships and sexuality so that they are appropriately prepared; both for healthy relationships and so that they can recognise and seek help when faced with unhealthy and abusive relationships. It is imperative that this education is delivered in an age-appropriate manner and to the lived-realities of children today.

**Recommendation Two:** A prevention and early intervention model of internet safety education, to include a sexual health element should be developed as a mandatory part of the curriculum. Children should be taught the language of relationships and sexuality with appropriate terms in a non-judgemental manner to best equip them for future relationships.

**Recommendation Three:** The ISPCC believes that the revised RSE provision needs to be embedded into the school curriculum and that this education should be aimed at the whole-school community including parents, teachers and students. It is imperative that parents are supported to be involved in their child's relationship and sexuality education.

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<sup>3</sup> Livingstone, Sonia and Mason, Jessica (2015) Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: a review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments. European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, London. Pg. 47 <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/64567/>

4

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/650949/Internet\\_Safety\\_Strategy\\_green\\_paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/650949/Internet_Safety_Strategy_green_paper.pdf) Pgs. 25-26

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[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_children\\_and\\_youth\\_affairs/reports/2018/2018-03-29\\_report-on-cyber-security-for-children-and-young-adults\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_children_and_youth_affairs/reports/2018/2018-03-29_report-on-cyber-security-for-children-and-young-adults_en.pdf) pg. 31

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<https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20160504ConcludingObsonCombined3rdand4thPeriodicReportsIreland.pdf> Pg. 13

**Recommendation Four:** There needs to be annual targeted public awareness campaigns on children’s cyber safety (incorporating messages from RSE) to reinforce learning from education in school (campaigns should have a specific focus on parental involvement and support). Programmes delivered in schools need to be aimed at young people with a built-in element of support for parents.

**Recommendation Five:** It is imperative that the revised RSE has a robust rights-based approach in its design and delivery in order to offer the most robust protection to children.

## 2. Introduction

The ISPCC is pleased to have this opportunity to share its experience of working with children and young people whose stories and experiences illustrate how the current provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is not meeting the lived-realities and needs of children in Ireland in 2018. This submission has been addressed within the context of the ISPCC’s vision, mission and objective, as defined by its own strategic plan.

Our recommendations are grounded in our experience, the data we gather and the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>7</sup>

The ISPCC is the national child protection charity.<sup>8</sup> It provides a range of child-centred services including childhood support services, family support services and mentoring, all of which are focused on building resilience and coping skills. These services support children and young people and their families to develop their own skills and enable them to deal with challenges and situations in their lives, and to promote their well-being.

The ISPCC provides Childline, Ireland’s only 24-hour listening service for children and young people. It is free, confidential and non-judgemental, providing support to children across Ireland.

The ISPCC’s Childline service responded to over 380,000 contacts from children and young people across its phone, online and text platforms in 2017.<sup>9</sup> In addition, over 650 children and young people benefited from our therapeutic support services.<sup>10</sup>

The ISPCC’s Childline service dealt with over 16,000 contacts from children and young people presenting under our ‘sexuality’ profile heading in 2017. These engagements cover issues such as

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7 Full Text on the UNCRC <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

8 Further information about the ISPCC’s services and financial statements can be found in its Annual Report 2017 <https://www.ispcc.ie/campaigns-lobbying/publications/ispcc-annual-report-2017/17066>

9 Ibid. pg. 4

10 Ibid. pg.4

information and the facts of life; sexual identity; pregnancy; and other sexuality issues. The service saw over 2,000 children and young people engage on the sub-profile of ‘relationship with partner’ in the same year.

## Our Vision

An Ireland where all children are safe, heard, and valued.

## Our Mission

To make the protection of children everyone’s priority.

## Our Work

We listen, we support, we protect.

### 3. ISPCC Key Areas for Consideration and Recommendations regarding RSE Review

The ISPCC recognises that children have a right to be protected and that balancing that right with other rights, such as freedom of expression can sometimes be difficult.<sup>11</sup> ‘...it is vital to develop a holistic approach that prioritises and respects both children’s opportunities as well as their protection from harm.’<sup>12</sup> The review of the current RSE provision is very welcome and the prospect of developing a dynamic, thought-provoking, secular and pluralistic education should be embraced by all key stakeholders. Livingstone and Mason (2015) in their study note that ‘Curricula should cover emotions, consent, sexual identity, dynamics of healthy (and unhealthy) relationships, sources of trustworthy information, critical media analysis tools and critical analysis of pornography, in addition to sexual and reproductive health issues. Further, rather than (or as well as) designing dedicated ICT-related or digital literacy sessions, the importance of the internet in exercising sexual rights and ensuring sexual protection would be better embedded in teaching and resources for sex and relationships education.’<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Livingstone, Sonia and Mason, Jessica (2015) Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: a review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people’s developing sexuality in relation to new media environments. European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, London. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/64567/>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pg. 11

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. pg. 11

The ISPCC's submission recommends that the following key themes be incorporated into the new RSE modules:

- (i) Child Protection
- (ii) Internet Safety
- (iii) Mental Health and Well-being

#### **(i) Child Protection**

The ISPCC is the national child protection charity. Through its Childline service the ISPCC receives interactions on a daily basis from children who are concerned about issues relating to sexuality and relationships, and abuse.

Child sexual abuse is still a significant problem in Ireland. Historically, and indeed in a not too distant past children were subjected to horrific sexual abuse at the hands of people in authority including priests; teachers and others in positions of trust. In the past, children's protection was not safeguarded nor championed.

However, child sexual abuse still occurs in Ireland today. The rate of criminal conviction for child sexual abuse is extremely low. There are many reasons for this outcome, but one that is that credibility of children as witnesses can be problematic. Often children who have experienced sexual abuse are not aware that what's happening to them is abuse: sometimes they don't have the language; sometimes they are too young to understand the behaviours; sometimes they are too innocent or naïve, or afraid to tell their abuser to stop.

Sometimes where a parent is involved, children fear the consequence of disclosure – they do not want to lose this parent or see anything 'bad' happen to them. Some children are sexually abused by a family 'friend'; some children are subjected to sexual abuse by a parent or other family member, in some cases who themselves know no different due to their own experience of inter-generational sexual abuse.

Child protection did not have the platform or level of awareness that it has in Ireland today; in the last ten years there have been a number of legislative and policy developments to enhance the protection of children. Still however; children, in the main, do not have the adequate language skills and the necessary confidence to speak out and express themselves if/when they are subjected to sexual abuse. In fact this leaves them in a vulnerable position to be preyed upon by those who seek to exploit and abuse. It is imperative children are aware of their rights; to be protected and to be safe. Children are equipped better when they understand their rights, which

can empower them to identify when something inappropriate is happening to them and can empower them to tell someone about it. Rights are important but need robust education to create awareness of them. The new RSE curriculum has the opportunity to take a strong rights-based approach in its teaching.

Education has a huge role to play in tackling the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Ireland. There is a clear need for improved guidance and education measures. Under the current system schools in Ireland are still free to deliver relationships and sexuality education according to their ethos. Many schools, often due to a religious ethos opt for, abstinence-only models, and others offering a more comprehensive programme. This inconsistency in delivery does a disservice to children and young people and does not equip many of them to deal with the real life situations they are likely to face. This does not suggest that one size fits all; individual schools should indeed have some autonomy in designing their own approach to the curriculum to allow for the consideration of areas of concern specific or unique to particular communities. However, there must be a commitment to cover specific core topics and an acknowledgement that an abstinence based approach is no longer an appropriate response.

Critically, we need to equip young people with the knowledge they require to be safe, and ensure that the issues young people are facing – e.g. exposure to pornography, sextortion, sexting are covered in any such curriculum. Students need to access high-quality, comprehensive sex education that supports them and gives them the knowledge and skills they need to be safe, while meeting their needs in a modern world. The ISPCC works with thousands of children each year who are concerned for their own safety and well-being and would benefit from more discussion and focus at school on the concepts of autonomy, privacy and consent.

In regards to addressing such experiences as ‘sexting’ and young people accessing harmful content online for example, through subjects such as RSE, it is imperative that young people’s own experiences are sought and are taken into account when developing programmes. This will ensure that real experiences and issues are being addressed.

## (ii) Internet Safety

The current RSE provision does not cover the role that online plays in children and young people’s relationship and sexuality development.

The ISPCC receives contacts consistently from children who are concerned about their online safety, or whose behaviours online combined with their lack of privacy knowledge is a cause for

concern. The current approach is not sufficient to prepare young people for the reality of life in today's society.

It is necessary that this review capture adequately the prominent role online has for children and young people and offers the space to discuss the various aspects of same. Such discussions can enable young people to navigate complex areas of their development, in particular when building online networks and making decisions about relationships and sexual behaviour. Young people must be equipped and empowered to make safe choices when making and keeping friends online. The importance of privacy, both their own individual privacy and that of others must also be highlighted as a right.

As more and more schools use technology in the classroom, the need to inform young people of both the positives and the potential dangers, and to empower them to be safe online grows.

Livingstone and Mason (2015) point out that ‘...internet sources now offer youth an instant and seemingly private means by which they can access information on sexual health, sexual pleasure and communicating with sexual partners’ (Brown et al. 2009).<sup>14</sup> The RSE review could possibly consider introducing an online resource to complement the content delivered in the classroom and support the overall delivery of the modules to reinforce learning.

The ISPCC is aware from its engagements with children and young people on the issue of ‘sexting’ that when their self-generated images have been non-consensually shared this can cause feelings of embarrassment, shame and anxiety about future reputational damage; these feelings should not be compounded/exacerbated further by the tone the curriculum takes. These young people often feel under huge pressure to generate and share such images. Young people from Newbridge College who gave evidence to the Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs when its members looked at the cybersecurity of children and young adults had this to say:

“We can help prevent and tackle this [sexting] by raising awareness and being taught the dangers of sexting in school as part of the social, personal and health education, SPHE, curriculum or the relationships and sexuality education, RSE, module.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Livingstone, Sonia and Mason, Jessica (2015) Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: a review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments. European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, London. Pg. 29 <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/64567/>

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_children\\_and\\_youth\\_affairs/2018-02-07/](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_children_and_youth_affairs/2018-02-07/)

Livingstone and Mason (2015) further recommend that educational programmes addressing the issue of 'sexting' should be mindful to talk about coercion and consent so as not to shame those who have taken part in this activity.<sup>16</sup>

It is clear that children and young people want safe spaces to be created where they can discuss these important matters in a factual and open manner.

**ISPC Case Study:** One of the young people I worked (age 14) with told me of issues relating to a friend who had sent nude pictures which were then posted to her friend's parents Facebook page as an act of revenge. My client had a good relationships with her mum and would have had open discussions about nude pictures and sexting, it was something she was encountering and one boy was requesting of her. This happened during our intervention so she was able to be assertive about it but I would wonder if someone has low self-esteem and hasn't supportive relationships what would happen.

### (iii) Mental Health and Well-being

Adolescence, a stage of development while important can be incredibly complex; young people want desperately to fit in but can struggle to get a sense of who they are and what they identify with, the onset of puberty further complicating matters. But, it is this stage where young people seek to form stronger friendships and more intimate relationships. The current RSE provision focuses on heterosexual relationships, leaving those who identify as LGBTI+ isolated and having to source relationship and sexuality health information elsewhere; sometimes from non-trustworthy sources. This lack of recognition can leave LGBTI+ young people feeling like they don't 'fit-in' to this heterosexual relationship ideal that's purported in the current RSE provision.

As mentioned above the ISPC's Childline service receives interactions on a daily basis from young people concerned about sexuality, relationships and risky behaviour online; it is clearly a salient and real issue for young people, affecting their well-being in a substantial way.

A mutual and acceptable understanding of consent is a cornerstone of any healthy sexual relationship; which should be discussed openly in the classroom.

**ISPC Case Study:** A 14 year old girl contacted Childline. She was hard to engage initially as she was crying and very upset but then talked about the following. She said that she had recently been hanging out with a group of friends in a nearby park. Some boys that they knew joined them

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<sup>16</sup> Livingstone, Sonia and Mason, Jessica (2015) Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: a review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments. European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, London. Pg.47 <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/64567/>

and they had brought some alcohol with them. The caller said that they were just talking and having a laugh and it was really good fun. There was a boy (16) in the group who she had fancied for a long time and he sat beside her on the grass and held her hand. She couldn't believe that he liked her. The caller said that she had never drunk alcohol before but didn't want to say no because everyone in the group was drinking. After a while she felt dizzy and a bit sick so the boy who she fancied took her hand and suggested that they go for a walk. They walked for a while and then stopped. She was still feeling very woozy when the boy started kissing her but one thing led to another and they ended up having sex. The caller said that she is worried that she could end up pregnant because they didn't use contraception but someone told her that you can't get pregnant the first time you have sex so she hopes that's true. The caller went on to talk about her feelings since this happened. She feels that it shouldn't have happened and thinks that she could have said no if she wasn't drunk. She said that she feels used by the boy because she hasn't heard from him since and thinks that he took advantage of the fact that she was drunk by having sex with her. She is also very worried that she might be pregnant as a result of what happened.

'Many researchers argue that educational programmes need to counteract ideas that devalue female sexuality, and young people should be educated about the responsibility of obtaining enthusiastic consent, where both parties express mutual pleasure...'<sup>17</sup>

The revised RSE curriculum needs to reflect and acknowledge a diverse range of relationships and be open to discussing the potential nuances with what consent actually means.

#### 4. Policy Context

The following need to be considered in the development of the RSE programme:

*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*<sup>18</sup>

Article 3 – The Best Interests of the Child

All actions concerning the child must be based on his or her best interests.

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<sup>17</sup> Livingstone, Sonia and Mason, Jessica (2015) Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: a review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments. European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, London, pg. 25 <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/64567/>

<sup>18</sup> Full Text on the UNCRC <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

### Article 12 - The Child's Opinion

The child has the right to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter or procedure affecting the child, in accordance with his or her age and maturity.

### Article 13 - Freedom of Expression

The child has the right to obtain and make known information, and to express his or her own views, unless this would violate the rights of others.

### Article 16 – Protection of Privacy

The child has the right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel or slander.

### Article 19 - Protection from Abuse and Neglect

The State has an obligation to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect, to provide support to those who have been abused and to investigate instances of abuse.

Article 34 – States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child – *Report of the 2014 Day of General Discussion on “Digital Media and Children’s Rights”* states:

‘The Committee recommends that States promote the development of digital literacy as part of the basic education curricula in accordance with children’s evolving capacities. Training and education should not be limited to technical competence but should also include awareness of ethical principles and values and teach children skills to behave responsibly when they engage and relate to each other online, and to respond to risks appropriately and safely (social literacy). In addition, the Committee recommends that States ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescent girls and boys.’<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRC/Discussions/2014/DGD\\_report.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRC/Discussions/2014/DGD_report.pdf) pg.24

Draft *Guidelines to promote, protect and fulfil Children's Rights in the Digital Environment* July 2017<sup>20</sup>

46. States should ensure the development and availability of awareness-raising efforts, user tools and education programmes for children and parents or caregivers to enable benefits and prevent and respond to risks in the digital environment, with the involvement of children. This should include support for skills that enable children to better understand and deal with potentially harmful content (such as violence and self-harm, pornography, discrimination and racism) and behaviour (such as grooming, bullying or harassment), thereby promoting confidence, well-being and respect for others in the digital environment. To address child exploitation online, states should implement, within nationwide education programmes, specific child exploitation primary prevention education programmes.<sup>21</sup>

*Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 Action Plan 2017 Department of Education and Skills*

17.3 Continue to provide parents/guardians, students and teachers with information, advice and tools to promote safer, more responsible and more effective use of the internet.

17.5 In the context of the junior cycle wellbeing guidelines, support schools in implementing those key skills and “staying well elements”, which include responsible, safe and ethical use of digital technologies.

*Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020*<sup>22</sup>

Outcome 2: Achieving full potential in learning and development

Government Commitment 2.7:

Continue to develop, evolve and implement curricula in the education system and to support initiatives in out of school settings, to teach children knowledge and skills relating to information management, new technologies, coding and digital literacy.

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<sup>20</sup> [https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/newsroom/-/asset\\_publisher/6ZtVCaG3cc7i/content/call-for-consultation-guidelines-for-member-states-to-promote-protect-and-fulfil-children-s-rights-in-the-digital-environment?\\_101\\_INSTANCE\\_6ZtVCaG3cc7i\\_viewMode=view/](https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/newsroom/-/asset_publisher/6ZtVCaG3cc7i/content/call-for-consultation-guidelines-for-member-states-to-promote-protect-and-fulfil-children-s-rights-in-the-digital-environment?_101_INSTANCE_6ZtVCaG3cc7i_viewMode=view/)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. pg.11

<sup>22</sup> [http://dcya.gov.ie/documents/cypp\\_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf](http://dcya.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf)

## 5. Conclusion

In Ireland schools have a level of autonomy on choosing how they deliver the curriculum set out by the Department of Education and Skills. This affords great flexibility and empowers schools to be creative and innovative in how they plan and deliver lessons, including messages and education on relationships and sexuality. Teaching staff charged with delivering relationships and sexuality education should have the necessary skills and interest, be able to embrace the topic and bring important messages into the classroom to their students in a way that helps them prepare for life.

However, issues arise where schools lack such teaching staff with the necessary skills and capacity in the subject area. While teachers are delivering messages on relationships and sexuality, each student's experience is different as teachers may not be confident or even interested in the subject matter. These students are not being appropriately served in this area.

The revised RSE curriculum must not leave any child behind; it must support all children in developing a concept of healthy relationships and appropriate and safe sexual expression.

For further information, please contact the ISPCC

Fiona Jennings Policy Coordinator [Fiona.Jennings@ispcc.ie](mailto:Fiona.Jennings@ispcc.ie)

Clíodhna O'Neill Director Policy and Communications [Clíodhna.O'Neill@ispcc.ie](mailto:Clíodhna.O'Neill@ispcc.ie)



Home

**Contributor**

**Irish Second-Level Students Union  
(ISSU)**

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Eboni
<b>Surname</b>	Burke
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Equality officer
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Irish Second-Level Students' Union
<b>Date</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> December 2018
<b>Email</b>	[REDACTED]

**Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?**

Personal  Organisation

**Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?**

Primary  Post-Primary  Both

**Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?**

Yes  No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

The Irish Second-Level Students' Union is the national umbrella body for second level student councils across Ireland. ISSU aims to provide training, guidance and advice to students and to equip them the skills needed to become involved in the decision-making processes in their own school communities; aims to work with other organisations to bring the views of secondary school students to the attention of policy makers and the media; and provides services to the membership of ISSU on the principle that control of those services lies with the membership.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I graduated secondary school in May 2018, meaning my experience having been taught Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is extremely recent. My personal relationship with RSE was almost non-existent. I was fortunate enough to have a timetabled 'Health Ed' class, however, this mostly consisted of students being allowed to study, do homework, or watch Operation Transformation on the projection screen to qualify as "health education". In my six years of education, I received no education on the different sexualities, genders, forms of contraception, STDs, or consent. Education surrounding peer pressure, drugs and alcohol, and sexting was minimal at best. The students as well as the teachers considered RSE as a "doss class", an excuse to catch up on work from the current week.

In April 2018, ISSU conducted a survey to gauge the opinions of second-level students nationwide.

Going by the survey,

61.5% of students did not have an RSE class regularly,

45.3% of students rated the teaching of this aspect as "terrible",

63% of students had not learnt about consent,

77.8% of students had not been taught how to use contraception,

61.1% of students had not been taught about sexuality,

85.1% of students had not been taught about gender identity,

And 87.1% of students felt they had not been explained sufficiently.

My opinion regarding my experience with RSE is shared with approx. 800 students in Ireland, and no doubt, many more.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

**Consent what it means and its importance**

I think the challenge to consent is tackling the supposed grey areas, such as if drugs and alcohol are involved, taking no for an answer, etc. There are a lot of misconceptions surrounding consent and young people that must be addressed and clarified, especially before young people reach the age of consent.

The opportunities to teaching consent are certainly that young people will finally be fully equipped to go out into the world and feel empowered to make positive decisions for themselves surrounding sexual expression and relationships. As well as that, I believe that teaching this information to young people will prove extremely positive for teachers as they gather input on consent from a young person's perspective in today's society.

**Developments in contraception**

A challenge to teaching developments in contraception might be that there are so many various forms of contraception that it may not be applicable to some people, some parents/students may have a moral objection to a form(s) of contraception, or that the teacher themselves may not understand a certain type.

An opportunity to teaching the developments in contraception is that it provides students with many alternative options to practice safe-sex. This can undoubtedly decrease the number of STDs contracted in young people as well as unwanted pregnancies as we have observed from the Netherlands.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

### **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**

A challenge to teaching healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships is the perception that this may lead to an increase in underage sexual activity, or an increase in unsafe sex. I believe this is a misconception, however, it could prove to be a challenge.

The opportunities to teaching this topic are numerous in that we would be empowering young people to make positive decisions for themselves with relation to sexual expression and relationships, and we would be teaching students what a positive relationship is, and therefore, how to identify a potentially toxic relationship.

### **Safe use of the internet & Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**

I believe that the challenges and opportunities to safe use of the internet and social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem are extremely similar, so they will be discussed here in the same vein. The challenges to teaching these two aspects are that young people tend to be more acquainted with more aspects of the internet than teachers do, having been brought up with it from a young age. There can also be a lack of credible sources in relation to a certain module in safe use of the internet/social media. Teaching this would require constantly keeping updated with social media for potential new trends, websites, or apps that would alter the scope of this topic.

The opportunities are that teachers can be given a clear insight into the lives of students daily and can keep themselves updated in the world of social media.

### **LGBTQ+ matters**

I think the main challenge here is the amount of LGBTQ+ identities there are, and admittedly, it does take a bit of effort to stay on top of them, whether they are sexualities or genders.

The opportunity is getting to know what lives are like for LGBTQ+ people, and the issues they are facing. This will also promote a message of tolerance and understanding in the classroom.

## **What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I think increased and mandatory teacher training. There is no excuse for the lack of mandatory teacher training for RSE when a teacher must obtain a degree to teach another subject. I believe it would assist with all the challenges and opportunities listed above in varying but extremely important degrees.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

ISSU maintains that drugs and alcohol awareness should be included within the RSE curriculum. This is because the subject of peer pressure with relation to drugs and alcohol can be integrated with the “relationships” aspect of RSE. Additionally, psychoactive drugs and sexual activity can integrate to cause harm, and young people will need to be informed of these effects.

ISSU also advocates for mental health to be given its own module in RSE, as it influences a variety of different aspects to this curriculum.

**Thank you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

### **Data Protection**

The NCCA fully respects your right to privacy. Any personal information which you volunteer to the NCCA will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts. If you require further information related to data protection and [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) you can contact the NCCA's Data Protection Officer at [dpo@ncca.ie](mailto:dpo@ncca.ie) or see our privacy statement at [www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement](http://www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement)

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

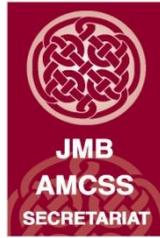
Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)



Home

**Contributor**

Joint Managerial Body (JMB)



## **JMB Submission on Relationships and Sexuality Education to the NCCA**

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### **Introduction**

The Joint Managerial Body/Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (JMB/AMCSS) presents this submission as representing the perspective of post primary faith schools on the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education.

### **Who we are**

The Joint Managerial Body (JMB) was founded in 1972 to represent the interests of all voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland. It is the main decision-making and negotiating body for the management authorities of almost 380 voluntary secondary schools. The JMB comprises two founding organisations: AMCSS, the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools and the ISA, the Irish School Heads' Association, representing the Protestant Schools in the State.

### **Relationships and Sexuality Education – a Faith School Perspective**

Education cannot be deemed to be holistic in any sense if it ignores either our actions or the spiritual or moral basis of the values that inform such actions. Neither can we be deemed to be fulfilling our school mission statements, the majority of which cite ‘development of the whole person’, if we ignore the values and the humanity underpinning our sexuality and sexual activity. It is therefore incumbent upon schools to engage fully with parents in the development of high-quality programmes of relationships and sexuality education (RSE) congruent with the ethos of the school and setting out to educate, in the truest sense, the values, understandings and actions of the generation of young people in their care.

Setting the scene for the delivery of RSE at local level requires the establishment of a school policy which clearly articulates the context and content of the programme and engages, in particular, with the parent perspective. Informing what actually transacts within the RSE classroom equally demands a high level of engagement between teaching staff, school leadership and the support services.

Parents choose a school for their children which most closely reflects their family values and aspirations. All schools, whether established by the State or by one or other voluntary groups such as religious orders, a diocese or a Trust, espouse a vision of the human person and give

expression to a particular ethos. Some people argue that schools should adopt a neutral stance in relation to religion. The inference is that religion is a matter of personal choice and should be kept in the private sphere. However, those who would exclude religion from school also espouse an ethos of their own. They impart a worldview, a philosophy of life, just as much as the person of faith.

The position of Catholic schools in relation to sex education was outlined in a Church document, *Familiaris consortio*:

‘Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must also be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen by them’.

Our commitment to the integration of Gospel values into the curriculum and daily life of the school means that the ethical and moral frameworks underpinning what is taught within RSE classes are congruent with Church teaching on sexual morality, within the particular faith tradition - Catholic or Protestant in the case of JMB schools.

This does not mean that an embargo exists around any truly human experience or that faith schools will not discuss or engage with any particular aspect of the curriculum. The exact opposite is the case. The fully human nature of Jesus Christ means that nothing truly human is alien to God and cannot be alien to true educators either. Such authentic holism cannot exclude engagement with the LGBTQ continuum of human sexual identity and expression but what does characterise the Christian classroom is the character and quality of the engagement in seeking truly human answers:

In the Christian anthropological perspective, sex education must consider the totality of the person and insist therefore on the integration of the biological, psycho-affective, social and spiritual elements. A fundamental objective of this education is an adequate knowledge of the nature and importance of sexuality and of the harmonious and integral development of the person towards psychological maturity, with full spiritual maturity in view. (*Lumen gentium*, Documents of Vatican II, 1964)

To this end, JMB/AMCSS as an organisation and JMB schools on an individual basis have been closely associated with the development, consultation and piloting of both the SPHE (incorporating RSE) curriculum at Junior Cycle and the Senior Cycle RSE programme and materials. It is nonetheless incumbent upon school management at local level to ensure such programmes are compatible with the school’s ethos and that parents have had their rights to consultation respected as well as their right to withdraw their child from RSE classes.

Concern has been expressed in recent times that provision of RSE classes across the post-primary sector has been less than universal or complete. It is the position of JMB that once the rights of parents (and students over 18 years of age) have been respected, the RSE curricula at both junior and senior levels should be delivered in all schools with respect for the characteristic spirit of the school and with the highest levels of professionalism and care.

The outcomes of a Comhairle na nÓg study in 2010 which pointed to apparent deficits in RSE provision at senior cycle in particular constituted a ‘wake-up call’ for school communities and those charged with supporting them in this important curricular area. Though the apparently stark outcomes (which reflected solely ‘student voice’) have subsequently been challenged by more comprehensive data indicating much greater levels of compliance, there nonetheless remains an obligation on schools to ensure provision of RSE across the school cohort.

The element of the findings pointing to high levels of apparent discomfort on the part of some teachers reflected student perceptions and not those of the professionals concerned. There remains however, an ongoing challenge in this area which can only be remediated by high quality in-service and ongoing professional support for teachers. A reduction in the professional support service for teachers in RSE in recent years represents a key difficulty to DES in maintaining such support across the system.

The provision of SPHE classes across junior cycle is not an option for schools and should be universal. The RSE element of the SPHE curriculum is similarly prescribed from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year, with the caveat of an opt-out for parents, but challenges to provision include the availability of teachers trained and willing to teach this element as it is sometimes the practice that this section of the curriculum is delegated to a teacher with a specific interest, skills and willingness to teach it. As a matter of priority, DES should invest in a new round of training opportunities for teachers to maintain and increase the pool of such educators available for scheduling into RSE classes.

*‘Good teachers are essential. I had a teacher in 1<sup>st</sup> year and no one got anything out of SPHE. However, I have had two good teachers which benefited everyone.’*

Comhairle Survey comment

A Comhairle finding that the RSE element of Junior Cycle SPHE and also at Senior Cycle was taught exclusively in Religious Education classes in a number of schools requires comment. The training of RE teachers incorporates the spectrum of ethical and moral paradigms found in society and such teachers are often well placed to comfortably and confidently engage in discussions around sexual ethics, particularly at senior cycle level. This is not to say that science, biology and home economics teachers may not also be called upon or volunteer to offer support in the teaching of the biological aspects of human reproduction or sexuality or that they should be restricted to such a limited input. What this debate does point to is the need to adequately train and professionally develop RSE teachers in their own right – developing expertise in every aspect of both the course materials and the likely questions necessarily arising in the classroom setting. The development of a post-graduate diploma course in SPHE/RSE is particularly to be recommended.

The policy of age appropriateness has always formed a central pillar of provision of RSE education in schools, particularly as it relates to the question of sexual consent. The concept could, however, be widened to incorporate conceptual appropriateness in that students with SEN or English language deficit or those at particular ends of the maturity scale should be

provided with a differentiated model of teaching and engagement with this critical subject area. Local school management is best placed to identify such needs but yet again, such nuanced practice will demand high-calibre teacher professional development and school leadership awareness.

Engagement with young people in schools and other fora on the subject of RSE is welcome. Just because an educator has taught something doesn't mean it has been learned and feedback is an essential element of any evaluation of a programme's effectiveness. It is essential, however, that outcomes be triangulated against other sources such as inspectorate reports, DES statistical feedback from schools or other data from the education partners. For example, the 2010 Comhairle survey statistic that 63% of student respondents claim to have 'never had an RSE class' does not stand up to scrutiny at any level.

#### *Assist parents to provide relationships and sexuality education in the home*

There are critical elements in a child's education which demand higher than usual levels of school-family mutual awareness and at least some level of genuine partnership in achieving the holistic goals of the educational enterprise. RSE, in all its forms, represents such an imperative.

For all its convenience and ubiquity, IT as a medium for enriching the RSE project at home and in school has its limitations. Analogous to older generations being given a 'little book', told to go away and read it and subsequently asked if there were 'any questions?', the provision of audio-visual resources and websites are devoid of the most important component which is the immediate presence and availability of a loving and caring adult, emotionally and cognitively equipped to support and nuance this 'holy ground' of a child's or young person's emerging sexual awareness and personal values. That said, the development of up-to-date digital and hard-copy resources to support parents, guardians and teachers would be most welcome and JMB will be happy to engage in the developmental and consultation activities around such initiatives into the future.

Parents and guardians need face-to-face contact with the school on this matter also. Beginning with general information sessions and offering individualised meetings with school personnel where required represents a basic level of engagement. The development of an RSE policy must also involve the parent representative body in the school as well as the staff, student council, Board of Management and trustees. The relationship between home and school on this issue must be a trusting one and this can only be developed by maintaining high levels of awareness and communication.

This is equally true of the relationship between 'outside' agencies and school communities. School management is charged with the duty of ensuring everything that happens in the school community is congruent with its ethos. Specific areas such as religious education, faith formation, pastoral care and relationships and sexuality education necessarily demand greater levels of alertness in this respect than, for example, many of the other subjects on the curriculum. Building up high level of trust between external agencies and school management should therefore represent a priority for all.

JMB is encouraged by the scope of the current RSE review work which includes:

- How the RSE curriculum is planned, how it is taught and how parents are involved;
- That the entire curriculum is being taught in schools to a high standard;
- The role of the classroom teacher in teaching the curriculum and the appropriate level of supports which are currently being provided by external providers;
- What time is given to it, what resources are being provided, and what support materials are being used;
- How effective is the continuing professional development opportunities which are currently provided by the Department and other bodies to RSE teachers.

JMB will, of course, continue to engage fully with this process and looks forward, in particular, to the subsequent investment of new ideas, energy and resources into this most important of educational enterprises.

**John Curtis, JMB General Secretary**

**23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019**



Home

## **Contributor**

Joint NGO submission (Spunout.ie, BeLonG To, ShoutOut, NYCI, USI, HIV Ireland, Teen Parents Support, ISSU, IFPA, Foróige)

## **Joint Position Paper on Reform of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) February 2019**

This paper briefly outlines the core common policies of the RSE NGO Working Group 2018-19<sup>1</sup>. As a group, we welcome very strongly the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Ireland currently being undertaken by the NCCA and commend their engagement with the NGO sector in seeking out much-needed changes to the way RSE is taught in Ireland. Living as we are through a profound moment of social change in our national history, we believe this review offers an unprecedented opportunity to modernise how we meet the needs of our young people, how we promote inclusion of formerly-hidden identities within our educational system, and how we ensure better sexual and emotional health outcomes in the next generation of Irish citizens.

While this document seeks simply to summarise our commonly-held positions, each of the below points are dealt with in more depth and placed in their proper context within the individual submissions made by each contributing organisation directly to the NCCA. We encourage all interested parties to read these full submissions for a more complete picture.

Any queries can be directed to [jack.eustace@spunout.ie](mailto:jack.eustace@spunout.ie) or [moninne@belongto.ie](mailto:moninne@belongto.ie).

### **Key Recommendations**

#### **1. Holistic RSE**

We believe that a holistic and comprehensive approach to sexual health and wellbeing is key. Social and emotional learning should be recognised as core competencies within the RSE curriculum, with a particular focus on self-awareness and distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy relationships from as young an age as possible.

#### **2. Role of Educators**

All students must have access to reliable, informed and up-to-date sexual health education, regardless of school ethos, facilitated by a teacher, wellbeing officer, or appropriate external educator. Comprehensive and accredited trainings should be put in place, for all educators, to provide a positive impact on the consistency and quality of rolling out the programme to ensure they can direct students to the right sources of information and to provide a healthy and holistic atmosphere for discussion.

#### **3. Consent**

Consent is of foundational importance to all healthy relationships, not just sexual ones. Principles of understanding, respecting and communication in negotiating consent should be strengthened as a core and consistent part of RSE, beginning at the very start of a child's education and carrying all the way through to adulthood.

#### **4. Contraception and STIs**

RSE should provide a practical knowledge around the use of a wide range of contraceptives, with a due regard for the needs of all forms of consensual sexual relationships, including education and signposting to appropriate services. RSE should include non-stigmatising and up-to-date information about the effective treatment of HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections.

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<sup>1</sup> The membership of the Working Group includes the following organisations endorsing this document: SpunOut.ie, BeLonG To, ShoutOut, NYCI, USI, HIV Ireland, Foróige, IFPA, Bananas Sex Ed, the Teen Parents Support Programme and ISSU.

## 5. Sexuality Online

Online sexuality is a large part of many modern relationships, and RSE must prepare students to safely navigate the realities of dating apps, sexting, and social media. The RSE curriculum must also reflect the impact of pornography in a stigma-free, evidence-based way.

## 6. LGBTI+ Integration

It is essential that RSE provides for the needs of all students regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBTI+ inclusion must run through RSE to demonstrate visibility, value and inclusion. The curriculum should promote healthy LGBTI+ relationships, reflect on societal gender roles, and educate on trans and intersex identities.

## 7. Continual Review

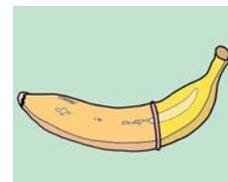
We believe the RSE curriculum should be regularly reviewed to ensure an ongoing commitment in keeping the curriculum current, engaging and up to date to meet the needs of modern Irish young people.

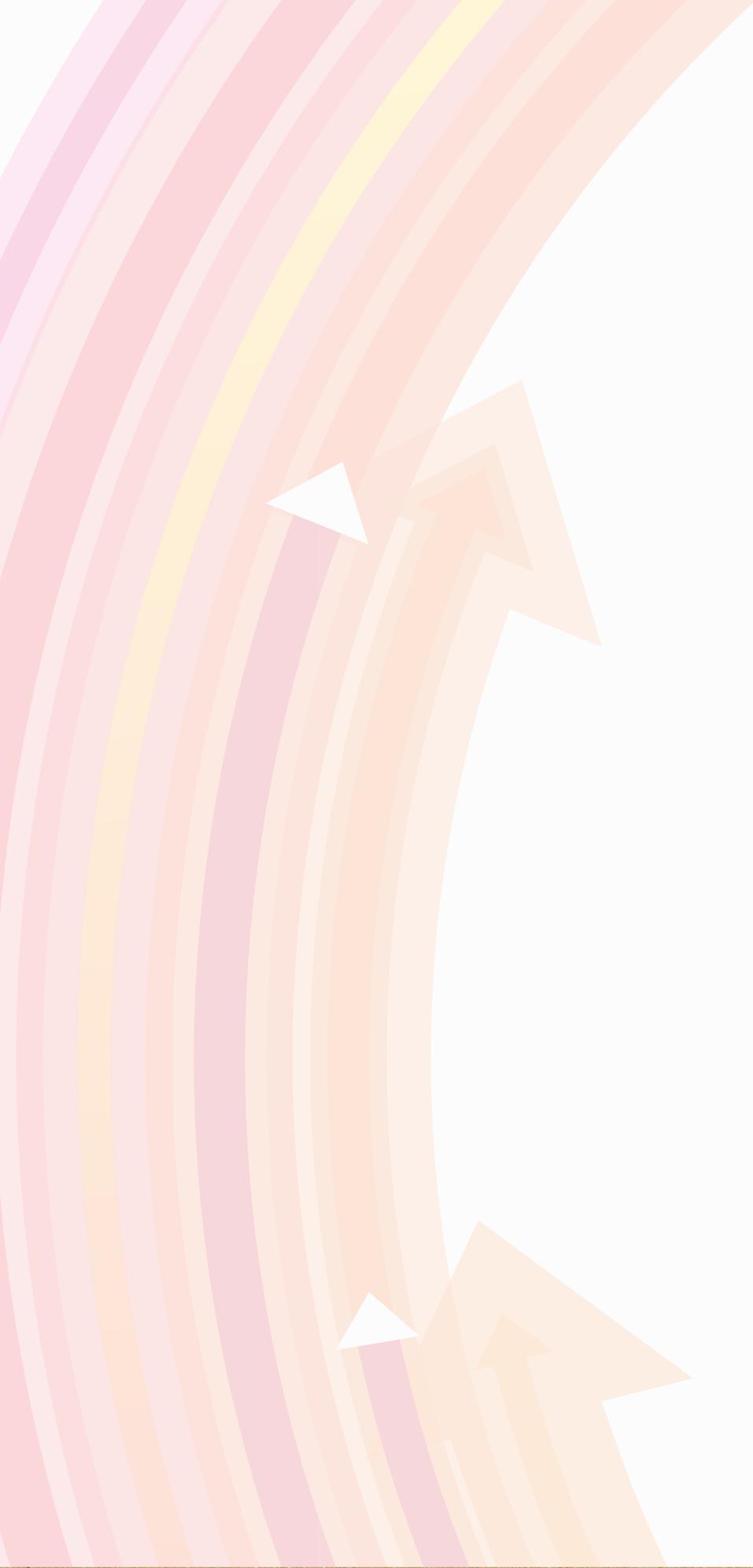
## 8. The Voice of the Young Person

We believe that the voices, opinions and experiences of young people themselves must be central to the construction and review of the RSE curriculum, and that active engagement with students and their representative organisations will always be key.



Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans Young People in Ireland





Home

**Contributor**

Julie Heslin

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondents details

Name	Julie
Surname	Heslin
Position (if applicable)	Specialist in Public Health Medicine
Organisation (if applicable)	Health Service Executive
Date	13/11/2018
Email	[REDACTED]

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal      X          Organisation   

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary                        Post-primary    X        Both   

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes            X                  No           

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

I am writing to you to inform you of research which might be of value to you in reviewing the RSE syllabus in post-primary schools.

I work in the Department of Public Health in HSE South East.

A number of years ago, our Department was asked to evaluate a pilot programme which was developed in the South Eastern Health Board (SEHB) area called Respect. This pilot was funded for an initial period of three years by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency.

This pilot programme was set up by the SEHB (which then became the HSE) to support post-primary schools and their teachers to deliver the RSE curriculum.

The programme was adapted, in conjunction with teachers involved in the piloting of the programme, from an evidence-based programme first developed in the UK called Apause. This programme consisted of teachers, health professionals and peer-educators delivering the programme in a systematic way. Changes were made during the pilot to adapt the UK programme to fit into the Irish system, including using an Irish vernacular, and taking into account Irish health and social systems and the Irish school schedule.

The evaluation produced two main reports: the first was an interim report, based on qualitative research conducted with stakeholders, including students, peer educators and teachers, which set out to inform the programme during its development. The second was the final report, which was mainly based on quantitative research conducted both with students involved with the programme and with slightly older students from the same schools who had not been involved in the programme. The final report also included some findings from the interim report.

I am including the link to the summary of the interim report and the link to the final report of the evaluation of the programme.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/children/respect-.pdf>

<https://www.lenus.ie/handle/10147/216470>

Unfortunately, despite the success of the programme within schools and the positive evaluation of the programme, support for the programme was discontinued after the initial pilot. Work undertaken by the project Steering Committee to adjust the programme to facilitate its

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

streamlining and to identify funding streams to maintain it are captured in the final report.

There are some elements of the programme in which you might be interested:

- While the term 'consent' was not explicitly mentioned, the issue of consent was addressed in the programme, including developing students' skills by using role play by students, facilitated by peer educators
- Teachers felt that, by having a health professional available to co-facilitate some sessions and to answer more technical questions from students, they were more comfortable in addressing aspects of RSE which they would not have previously taught.
- Because the programme was detailed and available in written material which parents could view before the programme commenced in their child/young person's class (with a summary format detailing each session which was posted to parents), school management and individual teachers were more comfortable that parents were fully informed about the programme.

There were some elements of the programme which were not developed initially as they were not part of the original A pause syllabus. It was planned that these would be developed and incorporated at a later stage. These included: dealing with the issue of alcohol and other drugs and their relationship to consent; LGBTQ+ relationships (although at the time, this term was not used).

Queries about the evaluation can be directed to myself:

Dr Julie Heslin, Department of Public Health, HSE, Lacken, Kilkenny.

If you have queries about the programme itself, I can see if I can make contact with the programme co-ordinator who has since moved to a new post.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;

- Consent what it means and its importance
- Developments in contraception
- Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships
- Safe use of the internet
- Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem
- LGBTQ+ matters.

What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?

What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?

If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.

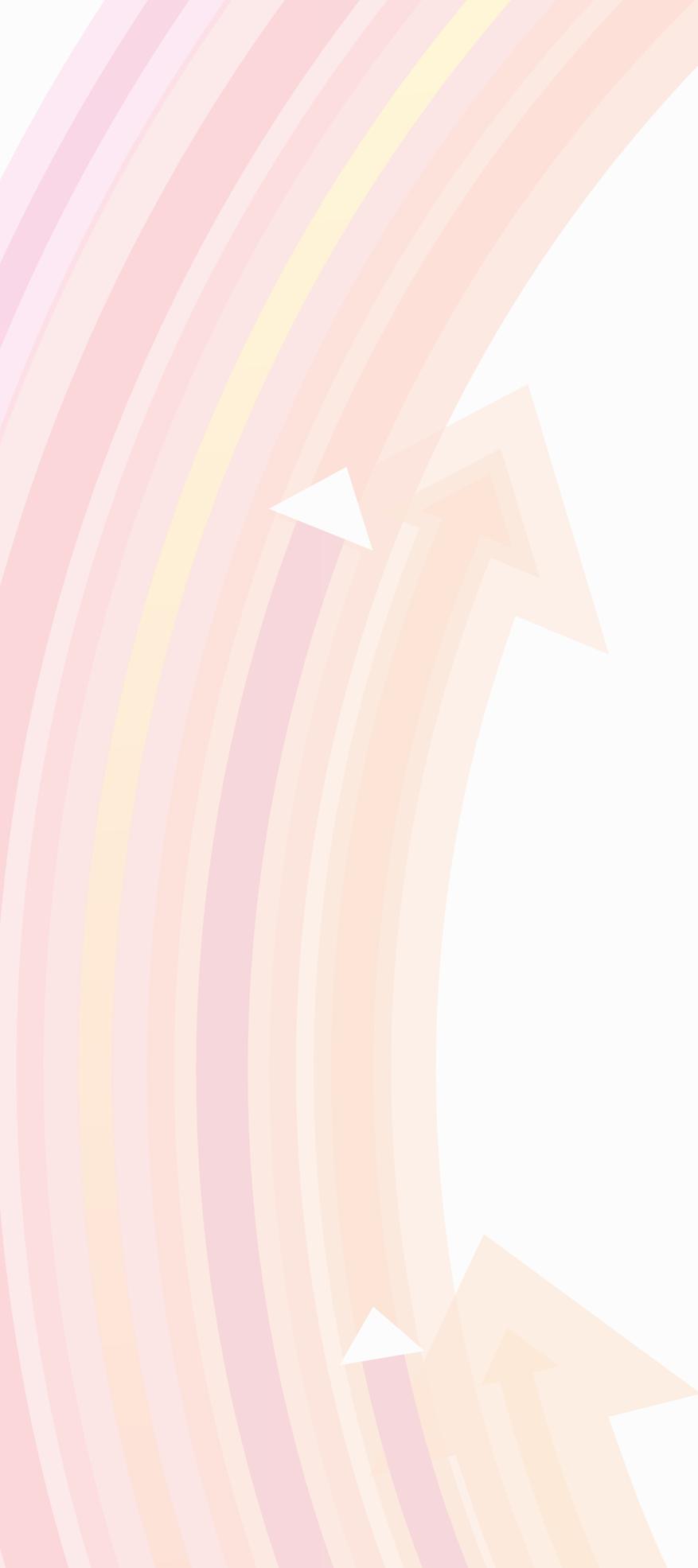
**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

### **Data Protection**

The NCCA fully respects your right to privacy. Any personal information which you volunteer to the NCCA will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts. If you require further information related to data protection and [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) you can contact the NCCA's Data Protection Officer at [dpo@ncca.ie](mailto:dpo@ncca.ie) or see our privacy statement at [www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement](http://www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement)

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page. It features a series of curved, overlapping bands in shades of pink, purple, and yellow, resembling a rainbow. Overlaid on these bands are several large, semi-transparent arrows pointing upwards and to the right. The arrows are in shades of orange and pink, with white arrowheads.

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**Contributor**  
LGBT Ireland



**LGBT  
IRELAND**

For Inclusion  
For Equality  
For Everyone



Minister Richard Burton T.D.,  
Department of Education & Skills,  
Marlborough Street,  
Dublin 1,  
D01 RC96.

05<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**RE: Review of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Schools**

Dear Minister,

On behalf of LGBT Ireland, I am writing to extend our support for your announcement on Tuesday to undertake a review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in schools.

As an organisation working to improve the visibility, inclusion and rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people living in Ireland, the current RSE programme is an area of significant concern to us. Discussions about LGBT identities and same sex romantic relationships are predominantly absent from the current RSE programme and discussions relating to safe sex are focused on heterosexual sex only.

We receive over 2,000 contacts each year to our helpline and online services and over 63,000 people visited our website last year. The lack of visibility and inclusion of LGBT identities and relationships in the RSE programme is consistently raised as a major concern, particularly by parents of young LGBT people, who see the impact that the lack of visibility and inclusion has on their children's education and overall health and well-being.

We would be delighted therefore to meet with you to discuss this matter further and to offer any help we can provide with the review of the RSE programme and establishing recommendations for the further development of the programme.

Yours sincerely

Paula Fagan  
Chief Executive Officer

**Paula Fagan**  
CEO

**Bernardine Quinn**  
Chairperson

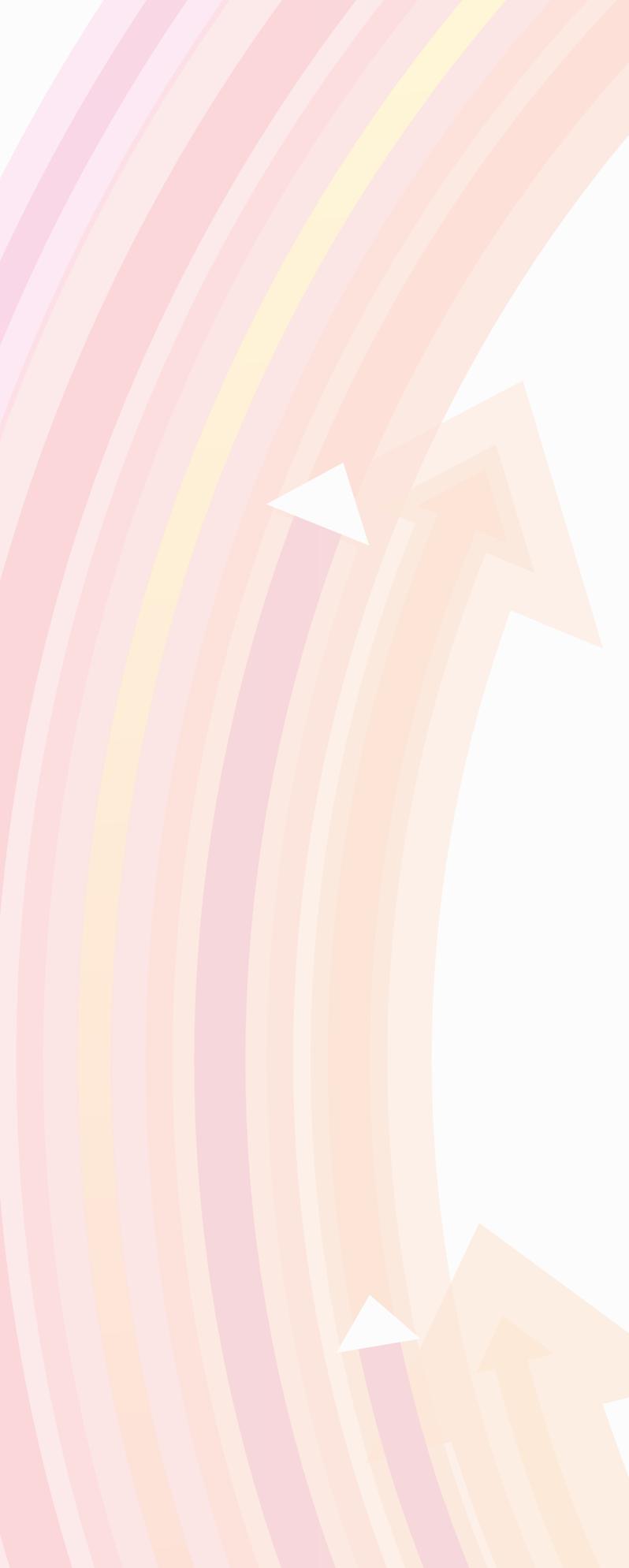
**Address**  
Floor 3, 7 Red Cow Lane  
Smithfield, Dublin 7

**Administration Line**  
01 685 9280

**Support Line**  
1890 929 539

**CHY Number**  
22036

**www.lgbt.ie**

The background features a series of curved, overlapping lines in shades of pink, purple, and yellow, creating a sense of movement. Overlaid on these lines are several large, semi-transparent arrows pointing upwards and to the right. The overall aesthetic is modern and dynamic.

Home

**Contributor**  
Lumen Fidei



## The Lumen Fidei Institute

Raith, Aghamore, Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo

**Tel:** 085 1208779

**Web:** [www.lumenfidei.ie](http://www.lumenfidei.ie)

**E-mail:** [secretary@lumenfidei.ie](mailto:secretary@lumenfidei.ie)

“Promoting, Defending, Teaching Catholicism”  
“Helping Catholics to live out their great calling as Children of God”

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31<sup>st</sup> January 2019  
Feast of St John Bosco

### Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

Name: John  
Surname: Lacken  
Position: Secretary  
Organisation: The Lumen Fidei Institute  
Date: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019  
E-Mail: [secretary@lumenfidei.ie](mailto:secretary@lumenfidei.ie)

**This submission is made on behalf of:** The Lumen Fidei Institute

This submission is related to **both** primary and post-primary education.

We consent to this submission being posted online including my name and organisation.

#### **Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

The Lumen Fidei Institute was founded to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. We have a particular emphasis on Marriage & Family which includes Catholic teaching on Human Sexuality.

#### **What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I am the father of eight children, two girls and six boys. My wife and I have given all of them a comprehensive education in human sexuality according to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

I was involved in protests opposing the implementation of the RSE programme in Catholic Schools in the 1990s, (which protests I note are not mentioned in the research paper, even though these protests were countrywide). A part of our protest centred on the lack of consultation with parents. The RSE programme was designed and printed, the teachers were given training days, and it was only after this happened that parents were consulted.

I have delivered RSE in one school in Northern Ireland as part of an external group that was brought in to teach a group of students Catholic teaching on human sexuality.

**Consent:**

As regards the term consent, the meaning is obvious. It means to agree to do something by a free act of the will. One can consent to kill an innocent human being in its mother's womb; governments can make it legal to do so, however that does not make it right. Human beings are moral beings governed by absolute moral norms which cannot and do not change. To try to teach children about human sexuality using a curriculum which seeks to avoid absolute moral norms is not only futile, it also represents a danger to those children. To teach children that consensual sexual activity is permissible so long as both parties consent to the act constitutes an abuse of children.

**Developments in Contraception:**

Once again, we enter an ideological minefield. Children, to which our human sexuality is ordered by its very nature, are proclaimed as a great good. Contraception acts against this good so that people can bypass the natural and sexually healthy outcome of human sexual intercourse. Contraception is therefore intrinsically evil, because it acts against a known and great good.

There is also the scientifically unsound problem of describing chemicals which have an abortifacient nature as contraceptives. Once fertilisation has occurred it is not possible to contracept because conception has already occurred. Again, the ideologists, in an unscientific way, try to use the terms conception and implantation interchangeably in order to foster their unscientific agenda which is clearly shown on page 43 of the research paper where it states that certain Catholic schools "refuse to give science-based sexuality education and instead adopt a morally based abstinence-only sexuality education approach."

The implication here, without a shred of scientific evidence being presented to support the case, is that Catholic teaching on human sexuality which promotes a moral and abstinence-based approach to human sexuality is unscientific. But there are no contradictions between Catholic Church teachings on human sexuality and science.

**Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships:**

The way this area of interest of the Minister for Education and Skills is expressed shows up another problem in how the whole matter of human sexuality is dealt with by the Irish state. There is a consistent use of different terms without any definition of what those terms mean. What is meant by 'positive sexual expression'? How is it determined if that expression is healthy?

The healthiest use of human sexual expression, that is, human sexuality expressed in a way that benefits both the man and the woman, comes from following the teachings of the Catholic Church on human sexuality. These teachings are both scientifically observable to benefit all of humanity and to respect the rights and duties of all men. Sexual intercourse is the preserve of marriage which can only occur between one man and one woman. There should be no sexual activity outside of marriage. The purpose of marriage and indeed of our human sexuality is the procreation of children and their subsequent education. Interestingly, those who follow these teachings faithfully, will never have to worry about sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancy.

Undoubtedly the standards set in this area by the Catholic Church are very high, but we should want only the very best for our children. Many people, including those Catholics who are trying to live up to these high demands, will fail at times. But the Catholic Church also provides the graces necessary to recover from our sins in this area through her sacraments. One should not fail to teach the truth, even to children, just because living according to the truth is difficult and challenging.

We should have more faith in our children's God given natural instincts and their desire to live good lives rather than teach them a compromised view of human sexuality based on a morally bankrupt ideology which supports the killing of the innocent human beings that are conceived as a result of the promotion of these falsehoods regarding our human sexuality. But this 'legalised killing of innocents', shows just how far these ideologues are prepared to go to further their agenda.

**Safe Use of the Internet:**

One of the greatest scourges in modern society is the plague of internet pornography. The solution to this problem is quite simple, if only the government wasn't so heavily invested in false ideologies. The government should make it illegal to broadcast pornography on the internet and should pass legislation with very stiff penalties for the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) who permit access to pornography on their networks. If China can block access in their country to 'google', then Ireland can block access to pornography, but there must be both an incentive and a strong deterrent in order to force compliance. If the Irish government really cares about the damaging effects of pornography on children, then one can only wonder why this solution has not already been considered.

**Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem:**

The use of social media can be very beneficial however it tends to become addictive and a replacement for normal interpersonal relationships. Recent suggestions from elected representatives that seek to suppress certain viewpoints on social media platforms, especially those that contradict the government's ideological narrative, are dangerous and worrying and, when taken with the ideological direction of proposed changes in the RSE curriculum, represent a growing totalitarian threat to our society and to our children.

**LGBTQ+ matters:**

The uncritical acceptance of the LGBTQ+ movement is going to lead to huge problems for our children in the future. Unscientific theories are being promoted as fact. For example, there is no scientific evidence to support the existence of transgender people. The only genders that can be determined in a scientific manner are male and female. Why is it, that when the government call for RSE that is factual, they ignore this 'fact'. Once again this suggests that the government are acting out of an unscientific ideology that has gained prominence in the western world and is being promoted by vested interests.

That some people who are male believe or 'feel' that they are in the wrong body or are of the 'wrong' gender or that they are female, can be scientifically shown to be false. This does not mean that this person does not need help, but their problem is psychological in nature and pretending that they really are of a different gender to their scientifically provable gender will not help them in the long run. There are very dangerous developments occurring in this area especially in the prescribing of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to pre-pubescent children which renders them infertile for life.

It is also an abuse to encourage the classification of children by their sexual preferences and then to tell them that they can never change those preferences, that they were born that way. Once again an unscientific agenda driven ideology is being foisted on children, often without the parent's full knowledge of what is going on, in state funded schools.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

Our submission wishes to focus on several areas especially on the role of parents in the education of their children. In section 5 of the research paper produced by Dr. Seline Keating, Professor Mark Morgan, and Dr. Bernie Collins titled 'Student and Parent Voice', it says.

**"Parents and Sexuality Education:** It is generally accepted that parents are the first and primary educators of their children in all matters, including sexuality education.

Yet the research paper also indicates a dismissive attitude to parents who hold traditional Catholic beliefs. On page 38 of the research paper it notes, quoting Flores and Barroso (2017) that, "In addition, their review of research in the area of parents and sex communication provides evidence of a traditional, heteronormative and stereotypical approach in the home context."

This is seen as a problem because the paper also notes that from the Growing Up in Ireland survey of 2012, young people expressed a preference for parents to provide sexuality-based information. If young people

expressed such a preference, why has the Irish government concentrated all of its efforts on school based RSE? Is it because the state wants to control what is taught to our children?

This small snippet from the research paper highlights the major problem with the paper. The paper is based on an ideological interpretation of human sexuality that is at odds with scientifically observable facts. In the quotation above, it almost seems to be too obvious to have to state it, but the reason that the parents are parents is because they are 'heteronormative'.

The term 'heteronormative' is itself an ideological term and not a scientific or factual term. Normal human sexual relations are heterosexual, and any objective scientific study will clearly demonstrate that human sexuality is ordered towards procreation. The term 'heteronormative' is an ideological linguistic construction to facilitate the use of the word 'homonormative', thereby implying that homosexual acts can somehow be normal. But it is obvious what the different parts of the body are for, and it is equally obvious, as in the case for example of anal intercourse, what the parts of the body are not for.

That the anus is not ordered towards human sexuality is a scientific fact regardless of whether or not certain people engage in such practices, and the well documented increased sexual disease rate amongst the population of men who have sex with men compared to other sectors of the population, clearly demonstrates the fact that this behaviour is disordered, that is, it is not in accordance with the observable order contained within our human body as it relates to sexuality. Unfortunately, in a society which prizes feelings over science, such a comment will be construed by some as 'homophobic', another ideological linguistic construction. You are not helping those with same-sex attraction by pretending that their abnormal behaviour is normal.

To ignore these facts when doing research on what to teach children concerning human sexuality in Irish schools, poses a danger to the very children the NCCA claims it seeks to help because it leaves them ignorant of these dangers on account of the ideological desire to present homosexual relationships as normal.

This is not to advocate teaching RSE in schools, it is to point out the dangers to children of the current government favoured sexual ideology that forms the basis of this research paper and its recommendations to promote the amoral 'holistic sexuality education'.

In summary, Catholic Schools must teach about RSE according to and in full conformity with the magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church on human sexuality. To do otherwise would be to abuse the rights of Catholic parents and their children. Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools in order for them to get a Catholic education and this right is constitutionally protected.

May God bless you in the most Sacred Heart of Jesus

---

John Lacken  
Secretary



Home

**Contributor**  
Meryl Connaughton

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

## Review

### Respondents details

Name	Meryl
Surname	Connaughton
Position (if applicable)	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Date	5/11/18
Email	[REDACTED]

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes  No

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I have children in 3<sup>rd</sup> and junior infants – so have been sent permission slips for RSE. I have queried the content – regarding the Catholic Ethos in the school and therefore what is contained at this level regarding same sex relationships/sex before marriage/contraception etc.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Of giving this information fairly and unhindered by the Catholic Ethos of 96% of all primary schools in the country.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Church and state (education) should be separated. Whilst we wait for this to happen then it should be insured that the subjects highlighted should be covered correctly and not tainted by any religious ethos.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

Religion has done unmeasurable and irreversible harm to many, many peoples' sex lives (whether be heterosexual or homosexual) and their relationships. It is essential that this information is shared with children from a neutral stand point.

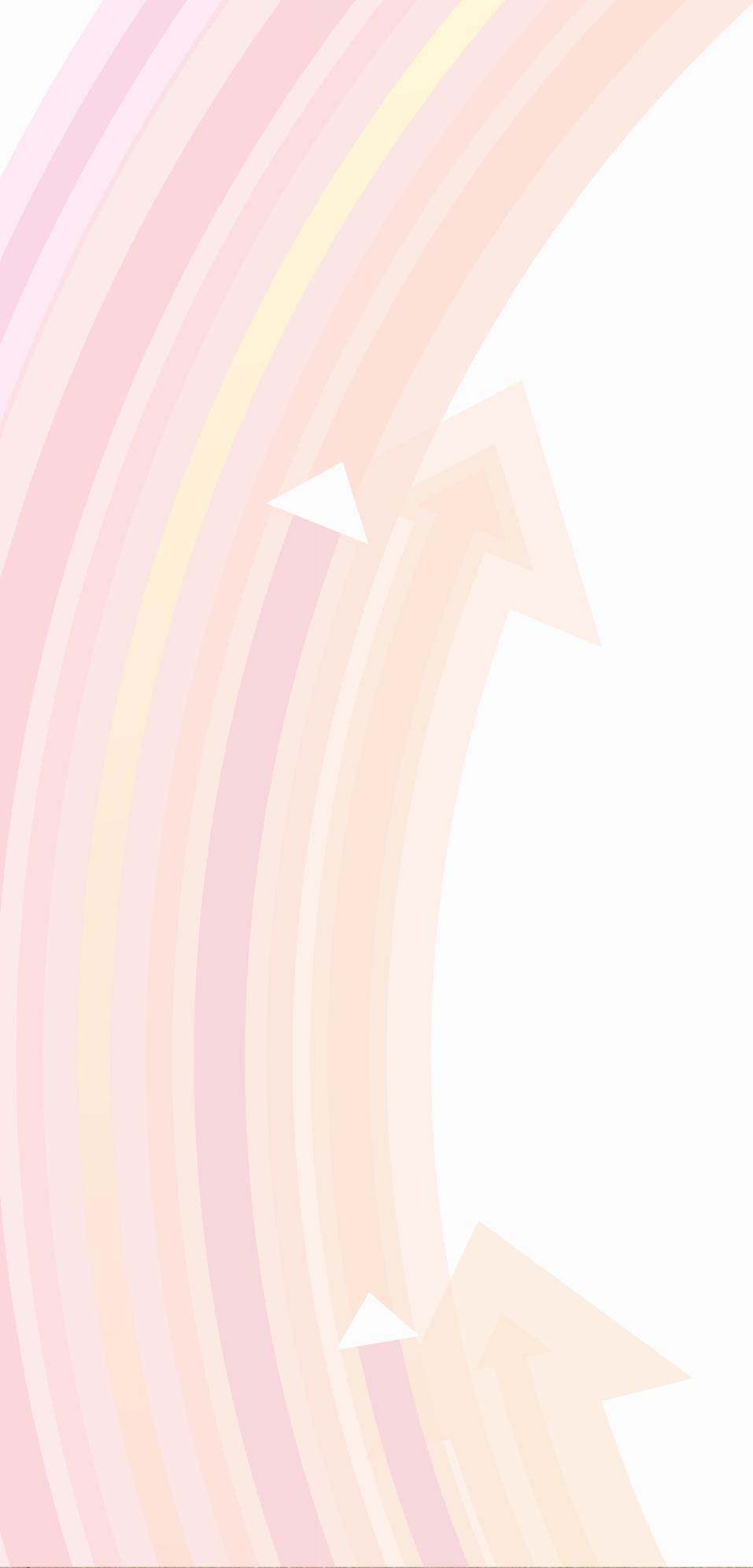
**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

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Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSReview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSReview@ncca.ie)



Home

**Contributor**  
Michael Ryan

**From:** Michael Ryan <[michael@peaceofmind.ie](mailto:michael@peaceofmind.ie)>

**Sent:** Friday 4 May 2018 19:20

**To:** info

**Subject:** RSE Consultation Process - Submission

Hello,

I wish to make the following input in relation to the RSE consultation process.

I have written a book called "The Complete Guide to Gay Life for new Explorers" – PDF Attached

It is aimed at 14+ years of age and the aim of the book is to help LGBT+ students deal with the coming out process. It might be considered to be part of the background reading material or available in each Secondary Schools Library.

I would like for the RSE curriculum to ensure that LGBT+ relationships are included as equal from the very beginning of the RSE process so that young people are aware of the fact that some people will be attracted to the same gender and that these relationships need to be discussed, considered and included.

The inclusion of same-sex relationships will reduce the confusion, stigma and shame that is currently experienced by a lot of young LGBT people and also reduce the mystery and stigma, isolation and shame that can sometimes be associated with the children of same-sex parents within the school community.

Many thanks.

Regards,

*Michael Ryan*

Counsellor/Psychotherapist

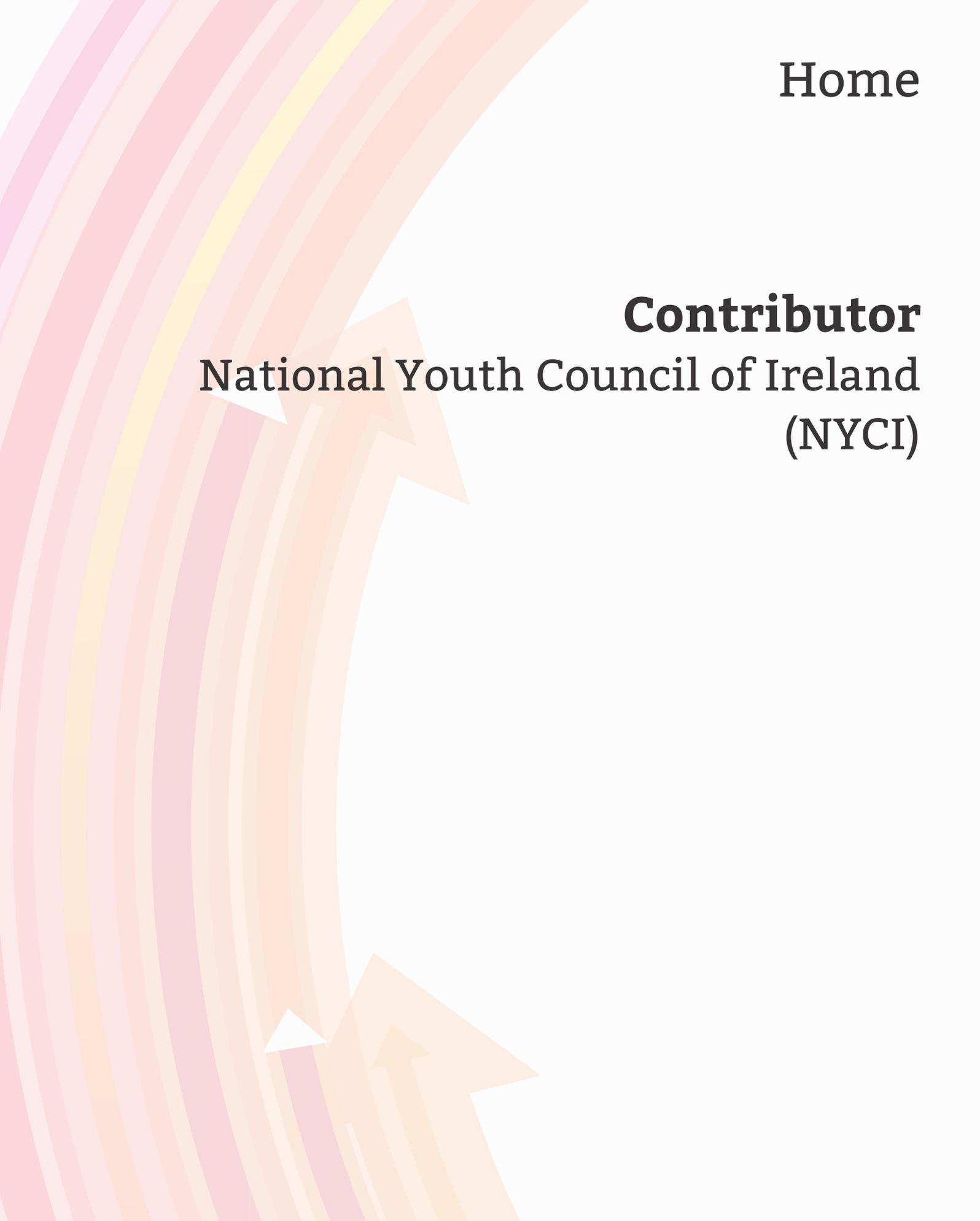
IACP Accredited

+353879568983

[michael@peaceofmind.ie](mailto:michael@peaceofmind.ie)

[www.peaceofmind.ie](http://www.peaceofmind.ie)





Home

**Contributor**

National Youth Council of Ireland  
(NYCI)

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

## Review

### Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Rachael
<b>Surname</b>	Treanor
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	National Youth Health Programme Manager
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	National Youth Health Programme, National Youth Council of Ireland
<b>Date</b>	December 13 <sup>th</sup> 2018
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:rachael@nyci.ie">rachael@nyci.ie</a>

**Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?**

Personal  Organisation

**Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?**

Primary  Post-primary  Both

**Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?**

Yes  No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for 51 voluntary youth organisations in Ireland, 380,000 young people, 40,000 volunteers and 1,400 paid staff (NYCI Indecon Report) <sup>1</sup>. NYCI functions to represent the interests of young people and youth organisations. NYCI's role is recognised in legislation (Youth Work Act) and as a social partner. The NYCI aims through its member organisations and its representative role to empower young people to participate in society as fulfilled confident individuals. The work of the Youth Council is based on principles of equality, social justice and equal participation for all. In achieving these aims the NYCI seeks the emergence of a society in which young people are valued citizens who can make a meaningful contribution to their community.

**1.1** The National Youth Health Programme (NYHP) is a partnership between the National Youth Council of Ireland, the HSE and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The NYHP's work has, and continues to be informed by key strategic and policy developments within the Health Sector. The HSE Health Promotion Strategic Framework (HSE, 2011) promotes a 'settings based approach' for health promotion in Ireland. The youth setting is identified in the Strategic Framework as a key setting for health promotion. The NYHP is dedicated to:

- Developing and promoting a culture within the youth sector which focuses on health and wellbeing
- Building capacity within the sector through the provision of training and evidence based resources for groups and youth workers using both a topics and settings approach
- Advocating on those issues that affect the health and wellbeing of young people
- Using our unique position as a conduit between grass roots experience and the development of public policy and national strategy in the area of youth health and wellbeing

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Please make your submission to [RSReview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSReview@ncca.ie)

## **What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Sexual health is a specialist area of work for the NYHP, working in partnership with the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme. Working in collaboration with the Sexual Health Crisis Pregnancy Programme, three training programmes have been developed and are currently rolled out across the youth work sector:

- B4u Decide (Exploring Relationships and Sexual Education)
- Understanding Young People and Pornography
- Good Practice in Sexual Health Promotion (Developing Organisational Sexual Health Policy).

In addition, since September 2017, the NYHP co-facilitate on the HSE 10 day Foundation Sexual Health Programme.

The NYHP and NYCI also contribute at a national level to a number of key strategic groups and committees which include:

- LGBTI+ Strategy Working Groups
- SENYPIC (Sexual Health Education Needs of Young People in Care)
- Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Advisory Group
- Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Sexual Health Promotion Training Strategy

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

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The National Youth Health Programme (NYHP), for the purpose of this submission, will concentrate on highlighting the challenges and opportunities in relation to:

- Consent what it means and its importance
- Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships
- Social media and its effects on relationships and self esteem

In 2015, the NYHP conducted a rapid mental health needs assessment among youth work organisations to investigate the Mental Health needs of young people. The main issues identified as affecting the mental health and wellbeing included Body Image (90%), Relationships (77%) and Sexuality (66%)<sup>2</sup> which also impact on an individual's sexual health. In 2018, the NYHP conducted a rapid needs assessment on Young Men's Health; similarly the key issues affecting the health and wellbeing of young men include Relationships (73%), Confidence (76%), Sexuality (60%) and Body Image (53%)<sup>3</sup>. From the findings above it is clear that young people struggle on an ongoing basis with their sexual health therefore, it is up to the organisations and national bodies to try to meet those identified needs.

In 2018, NYHP conducted a needs assessment among those working with young people to understand young people and pornography. The assessment found that:

- 84% of respondents stated that pornography influences the sexual health of young people

When asked *how* pornography impacts young people, the largest theme to emerge was that pornography gives young people an unrealistic representation of sex and sexual relationships. However, many young people are unaware that what they are viewing is unrealistic and are using pornography as a source of sexual education that often goes unchallenged. Respondents highlighted a number of consequences for young people of this:

- Pornography does not teach young people about developing and sustaining healthy sexual relationships. It rarely demonstrates discussions about emotions, giving consent, and/or engaging in foreplay.
- Young people are engaging in riskier sexual behaviours by mimicking the pornography they have seen. This includes not using contraception and engaging in sexual acts that they are not comfortable with but which have been normalised by pornography

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- Some young men's attitudes and behaviours towards women have been noted as disrespectful and sometimes aggressive
- Expectations around sexual performance and body image are skewed as young people try to emulate what they see on screen
- The pressure on young people to engage in what they perceive to be normal sexual behaviours impacts their mental health
- A small group of respondents were concerned about young men becoming addicted to porn and not having any interest in a sexual relationship with another person.

Within the youth work sector, the needs and issues which have been identified above are addressed through the delivery and implementation of the programmes the NYHP currently deliver.

**B4u Decide** aims, to support young people to delay the onset of early sex until they feel ready. The trainings objectives are:

- To explore the role of friendship in the development of healthy relationships
- To understand the role played by the media and peer pressure on young people and early sex
- To enable young people to develop skills in how to say 'No' and resist pressure
- To enable young people to explore the concept of consent
- To educate the young people on the importance of contraception
- To facilitate young people to discuss the impact of pornography on relationships

B4u Decide is also available within schools through delivery by the HSE HP&I in each county.

**Understanding Young People and Pornography** aims to develop the skills and confidence of those working with young people in addressing the issues of pornography. The objectives include:

- To define pornography
- To explore the topic of pornography
- To understand why young people engage with pornography
- To understand the impact of pornography on young people

Activities within this training could easily be adapted for a school setting.

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Please make your submission to [RSReview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSReview@ncca.ie)

**Good Practice in Sexual Health Policy** aims to strengthen the organisational environment for the delivery of sexual health programmes and will consider the development of policy and good practice. The objectives include:

- To examine the context for addressing the sexual health needs of young people
- To discuss the role of organisation in relation to this work
- To examine the support needs of workers and organisations in the area of sexual health
- To identify rationale and process for policy development
- To explore good practice with regard to sexual health education programmes

To empower young people and promote health it is important that schools take a holistic approach to health rather than looking at RSE as a stand-alone module. It is important to realise that sexual health impacts on one's mental health, physical health, social health and spiritual health.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Taking a holistic and comprehensive approach to sexual health and wellbeing is key. Sexual health should be recognised across a spectrum where young people are supported to develop their knowledge and competency regarding relationships and gender identity through to the practical skills around using contraception and accessing information from safe and reliable sources. This can be achieved through the following steps outlined below:

- Implement B4u decide throughout the school settings, ensuring young people are supported to delay the onset of early sex until they are ready. Rollout across both the youth work and school settings ensures consistency of messaging in relation to young people's sexual health. To achieve this, additional capacity is needed within schools to provide this training in a timely fashion in response to the needs that have been identified.
- Additional capacity is needed within the school settings to deliver on improving the RSE curriculum. Rather than aligning teachers to the delivery of RSE within

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Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

schools, schools should be equipped with the expertise of a health promotion officer who has the knowledge, expertise and experience in facilitating RSE sessions

- Social- Emotional learning are core competencies that should be developed in a young person and, should be emphasised within the new RSE curriculums. Social and emotional wellbeing is a term, which refers to the way a person thinks and feels about themselves and others and how well they are able to deal with daily challenges and stresses of life. Social and emotional wellbeing has been shown to contribute to young people's academic outcomes and their social development. In addition, social and emotion wellbeing is a protective factor against a range of health problems and their development provides the skill based for the prevention of a wider range of problems behaviours, which include risky health, and sexual behaviours.

There are five core competencies within social and emotion learning and for the purpose of RSE, there should be focus planed on 3 competencies: self-awareness, relationship management and responsible decision-making.

**Self-awareness** is defined as, the ability to recognise and label emotions and understand the impact these emotions can have on behaviour. It involves assessing strengths and challenges and having a strong sense of self-esteem and confidence.

**Relationship Management** involves being able to establish and maintain relationships. This involves communication, resolving conflict constructively and resisting inappropriate social pressure.

**Responsible Decision Making** is the ability to make constructive choices about behaviour and social interactions based on personal, moral and ethical responsibility. It involves identifying problems and using problem solving techniques while considering the wellbeing of oneself and others.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

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- Work in relation to consent is already happening across the youth work sector. It is important that this work is highlighted, recognised and replicated throughout different sector that young people are engaged with. It is also important that the area of consent is not delivered as a standalone piece. Consent needs to be part of a suite of training on sexual health and wellbeing. To ensure consistency of messaging for young people in relation to consent it is essential relevant sectors are equipped with accurate consistent and tangible information.
- Evidence on the impact of pornography on young people should be collated and key learnings identified and formally shared to relevant sectors. It is important to identify and understand why young people are using pornography. In the absence of safe and relevant online resources young people need to be supported to access the information they need from reliable and trustworthy sources.
- The establishment of a working group is essential to ensure an agreed approach and response to underage sex, social media and sexting, particularly since the implementation of Children’s First Legislation (2018) and the Criminal Sexual Offences Act (2017).
- The establishment of a working group (representation from a range of sectors) to ensure appropriate standards are achieved in relation to the development of resources, programmes and online information for young people’s sexual health and wellbeing.
- Over 24 youth work, organisations throughout Ireland have embedded health promotion within their service and have become Health Quality Mark Organisations (HQM). There could be potential partnerships formed with local youth work organisations and schools to replicate their work in RSE as all youth work organisations are at the forefront of providing comprehensive, inclusive RSE.

**References:**

1. National Youth Council of Ireland (2012), Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work  
[http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/Economic\\_Benefit\\_Youthwork\\_2012.pdf](http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/Economic_Benefit_Youthwork_2012.pdf)
2. Rapid Mental Health Needs Consultation (2015), National Youth Health Programme (Available from the National Youth Health Programme)
3. Rapid Needs Assessment on Young Men’s Health (2018), National Youth Health Programme (Available from the National Youth Health Programme)

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

4. Understanding Young People and Pornography, A Rapid Needs Assessment (2018), National Youth Health Programme (Available from the National Youth Health Programme)

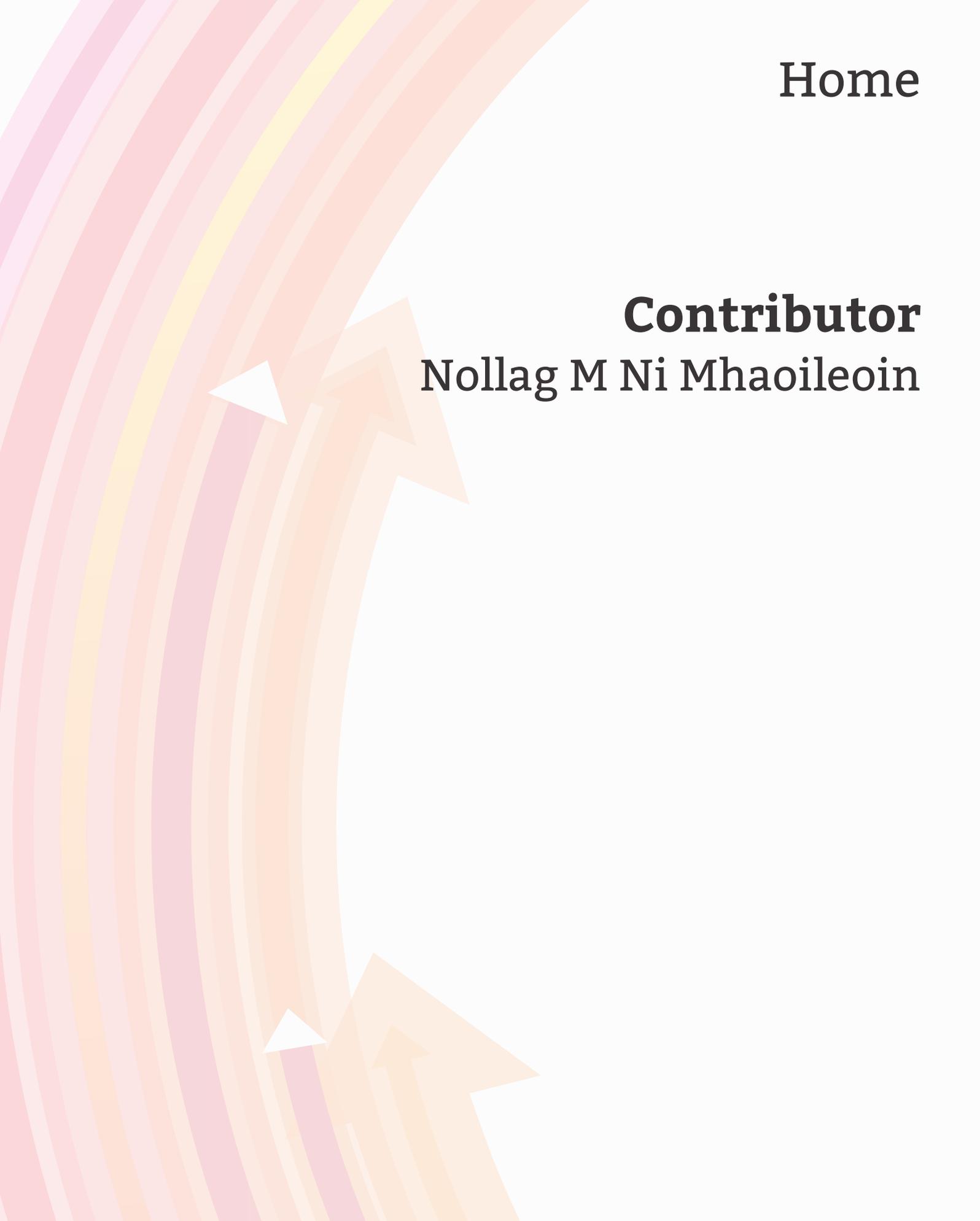
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Please make your submission to [RSReview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSReview@ncca.ie)



Home

**Contributor**

Nollag M Ni Mhaoileoin

Surname Malone

Position (if applicable)

Individual with interest

Organisation (if applicable) NIL

Date 29.1.2019

Email

YOUR BOXES ARE NOT WORKING nollaigml@eircom.net

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal: Yes

Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary

Post-primary

Both: Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes: Yes

The review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.

I simply wish to register my complete objection to this entire programme ref: Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE). It is objectionable to me that young children should be immersed in this programme. This does not mean that I am against a Christian sex education in later years but to initiate this for innocent little boys and girls in primary education is totally unacceptable. This is the age when children are moulded morally and are so open to the truth and the TRUTH. Not what secularism deems truth, as subjective truth, but objective truth. These children deserve their innocence and genuine play, not sexual play as this plan would lead them to. They deserve the truth of Christianity for Christians. Mise Eire . . . mor mo nair, a chlann fein a dhiol a Mhathair. This is a destructive programme Minister, not a building up programme for future citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Nollaig M. Ni Mhaoileoin (STL Theology)



Home

**Contributor**  
Patrick and Anna Carr

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondents details

Name	Patrick & Anna
Surname	Carr
Position (if applicable)	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Date	31 <sup>st</sup> January, 2019
Email	

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes  No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

We have two children in primary school (1<sup>st</sup> class and Senior Infants) and two children of pre-school age. The school has provided us with adequate information about its existing RSE policy, which we are happy with.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

RSE must be age-appropriate, but also individual-appropriate, i.e. not all children in the same class, even if they are the same age, will have the same level of maturity etc. Material or subject matters that may be appropriate for some will not be appropriate for all. For this reason it is essential that parents, as the primary educators of their children and the people who know them best, should have a central role in determining what RSE they judge to be appropriate for their own children.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

This must include their right to withdraw their children from RSE classes at school should they wish to do so.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

RSE, by its nature, can never be value-neutral. It is, therefore, essential that the values it imparts should be consistent with those of the parents. Since the parents will have chosen a school of a particular ethos, it is reasonable, in most cases, to assume that the ethos of the school reflects the values of the parents or, at least, values that the parents are happy to have informing their children's education. It is appropriate, in order to respect the wishes and rights of parents, that the RSE provided by any given school should be informed by and reflect that school's ethos

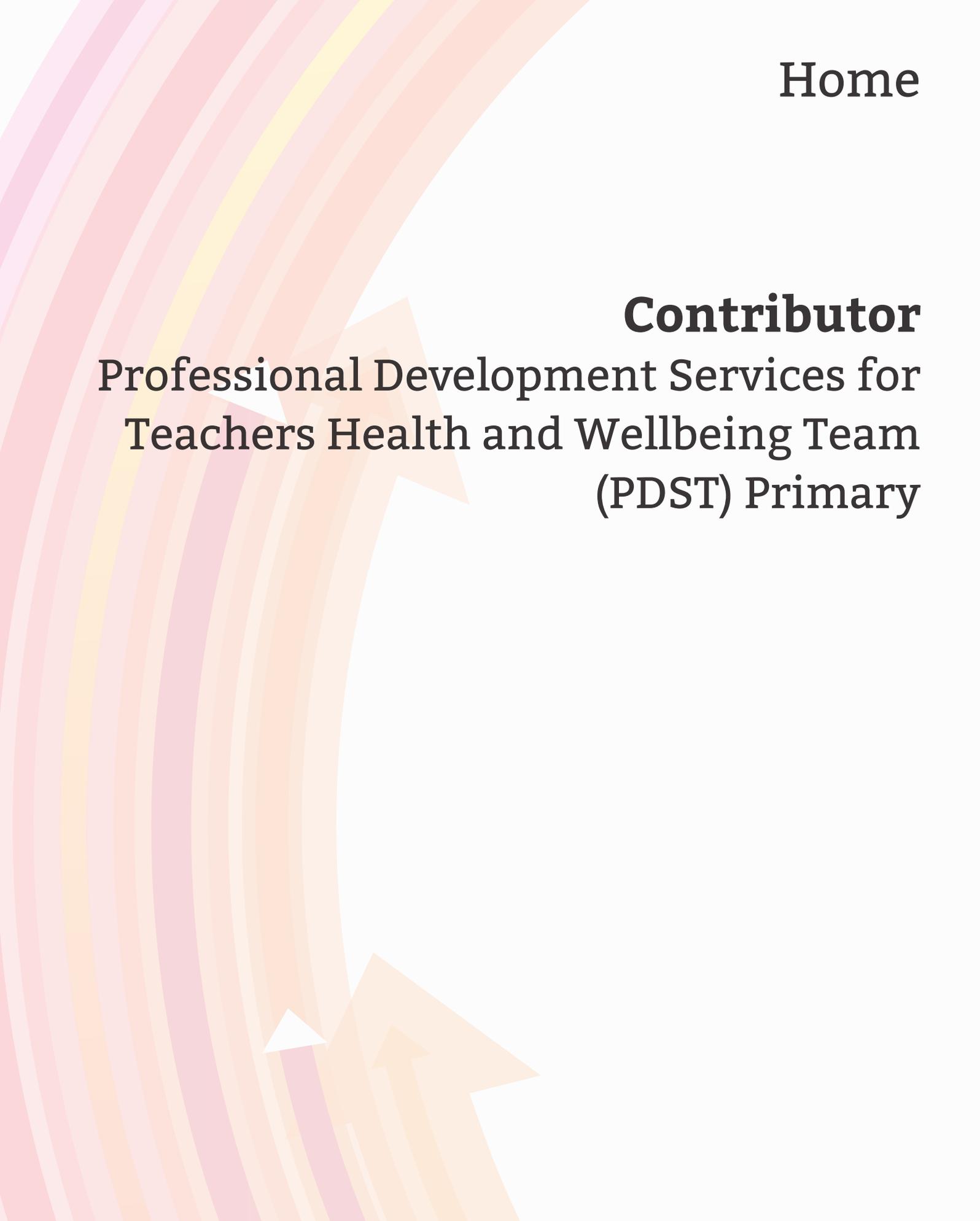
**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

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Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)



Home

**Contributor**  
Professional Development Services for  
Teachers Health and Wellbeing Team  
(PDST) Primary

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Health and Wellbeing Team
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Professional Development Service for Teachers
<b>Date</b>	28/01/2019
<b>Email</b>	

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal

**Organisation**

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

**Primary**

Post-primary

Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

**Yes**

No

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

The PDST is the country's largest single support service offering professional learning opportunities to teachers and school leaders in a range of pedagogical, curricular and educational areas.

PDST provides Relationship and Sexuality Education seminars on an annual basis. These seminars occur in Term One and Two of the school year. The aim of these seminars is to develop confidence and competence in teaching the sensitive aspects of RSE. PDST also provides School Based Support for RSE.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

PDST provides support to teachers in teaching RSE to pupils in our schools.

Overall, there is a huge demand from schools and teachers looking for support in the area of RSE.

The seminars in the Autumn term were completely booked up. Anecdotal evidence suggest that this is because of the major developments in the revision of the Stay Safe programme and the revision of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017. These supremely important developments have heightened a need on the ground for support in the area of RSE. An interpretation of one the reasons as to why such a need has emerged, may be due to the mandatory nature of Stay Safe, and the implications of following/not following the child protection procedures. Schools perhaps now observe a more critical need for children in schools to be taught about specific parts of the human body, in particular, how reproductive organs function, and what is appropriate behaviour for life, for keeping safe, and for protecting oneself. In order to facilitate this demand, extra full day RSE seminars have been scheduled for April and May 2019.

**Circular 42/2018 states 'The qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and she/he can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values, and behaviour in all aspects of wellbeing education.'**

Schools are looking for support in implementing this in their own schools. From the experience of many advisors and associates facilitating the RSE seminars, the number of schools relying solely on the visit of an outside speaker to deliver a once off input on the sensitive issues of RSE seems to be

in decline. This is a positive move, as we can see teachers are becoming more confident in this area and want to engage with best practice in their own classrooms. Research shows that teacher confidence is crucial in the effective teaching of RSE. The more the individual teacher connects with the material and delivers it, the greater their confidence will be. The importance of the relationship part of RSE cannot be underestimated. Research from a variety of jurisdictions reveals this to be fundamentally important. The established relationship between children and teacher encourages acceptance and understanding of the topic within the classroom for the children involved..

It would appear that schools generally are very open to change in RSE. It is deemed necessary in order to respond to the current social climate. The current review is very welcome in order for schools to consider current practices and the wider social response to RSE. In expanding the scope of the RSE curriculum within the context of SPHE, for example, if one was to include teaching and understanding about different sexualities, gender identity, transgender issues and different family structures, this area will demand a greater knowledge, understanding and willingness on the part of teachers to engage meaningfully with all that it entails, and equally the need for comprehensive training provided to teachers in service in schools as well as those aspiring teachers embarking on training in colleges. In this aspect of education, school personnel need reassurance that they are doing the right thing.

### **What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Some challenges that arise during seminar and school based support:

- school leaders requesting specific support in planning RSE
- teachers wanting support in differentiating RSE for pupils with SEN
- teaching in a multi-grade setting
- ITE and NQT education
- A school's ethos can raise questions around approved resources
- The time allocated to SPHE is 30 minutes per week or 1 hour per fortnight- teachers feel this time allocation does not give enough time to cover the content sufficiently.
- Currently contraception is not included in the curriculum and is an issue that if /when it presents, is passed back to parents; if/when it presents, it raises questions as to how this sits alongside the school's ethos; similarly the emotional readiness of Primary school children needs to be considered; research perspectives in other

jurisdictions require reflection; the fact that children will look to other sources for information such as the internet; and what is age appropriate. There is a need for clarity as the issue can be confused and difficult to explain as there are no guidelines pertaining to same.

- Addressing pornography and the myths it portrays.
- The advancement of social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem.
- Issues relating to LGBTQI: teachers' understanding and knowledge; reluctance/uncertainty of teachers and school leaders as to how to fully engage in related curricular areas (DePalma and Atkinson, 2010; Farrelly, 2014); Values and beliefs feeding in to the school culture.
- Consent: what it means and its importance: relate to ethos and when it is appropriate to introduce in terms of sexual contact; also relates to sharing different non-sexual images online; these rights are not just about sex and sexuality.

Opportunities that arise from these challenges:

- Some areas of RSE easily link in with the new Stay Safe particularly the theme of consent and body ownership which needs to be emphasised more in RSE.
- LGBTQ+ matters and the inclusion of diverse family units need to be incorporated to reflect the diverse society we live in and to allow pupils develop a healthy self-concept. Opportunity for further research; training for teachers; buy in from management bodies in terms of support; focus on a positive empathic understanding rather than solely homophobic/transphobic bullying and how to deal with it. Shai (2011) stresses the need for teachers to be introducing this at a very early age following his research.
- Consideration needed for contraception and safe sex to be discussed in senior classes when we introduce sexual intercourse; there is a need for age appropriate information and training for teachers if this area is explored.
- Social media and safe internet use are an important aspect of relationships and self-esteem and hence need more attention at primary level. A number of issues arise in relation to same: maintaining childhood whilst keeping children safe and giving them the correct and appropriate knowledge; parental example regarding social media usage; online bullying; levels of social media consumption.
- Review of the RSE Seminar and looking at providing different supports for different needs. For example: Workshop for NQTs.

- Sustained Support for schools
- Updating of resource materials. The core resource materials book that most schools are using is over twenty years old. This needs a revision following on from the review.
- Exemplars of good practice e.g. videos/webinars
- Consent: can be connected to stay safe programme; applicable to every area of a child's life; key focus on respect and what that means.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Supports to be considered:

- Updated curricula to incorporate and reflect today's society
- Parental support and communication with home.
- Support/ guidelines for schools where a child has been opted out of RSE
- An awareness of RSE in pre-school and post- primary setting which will enable a smooth flow of progression.
- Continuing support through seminars and workshops for teachers to enable them to lead in their communities with vision and respect and informed awareness of varying needs.
- Teachers hope the new review will supply answers to the dilemma they face regarding the ethos of their school and what resources they wish to use.
- Whole staff training for RSE – currently stands at substitution cover for 2 teachers per school to attend a seminar
- Specific support and clarity for school leaders in planning and cultivating a whole school approach to RSE
- Support for teachers in the teaching and learning of RSE and SEN
- Supports to help school communities develop positive and inclusive approaches to RSE
- Communities of practice established particularly in rural Ireland as a means for teachers and schools to build a network of support and open and safe dialogue in their own context.
- More allocated time to SPHE

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

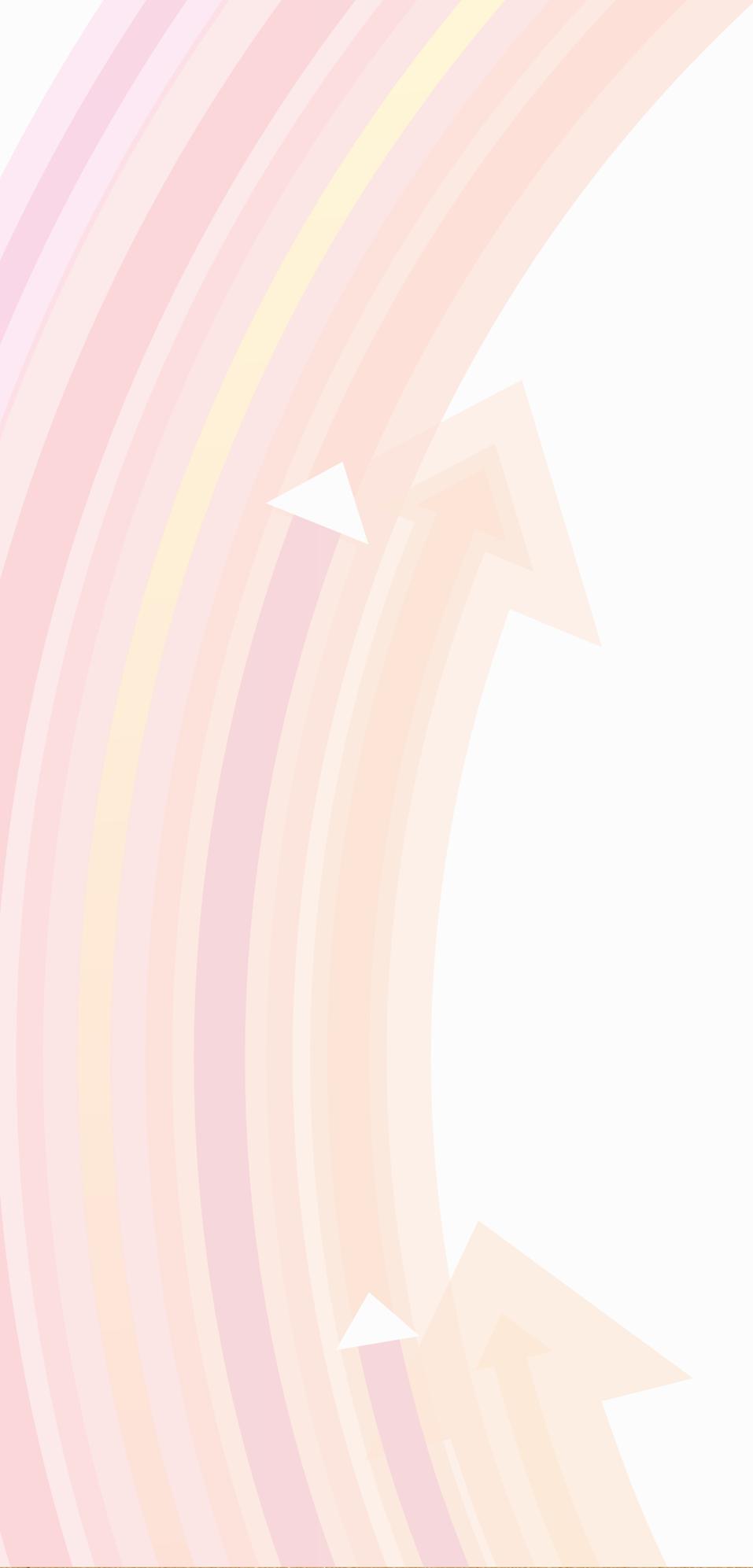
Could the review include research on the detrimental effects of social media/technology/pornography/hearing RSE content out of context, if such research is available?

Naturally, parents, teachers and organisations have different views about how and when RSE is taught to children. In addition, the content taught. Trying to mediate through this space can be extremely challenging for all concerned. The review of RSE is therefore most welcome.

**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

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**Contributor**  
Richard Casey

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

## Review

### Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Richard
<b>Surname</b>	Casey
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Primary teacher
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	24/11/18
<b>Email</b>	

**Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?**

Personal   Organisation

**Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?**

Primary  Post  y  Both

**Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?**

Yes   No

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**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I am a primary school teacher in a Catholic school and have taught RSE in infants and 6<sup>th</sup> class for 5 years. I believe it is 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost the parents' responsibility and duty to educate their child. As a school we must make parents aware of our RSE programme and how it links with our ethos and the attitudes we are endeavouring to cultivate in our pupils.

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I am very worried that sex is being reduced to consent only. A vision of sex in a fully committed relationship, in which the couple plan on remaining together, is a much richer one. This is why marriage should be placed as a fundamental part of RSE. Consent is obviously expected to be discussed when it comes to marriages. Consent only, leads to the "throw away" culture and to the hurt of individuals and society.

Promoting contraception is of grave danger to young people. It gives the impression that one can have sex with no responsibility. This can lead to abuse of sex and others. It can also lead to

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abortion when an unplanned pregnancy occurs. It is important that children are taught about the natural reasons for sex, a vital part of which is procreation. When the procreative element is removed from the sexual act it leads to its abuse.

I again fear what “healthy, positive sexual expression” means in the minister’s eyes. The language used appears to be positive and for the good of the individual but it does not outline what he means by this. I would be extremely suspect of how “positive” this “expression” would sincerely be for the person’s character and development of self.

The internet is undoubtedly a minefield for young people at the moment and being properly taught how to avoid getting into its addictive vices is of the utmost importance.

Likewise, the use of social media to boost one’s sense of self and their self-esteem is shallow and leads to many problems with self-image. Healthy esteem and confidence comes from the knowledge of yourself as a unique, valuable creation, who is loved by the Creator of all.

It is important that children learn that people experience same sex attraction and that we do not understand the reasons why. It is important to foster an environment where people experiencing these feelings feel respected, valued and have their inherent dignity affirmed. It is not right to discriminate against them in any way. It is also vitally important that a Catholic school has the right to teach about homosexuality and gender identity disorder in accordance with its understanding of the truth of these matters.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

We need to:

Reaffirm the importance of creating a high moral vision for children to aspire to in regards to their sexual lives.

Enable them to create a vision of themselves in the best possible long lasting relationship and to share the gift of sex with that person.

Teach children about the dangers of promiscuity in society: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.

Teach children about the dangers of the internet and especially of the catastrophic effects of pornography.

Create discussion about the natural reasons for sex and how procreation is its natural result. This must be linked to the fact that no contraception is 100% reliable and the dangers of holding beliefs about sex with no consequences.

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Promote the understanding of pregnancy as the most wonderful miracle of life and it is a gift whenever it occurs.

Teach about the harmful effects that sex outside of a loving relationship can have on the person spiritually, mentally, socially and emotionally.

Teach children the skills to say “no” to sex and the reasons why.

Cultivate the attitude within young people of thinking about their future partner. Invite them to create, in their imagination, how they would like their future long term partner to act now, sexually, in preparation for meeting them. Invite the children to do likewise.

Critically reflect on the media’s portrayal of sex in magazines, tv and the internet.

Discuss how people who are gay or who are suffering from gender identity disorder are of equal value to each of us and the importance of treating them with value and respect. It is vital that a schools ethos is protected with respect to its inherent beliefs about these matters.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

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**Contributor**

The Sexual Health Centre, Cork

## **A Review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

A submission to the National Council for Curriculum and  
Assessment on behalf of the Sexual Health Centre

Dr. Martin Davoren  
*Executive Director*

## Introduction

The Sexual Health Centre is a Not for Profit, Voluntary Sector/Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). It is situated at 16 Peter's Street in Cork City and its charity number is CHY 19919. The Sexual Health Centre is now in its 30th year. Its vision is for a society where (i) people are able to understand, acknowledge and express their sexuality, (ii) people are able to understand, acknowledge and respect the sexuality of others and (iii) fewer people experience STIs and crisis pregnancies. In achieving this, the mission defines the Sexual Health Centre as "an innovative and creative organisation that facilitates people's need for clear and unambiguous information and support regarding their sexual health, while advocating for positive social change". Our values include but are not limited to Equality, Dignity and Respect, Accountability, Quality, Inclusion and Transparency. We believe that (i) sexuality is an integral part of everyone, (ii) that everyone has the right to feel confident, assertive and safe to express their sexuality and (iii) that being listened to in confidence and accepted without prejudice can alleviate feelings of shame and isolation. The organisation team is focused on delivering health promotion workshops and interventions centred on education, support and facilitation. It works with a broad spectrum of society including but not limited to:

- Young people
- People living with a disability,
- LGBTQ+ community,
- Sex workers,
- Addiction service users
- Vulnerable adults
- Migrants

Until December 2017 the Sexual Health Centre delivered sexual health education programmes to primary and secondary schools in Cork city and county. Due to a funding cut, this programme is no longer available. During the period of delivery, the programme transformed to meet the changing needs of an evolving Ireland. In the final year, the programme covered areas including sexual health, relationships, consent, pornography, contraception, sexuality, reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, sexual pleasure and sexual misconduct. The programme also provided a forum for young people to consider their sexual health and ask questions of a facilitator, experienced in the nuanced detail required to successfully support young people's sexual health and wellbeing. The programme delivered by the Sexual Health Centre was developed to compliment the RSE and SPHE curricula in schools.

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### Information to be considered

Traditionally, sexual health was primarily concerned with reproductive health and its fundamental contribution to society. However, since 1974 a global shift broadened societies view of sexual health requirements to encompass a more holistic approach. This ideology was supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1975) when they first published and acknowledged sexual health in terms of pleasure, the right to information and the enrichment of personal relationships. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme has been a required component of the curriculum at primary and post-primary level since 1996. In 2003, RSE was integrated into a broader health education programme, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). Most recently, the National Sexual Health Strategy signals the State's recognition of its responsibility to ensure that children and adolescents receive relationship and sexuality education that is comprehensive in order to help them attain the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills required for healthy sexual expression. The strategy also names the requirement for a partnership approach involving non-governmental organisations in addressing the education, information and support service needs of children and adolescents in relation to sexual health and wellbeing.

Sexual development and exploration are important developmental tasks of adolescence and emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Impett et al., 2006). Supporting this development requires the implementation of a comprehensive sex education programme. Schools are the primary setting for sexual health education, outside of the home. Clearly there is a need for mandatory, streamlined sexual health programmes so that interventions are effective. Incomplete or incorrect interventions hinder the impact of comprehensive sex education (Bartholemew, L et al, 2011). Goldman (2008) defines comprehensive sexuality education as a programme "that addresses biological and reproductive knowledge, rational, moral and ethical values, communicating skills, decision-making, negotiating relationships skills, socio-cultural understandings, and self-concept and self-esteem enhancement within the context of being a participative member of society and a responsible citizen, integrated in a cross-curricular and multi-subject approach and delivered professionally through each level of school life". Comprehensive sexual health education acknowledges that many young people will become sexually active (Collins et al, 2002). In fact, the majority of young people report sexual activity in advance of 18 years of age (UNICEF, 2011). An updated sex education curriculum requires a partnership approach across education, charity and community organisations that equips young people with the information, skills and opportunity to understand their values and access services so that they can have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships. (Sex Education Forum).

There is considerable Irish and international evidence that suggests those who receive good quality RSE are more likely to delay their sexual debut. (Kirby 2007, UNESCO 2009). Comprehensive sex education provides young people with the opportunity to explore the advantages of waiting until they are ready for sex. Research suggests young people strongly favour classes which are delivered by

external partners and deal with relationships, sexuality and sexual health (Hyde and Howlett, 2004; Mayock and Byrne, 2004). Others suggest the inclusion of information on condoms and where to access services. (UNFPA,2010). It is important to note that:

- The Health Protection Surveillance Centre reports that Sexually Transmitted Infections are a growing public health concern amongst young people in recent decades. In parallel, research has shown that the age of first intercourse has fallen. The likelihoods of contracting chlamydia are higher amongst those whose sexual debut is earlier than the norm (O'Connor, 2015).
- Adults and young people in the out of school setting are particularly vulnerable to models presented as 'legitimate' sexuality, the portrayal of men as sexual predators and lack of acknowledgement of the diversity of sexual feelings and practices. As a result, they are likely to disengage from the programmes. (Pound et al 2016).
- Contextual factors and their effects are important and include: new population groups (religious and cultural differences), the influence of the media and social media, concerns about sexual abuse of children, changing patterns and attitudes to sexuality, the growing acceptance of diversity.

**Facilitation:** While many people believe that teachers should deliver RSE because they know their students, research notes this was actually a barrier due to the level of embarrassment among students and a breach of their boundaries (Pound et al 2016). Students wanted a sense of privacy, impartiality and acceptance. The research found that there were dangers of "blurred boundaries" and that teachers may be inherently unsuitable because of the nature of the relationships. The report recommends highly trained, specialist RSE teachers.

In addition, teachers' belief systems, their personal attributes, teacher training, school policies, schools support for the adoption and implementation of RSE, other curriculum pressures and inconsistent monitoring of delivery and implementation all impact on the quantity and quality of relationships and sexuality education present in our schools. Many studies caution against the implementation of uncoordinated, fragmented interventions.

## Recommendations

A comprehensive review of sex education in Ireland should consider:

- **Partnership:** In their multi-national and multi-cultural study of evidence over a 25-year period, Pound et al concluded that “the evidence indicates that young people dislike having their own teachers deliver RSE”. And, “even if excellent RSE curriculum materials were produced, the success of those materials would depend in very large part upon the educator delivering them” (Pound et al 2016).
  - Sex education delivered in partnership with youth friendly sexual health services experienced in the nuanced detail required to aid the facilitation of knowledge, awareness and behaviour change is required (UNESCO,2011). The programmes delivered by the Sexual Health Centre were and are tailored to the established and expressed needs of young people so that they can be relevant and responsive to emerging issues. Working in partnership with schools to complement the SPHE curriculum supports evidence that acknowledges the value of a package of interventions using a variety of measures, giving complementary messages. (Durlak JA, 2008).
- **Sexuality:** Young people often find the pressure to define their sexuality overwhelming. Sexual education needs to incorporate a global view of sexuality into the curriculum.
- **Pornography:** Pornography consumption is a growing public health concern. A recent meta-analysis of 22 studies between 1978 and 2014 from seven different countries concluded that pornography consumption is associated with an increased likelihood of committing acts of verbal or physical sexual aggression, regardless of age. A 2010 meta-analysis of several studies found “an overall significant positive association between pornography use and attitudes supporting violence against women.” Pornography and it’s link with sexual misconduct must be addressed.
- **Contraception:** Previous research notes that sexual health education without information about contraception is not effective. (Guttmacher Institute, 2007; Kirby 2007 and 2008; Trivedi 2007). Schools in Ireland which operate under a catholic ethos can object to information about contraception being taught in their schools. The Sexual Health Centre programme focused on creating a relationship of trust amongst teachers and principals so that contraception was an accepted integral part of the programmes. Sexuality education was associated with later sexual debut and the use of contraception at first sexual intercourse. This positive influence continued into adulthood where those who had received sexuality education were more likely to access STI tests and services (McBride et al in the ICCP report number 10).
- **Responsive:** Evidence shows that RSE is most effective if it is age appropriate and responds to the needs of young people as they mature (Ofsted 2010). Sex education needs to start in primary schools and continue into secondary school. It should deliver accurate information about services and sexual health while also providing opportunities to reflect upon the values, knowledge and skills required to negotiate healthy sexual relationships (Sex Education Forum, 2010).

- **Inclusive:** As the definition of sexuality has broadened to include pleasure, the education supporting young people needs to incorporate a broader view of sexuality into the narrative. The review of sex education needs to incorporate information about HIV, STIs, unwanted pregnancies in addition to issues such as knowing your own boundaries, feelings, relationships etc. in a sex positive context (Wiefferink et al, 2005; Hodzic, 2003). Sex education must promote protective behaviours and reduce the negative consequences of sexual ill-health.
  - “RSE should be ‘sex-positive’ and delivered by experts who maintain clear boundaries with students. Schools should acknowledge that sex is a special subject with unique challenges” (Pound et al, 2016). Sex education should reflect the “range of young people’s sexual activity, otherwise young people will continue to disengage from RSE and opportunities for safeguarding and improving their sexual health will be reduced” (Pound et al, 2016).
  - Young people criticised sex education that was overly biological or narrow problem oriented or that presented sex outside of its erotic context. They wanted greater openness about sex, what it involves, how to have sex. Young women in particular wanted to discuss emotional aspects of sex and relationships. (Pound et al, 2016)
  - Young people say that they are not sufficiently consulted about their needs, that sex education starts too late, is too biological, stresses negative rather than positive aspects, is not comprehensive and is poorly delivered. (Pound et al, 2016).
- **Consent:** Consent is a required element of each sexual experience. Recent research noted that young people viewed consent in four distinct themes:
  1. An endorsement of the traditional sexual script;
  2. That women are responsible for performing oral sex;
  3. That men's consent to sex can be aggressive; and
  4. That men utilise deception to obtain consent to sex.
    - “Findings suggest that men are conceptualised as sexual initiators and women as sexual gatekeepers, and that men's sexual pleasure is primary whereas women's experience of pleasure is secondary” (Jozkowski, 2012).
    - A lack of informative, evidence based research is available in relation to sexual consent among young people.
- **Support tools:** Recently, Bystander Intervention workshops delivered by the Sexual Health Centre have provided a platform to support young adults in tackling the culture of sexual misconduct in Ireland. This training programme provides young people with the tools and supports required to effectively intervene. The current review of sexual education should consider the tools, support structures and services it will provide young adults to assist their positive sexual health and wellbeing.
  - Furthermore, sex education should provide information on local support and testing services which are freely available to the public and that young people are entitled to access on an on-going basis.
- **Tailored interventions:** A number of groups in Irish society require tailored programmes to support their sexual health and wellbeing requirements. The Sexual Health Centre currently

deliver tailored programmes to vulnerable young people as well as individuals living with an intellectual disability which take account of issues including sexual health, esteem, relationships, consent, pornography, contraception, sexuality, reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, sexual pleasure and sexual misconduct.

- As young people, 'othered' from society in out-of-school setting are more likely to disengage from sexual health education programmes (Pound et al, 2016), tailored programmes on an on-going basis are required.
- The *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* recognises that persons with disabilities require the same range, quality and standard of programmes as provided to other persons including the area of sexual and reproductive health. The Sexual Health Centre delivers tailored workshops to individuals living with an intellectual disability in partner organisations.

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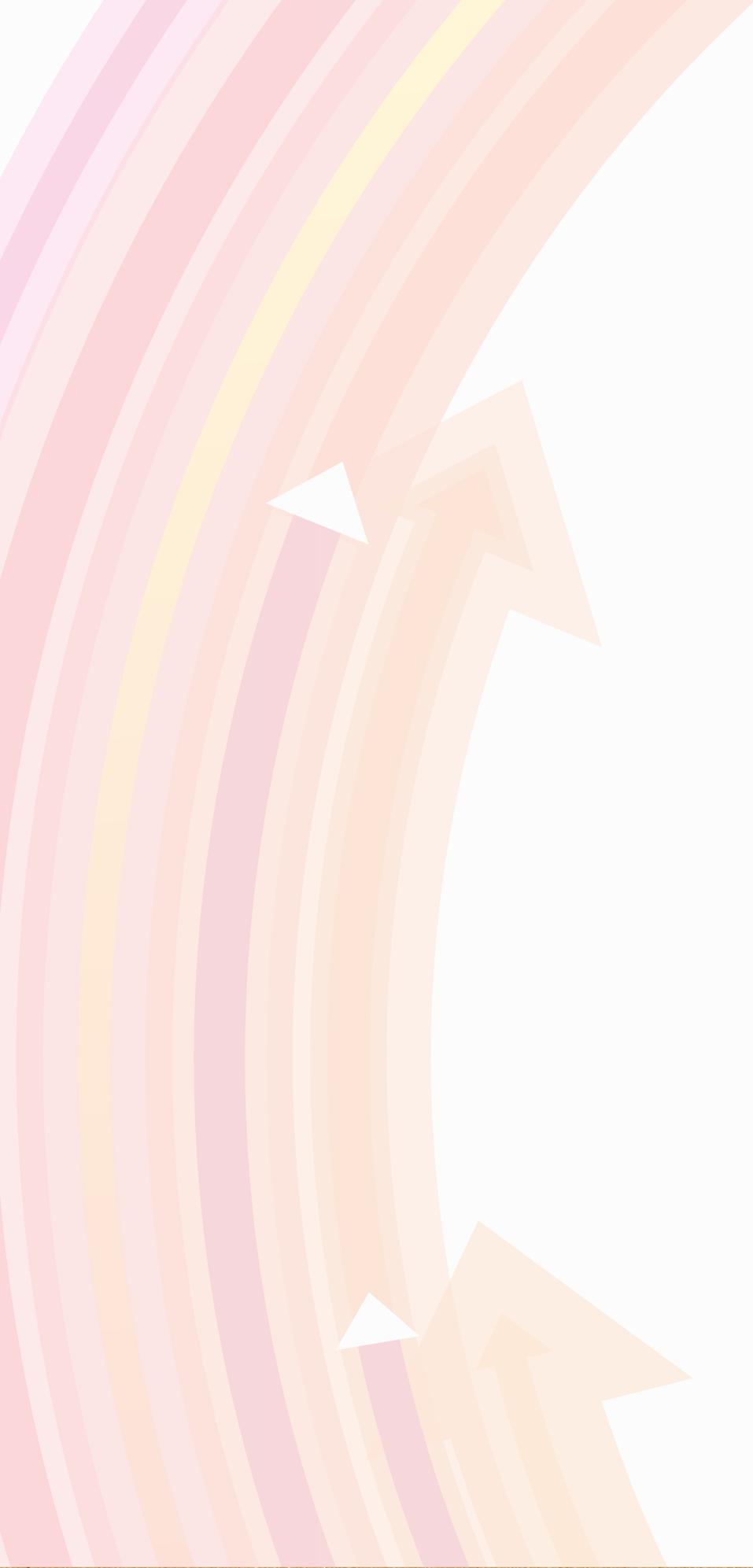
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**Contributor**

Shane Hogan

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

## Review

### Respondents details

Name	Shane
Surname	Hogan
Position (if applicable)	Post primary teacher
Organisation (if applicable)	CBS Secondary School, Charleville, Co. Cork
Date	10/01/2019
Email	

Is this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes  No

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**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

CBS Charleville is an all-boys secondary school providing Catholic education in the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice. We aspire to the intellectual, moral, spiritual, physical and social formation of all members of our school community. We seek to inspire our students to reach their potential, to foster integrity, inclusivity and a spirit of service for the greater glory of God.

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

I have been teaching in the area of relationships and sexuality, in the context of vocation, for about 15 years. I have tried to remain true, in all my teaching, to the fundamental principle at the heart of our reality as human beings that we are created by a loving God in His image and likeness and that we therefore long for genuine intimacy in our relationships. Our sexuality is a God-given gift which, properly integrated into our lives, has the potential to contribute to our sense of well-being and connectedness. I find that as the years go on, more and more students present at secondary school with an understanding and formation around RSE that is deeply flawed, where sexuality is seen as an activity, contraception a licence, pregnancy a problem and recreational sexual activity an expression of freedom. I work to open students eyes and hearts to their profound dignity as children of God, to what love really means, to the reality that promiscuous sexual relationships represent an abuse of others and self and have nothing to do with love. I explore the irony that true freedom comes in commitment and self-giving service and that these are the keys to fulfilment and happiness. I teach the Christian virtues of honesty, chastity, humility and show how they run counter to the self-centred, self-focussed and self-promoting culture that surrounds us. As young men, I urge them to be protectors of the women they care for, not users. My students are often surprised at the depth and wisdom of the Christian vision of love and sexuality although finding it very challenging in the context of their own life experience. Most have only ever heard a caricature of the Christian vision – you can't do anything or have any fun – and come to realise, as they look at their parents' and grandparents' lives, the real truth of the matter. It is a hugely important element of education and formation, which has the possibility to be transformative of lives, and it is an honour to be involved in it.

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**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Consent is a hugely flawed notion. If I propose an inappropriate, immoral or illegal activity to another, and they say “yes”, it is still wrong. A person’s yes is highly manipulable, whether by emotional pressure, mind-games or drugs. The very notion of consent presents a mindset where one person wants to “do” something to the other. I utterly reject all of this approach. Love demands that I spend myself seeking only what is good, what is best, for the other. I recognise in the other a beautiful, priceless and vulnerable creature of God whom it is my joy and duty to honour, respect and protect. Consent is far too superficial and dangerous a concept in this regard.

Contraception has become widely accepted in Irish society and worldwide. This situation should be critiqued in light of its widespread consequences for the wellbeing of society generally and individuals. As it has spread across the human landscape so we have seen huge increases in STDs, extra-marital pregnancy, human trafficking (especially of vulnerable women), demand for abortion services, contraceptive-related cancers and infertility issues and the hammering home of the notion of sex as a recreational activity. Natural methods of birth control, governed always by a spirit of generosity and a fundamental attitude of love and welcome to new life, should be thoroughly presented, including up-to-date methods of ovulation prediction and confirmation.

The greatest contributor to “self-esteem” is the knowledge that we are created and loved by a God who cares for every detail of our lives and longs for our present and eternal happiness, a God who has given Himself for our salvation. Notions of self-esteem built on a structure of self-obsession and

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self-promotion are erroneous and dangerous, leaving individuals highly vulnerable to the opinions and words of others. The very idea that we are not created, that we are random consequences of random processes in a randomly existing universe, is an attack on the dignity and sense of purpose of every student subject to such falsities.

Gender ideology, as it has come upon us in recent years, is very dangerous to our students. In

Krakow with the Polish bishops in July 2016, Pope Francis declared that, “We are experiencing a moment of the annihilation of man as the image of God.” He specifically included within this defacement “[the ideology of] ‘gender’”. He was clearly outraged that, “Today children – children! – are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex...And this is terrible! God created man and woman; God created the world in a certain way... and we are doing the exact opposite.” Our younger children should be completely protected in school from these dangers. Our older secondary children should be led on a thorough analysis of the origins and purpose of this particularly terrible steam train which seeks to overrun us

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

All teachers and facilitators of RSE must receive a thorough formation in the wider truths surrounding our reality as human beings, existing as created beings in a world created for us by God who loves us. They must be encouraged to see education and formation in the area of RSE as of critical importance in the healthy development of our students and in the future health and stability of our families and society. RSE, they must insist, comes down to our need to express and receive love, self-giving, outward focussed, sacrificial, committed love. Spiritual formation is a necessary pre-requisite to working in this area, central and pivotal as it is to the human person. All superficial “consent” and “safe-sex” based approaches to this topic should be rejected as undignifying, dangerous and ultimately counter to any genuine aspirations we have for the happiness and fulfilment of our students. It is critical that RSE teachers and facilitators, together with their students, be given access to appropriate spiritual and pastoral formation

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Thanks you for taking the time to fill in this submission form**

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Home

**Contributor**  
Shauna Bhreathnach

**From:** Shauna bhreathnach [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 14 September 2018 16:43

**To:** info

**Subject:** Rse

To whom it may concern,

I am writing with regard to the current relationships and sexuality education curriculum in post-primary schools. I am a post-primary school teacher and have been shocked at the lack of knowledge given to teenagers around this subject which can range from communication to sexual consent and contraception. As a teacher I am left to deal with many of the problems which are arising as a direct result of students not being taught adequately about their mental health and healthy relationships. I feel we are letting this generation down and some students are leaving school with no support, information or coping skills. I would like to see it enforced that all students receive compulsory RSE in each year of their education and make it a normal part of their school life.

Included in this should be, but not limited to:

Healthy relationships

Sexual consent

Emotional well-being/Resilience

Contraception

STIs

Unplanned pregnancy

Pornography

Body image

Communication

Gender

Sexuality

Safe internet use

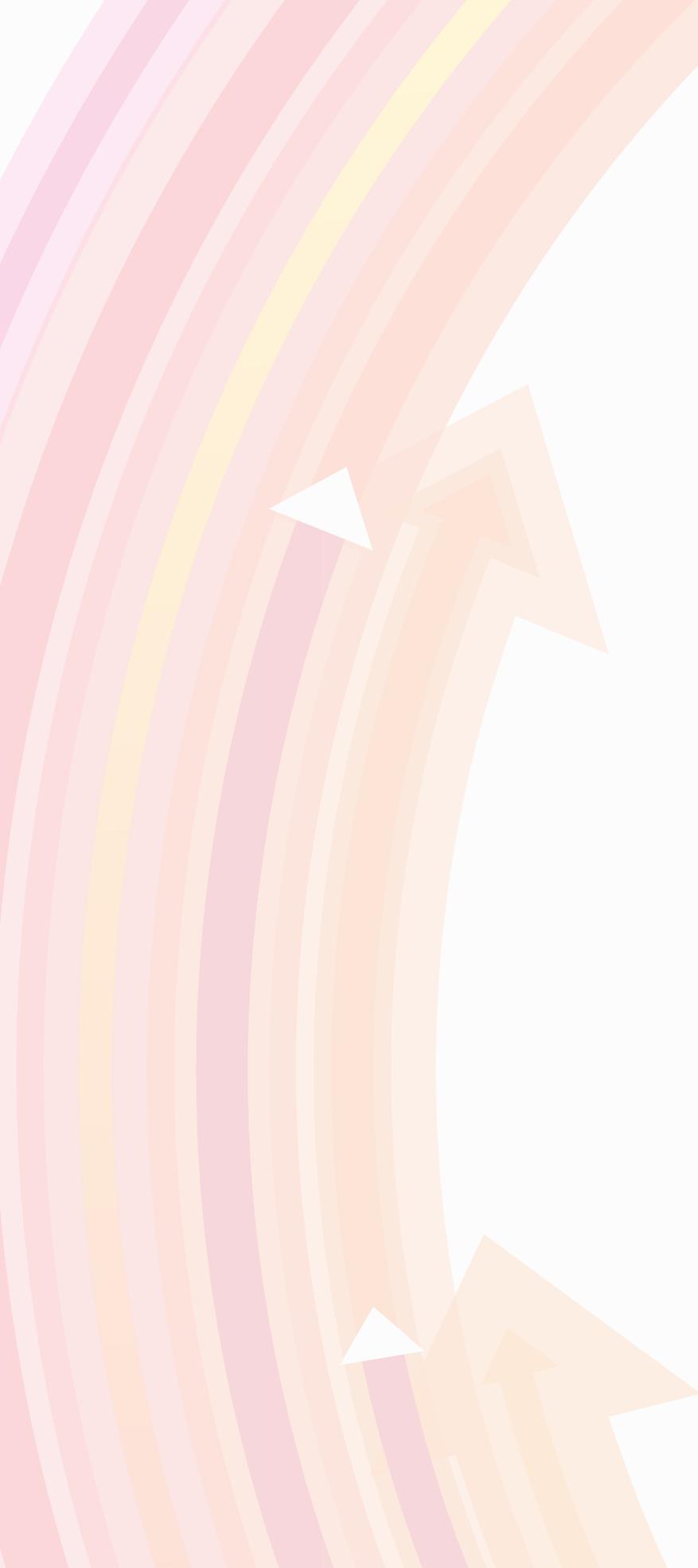
The law

Relationships and sexuality education needs to constantly adapt according to the students in each class and should not give the students the message "it is shameful to talk about certain topics."

I feel that each school should be offered more professional autonomy to teach their students, however, all school should be held accountable for running a comprehensive RSE programme which caters to all students and will promote healthy relationships and mental health.

Fofoige run a very successful REALU programme which I have received training in and found to be invaluable. I am sure they would be happy to provide information and training on this.

Yours Sincerely,  
Shauna Walshe.



Home

**Contributor**  
St. Cecilia's N.S

# Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review

## Respondents details

Name	ÉILIS
Surname	DILLON
Position (if applicable)	PRINCIPAL
Organisation (if applicable)	ST. CECILIA'S SCHOOL
Date	28.02.2019
Email	[REDACTED]

If this submission made in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?

Personal

Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary

Post-primary

Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation\*?

Yes

No

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).**

Special School for students with Mod + SPLD + ASD  
Students from 4-18yrs

**What are your experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Teachers  
Principal – Developing programme for school  
Consultation with parents

**The Minister for Education and Skills requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters.**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

The above topics are all very important and relevant to all students. However, we are dealing with very vulnerable students many of whom are not able to understand/verbalise their emotions. There is difficulty with all of the above areas because they involve very serious consideration and high cognition they are complex concepts

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

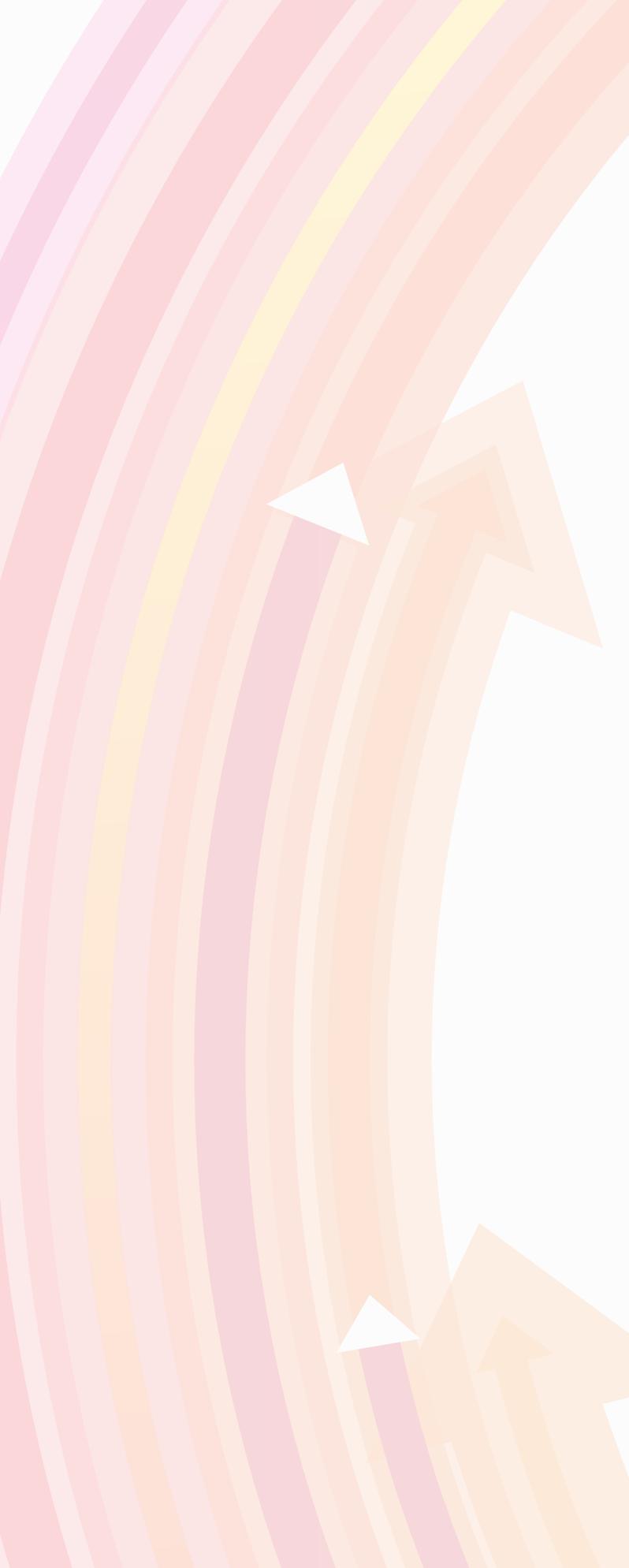
- Teacher Training
- Resource Packs which are suitable for older students who are cognitively in an early developmental level to learn safety strategies.
- An appreciation that there are some students whose care needs are such that this topic unfortunately is not relevant. The sensitivities of parents/guardians of these children must be considered.
- It is difficult for some special schools/classes to implement whole school programmes.
- Recommendations for teaching students with mod – SPLD
- Suggested differentiated programmes/ strategies and examples.
- Guidelines around puberty
- Staff training on behaviour support regarding puberty inc. masturbation.

**If you have any further comments or observations, please respond here.**

There are no resource available in the Republic of Ireland which deal with RSE in a way that our students can understand. The resources that are there are geared towards students in the mild range. In this school we have developed a programme based on our experience as educators and in consultation with parents. Many of our students can only understand concepts in the here and now as they happen. It is important that a suite of resources are developed by professionals so that teachers can access them and use with students who have complex disabilities. The programmes should be taught in consultation with parents and discussed at IEP/MOT meetings. Currently teachers and health care professionals are not following set programmes.

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# Contributor ShoutOut

# Submission to the NCCA on behalf on ShoutOut



## **Brief introduction**

ShoutOut is a registered charity which delivers workshops in schools to tackle LGBTQIA+ bullying and exclusion. We started in 2012 and since then have delivered nearly 700 workshops across the Island of Ireland. That's a reach of over 20,000 students. As well as student workshops we also deliver educational training to teachers, parents and guardians, youth workers and social workers. We feel education is the best way to tackle exclusion and stigma. We have spent many hours with young people across the Island discussing LGBTQIA+ issues, and the lack of inclusivity in RSE is very apparent. Due to this we feel strongly that any update to the curriculum must be LGBTQIA+ inclusive and positive.

## **Factual Information**

### **Research**

The statistics around LGBTQIA+ young people's mental health and sense of belonging is troubling. A recent study\* found that LGBTQIA+ young people were twice as likely to self-harm, three times as likely to attempt suicide and four times as likely to experience severe stress, anxiety and depression than their non-LGBTQIA+ peers.

This, in no small part, is due to a feeling of being isolated, and "other", which is compounded by the lack of discussion about LGBTQIA+ identities in schools. It only stands to reason that clear, non-biased discussion of LGBTQIA+ identities will help bridge the gap which has been formed over decades of silence.

Pertaining specifically to school, this same report showed only 20% of LGBTQIA+ students felt they belonged completely in their school, leaving 80% who did not. 67% of young people witnessed LGBTQIA+ bullying in school. 1 in 4 missed or skipped school to avoid negative treatment due to being LGBTQIA+, and 1 in 4 considered leaving school early.

Young people of Ireland are entitled to an education, but when their place of education is unsafe for them they are effectively being denied this right. We feel inclusive RSE is one way to tackle this problem along with methods currently being carried out by ShoutOut such as teacher training and open spaces for discussion in workshops.

\*LGBTIreland Report, 2016

**Experience of ShoutOut**

We have spent many hours discussing LGBTQIA+ issues with secondary level students and as such have made several observations.

Firstly, in the vast majority of cases, we are informing both teachers and students alike of the existence of intersex people. Considering intersex people make up 1.7% of the population there is an unjustifiable lack of knowledge about this.

Because the young people have never heard of variance in sexual characteristics, and often the teachers confirm they have also not heard of it, they can be reluctant to accept this information despite it being factual. This shows a big gap in education which must be addressed.

We also observe a fundamental misunderstanding about trans identities at all levels of secondary school leading to isolation, bullying and sometimes physical violence for trans young people. Many times, ShoutOut workshops are the only time trans identities will be discussed in the school and only for those who were present that day, in a school which invited us in. This type of education should not be left to chance like this and has led to the fostering of intolerance among many young people towards trans people.

We have noted that much of the homophobic attitudes expressed stem from a complete lack of understanding about consent. Particularly observed in all-boys schools, homophobia is at first an aggressive display of hatred. However, when this is explored further many boys express that they would be unwelcoming to anyone who came out because they are afraid that they will be sexually pursued by a gay classmate despite the lack of them experiencing this, or knowing of anyone having experienced this. Their lack of understanding around consent makes them feel that they will not be asked for consent and will be harassed just because someone is attracted to their gender. (One would then be concerned FOR the young women these boys interact with).

## **Specific Recommendations**

### **Biological Sex**

Biological sex is constantly being forced into a false dichotomy in schools. People have no real sense of the many variations that exist in sexual characteristics and as such people feel like they are "other" if their sexual characteristics differ to what they have been told to expect. We feel RSE should include information on the variety of ways humans can display sexual characteristics and the reality that chromosomes do not always determine sex, and sex does not always determine gender.

Although this is not the focus of this exercise, ShoutOut feels strongly that this should be included in the science and biology curriculum as well, so LGBTQIA+ identities can be woven into the narrative of learning.

### **Gender, and how it differs from sex**

Gender and sex should be discussed and differentiated in RSE. As well as this gender roles should be discussed, how they change over time or due to culture, and how people should not feel defined by them.

## **Minority orientations**

Minority orientations are those outside heterosexuality including, but not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, and pansexual. Because these identities are in the minority this means people are often assumed to be heterosexual until told otherwise. Because of these assumptions, people who are a-part of minority orientations can feel isolated.

## **Trans identities, gender identity and gender expression**

Transgender identities should be fully explained giving students a comprehensive education in gender alignments, gender identity and gender expression. Specifically, the way gender identity and expression are different. Young people need to know that many trans people have known their gender identity from as young as 3 years old, and when they come out as trans they are not suddenly deciding something but aligning their gender identity and their gender expression in a new way.

Trans people may or may not take medical steps in their journey, but whether or not they will, or have, is not anyone's business but their own.

Gender identity should not be expressed as a binary concept. As mentioned above sex is often wrongly forced into a pure dichotomy, and similarly so is gender. Gender exists on a spectrum and the concept of non-binary or third genders have been seen in virtually every society since written record.

Some people identify with the sex assigned to them at birth (cisgender), some people do not identify with the sex assigned to them at birth (transgender), but everyone has a gender identity and gender expression.

## **Sexual activity as a spectrum**

Sexual activity is a spectrum of different acts and should not be limited simply to the act of intercourse. Many people have different wants and desires which will manifest in a variety of ways with their partners, or with themselves.

Because young people are taught that sex is one specific act, those who have disabilities which preclude them from taking part in that act feel excluded. Sex means different things to different people, with the common unifying factor being consent between individuals.

Similarly, some may not experience sexual desire but may experience different forms of attraction.

## **HIV and stigma**

Many young people think only gay and bisexual men can contract HIV, and do not realise that it is a condition anyone could be living with. In 2016, men who have sex with men made up 51% of diagnoses, with 28% among heterosexuals, 16% unknown, 4% among intravenous drugs drug users and 1% mother to child transmissions.

RSE should include information regarding the effective treatment of HIV. They should know that someone with HIV who is taking medication may have an undetectable viral load and therefore will not transmit the virus.

Although it is beyond the purpose of this exercise, we feel the HIV and AIDS epidemic in the 1980s should be apart of the history curriculum.

### **Fluidity of identities**

It should be highlighted that identities, including gender identity and sexual orientation, are not always a static concept and people can change over time. If someone's identity does change over time that is no reason to be disrespectful. There should be no stigma attached to a shift in identity which occurs later in life, as many young people may have adults in their life that come out and be confused by this change.

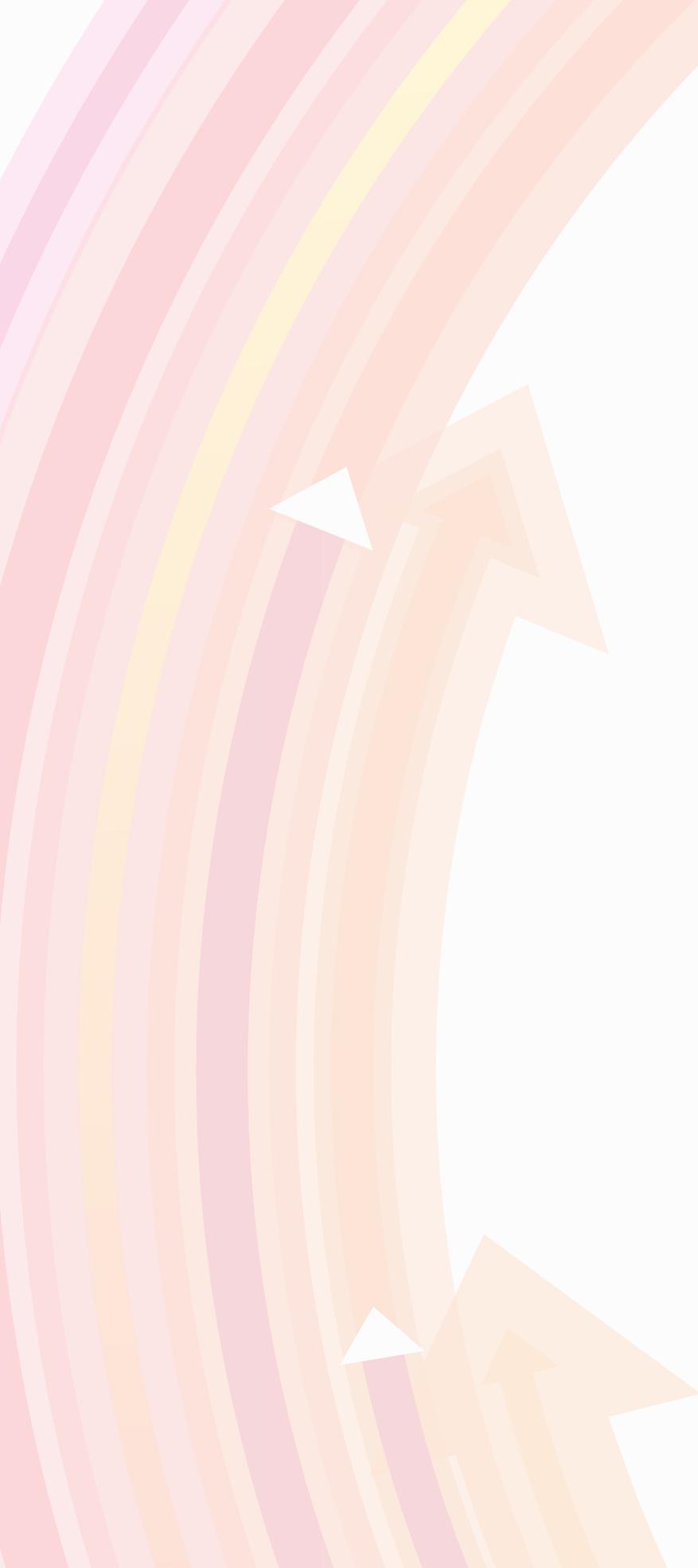
Similarly, all identities should be respected and not challenged. In particular, bisexual people face much discrimination under the idea that it is a "phase" that someone will grow out of. Bisexual people make up the majority of the LGBTQIA+ community but even the number of bisexual people does not stop the stigma around this identity.

While most bisexual people will identify as bisexual for their entire lives, they are still faced with being erased as either gay or straight depending on the gender of their romantic or sexual partner(s).

### **Assumptions**

As humans we all make assumptions, every day. It's part of how our brains work, to fit things into categories so we can assign information about it from past experiences. However, sometimes our assumptions are wrong and that's OK. We feel this is an important concept to be introduced in RSE as it greatly pertains to relationships and personal wellbeing.

This is particularly applicable to LGBTQIA+ people because the unifying factor between all the identities contained in LGBTQIA+ is that it is outside what is assumed of people. People assume that people are heterosexual, or cisgender, or perisexual (non-intersex), or allosexual (not asexual), or monosexual (not pansexual or bisexual). This is why we have the concept of "coming out"; LGBTQIA+ people have to let people know that they are not what has been assumed.



Home

**Contributor**  
SPHE Network

# Relationships and Sexuality (RSE)\* Review

## Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Margaret Nohilly (Chair, SPHE Network) Carol O'Sullivan Audrey Johnston
<b>Surname</b>	As Above
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Chairperson and members of SPHE Network
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	SPHE Network
<b>Date</b>	18.12.2018
<b>Email</b>	[REDACTED]

Is this response a personal view or made on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including the cover page\*?

Yes  No

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**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable)**

The SPHE Network ([www.sphenetwork.ie](http://www.sphenetwork.ie)) was founded in 2000 by Bernie Collins (St. Patrick's College) and Carol O'Sullivan (Mary Immaculate College). It has grown significantly since then with membership from many different organisations and groups.

The diversity in terms of membership reflects the multiplicity and complexity of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum. The Network addresses many different issues relating to SPHE with a view to facilitating its ongoing development as an integral part of both the primary and post-primary curricula.

The Network embraces an advocacy role and endeavour to highlight issues and concerns relating to SPHE in a variety of public fora. It views SPHE as becoming increasingly important in a society where children and young people are confronted with many challenges to their health and wellbeing.

The Network works in a spirit of partnership, co-operation and collaboration and meetings are always well attended with lively and stimulating discussions and debate.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSReview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSReview@ncca.ie)

**What are you or your organisation's experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

- Members of the Organisation teach about Relationships and Sexuality Education(RSE) at primary level and also at third level
- Members of the Organisation have been and are involved in research and report writing in the area of RSE and related areas
- Members of the Organisation have delivered continuous professional development in the area of RSE to both primary and special schools
- The Organisation has received an input from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA ) in relation to the review of RSE taking place presently
- It must be noted that a lack of research into RSE at primary level is particularly evident in the system

**The Minister of Education has requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**

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- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Opportunities

- These areas highlight the acute need for review and revision of the current provision in relation to RSE. The 1998 programme is outdated and does not make specific reference to these areas. The review allows for critical debate on the dichotomy between the current provision and the 21st century needs of children and young people. All of the areas listed above relate to Wellbeing, and the review of RSE provision needs to be embedded in this wider framework. Thus the review of the provision is timely and relevant as Wellbeing is a key focus of both educational and societal debate. It is of note (or concern) that the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES 2018) makes only one reference to RSE. Review of the RSE provision also needs to be considered in the context of bullying, in particular homophobic bullying, gender-based violence, and differing cultural perspectives on identity and roles
- It is crucial that the review and revision of RSE does not follow the pathway which occurred in the 1990s, wherein RSE was presented as “an aspect of Social, Personal and Health education”, before SPHE actually existed. This posed confusion to many stakeholders and was a significant barrier to implementation. The current review needs to be presented in the context of the overall review of the curriculum (in particular the SPHE curriculum) by the NCCA and new developments in RSE need to be presented along with other new curricular developments
- This review of RSE presents the opportunity to update the existing curriculum to include age-appropriate inclusion of consent, safe use of the internet and LGBTQ+ matters. However it is important that RSE is considered in its broadest

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sense as healthy friendships and relationships, personal development and self-esteem and a focus on feelings and emotions are integral to the implementation of a successful RSE programme

- In terms of structure of a new RSE curriculum, it would be opportune to mirror the four key pillars of the Wellbeing framework in order to demonstrate cohesion. It is a requirement of current provision that the curriculum is supported by policy. While the Lifeskills (2015) survey reports that 94% of schools have a policy on RSE (DES 2017), such policies need to be constantly evolving and updated. This perspective needs to be included in the review process. Also, more stakeholders need to be actively involved in the process – most respondents to the 2015 survey indicated that the principal and teachers (at both primary and post primary level) were the major contributors to the RSE policy
- Addressing RSE with pupils from different cultural backgrounds is an area in which area teachers would appreciate support. The review of RSE provides the opportunity to address same
- More prevalence needs to be given to addressing RSE for pupils with special educational needs
- The 1996 guidelines recommend a collaborative approach to policy development and curriculum implementation with the involvement of parents, teachers and the Board of Management. This is central to the review moving forward, but the voice of the child and the rights of the child must also be central to the collaborative process. This review provides the opportunity to promote and include all voices. Roll out of training / information sessions for the whole school community would support a collaborative approach to review

#### Challenges

- In view of the fact that the 2015 survey demonstrates that 74% of primary school teachers and 78% of post-primary school teachers find RSE either

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challenging or very challenging to teach, it is unlikely that the new areas to be addressed will reduce these statistics without considerable support for the teachers. All of the barriers to RSE (lack of time, sensitivity of content matter, status accorded to the subject etc) which are reported in other literature (see for example Nic Gabhainn et al 2010) are unlikely to be eliminated in a new curriculum. In addition, the debate around school ethos is likely to continue. However, perceptions that the RSE curriculum may contravene school ethos needs to be subjected to more critical debate than heretofore. Media focus needs to be challenged and channelled so that the sensationalising of a new curriculum can be averted

- Both the NCCA review (2008) and the DES review (2009) of SPHE, inclusive of RSE highlight challenges in implementing the current RSE programme, including the sensitivity of the material, teachers discomfort in teaching the content, and the absence of a clear programme of content to be implemented at each class level. These challenges should be a central focus in a review and revision of this curriculum
- RSE needs to be given a high profile at all levels across the education system and with all the relevant supports services and the rationale for specific teaching of social / relationship skills and for the provision of information around sexuality needs to be explicitly stated at governmental level
- The amount of time allocated to RSE at pre-service level needs to be increased
- There is a general lack of understanding of the value of children being taught pre-requisite / parallel relationships / social skills; having been taught these skills children then progress to a broader understanding of the topic at the next level
- Teachers would benefit from updated materials that are approved by the DES / NCCA; this will give them more confidence approaching the topic
- The RSE Resource Materials and other resources need to be updated and presented in a modern, more user-friendly style

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- The main issues include implementation, and in particular inconsistent implementation of RSE. It is often perceived as a curriculum for 5<sup>th</sup> /6<sup>th</sup> class as opposed to that which is implemented from the Infant classes.
- The employment of an ‘outside speaker’ for RSE has become established practice for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in some schools. The practice where the speaker is employed outside of school hours and in the evening means that a portion of the curriculum is not delivered during school time. In some instances, pupils from different schools are brought together to minimise costs and the amount of content covered in one session is too much for pupils to process. This practice of a speaker for 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> class further denotes this curriculum as one for 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> class. Many competent, willing teachers may feel disempowered to teach RSE because of the employment of an outside speaker
- Particular issues in recent years include teaching around same sex families and different types of families. Again the ethos of the school can be noted as a preventative factor. While it is really important that this is included in a revision of the RSE curriculum, it would be a disservice to teaching about different types of family if this was only taught in the context of RSE. It must also be explored through the strand unit ‘Myself and My Family’. Gender identity must also be explored and again, through the broader SPHE curriculum, in particular the strand unit ‘Self Identity’.
- A revision of the Stay Safe programme in 2016 has placed a much stronger focus on teaching the correct anatomical names for the private parts of the body. Given the mandatory nature of the programme, it has become a very important focal point in primary schools. It is important to consider if the mandatory nature of one programme in SPHE takes from the implementation of other elements of the programme

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**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

- The importance of RSE needs to be emphasised and allocation of time for SPHE and RSE needs to be prioritised.
- Training and information sessions should be provided for the whole-school community. This includes the provision of specific high-quality resources/ lesson plans for teachers and relevant support materials for parents that teach skills and provide specific knowledge
- It is essential that CPD for teachers is provided to all the teaching staff of the school and a whole-school approach to teacher training and thereafter review and implementation is advocated.
- Clear requirements in relation to RSE need to be outlined by the Department of Education, in particular the mandatory implementation of this programme at all class levels. This must be supported by the Inspectorate
- RSE must become a clear focus in the Whole School Evaluation Process
- Critical debate on the status and profile of RSE in primary and post-primary schools is required, and the impact of the state exams at post-primary level needs to be considered.
- Recognition of the fact that, like other curricular areas, RSE needs to be addressed as a spiral curriculum, rather than being recognised at puberty or at other key milestones in a child's life.

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**References:**

Department of Education and Skills (2009). *Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in the Primary School*. Available from [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

Department of Education and Skills (2018). *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*. Dublin: Government Publications. Available from [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

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NCCA (1996). *Relationships and Sexuality Education: An aspect of Social, Personal and Health Education*. Dublin: Government Publications. Available from [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

NCCA (2008). *Primary Curriculum Review, Phase 2*. Available from [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)

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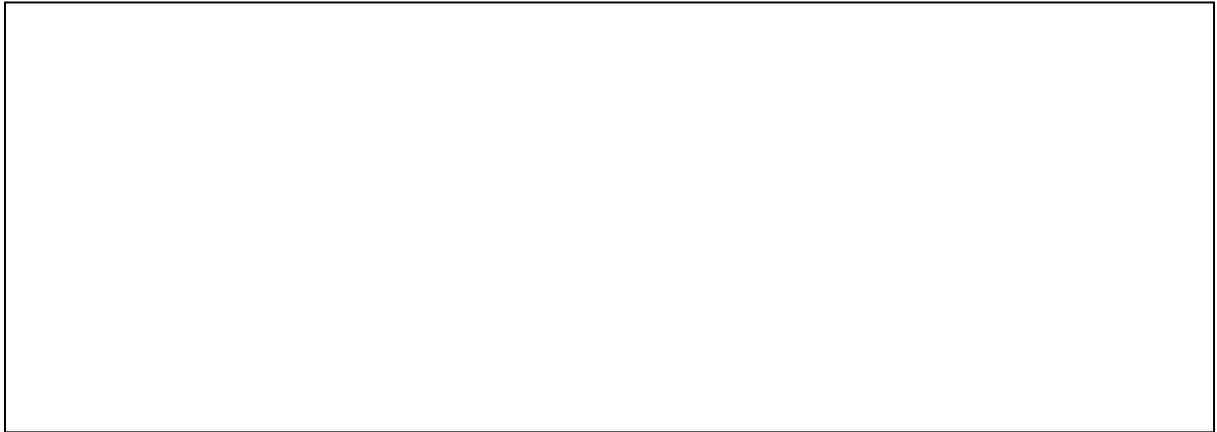
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**If you have any comments or observations, please respond here.**

THE SPHE Network welcomes the review of RSE and are delighted to support the NCCA in this most important work.

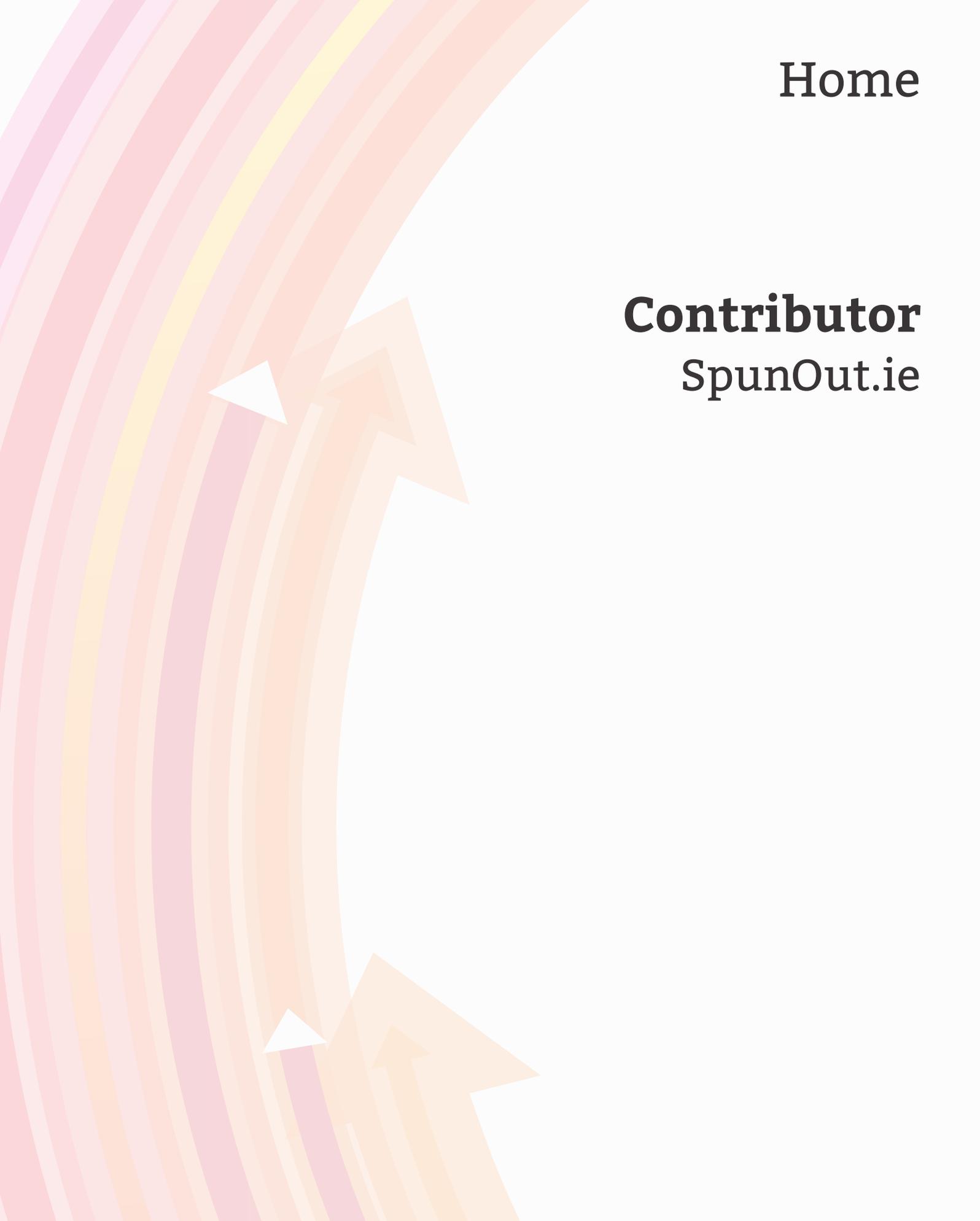
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**Contributor**  
SpunOut.ie



**Submission to the  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)  
on the Review of  
Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

**February 2019**

**1. About SpunOut.ie**

SpunOut.ie is Ireland's multi award-winning youth information website created by young people, for young people. Our goal is to empower young people with the information needed to live active, happy, and healthy lives. We do this by providing easy access to relevant, reliable, supportive and non-judgemental information to assist in informed decision-making; by promoting help-seeking behaviour and signposting young people to existing services and supports; and by facilitating a safe and positive online community where young people can share experiences, perspectives and advice. Last year, our site welcomed more than 1.8 million readers.

This paper sets out our recommendations to the NCCA on the ongoing review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum in Ireland.

## 2. Summary of Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Page
1	That the NCCA establish a regular, recurring process of comprehensive review of the RSE curriculum.	4
2	That the voices, opinions and experiences of young people themselves are always central to the design of the RSE curriculum.	4
3	That steps be taken to ensure consistency of quality in RSE education regardless of school ethos.	5
4	That a mandatory accredited programme be put in place, for all educators, to provide a positive impact on the consistency and quality of RSE education and to ensure teachers can direct students to the right sources of information and provide a healthy atmosphere for discussion.	5
5	That stronger regulatory standards be applied to external providers of RSE in schools.	5
6	That the NCCA adopts a holistic approach to RSE.	7
7	That education around consent commences from as early as possible in a child's education, and forms a continuous and central part of the RSE curriculum until the end of secondary level.	7
8	That LGBTI+ experiences are a central theme of the RSE course, and that all students receive a comprehensive education on issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, and on gender roles.	8
9	That RSE prepares students with the skills to safely navigate online sexuality, understand their personal data rights as relates to sexual imagery, and deals with the issue of pornography in a stigma-free, evidence-based way.	9
10	That RSE provides each student with a practical knowledge of all forms of contraception.	10
11	That RSE provides young women and people who may become pregnant with a clear understanding of their legal rights.	10
12	That RSE provides comprehensive, factual and de-stigmatising information on HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections.	10
13	That the Government supports the effectiveness of RSE by expanding its plans for the provision of free contraception.	10

### 3. The Voices of Young People

As a youth-led information service, SpunOut.ie strives to base our policy recommendations on evidence supplied to us from young people describing their own experiences. As a trusted provider of non-judgemental factual information online, we are uniquely placed to report on the information-seeking needs of Irish young people in the area of relationships and sexuality education.

Sexual health information has long been one of the most consistently searched for and read topic areas within our service, as evidenced by our most recently published organisational Impact Report<sup>1</sup> in which three of our top ten most-read articles dealt with RSE- relevant content. More than 47,000 people used our website to find details of free STI screening clinics, and over 11,000 young readers visited SpunOut.ie to read about consent in the aftermath of the 2018 rape trial in Belfast. Our factsheets on toxic relationships and common sex myths were each viewed by more than 18,000 of our readers in 2017. Overall, SpunOut.ie's acts as an important cost-free information service on a range of topics that should be covered in detail through school-based RSE.

In determining our recommendations for the NCCA, we have been conscious of the need to provide fresh data on young people's genuine experiences of the RSE curriculum as it currently stands, and to ground our submission in the genuine desires of Irish young people. Therefore, in advance of this review, we conducted a 2018 survey of young people aged 16-20 from across Ireland on the topic of RSE.

All told, 1,466 young people participated in the survey. Of these, 76% confirmed they had received some level of RSE in their formal education, while 18% said they had not. For those who did receive RSE, only 21% rated the education received as 'good' (13%), 'very good' (6%), or 'excellent' (2%). For 30% of responded receiving RSE, the quality was 'fair' and 47% described their RSE experience as 'poor'. These numbers are troubling, and point to a very serious need to reform the RSE curriculum to meet the real needs of students. In terms of what respondents felt was missing from their RSE, the most common answers were as follows:

- 31% reported not receiving information on different forms of contraception
- 32% said their RSE did not include information on STIs
- 58% said their RSE did not include information on consent
- 79% said they did not receive information on LGBTI+ matters
- 87% received no information on abortion

These figures point to a serious deficit in the teaching of RSE in Ireland, and have informed our recommendations throughout this document.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://spunout.ie/images/spunout/SpunOut.ie\\_Impact\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](https://spunout.ie/images/spunout/SpunOut.ie_Impact_Report_2017.pdf)

#### 4. The Need for Regular Review

**Recommendation 1: *That the NCCA establish a regular, recurring process of comprehensive review of the RSE curriculum.***

**Recommendation 2: *That the voices, opinions and experiences of young people themselves are always central to the design of the RSE curriculum.***

SpunOut.ie strongly welcomes the call by the Minister for Education and Skills for a substantial review of Relationships and Sexuality Educations (RSE) by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). We commend the openness and emphasis on dialogue with educators, young people, and civil society organisations demonstrated by the NCCA throughout this process to date, and hope that its findings and recommendations will reflect the evolution of best practice in RSE and the dramatic positive changes in Irish society across the past two decades.

However, we recognise that the NCCA has been set with a considerable task in updating a curriculum which dates, in large part, from 1998<sup>2</sup>. While we recognise many positive and enduring elements of the existing curriculum, the sheer length of time since its introduction will naturally necessitate a significant scale of review twenty years later. The pace of change in Irish society has been dramatic in the intervening period, for instance in our growing understanding and acceptance of the needs and rights of the LGBTI+ community.

In addition to the above, international best practice in the teaching of RSE has also, understandably, continued to develop since 1998. This has included a shift towards models of Holistic and Comprehensive Sexual Education, which increase the emphasis on “addressing the reality and impact of sexuality on young people’s lives [using] scientific evidence and rooting the content in gender equality and human rights standards and frameworks.”<sup>3</sup>

Such changes are unavoidable across any significant length of time. We believe that the scope and workload of future reviews can be lessened, and the evolving needs of students more readily met, through a more regularised review process. As the context and challenges facing RSE continue to change, so too must the NCCA be able to meet those challenges through regular, consistent curricular review. In doing so, we encourage the NCCA to maintain its commendable present attitude towards facilitating dialogue with stakeholders, and in particular its commitment to involving the voices of young people themselves in the discussion on their education.

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<sup>2</sup> Morgan, Keating and Collins (2018) *Relationships and Sexuality Education in Primary and Post Primary Irish Schools: A Research Paper*

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO (2018) *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*

## 5. Educators and Ethos

**Recommendation 3: *That steps be taken to ensure consistency of quality in RSE education regardless of school ethos.***

**Recommendation 4: *That a mandatory accredited programme be put in place, for all educators, to provide a positive impact on the consistency and quality of RSE education and to ensure teachers can direct students to the right sources of information and provide a healthy atmosphere for discussion.***

**Recommendation 5: *That stronger regulatory standards be applied to external providers of RSE in schools.***

One of the most significant issues which has been identified in the present RSE curriculum has been its implementation on the ground in schools across the country. One wide-ranging study of the teaching of RSE reported “significant variation in the quality of RSE teaching” in Ireland, with the level of quality majorly dependent on the “experience and expertise of individual teachers”. Moreover, some 37% of schools were identified as not having a core teaching team in place for RSE in senior cycle.<sup>4</sup>

Staff turnover and teachers’ uncomfortableness with the subject matter were both identified as barriers to the proper implementation of the existing curriculum. Unsurprisingly, this may have led to what the report describes as a potential “over-reliance on outside facilitators” to provide basic RSE in some schools, as well as a dependence on free online resources, such as those of SpunOut.ie, which, while valuable, cannot act as a substitute for an effective and consistent on-the-ground curriculum<sup>5</sup>.

School ethos has also been identified as a “significant factor in the approach adopted in schools” towards RSE in Ireland<sup>6</sup>, affecting both the delivery of the subject matter in classrooms and the choice of external facilitators to supplement (or substitute for) RSE provided by teachers. With the assessment of learning outcomes for RSE relatively weak compared to the ‘examinable’ subjects with which it competes for student and teacher focus<sup>7</sup>, the standard of RSE being imparted in individual schools or by external providers can be unclear. The risk of misinformation is high, with certain external providers delivering

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<sup>4</sup> Ketting and Ivanova (2018) *Sexuality Education in Europe and Central Asia: State of the Art and Recent Developments*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Morgan et al (2018)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

an abstinence-focused form of RSE which promotes negative or incorrect information on contraception and sexual activity<sup>8</sup>.

Abstinence-focused RSE education has of course been increasingly debunked in recent years, with UNESCO's recent review of the relevant evidence stating that "sexuality education ... does not increase sexual activity, sexual risk-taking behaviour or STI/HIV infection rates"<sup>9</sup>. It also bears mentioning that, as an interpretation of RSE focused on the avoidance of pregnancy in same-sex relationships, abstinence-based models inherently fail to meet the needs of many LGBTI+ students.

Failure to ensure a consistent standard of RSE for all students, regardless of school ethos, is a significant policy problem. Therefore, we believe steps must be taken to ensure that the new curriculum is delivered to all students, from all parts of the country and in schools of all kinds of ethos, to a similar standard. We believe there are two major actions which can be taken to ensure this becomes the case.

Firstly, the number of teachers who have the knowledge and training to deal with the subject of RSE in a confident and informed manner should be increased through the creation and funding of a mandatory accredited programme for educators. This would further lessen the impact of staff turnover on effective teaching of the subject, and make it easier for schools to put in place a core RSE teaching team. This should be accompanied with a recognition of the valuable role played by many external educators in fulfilling students' RSE needs, and the introduction of regulation and accreditation to bolster those external educators teaching RSE in line with the principles of the revised curriculum, while reducing the capacity for groups to advocate alternative, non fact-based agendas in this area.

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<sup>8</sup> Ketting and Ivanova (2018)

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO (2018) *Review of the Evidence on Sexuality Education*

## 6. Holistic RSE with Consent at Its Core

**Recommendation 6: *That the NCCA adopts a holistic approach to RSE.***

**Recommendation 7: *That education around consent commences from as early as possible in a child's education, and forms a continuous and central part of the RSE curriculum until the end of secondary level.***

SpunOut.ie supports a holistic model of education provision in this area. Holistic sexual education has been defined as being based around “sexuality as a positive human potential and a source of satisfaction and pleasure”<sup>10</sup> or, to paraphrase another source, the recognition that young people will, in the course of their lives, enter into relationships which may become sexual<sup>11</sup>.

Holistic RSE is therefore based on helping young people make the right choices for them as they navigate their evolving conceptions of interpersonal relationships from early childhood right until the end of adolescence and beyond. The World Health Organisation has also identified a basis in scientifically factual information as a key component of holistic RSE<sup>12</sup>, something which we believe must be a central factor in considering which approach be taken in any area of education.

In implementing a holistic approach, we believe that social and emotional learning must be recognised as core competencies within the RSE curriculum, with a particular focus on self-awareness and distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy relationships, from as young an age as possible. In particular, we would encourage that RSE imparts a knowledge of how to identify potentially toxic relationships and the best courses of action for individuals to extricate themselves from such situations.

We also recommend that the curriculum reinforce its commitment to the foundational importance of consent. Rather than being a concept exclusively for sexual relationships, the basic principles of consent are relevant, indeed vital, to all interpersonal relationships and should be imparted and understood from as young an age as practicable. Understanding, respecting, communicating and negotiating consent should be a core and consistent part of RSE beginning at the very start of a child's education and carrying all the way through to adulthood, with the specific role of consent in sexual relationships being introduced at an early, age-appropriate stage.

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<sup>10</sup> Ketting and Winkelman (2013) *New Approaches to Sexuality Education and Underlying Paradigms*

<sup>11</sup> Morgan et al (2018) p.24

<sup>12</sup> WHO (2010) *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe*

## 7. Meeting the Needs of LGBTI+ Students

**Recommendation 8: *That LGBTI+ experiences are a central theme of the RSE course, and that all students receive a comprehensive education on issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, and on gender roles.***

The NCCA must ensure the development of an RSE curriculum which fully meets the educational needs of young LGBTI+ people. A welcome change has occurred in Irish law and public opinion in the last quarter-century; from decriminalisation of homosexual acts in 1993, through to the Marriage Equality and Gender Recognition Acts of 2015. It is critical that the opportunity is now seized to move past decades of heteronormative, cis-exclusive educational assumptions and deliver an RSE curriculum that recognises, celebrates and caters to the variety of sexual orientations and gender identities that exist in our country.

Meeting the needs of young LGBTI+ people, or of those who may question or come to question their sexuality or identity, is especially important considering the bleak mental health outcomes that have been recorded for this community, even in the new, more legally egalitarian Ireland. Research published by BeLonG To and GLEN paints a worrying picture, with LGBTI+ youth three times more likely than their peers to attempt suicide and a staggering four times more likely to be living with severe anxiety or depression<sup>13</sup>. These negative health outcomes were linked to anti-LGBTI+ bullying in schools, with half of all surveyed students having experienced such bullying during their education.

The importance of schools making effective educational interventions to create a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for LGBTI+ students is clear. Central to this must be an RSE curriculum which informs on and de-stigmatizes the issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender roles for students. It should also not be forgotten that education on these topics serves not only the minority who identify or will identify as LGBTI+; rather, we must acknowledge and explore the fact that every person has a sexual orientation, a gender identity, and must grapple with the implications of societal expectations assigned to them by others due to their gender expression.

Furthermore, the teaching of these issues should adhere to the spirit of holistic RSE: LGBTI+ identities should be present and validated throughout the curriculum, rather than reduced to any number of defined lessons. The existence of LGBTI+ people and their equal capacity for loving, meaningful relationships should be a core and consistent theme of the revised RSE course. The curriculum should take particular care to educate on trans and intersex experiences and identities.

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<sup>13</sup> Higgins et al (2016) *The LGBTIreland Report: National Study of the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex People in Ireland*.

## 8. Dealing the the Realities of Online Sexuality

**Recommendation 9: *That RSE prepares students with the skills to safely navigate online sexuality, understand their personal data rights as relates to sexual imagery, and deals with the issue of pornography in a stigma-free, evidence-based way.***

One of the most dramatic ways in which the world has changed since 1998 concerns the now-widespread access to internet services and the resulting effects on modern relationships and sexuality. The revised RSE curriculum must acknowledge the pervasive role of the internet in modern sexuality, and should prepare students with the skills and knowledge they need to safely navigate this online space.

By imparting good digital citizenship onto young people as part of a reformed RSE course, the NCCA can ensure that young people are better prepared for the realities of modern sexuality; such as dating apps and other services. These services have allowed for great connections across distances and within specific communities, but also require a degree of comprehension as to individual data rights, the right to be forgotten, and how to best utilise apps and dating services in ways which are safe and satisfactory.

Furthermore, the curriculum should deal with the issue of sexting in a considered, rights-based way. While the sharing of sexually explicit images by young people is a fraught topic subject to criminal law, educators should not be ignorant of the fact that such practice is common and, where done with mutual consent with both parties above the age of consent, it can form part of a healthy sexual relationship. While educating students about the potential negative consequences of sharing sexual imagery of oneself online, RSE must also provide them with the information on how to mitigate the risk if doing so. Education should also be provided on what actions can be taken should a person come to regret imagery they had previously shared, helping students to understand what actions can and cannot be taken to remove such images from the apps or texting service through which they were shared. RSE should also empower students with knowledge of their rights and legal recourse in cases of non-consensual sharing of sexual images, including so-called 'revenge porn'.

RSE must also be frank and proactive in dealing with the impact of the widespread, effectively cost-free availability of pornography online. The risk of pornography acting as a substitute for genuine sexual education must be acknowledged and the negative lessons taught by pornography countered (for instance around contraceptive use, relations between sexual partners, and the importance of negotiation of consent prior to and during sex). In general, education relating to pornography and its impact must be done in a stigma-free, evidence-based way that seeks to combat misinformation rather than shame young people.

## 9. Contraception, Pregnancy and STIs

**Recommendation 10: *That RSE provides each student with a practical knowledge of all forms of contraception.***

**Recommendation 11: *That RSE provides young women and people who may become pregnant with a clear understanding of their legal rights.***

**Recommendation 12: *That RSE provides comprehensive, factual and de-stigmatising information on HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections.***

**Recommendation 13: *That the Government supports the effectiveness of RSE by expanding its plans for the provision of free contraception.***

For a truly effective RSE, it should be of fundamental importance that the subject provides each student with a practical knowledge concerning the proper use of as wide a range of contraceptive options as possible. RSE can and must equip young people with a working knowledge of different forms of contraception, how they are used and for whom and in which situations they might be suitable. This process should include a healthy regard for meeting the needs of all forms of consensual sexual relationships, without a singular focus on the male-female cisgender sexual relationships to the exclusion or diminishment of others.

In addition to learning about the biology of procreation and strategies for its prevention, students who may one day become pregnant should have access to proper signposting towards services of all kinds which may be of use to them in the future, including abortion services. It is critical that students are provided with information around termination of pregnancy, and that young people are empowered to follow their own judgement in cases of crisis pregnancy. RSE should reflect this and provide young women and other people who may become pregnant with a full understanding of their legal rights in this area.

The revised RSE curriculum should also provide students with factual, non-judgemental and up-to-date information as to the avoidance and effective treatment of sexually transmitted infections. A particular focus should be given within the curriculum to the realities of HIV, given the enormous social impact of the virus, high levels of societal stigma associated with it, and significant medical advances in recent years which have fundamentally changed the nature of the condition and made it possible for HIV+ persons to live full and fulfilling lives with proper medical support. Furthermore, with the rate of new HIV infections again on the

rise in Ireland in recent years, proper education on the subject in its totality is nothing short of essential from a public health perspective<sup>14</sup>.

As a supplementary recommendation outside of the immediate scope of this report, SpunOut.ie strongly endorses proposals by the Government to provide free condoms<sup>15</sup>, and recommends both that this plan be implemented, and that its scope be expanded to include all forms of contraception. We believe that one of the best ways the Government could support the effectiveness of the RSE curriculum is to ensure that the materials required for good sexual health are reliably available free-of-charge.

**Prepared by Jack Eustace, Governance & Policy Officer**

Any queries can be addressed to [jack.eustace@spunout.ie](mailto:jack.eustace@spunout.ie)



Seán MacBride House, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2

t: 01 675 3554

e: [info@SpunOut.ie](mailto:info@SpunOut.ie)



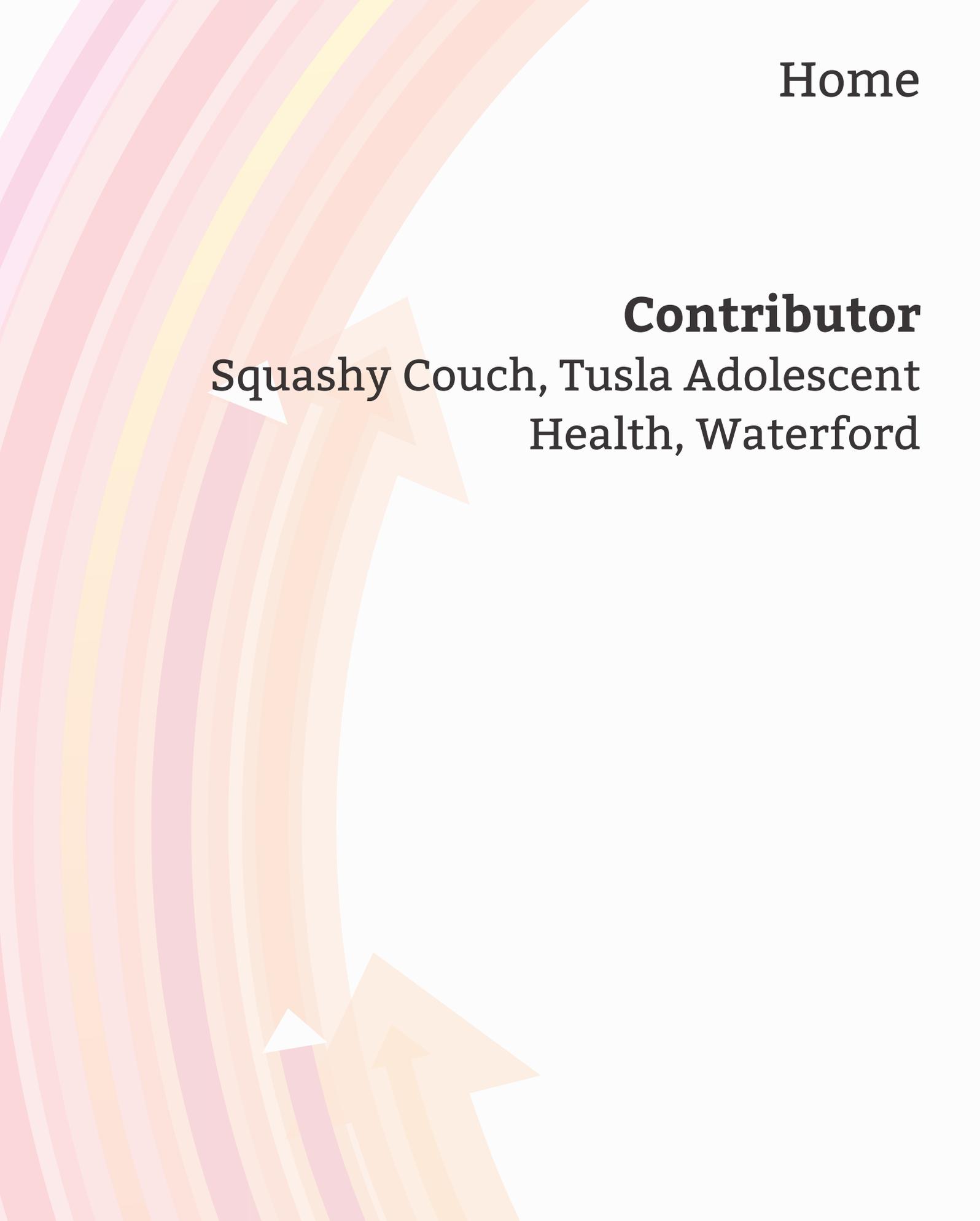
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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/hiv-rate-across-ireland-rose-by-8-in-2018-figures-show-1.3748999>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/vending-machines-may-be-used-to-distribute-free-condoms- says-hse-1.3745092>



Home

## **Contributor**

Squashy Couch, Tusla Adolescent  
Health, Waterford

# Relationships and Sexuality (RSE)\* Review

## Respondents details

Name	Adrian
Surname	Hogan
Position (if applicable)	Acting Manager
Organisation (if applicable)	Squashy Couch –Adolescent Health Service (Tusla)
Date	08/11/2018
Email	[REDACTED]

Is this response a personal view or made on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including the cover page\*?

Yes  No

\*By ticking this box you consent to the NCCA to publish the submission online including the details submitted on the cover page, in line with GDPR regulations. For more information please see our privacy statement at [www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement](http://www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement)

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable)

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

Squashy Couch was set up by the South Eastern Health Board with the objective to reduce the high numbers of unplanned teenage pregnancies as a result of figures highlighted in a study titled “ The experience of teenage pregnancy in the South East”. The study also identified that young people needed aged appropriate, information and sexual health services that were youth friendly and most importantly accessible to young people, both geographically and financially. All of which are fulfilled by Squashy Couch from its establishment in 2013.

**What are you or your organisation’s experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

From the beginning our service provision was to offer young people accessible, free and confidential sexual health information, support and services.

We created and deliver our 6 hour Sexual Health programme to over 800 young people annually. To further support the programme we have a Nursing service that offers young people one to one sexual health sessions, information on contraception, pregnancy testing, ante and postal natal sessions, STI information, and access to a GP service.

Young people can access condom demonstrations and condoms free of charge.

**The Minister of Education has requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**
- **LGBTQ+ matters**

**What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Below are a list of challenges and opportunities we as a staff team have identified in our experience of facilitating sexual health programmes and delivery of services over the past 14 years.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Challenges :**

- The requirement in some settings for a teacher to be present in the room, has in our experience had a negative impact on the group dynamic and young people are more reluctant to give candid answers or ask relevant questions.
- There are times when access to young people can be obstructed as a result of school ethos and fear of repercussions from boards of managements and/or parents.
- If there isn't a whole school approach to the value placed on or the need for sexual health education it can be challenging in that it can impact the availability of allocated class times, suitable environment for group work and small group numbers all of which impact a young person's experience and learning.
- Gender and sexuality need to be identified as separate entities.
- Some cultural acceptance of the LGBTQ + community in schools is needed for example few schools have gender neutral toilets and have restrictions on uniforms.
- Consent brings with it hypothetical questions. Facilitators need knowledge and youth led experience to answer and help process young people's thoughts.

**Opportunities:**

- The opportunity to discuss consent and choice should be essential and apparent themes throughout the entire programme.
- Facilitators seek consent from parents/guardians of participants and young people are also made aware that participation in the group optional. This reinforces the importance of consent and choice.
- In relation to developments in contraception, facilitators should have up to date factual information. Information rather than advice should be offered. Permission should be sought from the schools which clearly gives the facilitators opportunity to demonstrate and discuss contraception. Signposting to local adolescent friendly GP services and pharmacies.
- A great opportunity is the willingness and enthusiasm young people have to take a chance discuss, query and learn all they can about sexual health in a safe environment where they trust they will not be judged or given misinformation.
- As a service Squashy Couch has taken every opportunity to work with local schools and youth services. We have used this to build and maintain good working relationships with

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

schools/services who support and value the work we do and the positive impact it has on the young people who participate.

- We are clear about our ethos along with the style and content of our facilitation. This transparency makes clear the health promoting approach our programme has towards its value on healthy , natural sexual experiences and empowering choice and pleasure.
- We take the opportunity to facilitate young people’s processing of information that is being viewed in text and online form for example – sexting and pornography.

**What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

- Training in a programme that meets the specific needs of Irish young people. The programme should also have the ability to be adapted to suit individual group needs/issue e.g. young people from the travelling community, young people with disabilities etc. Facilitators should be confident in their skills to adapt accordingly to the needs.
- Style of delivery is paramount in effectiveness of reaching /engaging young people. The programme needs to be discursive rather than lecture style. It should be reflective of young people’s stage of development and age appropriate. Current trends and concerns need to be a factor.
- Non judgement is essential.
- Facilitators must be comfortable with the content, positive attitudes will reflect in the outcome of the group.
- Ground rules must be established at the start. With no personal sharing being paramount.
- A positive attitude from the school towards the importance and value of sexual health education is important.
- Time is a big factor- consideration needs to be made for the fact that sexual health education may produce thoughts, discussions and questions after the group takes place. Support and identified people must be in place for this to happen safely. This will compliment the group work/sessions and reinforce a positive open attitude to sexual health.

**If you have any comments or observations, please respond here.**

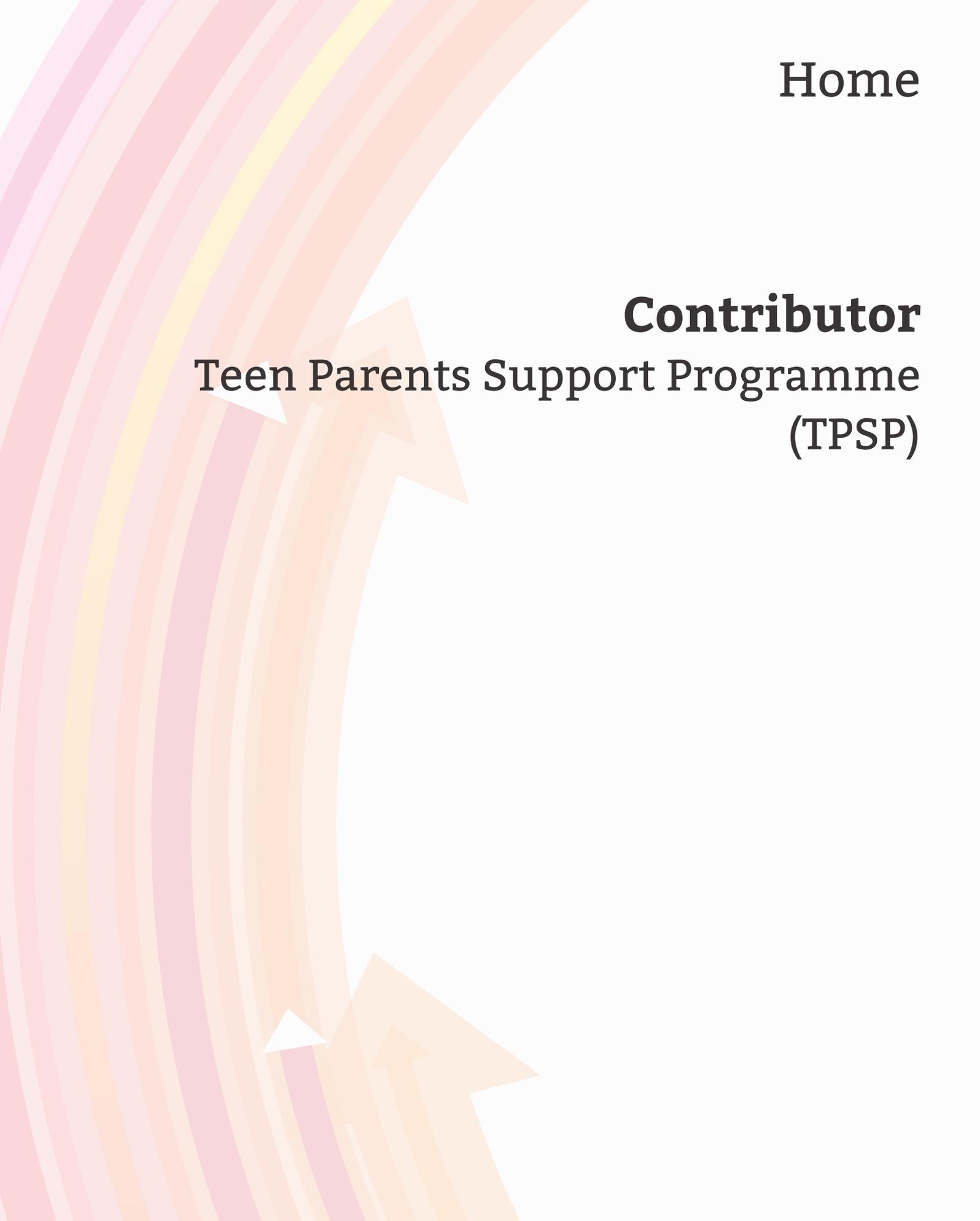
Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

- We feel it would be a very beneficial to view and consider Irish programmes that are already in use and successfully being delivered. For example Squashy Couch's which has been delivered to thousands of young people nationally in the last 15 years.
- To engage with the professionals who have the experience, expertise and enthusiasm for sexual health in Ireland

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)



Home

**Contributor**  
Teen Parents Support Programme  
(TPSP)

## The Teen Parents Support Programme

### The Teen Parents Support Programme

The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) consists of eleven separate projects funded by TUSLA and the HSE and located throughout the country in a range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations. The TPSP engages with young people who become parents when they are under 20 years of age and supports them to build their capacity as young parents and to complete their own development as adolescents moving towards early adulthood.

See [www.tpssp.ie](http://www.tpssp.ie)

### Births to Teen Parents

In 2017 there were 1,041 births to mothers under 20 years of age. This represents a decrease of more than 50% over the past decade. Nonetheless, when compared to European counterparts, the birth rate to teens in Ireland remains *'high to middling'* (HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, National Strategy 2012-2016)<sup>1</sup>.

Age at Birth	Number of Births <sup>2</sup>
15 and under	19
16	54
17	138
18	293
19	537

All these young people had recently passed through the education system and some of them were still in school. In 2017, the TPSP supported 930 pregnant/parenting teens: 848 young mothers and 82 young fathers. Of these 108 were in mainstream secondary school: 97 mothers and 11 fathers. The TPSP supports approximately 30% of all pregnant/parenting mothers in the country. From this we can estimate that there were approximately 360 pregnant/parenting students in secondary school in 2017.

## Recommendations

These recommendations are coming from young people who became parents while still at school or went on to become parents shortly after leaving school. They are based on feedback which these young people have given to TPSP Project Workers.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.crisispregnancy.ie>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-vsyst/vitalstatisticsyearlysummary2017/>

### **1. Teach young people how to have a difficult conversation.**

This will serve them well in all aspects of their lives in the future. In the context of sexual health and healthy relationships, being able to initiate and engage in a difficult conversation is a crucial part of giving consent and discussing contraception.

#### ***Consent***

Most young women who become pregnant are in a relationship (short or long-term) with a young man of similar age. Often their becoming sexually active, particularly where the couple is very young, happens without any prior discussion. It is very difficult for a young person to initiate this conversation, yet CPA research shows that becoming sexually active before 17 years of age can have very negative consequences later in life and that many young people regret becoming sexually active so young<sup>3</sup>. They need to be helped to develop the language needed (through role play, for example) to have this discussion with each other and to know how to give or withhold sexual consent in line with what is right for them at the time. They need to be taught how to recognise the early signs of an unhealthy relationship, what to do if they are in an abusive relationship and support services available. They need to be given time to reflect on how to nurture their own self-esteem and to see the connection between self-esteem and healthy relationships. Young people need an opportunity to discuss the role of peer pressure, alcohol and drugs in becoming sexually active before they are ready. They need to know that sexual consent is given continuously and that they each have a right to withdraw consent at any time. They also need to be taught the legal definition of sexual consent and know the legal age of consent.

#### ***Contraception***

Alongside the ability to discuss consent with each other, young people need to be able to practice having a conversation about taking joint responsibility for contraception. They need to understand the importance of using contraception the first time they have sex, that unplanned sex can lead to unplanned pregnancy and how alcohol or drugs will increase the risk of this happening. They need information on the full range of contraception now available, how to use them effectively and where to access them - something which can be particularly difficult for young people in rural areas and small towns. They need to understand that no contraception is 100% safe, when contraception is most likely to fail and the additional role that condoms play in the prevention of STIs.

### **2. Engage trainers/teachers with accredited group facilitation skills.**

Young parents reported that they felt uncomfortable with the RSE Programme being taught by a teacher in their school who was already teaching them other subjects. They would have preferred and would have been more comfortable and open with a person/teacher who was from outside the school. They also said that what is covered can depend on the values of the school and the teacher's personal level of comfort with the topics. They said that sometimes they themselves were more informed than the teacher- on topics such as the range of contraception available, for example. RSE cannot be 'taught' with the same methods used for general subject teaching. It requires skilled facilitation by someone who is comfortable and open about the topics being discussed, accepts that young people are sexually active in different ways and is enthusiastic about the importance of sexual health.

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<sup>3</sup>Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Dublin 2012 *Research on Teenage Sexuality*.

### **3. Deliver the RSE Programme early and often**

Parents and teachers underestimate the level of sexual activity among young people. In research carried on young people in 2014 by the Health Promotion Research Centre NUIG, 21% of girls and 31% of boys aged 15-17 years reported that they have had sex<sup>4</sup>. Delivery of the RSE Programme, therefore, needs to start early and continue for each of the 6 years of secondary school.

Some young mothers who had their children while in school or shortly after leaving school reported that, when their school delivered the RSE Programme on a once off basis, they were too young at the time to relate to the content and gain a real understanding of what was involved in having healthy relationships and being sexually active. They said this was partly due to their own immaturity, the immaturity of some of their classmates and embarrassment at the sensitivity of some of the topics when discussed in a mixed group. They reported that they would have liked the Programme to be repeated throughout their secondary school years so they could connect more with it as they matured. Young fathers who spoke to project staff reiterated this point. They said that when younger it wasn't cool to appear to be paying attention as that suggested they didn't know all there was to know about sex, healthy relationships and contraception.

### **4. Bring the content of the RSE Programme up-to-date**

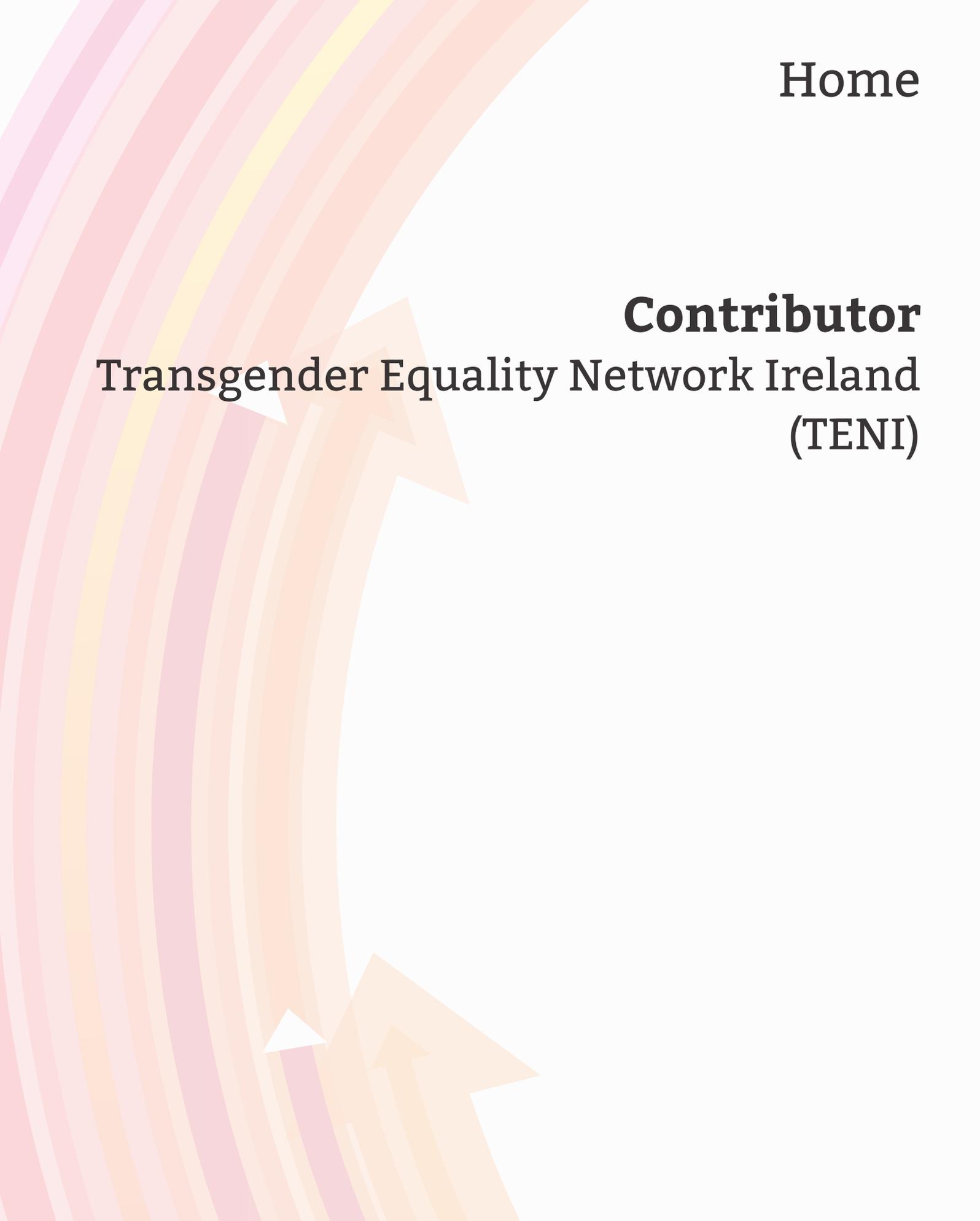
Some young parents reported that the Programme delivered in their school was out of step with the reality of their lives and their own sexual practices and sexual relationships. Some described it as a missed opportunity to discuss issues which they found too embarrassing to discuss with parents/guardians such as the use of online dating sites, pornography and sexting. They asked that the content of the RSE Programme be brought up-to-date and that whoever is discussing these topics with them must be knowledgeable, comfortable and skilled so that they are able to facilitate an open discussion in class.

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**Margaret Morris**  
**National Co-ordinator TPSP**  
**Treoir**  
**28 North Great Georges Street.**  
**Dublin 1**  
**tpsp@treoir.ie**  
**Tel 087-2518428**

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<sup>4</sup> Health Promotion Research Centre NUIG (2015) *The Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study 2014*.

The background features a vibrant rainbow with a yellow center, curving from the top left towards the bottom right. Overlaid on the rainbow are several large, semi-transparent arrows pointing upwards and to the right, creating a sense of movement and progress.

Home

**Contributor**

Transgender Equality Network Ireland  
(TENI)

# Relationships and Sexuality (RSE)\* Review

## Respondents details

<b>Name</b>	Catherine
<b>Surname</b>	Cross
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	Family Support and Education Officer
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Transgender Equality Network Ireland
<b>Date</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018
<b>Email</b>	

Is this response a personal view or made on behalf of an organisation?

Personal  Organisation

Is this submission related to primary, post-primary or both?

Primary  Post-Primary  Both

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including the cover page\*?

Yes  No

\*By ticking this box you consent to the NCCA to publish the submission online including the details submitted on the cover page, in line with GDPR regulations. For more information please see our privacy statement at [www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement](http://www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement)

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

**Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable)**

TENI is a non-profit organisation supporting the trans community in Ireland. TENI seeks to improve the situation and advance the rights and equality of trans people and their families. Our vision is an Ireland where trans people are understood, accepted and respected, and can participate fully in all aspects of Irish society.

The TENI Board takes strategic positions on various issues and topics. We endeavour to take a human rights approach to all our work and support those who are most vulnerable. All resolutions are done in consultation with affected groups and relevant stakeholders

**Background**

There is a growing body of international research on trans people, including the development of gender identity, prevalence of trans people in society and their experiences in the education system. A report on research conducted in Northern Ireland on trans and gender-variant young people by the Institute of Conflict Research<sup>1</sup> stated that service providers and policy makers need to take proactive approach to erode the cultural inertia that is marginalizing young trans people and preventing many of them from reaching their full potential. It also recommended that gender identity and trans experiences be integrated into the school curriculum and that the process should include relevant community and voluntary groups.

**What are you or your organisation’s experiences of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Part of the RSE programme for primary schools states the importance of children being allowed the space to celebrate their own special and unique story. Parents and teaching staff can create an opportunity from an early age to do this, however, this can present difficulties for a gender variant children if the programme does not allow for discussion about gender identity. Schools appear to be fearful about bringing this topic into the very innocent space of the primary school classroom. Many people conflate the issue of gender identity with sexuality, assuming incorrectly, that very young children are simply too young to know what their gender identity is before puberty<sup>2,3</sup>, however, it is suggested that children can become aware of their gender-identity during their early years, but this is not an absolute indicator of gender-transition when entering puberty<sup>4</sup>.

Primary schools can be highly gendered spaces, and can cause a lot of distress for a child who is gender variant. Teaching staff often lack the knowledge about gender variance or expression which can cause fear and reluctance to engage with the subject in any way, and there is often uncertainty

<sup>1</sup> Grasping the Nettle: <http://ofmdfmi.govuk/grasping-the-nettle-transgender-youth-living-in-ni.pdf>.endered

<sup>2</sup> Durwood, L., McLaughlin, K.A. & Olson, K.R. 2017, "Mental Health and Self-Worth in Socially Transitioned Transgender Youth", *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 116-123.e2.

<sup>3</sup> Diane Ehrensaft, Shawn V Giammattei, Kelly Storck, Amy C Tishelman & Colton Keo-Meier (2018): Prepubertal social gender transitions: What we know; what we can learn—A view from a gender affirmative lens, *International Journal of Transgenderism*, DOI: 10.1080/15532739.2017.1414649

<sup>4</sup> Steensma, T.D. (2013). From gender variance to gender dysphoria: Psychosexual development of gender atypical children and adolescents. Unpublished dissertation, VU University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

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Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

about teaching about gender identity due to the school's religious ethos. The approach to gender identity is largely reactive, only reacting when they have a gender variant child in their school. As the topic of gender identity or expression is not addressed in most primary schools either formally or informally, any training about gender identity becomes about supporting a particular child and can draw unwanted attention on them.

Primary schools often place an unfair reliance on the parents of gender variant children to educate about gender identity and given that not all parents are in a position to provide this, it can result in inequalities of the experience and treatment of some children<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, these parents are often experiencing their own conflicting feelings towards the changes and may feel overwhelmed<sup>6</sup>. This is a period of vulnerability for many families and the school system can help to diffuse awkward situation by having some knowledge in this area.

It is equally problematic in secondary schools as the SPHE curriculum, which includes RSE, is designed to be broad to allow schools the autonomy to decide when particular topics should be delivered, this often leads to gender identity not being addressed at all. In our experience of working with young trans students, they report to us that even when it is taught, the topic of gender identity is taught in a very minimalist and piecemeal way, and teachers often seem uncomfortable and uninformed on the subject. Discussions about trans and non-binary people can often be within a framework of negativity, presenting them as people who will never experience a fulfilling and meaningful life, this can often lead to trans students being very reluctant to make any disclosure that they plan to make a gender transition. Similarly, it can prove very challenging to teach this module if there is an openly trans or non-binary student in the classroom if this is the first time it is mentioned

**The Minister of Education has requested that the following areas be specifically considered;**

- **Consent what it means and its importance**
- **Developments in contraception**
- **Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships**
- **Safe use of the internet**
- **Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem**

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<sup>5</sup> Neary, A., and Cross, C. (2018) *Exploring Gender Identity and Gender Norms in Primary Schools: The Perspectives of Educators and Parents of Transgender and Gender Variant Children*, Limerick: University of Limerick and the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland.

<sup>6</sup> Norwood, K., 2013. Grieving gender: Trans-identities, transition, and ambiguous loss. *Communication Monographs*, 80(1), pp.24-45.

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- **LGBTQ+ matters**

### **What are the challenges and opportunities when considering these areas in the review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

At all school levels, some of the challenges will include addressing the concerns of parents who may find the topic of gender identity difficult to comprehend, however, it is in educating that we can allay people's fears. In our experience, one of parents' greatest fear around this topic is the fear of social contagion. Having worked in over three hundred primary and secondary schools over the last couple of years we find that avoiding the subject only adds to the fear.

Presenting gender identity as just another form of human diversity rather than sensationalising this difference is key and can be an incredibly important tool to empower and educate young people, and can also give students the courage to live the gender they identify in if they feel more understood. Teaching about difference and diversity benefits *all* of the student community and can alleviate potential anxiety from both staff and students when attaining an understanding of the issue.

Engaging educators or trainers from outside of the school staff could effectively address the issue of students and teachers who are familiar with one another feeling awkward around particular issues. However, it would need to be a practice that is used to deliver all RSE modules to ensure consistency. This can be a very complex issue and is very often conflated with sexual orientation. With the onset of puberty, some young people undertake medical interventions, and the physical changes that will ensue may be challenging for both staff and students to comprehend, therefore, the trans young person may experience further isolation due to the lack of understanding from both staff and students.

Teaching about gender identity really needs to be threaded throughout the RSE programme rather than condensed into one or two lesson plans and then never spoken about again.

There is an opportunity for the intersex community to be meaningfully included in this process, as there is some intersectionality with trans people and people who may have disabilities or differences in their anatomy.

### **What supports need to be considered with regards to these challenges and opportunities in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

Teaching staff will need to be fully trained and confident to deliver modules effectively. They will need accurate, up to date information which will necessitate regular refresher training courses, as this area is constantly evolving.

There are many misconceptions about sexual health and pregnancy for example, not only in the wider community but also within the transgender community.

Teaching resources and methods of delivery need to be consistent and clear, addressing personal beliefs and potential resistance from staff as trans identities can be perceived as 'a trend'.

Accessing information from a knowledgeable source will ensure teaching staff will feel more empowered to address this issue with the trans student and the wider school community.

A shared digital platform that parents can access would help to facilitate parents to continue the conversation at home and give them guidance on how to emulate the language being used at school that is age appropriate.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSEreview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSEreview@ncca.ie)

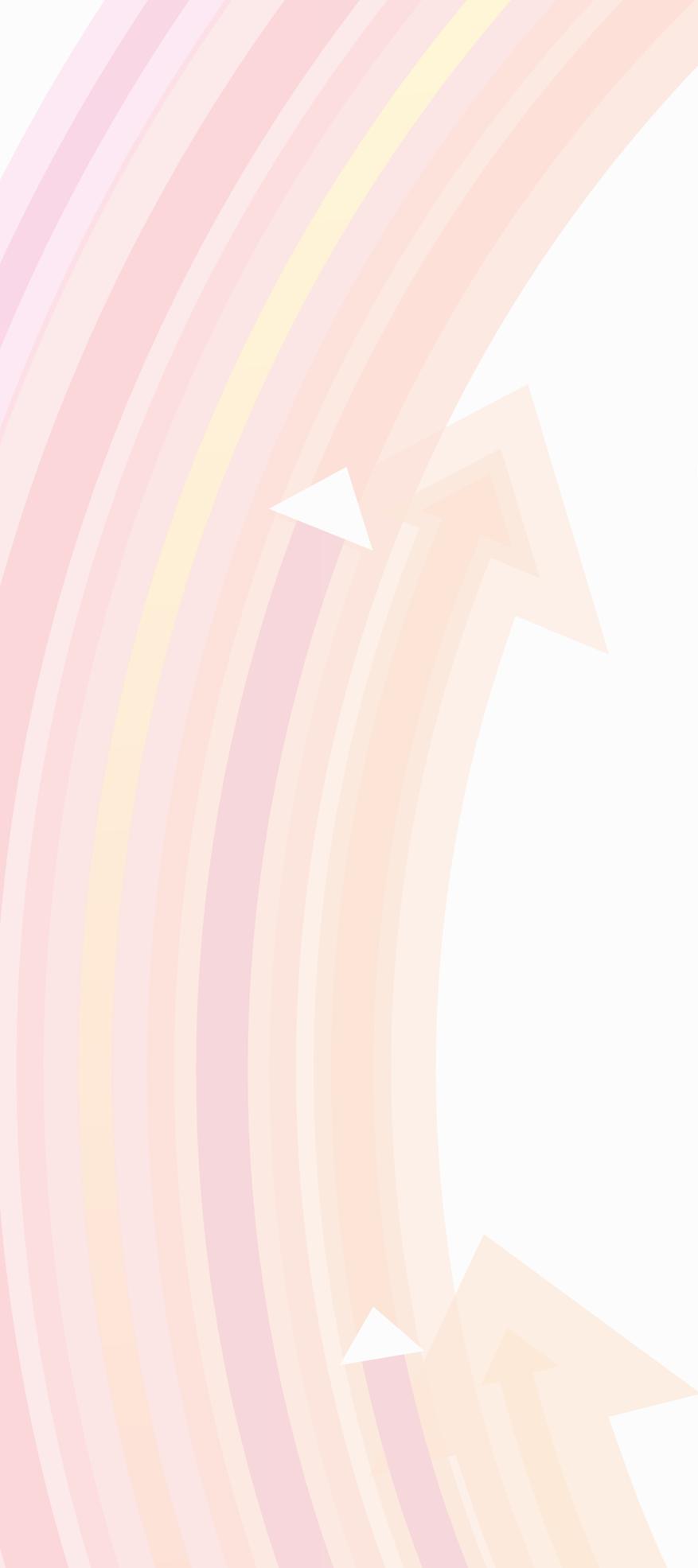
**If you have any comments or observations, please respond here.**

The number of trans-identified children and adolescents in the Irish school system has risen exponentially over the last decade. In 2010 TENI had one case of potential gender-transition in schools, however in 2017 TENI have worked in collaboration with 47 post-primary and 17 primary schools in Ireland. This significant increase may suggest that younger-people feel more comfortable to reveal or express their gender-identity in Irish schools, which should be perceived as a positive development. However, these children and their families need assurance from schools that they are equipped to address the often complex issues that are experienced by trans people and their families. In TENI's work with school management bodies, school boards and staff we maintain a collaborative approach to addressing these complex needs and feedback regarding our sensitive approach has been noted positively throughout.

We are excited that this process is now taking place as it provides a space for discussion and an opportunity to include measures that will undoubtedly support trans young-people to remain in school and complete their education. TENI look forward to further collaboration with DES, management bodies, school boards teachers unions, school staff and parents as our objective is the sustainable wellbeing of trans young-people in Irish schools.

Written submissions may be in English or Irish.

Please make your submission to [RSReview@ncca.ie](mailto:RSReview@ncca.ie)



Home

**Contributor**  
The Iona Institute

The Iona Institute

Submission to the National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment on the planned  
revision of the Relationships and Sexuality  
Education programme

23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 [info@ionainstitute.ie](mailto:info@ionainstitute.ie) [www.ionainstitute.ie](http://www.ionainstitute.ie) 01 6619204

**Introduction:** Set out below are what we believe are general principles that should guide the planned revision to the RSE course. The Iona Institute is currently drawing up a longer paper examining various philosophical approaches to RSE.

## **General principles**

### **1. Parents' wishes must be front and centre in any revision**

While a national curriculum can be proposed, parents must have a real input into adapting it to the needs of the local school. The new model of education emphasises partnership between the school, community and home. If this partnership is real, the views of the parents must be taken into account in this most sensitive of subjects. Parental involvement is essential as it is their children who are being taught and they are the primary educators.

### **2. RSE must be age-appropriate**

RSE must be age appropriate and must take into account the different levels of maturity that will be encountered in the same classroom. The most 'advanced' pupils should not set the pace for the more 'immature' pupils. It must be aimed at the average. Where possible, when it comes to more sensitive topics, it should happen in smaller groups than the standard thirty-plus pupils in a classroom. This has resource implications and should be factored in to the Education Budget figures if the government is serious about providing high-quality RSE.

### **3. Parents must be allowed to withdraw their children from RSE**

Parents must be allowed to opt their children out of RSE, just as they can opt them out of RE, and as with RE, this must be done with sensitivity by the school. The programme should be designed in a way that makes it unnecessary to do so, but the right should remain there for parents. It would be more than odd to teach respect and consent to individual pupils while denying it to their parents.

### **4. A value-neutral RSE programme is impossible**

It is impossible for RSE to be 'value-neutral'. No matter what it tries to do, values will be taught either explicitly or implicitly. For example, teaching pupils to respect each other is a value, and a good one. Factual and objective knowledge is an important cornerstone of any programme, but once a question is asked along the lines of, 'What should you do in this situation?' it is impossible to avoid value judgements. In another example, it is impossible to be value-neutral about sexting. It is a criminal offence and can lead to immense psychological damage when the images are inevitably shared beyond their original intended audience. Similarly, pornography (which is widely available and accessed before the teenage years) cannot be treated neutrally, as again, it has the power to influence young peoples' image of relationships, and numerous studies show that sexual relationships in porn are often misogynistic and violent. However, the approach to these areas should never be heavy-handed or designed to create fear, but instead

should calmly point out the reality of the porn industry and its well-documented exploitation of those who work in it. Again, it is important to tailor the approach to these issues to the maturity of the pupils, and these issues should probably be reserved to Sixth class.

#### **5. RSE classes must go beyond consent classes**

RSE must go beyond mere consent classes. The key term in relationships and sexuality education is relationships. From an early stage in RSE and elsewhere in the curriculum, children must be encouraged to think about what respect for the other means and that it involves wanting what is good for the other person, not just oneself. In order to be able to judge what is good for the other person, it helps greatly to know a person well. Why should respect in sexual relationships be any different? Most parents will want their children to be taught to get to know, like and trust the other person first, at a minimum, before any sexual relationship commences. Facts like the age of consent must be taught in a way that emphasises the positive impact of waiting until one is more mature. This is the approach taken by the B4uDecide.ie website which is aimed at slightly older pupils and it would be very strange if this approach were not taken with younger pupils.

#### **6. School ethos must be respected**

The ethos of the school must be respected. This isn't simply a question of respecting the religious ethos of a school. It is much more a question of respecting the ethos that is supported by the parents. If parents (for example) want their children to be taught RSE within a Catholic ethos, that must be respected.

#### **7. Constitution must be respected**

If the law forces a school to adopt an approach to RSE that is against the ethos of the school and against the wishes of parents, that might well be unconstitutional.

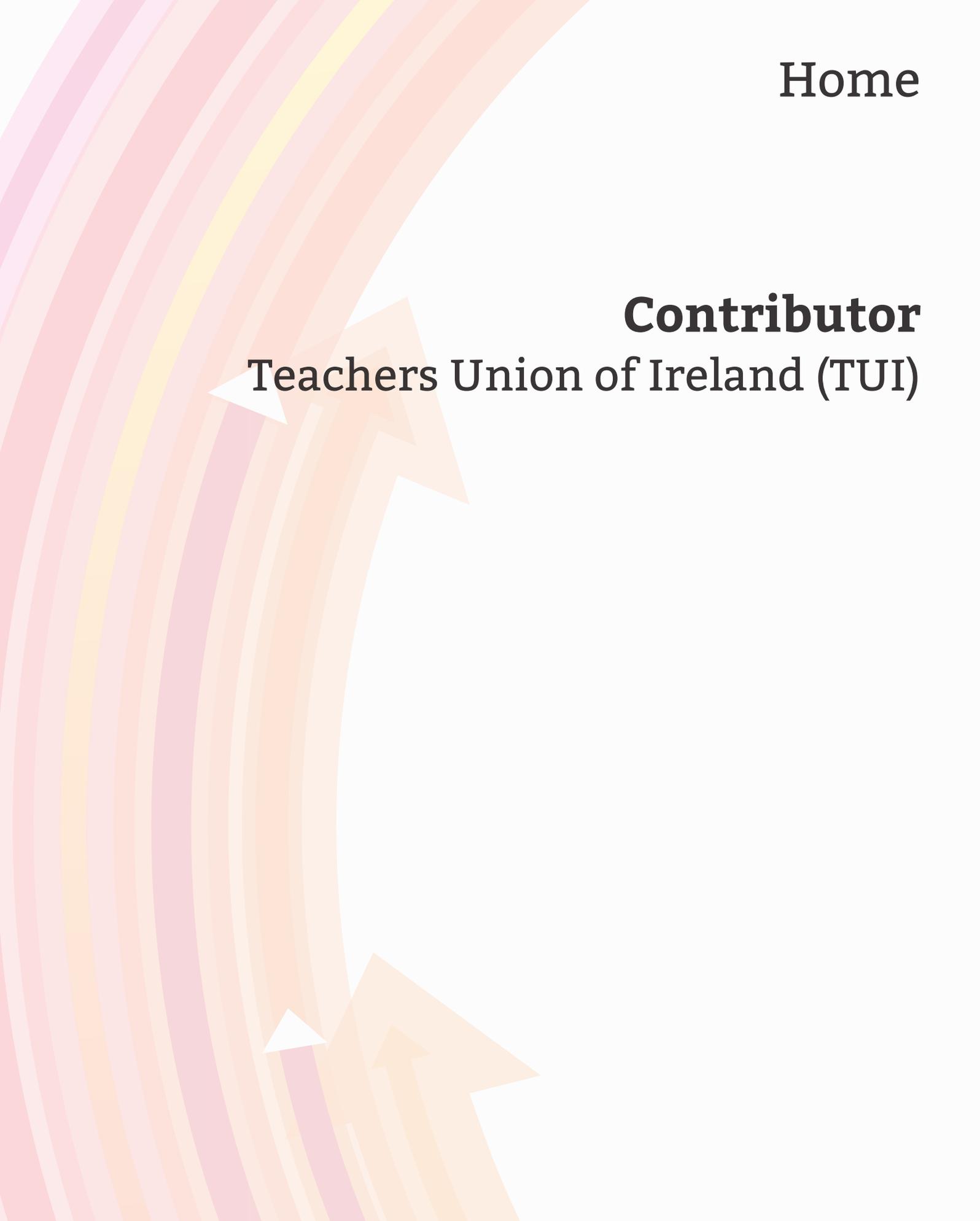
#### **8. Outside groups must not be banned a priori**

Outside groups should not be a priori banned from schools where the ethos of these groups and the ethos of the school is compatible and what they teach is also factual. Anecdotally, young people often find it awkward, particularly when they are the early stages of adolescence, to discuss sensitive issues with their teacher. No matter how much CPD an individual teacher may receive, not every teacher will be comfortable delivering the material, either. In many cases, outside facilitators who do this work all the time will do a very good job. On the other hand, there should be no imposition of speakers or facilitators who are in conflict with the ethos of a particular school. Again, we cannot teach consent as a value to young people and deny it to schools.

## **9. RSE must teach respect for all**

Pupils must be taught to fully respect everyone else regardless of ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, appearance and so on. This is already a core part of the anti-bullying programme in schools, and RSE represents another place where this can be re-emphasised.

ENDS



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**Contributor**

Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI)



## **Teachers' Union of Ireland**

### **Submission to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills regarding the review of sexual health and relationship education (April 2018)**

#### **Introduction**

The TUI represents teachers and lecturers (17,000+) employed by Education and Training Boards (ETBs), voluntary secondary schools, Community and Comprehensive (C&C) schools and the institutes of technology.

The TUI would like to thank the committee for this opportunity to make a submission on the review of sexual health and relationship education.

#### **Background**

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, the Minister for Education and Skills wrote to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) asking it to carry out a review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

The press release issued by the DES specifically asked the NCCA to review:

- Consent, what it means and its importance
- Developments in contraception
- Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships
- Safe use of the internet
- Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem
- LGBTQ+ matters.

#### **View of the TUI**

The TUI welcomes the review of the RSE programme, particularly given that it has been twenty years since the last review of the programme. The context in which Irish education operates has changed significantly in the last twenty years and a review of RSE is timely. However, it is important to make a number of key points in relation to the review.

Schools have a clear responsibility for delivering the RSE programme but, in the broader societal context, parents/guardians and families clearly have a primary responsibility in terms of fostering values and practices in relation to sexual health and relationships that are positive and underpinned by respect for oneself and others. Indeed, Article 42 the Irish Constitution cites the family unit as the 'primary educator'.

It should be noted that teachers generally would not consider their delivery of the RSE programme to be constrained by what was prescribed twenty years ago. They have had to take into consideration developments in the intervening period. Therefore, they routinely address matters such as marriage equality, LGBTQ+ issues, consent, contraception, safe use of social media etc. Indeed, not only are these matters addressed through RSE but are also often captured as part of other subjects such as Religious Education, Politics and Society, Computer Science, CSPE, SPHE/Pastoral Care and are also expected to be included in revised subject specifications for Leaving Certificate Applied ICT.

Schools need to be able to decide which teachers are best suited to teaching sensitive matters such as sexuality. These teachers must be able to access high-quality CPD to enable them to carry out this sensitive task. The DES has a responsibility to provide this CPD at a time and venue that is convenient to teachers.

The TUI has a concern that RSE is not available equally in all school settings. The TUI strongly supports the Constitutional protection of religious freedom but also believes that RSE should be available to all students unless the parents of a student explicitly ask for their child to be exempt. The availability of RSE should not depend on the religious ethos or otherwise of the individual school.

As outlined above, many schools support the teaching of RSE through the Religious Education programme. Religious Education is an academic exam subject in many schools. For example, in 2017 28,045 students took RE in Junior Cycle and 1,408 took it in the Leaving Certificate examination (SEC, 2017). It should not be confused with faith formation. Regrettably, circular 13/2018 which was issued by the DES in February 2018 makes precisely this mistake by confusing 'religious instruction and

worship' with 'religious education'. The issuing of this circular may have a detrimental impact on the ability of schools to deliver RSE as many schools, especially ETB schools, deliver Senior Cycle RSE through the RE class whilst avoiding any teaching of faith formation or matters of religious doctrine.

It is important to note that RSE is considered a vital part of the Wellbeing area of learning in the revised Junior Cycle. The Wellbeing programme is a 'whole school activity'. It is quite possible that the opt-out provided for in circular 13/2018 may jeopardise the ability of schools to provide the Wellbeing programme and may in fact constitute a breach of the Junior Cycle agreement between the TUI and the Minister for Education and Skills. This is because it is not clear if circular 13/2018 makes RE, and hence possibly RSE, optional. The TUI is deeply concerned about this matter.

The TUI is aware of reports that some materials and/or speakers being used to support the delivery of RSE in some schools may not be in line with best practice of independence and the provision of non-directive expert knowledge. The TUI believes that it can be useful for schools to use outside materials and/or speakers to support particular parts of the RSE programme. However, it is important that schools are confident that the materials or speaker are in line with best practice and that particular agendas are not pushed by the materials or speaker. It would be helpful to schools if the DES could develop additional resources that schools could then have confidence in using.

The issue of cyber-security has received significant attention recently. Matters such as sexting for example are clearly part of good quality RSE. In March 2018 the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs issued a report on the topic of cyber-security and made recommendations regarding schools, such as cyber-safety education being part of the curriculum. However, the TUI would like to remind both the Committee on Education and Skills and the Committee on Children and Youth Affairs that 'risky' internet behaviour usually, by its very nature, happens outside of school premises. Parents have a clear responsibility regarding the safety of their children outside of school and it may be unconstitutional for schools to take over that role.

### **Conclusion**

The TUI would like again to thank the Committee for this opportunity to make a submission. The review of RSE is welcomed by the TUI. The TUI believes the review to be timely. Schools have an important role to play in the area of RSE but responsibilities also fall to parents, communities and the DES. The great educational theorist Larry Cuban once said that "when society gets an itch schools get

scratched". Schools have responsibilities but so too does society. Schools are neither the cause of all societal problems nor the solution to all of society's ills.

### **Later Addition**

As cited in Fischer (2016), as far back as 2000, Billy Fitzpatrick, speaking on behalf of the TUI, stated that schools should be non-denominational or multi-denominational.

"In 2010 a significant majority of the population (61 percent) felt that the Catholic Church should relinquish control over the primary-school system." Pg 128

"In the Irish education system, it so happens that the more 'exclusive' secondary schools (in every sense of the word) are the general education denominational schools, which most often belong to religious congregations, whereas community schools and vocational or technical schools under VEC (and now ETB) management cater for a much more diverse school population and for a disproportionate number of immigrants or children of immigrants, as the results of the 2008 Department survey clearly showed." Pg 167

"Until, now, the Irish State has preserved its segregated, denominational education system for historical and political reasons that owe as much to a lingering vision of Irish identity as Christian (if not Catholic) as to a refusal to engage in a much-needed overhaul of the Irish Constitution." Pg 208

### **Acronyms**

C&C	Community and Comprehensive
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSPE	Civics, Social and Political Education
DES	Department of Education and Skills
ETB	Education and Training Board
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
TUI	Teachers' Union of Ireland

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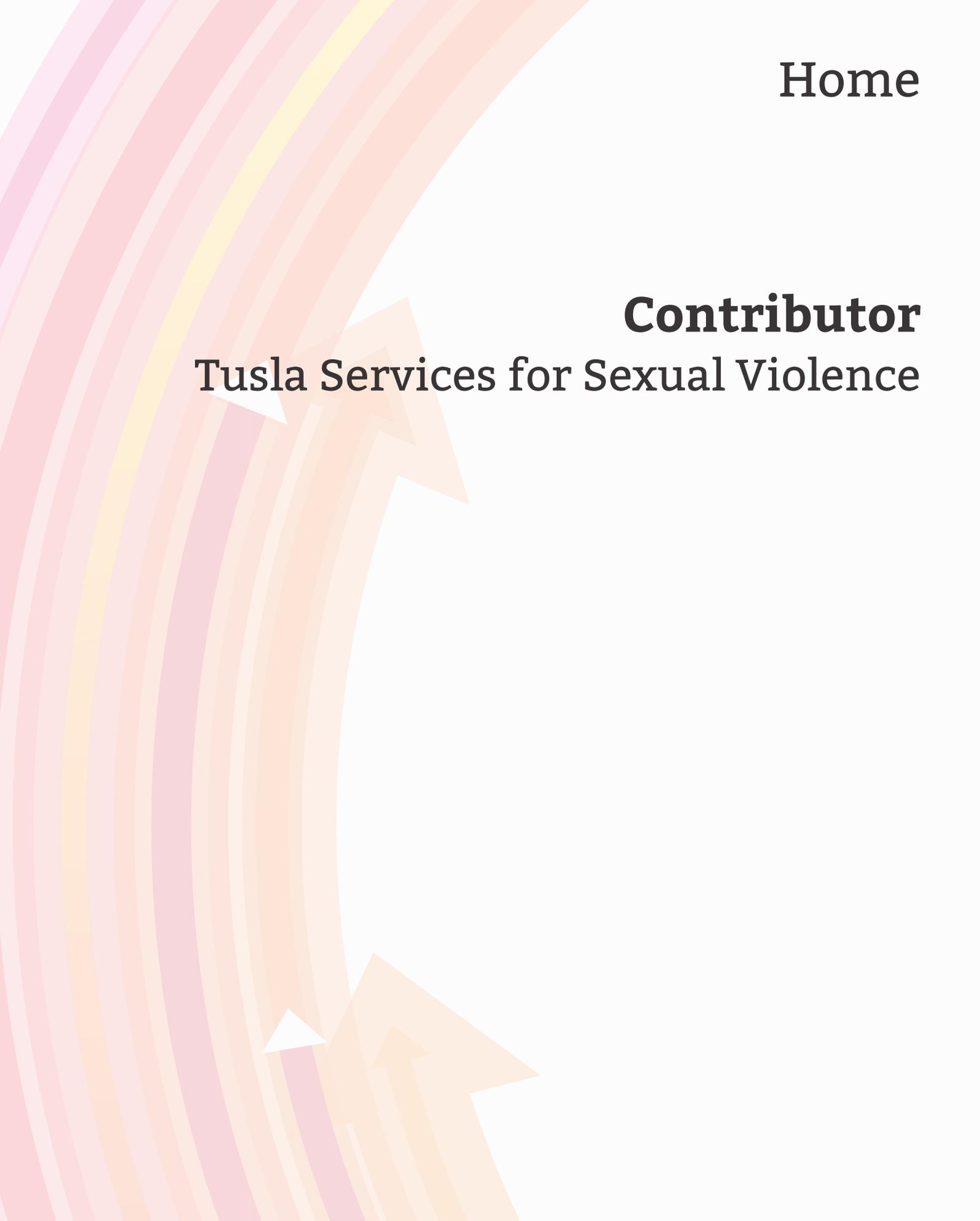
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Home

**Contributor**  
Tusla Services for Sexual Violence

## Introduction:

The purpose of this submission is to:

- Make the Department of Education's review group aware of the state agency with responsibility for Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence;
- Describe the policy background of the DSGBV Programme;
- Alert the review group to the consent education and prevention project directed at 15 -16yr olds that is currently operating in the schools and other settings on an evaluated pilot basis education and wider setting
- Signpost further submission with wider potential for consideration

## Túsla Child and Family Agency; Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Programme:

The *Istanbul Convention*,<sup>1</sup> to which Ireland is a signatory, places certain requirements on signatory governments to address and do what it can to prevent Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV). The *Council of Europe Minimum Standards for the Provision of Services*<sup>2</sup> identifies the types of services which in general such victims require and gives guidance on appropriate levels of provision. The *EU Victims Directive*<sup>3</sup> places obligations on member states to protect victims of crime and to recognise victims with specific protection needs, which may include victims of DSGBV. At the national level, the "*Second National Strategy<sup>4</sup> on DSGBV 2016-2021*", sets out requirements on state agencies to meet such obligations and the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, identifies Túsla as the primary state agency with responsibility to meet the needs of victims of these forms of violence.

To fulfil these responsibilities, Túsla established the Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) programme in 2014, with a dedicated national team. While the programme has a national remit, services in this sector are and have traditionally been delivered at a local level relying on the input of committed voluntary DSGBV specific organisations to provide services while working alongside other relevant community organisations and statutory services. It is the role of the DSGBV programme and team to fund, co-ordinate support, commission and oversee the work of these DSGBV specific services and to help them develop their capacity to respond effectively to women, children and men who have been victims of this violence and to contribute to efforts to interrupt patterns and cycles of abuse and work towards prevention and earliest intervention.

As it is a priority for the DSGBV Programme to encourage, develop and devise ways of working towards prevention and early intervention—education for children and young people in the matter of healthy relationships and sexuality is an extremely important focus for this effort. Most of the funded service providers deliver educational and awareness programmes to schools as external specialists. However it is not clear if this is a sustainable, equitable or standardised model of educational support with measurable outcomes that should be funded or encouraged in the longer term. We are therefore piloting the delivery of The Manuela Project, which is endeavouring to test the impact and sustainability of a sexual violence prevention approach for students at second level.

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

<sup>2</sup> Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services: Prof. Liz Kelly, Roddick Chair on Violence Against Women, London Metropolitan University and Lorna Dubois, Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs Council of Europe Strasbourg, September 2008

<sup>3</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32012L0029>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cosc.ie/en/COSC/Second%20National%20Strategy.pdf/Files/Second%20National%20Strategy.pdf>

## The Manuela Project

The DSGBV Programme was invited to bid for a European Commission Justice Grant under a call for proposals, "*awareness raising and education activities aimed at and preventing and combating violence against women.*" The application for the Manuela Project (MP) was successful and the project started in September 2017. The MP uses the Manuela Programme training materials which emerged from collaboration between all 16 national rape crisis centres, the Rape Crisis Network Ireland, and the Manuela Riedo Foundation Ireland with assistance from Dr Sue Redmond, a social research expert. Manuela Riedo Foundation Ireland (MRFI) was founded in Galway in 2009 in memory of Manuela Riedo, a 17 old Swiss student, who was raped and murdered in the city in October 2007.

It is a 12 hour comprehensive, evidence informed education programme particular to sexual violence prevention and promotion of negotiated consent in healthy relationships, with both learning and evaluation as integral parts of the delivery. The MP engages young people in interactive dialogue that explores healthy relationships, challenges attitudes, knowledge and skills in relation to sexual violence and harassment with an emphasis on exploring the issue of consent (to any sexual interaction). The MP is set to run for 30 months until March 2020. While young people are the primary participants, the project relies on successful engagement with schools and with alternative education settings to support sustainability. The MP is also designed to involve teachers directly through training and co-delivery with the express purpose of building their capacity and comfort in this challenging area of education.

The Manuela Project has broad ambitions to meet the varied needs of Irish educational settings. MP is cognisant of equality of access for a broad range of young people, LGBTi, Traveller, new communities, various religious & belief systems as well as cultural backgrounds.

It is informed by "Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures"<sup>5</sup>, five national outcomes for children and young people, and the obligations under the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence to "Change societal attitudes to support a reduction in domestic and sexual violence".

### Learning Outcomes:

Young people who participate in the project will be able to:

- Demonstrate an enhanced knowledge of what constitutes sexual violence and its impact
- Recognise what constitutes a healthy and unhealthy relationship
- Challenge social norms that are tolerant of sexual violence
- Develop attitudes that contribute towards gender equality
- Make healthier choices in the context of influences in the world around them
- Access relevant services and support structures

### Overall Desired Outcomes:

Project Workers and the trained facilitators, through their engagement will contribute towards:

- A reduction in sexual violence in Ireland.
- Inform evidence and provide resources useful for sexual violence prevention.
- Build capacity for teachers and other educators towards a sustainable model of consent education as part of broader RSE considerations

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.dcy.gov.ie/docs/16.04.2014\\_Better\\_Outcomes\\_Brighter\\_Futures:\\_The\\_National\\_Po/3146.htm](https://www.dcy.gov.ie/docs/16.04.2014_Better_Outcomes_Brighter_Futures:_The_National_Po/3146.htm)

### **The Manuela Project deliverables:**

By the end of a three year pilot and evaluation The Manuela Project will deliver in up to 120 educational settings e.g. Transition Year in mainstream schools; out of school and other possible youth provision settings to maximize the reach.

A training manual for facilitators (teachers and others) will be developed to support quality assurance, standardization and sustainability. Training will be provided to teachers and they will also be supported through a project co-facilitator -partnership for their first two delivery experiences.

The publication of outcomes will be highlighted at a national event.

Creating opportunities for Sustainability: An ongoing exploration of educational and curriculum partnerships, settings and structures will be an important focus in the project developments.

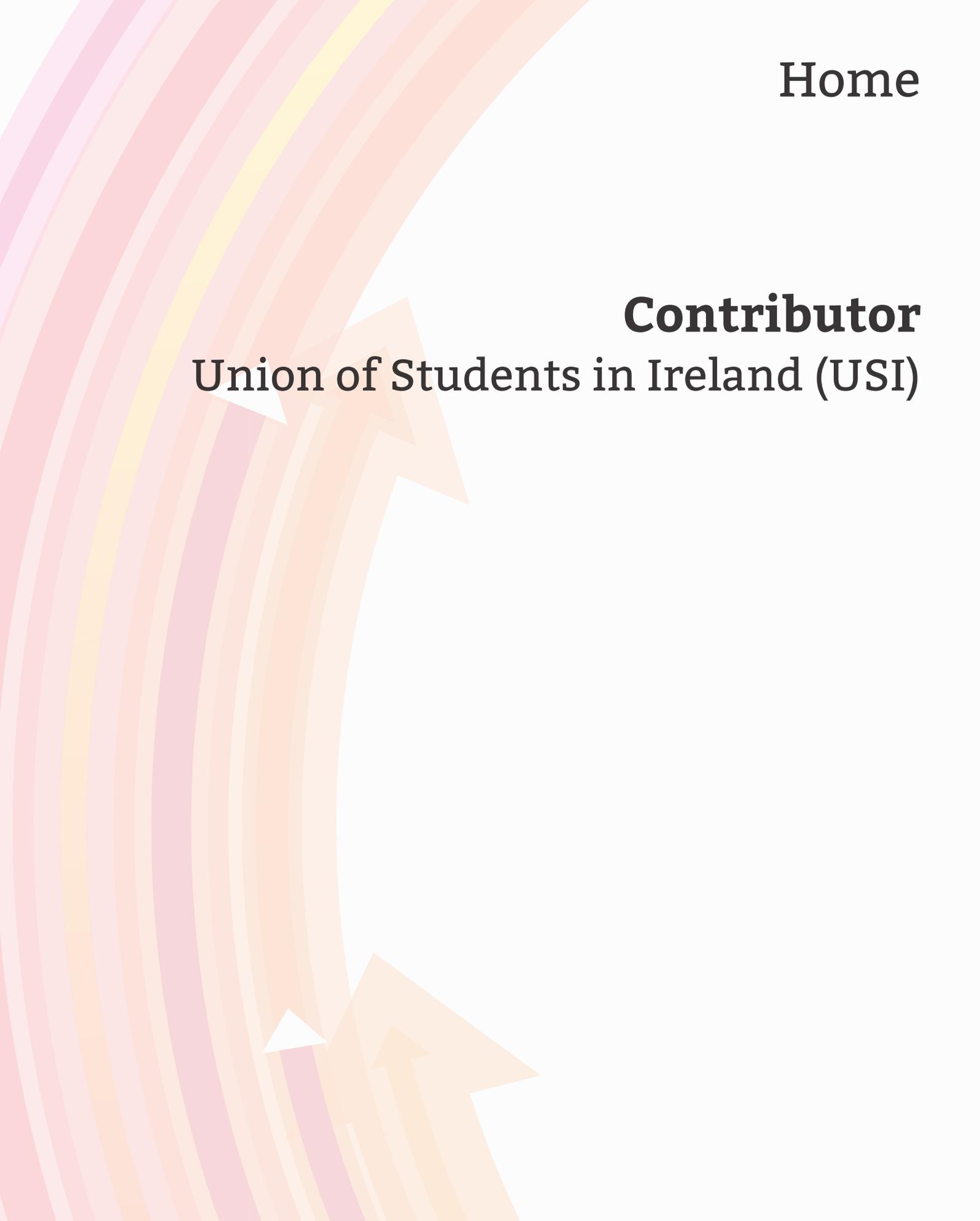
### **Opportunity for prevention and consent education**

It is planned that implementation and evaluation outcomes of the Manuela Project will support other resources which have been tested and developed by colleagues at the Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme. These include the TRUST Resource and the Personal Safety Resource Pack at Senior Cycle both used by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). Members of the Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme have been taking an active part in the Manuela Project Advisory Group.

While it is too early to say exactly how the Manuela Project outcomes will contribute support to the RSE strand of the SPHE curriculum, to which the topic of consent is highly relevant, this submission is an opportunity to reiterate that this is a clear project aim. The independent MP evaluation will be taking a particular interest in how participating teachers experience the training, support and implementation of the project. The DSGBV Programme will be very keen that the learning from this project is shared with the Department of Education in whatever way is of most benefit to support their efforts to include education about sexual consent. This includes offering evidence informed resources to the Department's PDST.

The DSGBV Programme personnel are also happy to respond to the Department with further submissions or further detail on this submission if so requested.

End



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**Contributor**  
Union of Students in Ireland (USI)



**Union of Students in Ireland**  
*Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn*

**Written Submission to the National Council of Curriculum and  
Assessment Public Consultation on Relationships and Sexuality  
Education**

**January 2019**

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

The Union of Students in Ireland (Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn) is the national representative body for third-level Students' Unions in Ireland. Founded in 1959, USI now represents more than 374,000 students in Further and Higher Education Colleges across the island of Ireland. The goal of USI is to work for the rights of students and a fair and equal post-secondary education system in Ireland. USI is a full member of the European Students' Union (ESU) which represents students from 46 National Students' Unions in 39 countries, and a member of Eurodoc, the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers.

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) welcomes the recently announced review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Ireland, and is pleased that an opportunity for consultation has been provided for students, educators, and other interested stakeholders in order to inform how this education will be rolled out in the future.

USI and RSE

When students enter into third level education, they often do so with little understanding of relationships and sexuality. This is due to the varied teaching methods and lack of thoroughness and factual content in the current Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) taught at post-primary level. It is also believed to be due to the religious ethos preventing students being taught particular elements of RSE, including abortion information and gender identity and sexuality as these are core principles many religious organisations object to.

The USI and Students' Unions across the country are educating students on sexuality and relationships through many initiatives. Most notably our sexual health,

awareness and guidance campaign (#SHAG19) consists of a national roadshow which sees information disseminated across the country, including information on contraception, STIs, condom demonstrations, healthy relationships and consent as well as information on abortion. We also disseminate over 20,000 sexual health packs which contain a condom, a sachet of lube and information on STI's, consent and how to use a condom/dental dam.

The USI have also been running Pink Training for the past 26 years which is an LGBTI+ student conference for over 300 delegates. This conference includes informative workshops and modules on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex + sexual health, STIs, gender identity, consent, LGBTI+ rights, plus many more.

When educating young people, it is important to factor in the surroundings for the student and teacher, the methodologies and the resources available to teaching staff. USI believes the following must be considered for educating students about relationships and sexuality:

1. Information for all students

All elements of RSE should be taught to all students, irregardless of gender. RSE should not be divided between gender, leaving ambiguity and misunderstanding among students who have not learnt about particular elements of RSE. e.g. menstruation

2. Irish language inclusion of training materials

It is essential that any resources, support documentation or training be provided in both English and Irish. We have seen an increase in the number of Gaelcholáistí and Gaelscoileanna in recent times with 66 post primary Gaelcholáistí in the Republic of Ireland (Gaelscoileanna, 2017). Teachers and students studying through the medium of Irish need to be supported in their learning journey. USI, in conjunction with Belong To and TENI created An Foclóir Aiteach, terminology which will support inclusive discussion (USI, 2018).

3. Adequate resources for teaching staff

USI believes that any teacher should have access to training and resources if they are to support their learners. USI recommends that teachers are given incentives to upskill, and enabled to do so with scheduled time for lesson preparation and training in lieu of teaching time. USI recognises the difficulties some schools will face in supporting teachers to attend training events due to the current teacher crisis. It is essential that all teachers of RSE receive adequate training, including NQTs. Initial teacher education programmes, and the providers of same may offer an additional module to student teachers, or timetabled access to training. USI recognises the difficulties which may be created regarding timetabling, module creation and front loading of modules for student teachers. However every RSE teacher should be supported to facilitate discussion, and provide accurate, unbiased information. The recent survey regarding teacher retention and recruitment found that 66% of respondents confirmed that some subjects are being taught by teachers who do not have the appropriate qualification (TUI, 2019). 91% of respondents highlighted the negative impact of the teacher shortage for students (TUI, 2019). An individual who has not received training would struggle with the sensitive nature of discussion, and could not sign post students to the relevant services.

#### 4. Different teaching methodologies to promote learning

The DES Inspectorate report on Social, Personal and Health Education in post-primary schools (2013) identified key challenges in schools. One key difficulty was the over reliance on external facilitators. The report found that there was a lack of follow up lessons to facilitate questions or reflection on the previous lesson. In order to optimise learning there should be opportunity for collaboration amongst RSE teachers and a clear scheme of work. The WHO Training Matters (2017) report highlighted qualities which RSE teachers should possess, recommending those who are compassionate, non-judgemental, empathetic, trustworthy and possessing a positive attitude to young people's sexuality. USI recommends that the use of external

facilitators be limited and strictly monitored. Certain topics will require a workshop based approach, for example Consent. Workshops should be engaging for students, thought provoking and fun such is the model of Smart Consent (2018). It is also important to evaluate the workshops in order to optimise students' learning. USI believes that active learning, with space for discussion should be implemented as opposed to lecture style.

#### 5. Amendment of the Education Act 1998

USI believes that the Education Act 1998 must be amended so that no students are in a position where they may be missing out on factual, evidence-based RSE because it may not be in line with the religious ethos of the school.

#### USI Recommendations

Relationships and Sexuality Education in Ireland does not currently reflect the reality of the lived experiences of young people and adequately inform them in the areas of sex and relationships. In order for RSE to be effective, USI believes it should include learning in the areas below, at an age appropriate level.

##### 1. LGBTI+ Inclusion

All information should be inclusive of LGBTI+ relationships in order to destigmatise different sexual orientation and gender types.

##### 2. Pregnancy & Abortion Information

Students need to understand what options are available to them when they experience an unplanned pregnancy. They should be presented with all available options, and presented with unbiased, evidence-informed information.

##### 3. Consent

Communication and consent are core concepts for learning about relationships. Consent can be taught in various levels, dependant on the appropriate age level. Consent should be taught as positive, healthy

communication which helps relationships. It should also be taught how non-consensual behaviour can have long-lasting negative effects on a person.

#### 4. Cyberbullying, social media and the internet

Social media can be a tool used to shame or victimise students, and students may use it without knowing the associated risks. It is important to cover areas in relation to sexual harassment through using online outlets to spread images or messages. There are different forms of online harassment, and students should be able to identify harassment in all forms. It is also important to cover areas of online sexual activity (such as sexting), and the risks associated with such activity. It should be clear that there are resources available to students who are being harassed online.

#### 5. Pornography

It is important to discuss why it is used, and how to use it in a healthy manner. It is important to address feeling ashamed for using it (whether from oneself or from others), addictive behaviours, and understanding its relation to real world sexual activity.

#### 6. Healthy (and identifying abusive) relationships and roles

Students should understand implied and assumed roles in relationships, and have a space to challenge those assumptions. They should be able to learn about what are healthy expectations, behaviours and emotions in a relationship. They should also learn about abusive or manipulative behaviours in a relationship.

#### 7. Sex education - sex has a broad definition

Students may have preconceived ideas on what sex entails, and may equate “sex” to mean only vaginal sex. They should be educated that sex can consist of a wide range of activities, including oral sex, vaginal sex and anal sex, and those should be taught from a position of understanding, not stigmatisation.

8. Comprehensive education on various contraception and STI preventative methods

In addition to using condoms safely and correctly, students should learn about other forms of contraceptives such as emergency contraception, oral contraception, long acting reversible contraception. They should also learn about the benefits and drawbacks of using each form of contraception, and their effectiveness at preventing pregnancy and STIs. Students should learn about preventative measures they can take to avoid STIs, including information on PrEP. Contraction of STIs, and HIV, should be treated in a non-stigmatising manner, and include up-to-date information on effective treatments, with inclusion of information on PEP medications.

9. Cancer awareness and preventative measures

According to the Irish Cancer Society, breast cancer and prostate cancers are some of the most common cancers in Ireland. Students should learn signs to look out for, and services they can access. They should also learn about preventative measures available to them, such as the HPV, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccines.

**Submission Authors:**

*Aisling Cusack*  
Vice President for Equality and Citizenship  
Union of Students in Ireland

[equality@usi.ie](mailto:equality@usi.ie)

*Damien McClean*  
Vice President for Welfare  
Union of Students in Ireland

[welfare@usi.ie](mailto:welfare@usi.ie)

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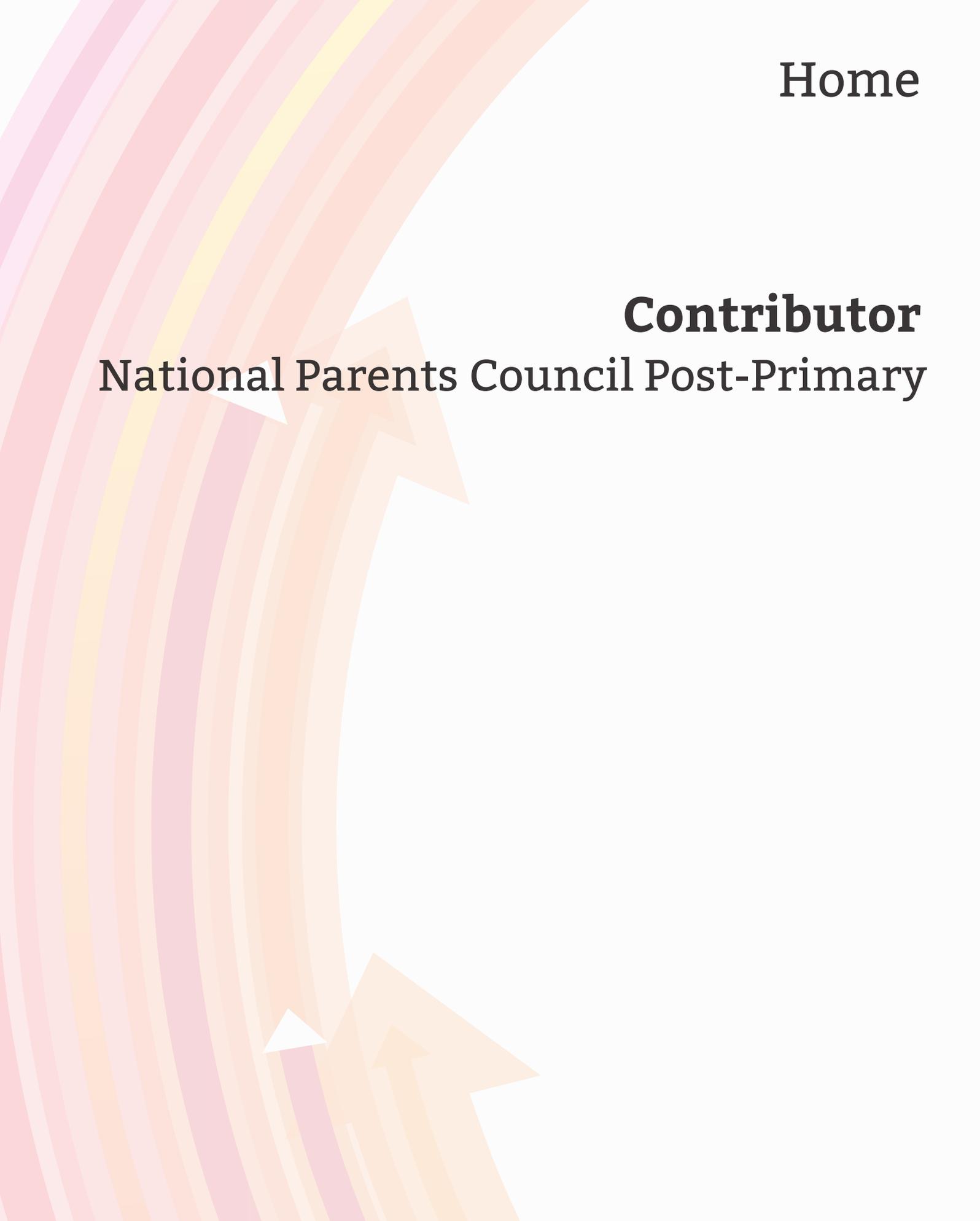
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Home

**Contributor**  
National Parents Council Post-Primary

National Parents Council pp  
 Unit 6/7  
 Building 125  
 OMNI Park Centre  
 Santry  
 Dublin 9  
 D09 W3Y9



Tel: 01 862 33 46  
 Email: [manager@npcpp.ie](mailto:manager@npcpp.ie)  
 Website: [www.npcpp.ie](http://www.npcpp.ie)

*NPCpp – Working towards a better education system for all*

**Written submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the subject RSE – Relationships and Sexuality Education.**

The National Parents Council Post Primary (NPCpp) are grateful to the NCCA for the opportunity to make this submission on behalf of parents of students attending post-primary schools in Ireland.

This subject is an good example of one which relates to the teaching of life-skills integral to societal values and critical towards resilience and empowerment of students in today's world, - as opposed to subjects which are primarily academic in nature. The development of the curriculum, how the topic is presented and the effective teaching of the subject will be best achieved through school and home combining and working together to deliver the knowledge required to empower the pupils.

It is very clear from surveys, carried out by NPCpp and our constituent bodies, and from discussions with parents that there is an overwhelming desire for factual information to be imparted to our secondary school students and to properly inform them so that they have the correct and relevant information with which to make informed decisions in matters of relationships and sexuality.

The facts around fulfillment and joy, as well the responsibilities, dangers and complications of relationships and sexuality should be presented and discussed to ensure effective and balanced learning in this area.

**Directors:** P. Rolston, P. Beddy, E. Bell, S. Bennet, J. Carr, B. Dennehy, M. Fanning,, R. Hemeryck, D. Hogan, C. Kelly, R. MacMahon, A. Mulligan, J. Murphy, G. O'Hara, S. O'Riordan, M. O'Shea.

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Most parents feel strongly that the confusion that can arise from incorrect, biased or agenda based information imparted through the internet or over restricted information delivered by some agencies can be very misleading and even dangerous.

RSE education is so important in our teenagers lives that it fully warrants properly trained teachers (specifically in RSE) who are confident and well informed in their subject and who can comfortably communicate well in order to facilitate full discussion in all aspects of this subject with their students.

While there is a strong feeling that moral values and ethics from a child's home or religious background are important and should help to inform our teenagers, the vast majority of parents believe that the dangers and joys that adolescents will see and experience in today's world should be faced with the benefit of full, factual and relevant information. Religious and family ethos can then also be taken into consideration by the student when facing decisions or life situations.

Through NPCpp surveys, parents suggest that RSE Education in schools should be taught as all other subjects are taught – presenting and discussing the facts. There is an awareness that some parents are not in a position to, may feel uncomfortable with, or are unable to discuss, important details required to properly equip their children in these areas.

In fact, some parents suggest that they are not themselves aware of many of the facts in a world where understanding and pressures relating to relationships and sexuality and the influences and pressures surrounding them, on and off line, are changing so fast that they struggle to keep up. In this regard, it is also important for school parents to be involved in learning and discussions to properly inform themselves so that they can properly understand and support what is being taught in the classroom.

Through extensive consultation with the parent body in our schools, it is clear that parents feel that RSE education is a critical requirement for our children today. To be properly informed, empowered in their decision making, resilient when challenged, our adolescents require education on the facts. However, to benefit from the joy and fulfilment that

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respectful, caring and loving relationships can bring, requires additional information on emotions, the moral aspects, the respect and the societal influences in these area of their lives.

This multi-faceted programme can only be effectively delivered by all the educators working together inside and outside the classroom. Schools and parents must work together in this area and the curriculum set must be understood by both so that effective educations of our teenagers can be ensured.

### **The elements acknowledged to bring about high implementation of RSE with our schools**

We feel there must be reference to the existing programmes currently active in our schools. In commenting on the introduction of an enhanced or changed programme for SPHE/RSE it must be acknowledged that the success of such additional information being delivered to students can be measured to some extent by the success of the delivery of existing programmes.

In 2007 An Assessment of the Challenges to Full Implementation of RSE in the Context of SPHE Programme in Post-primary Schools was reported on. This was undertaken three years following the full implementation of the RSE programme in 2003. This report highlighted a number of barriers to the implementation of the program and a number of factors that would help in the implementation of the program. While this report was over 10 years ago, experience on the ground tells us, as parents, that little has changed in the implementation this program and in the program itself, while much has changed for the students in receipt of this program.

In 2007 Barriers to this program were identified as

	% of schools agreeing
The overcrowded curriculum	82%
The need to complete so many courses in so many subjects	71%
Discomfort of some teachers in teaching RSE	71%
The pressure of examination subjects	67%

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Table 4 Factors that would help 'a lot' or 'somewhat' in implementation of the RSE programme in post-primary schools

	% of schools agreeing
An expanded SPHE Support Service	87%
Increased in-service provision	84%
More outside facilitators in schools	80%
Greater involvement of parents	58%
Changes in the RSE programme	37%

This report also detailed the elements which brought about a high level of implementation of the RSE programme. These elements are still relevant ten years later and are, by in large, a matter of common sense and a realistic investment in the delivery of any programme.

**Co-ordination of SPHE/ RSE:** Schools with a successful or high rate of implementation had a committed subject co-ordinator who worked with teachers and the entire staff to prioritise SPHE and RSE. The coordination of SPHE/RSE was designated as a Post of Responsibility by school management within the school.

**Parental involvement:** Parents were consulted at the time of drawing up the RSE policy and were regularly informed about the content of RSE.

**Status:** SPHE/RSE was prioritised and valued by all staff members. The subject enjoyed status in the planning of school 'business' generally and also among the students.

**Teacher training:** A pool of well-equipped teachers using experiential learning methodologies for RSE. The School also provided additional funding for staff wide training. Teachers used personal time to train in SPHE/RSE and there was a high level of access to extra training services.

**Teacher comfort:** Teacher comfort is an essential point. When teachers were uncomfortable and unsure of what they were teaching or how they should teach the programme the school experiences a reduced success rate of implementation. Where the school confronted RSE issues in a positive manner teachers had more confidence and comfort with the delivery. Teachers in schools with a high implementation rate were trained in facilitating openness and

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confidentiality amongst students. They also showed a personal level of confidence in negotiating any ethos issues. They were supported by a clear RSE policy, school management, and a clear and open relationship with parents.

**Clarity among teachers about what can be taught:** Teachers were confident about the boundaries of acceptability within RSE teaching and moved comfortably through all aspects of the RSE programme.

**Student perspectives and understanding:** Students have confidence in their RSE teachers and enjoy RSE classes. They are reasonably or very satisfied with the programme content and generally feel comfortable and able to discuss relationships and sexuality. Students are consulted about RSE policy and the programme, possibly through the mechanism of the Students' Council.

**Whole-school support:** A large number of staff trained in SPHE/RSE. High level of openness and flexibility around RSE teaching and timetabling. Regular planning and evaluation of RSE progress, sharing of ideas, and 'moral support'. Actively and explicitly outlining to parents curriculum content and how RSE is taught.

These would be clear indicators as to some of the resources, supports and strategies that would need to be in place for the successful introduction of any content.

In particular we feel the following factors are essential

- Teacher comfort and knowledge
- Parental involvement
- Student Involvement
- An agreed RSE policy
- Priority and planning

Responses to NPCpp suggest that in schools with a low implementation rate of RSE classes it was found that the main reason appeared to point to teachers avoiding teaching the subject due to personal discomfort with the topic of sexuality. Teachers were extremely nervous about the topics they could 'safely' address and consequently avoided certain or all aspects

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of RSE teaching. This resulted in students feeling that teachers were disinterested in and uncomfortable with RSE.

Parents also feel that programmes delivered by individuals external to the school can bring about a more positive and open delivery of this type of programme.

Much has changed in Ireland – and the world – since the teaching of RSE was last visited. It is clear that there is a need for a broader based RSE curriculum to fully and properly inform students on all aspects of this topic. NPCpp and parents support the implementation of such a curriculum and also emphasise the need to provide sufficient support through funding and training for teachers and parents in RSE education to ensure effective delivery of the subject.

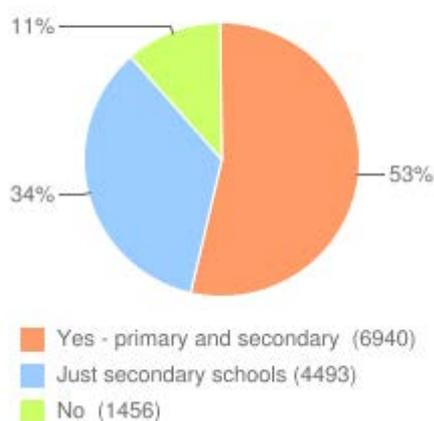
### **CONSENT (A particular necessary part of RSE)**

In a recent survey the Journal.ie asked the question: **Do you think schools should teach about consent?**

There were 12,889 responses to this survey with only 11% against the teaching of consent in schools. 34% were in favour of teaching consent at second level only but the majority, 53%, were in favour of teaching consent at both primary and secondary level.

#### ***Poll Results:***

#### ***Poll Results:***



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While this is a ‘pop-up’ survey, without means to validate the responses, it is an indicator of a positive reaction to the teaching of consent in schools.

### **The case for teaching consent at Post Primary**

There has been a steady introduction of Consent classes at third level, some compulsory, some facilitated by the colleges and some facilitated by student unions. Students attending these have expressed the opinion that third level is too late! By this time in their lives, many second level students have already encountered challenges around relationships and sexuality, some are already sexually active. It is also pointed out that the age of consent is 17 and that a percentage of students do not attend third level.

Technology and access to instant and extensive information has impacted on the type of content we now need to deliver in any health related subject in our schools. The many advances in media and the manner in which programmes are now streamed into homes mean that young people receive informal and unsupervised information about relationships and sexuality outside of the classroom setting. Young people are already exposed to a variety of sexual practices and attitudes through the media, particularly social media, television, film and magazines from a relatively young age.

Social media has changed the way young people relate to each other. It has also meant that students at a young age are sharing inappropriate images of a personal nature with each other.

We know that children access pornography at a much younger age because of the internet and the recent “Net Children go Mobile” report confirmed that over 21% of children had seen sexual images either on or off line in the past 12 months. The type of content being viewed is influencing young people’s sexuality and influencing their expectation of what the relationships within a sexual relationship should be.

A Special Eurobarometer, Gender-based Violence Report published in November 2016 highlighted disturbing attitudes. This survey presented a series of different situations to respondents and examined whether any of these can ever justify sexual intercourse without consent.

**Directors:** P. Rolston, P. Beddy, E. Bell, S. Bennet, J. Carr, B. Dennehy, M. Fanning,, R. Hemeryck, D. Hogan, C. Kelly, R. MacMahon, A. Mulligan, J. Murphy, G. O’Hara, S. O’Riordan, M. O’Shea.

**President:** Geoffrey Browne, **Company Secretary/Director:** Michael Mulry.

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More than one in four respondents think sexual intercourse without consent can be justifiable. Overall, 27% say sexual intercourse without consent may be justified in at least one of the situations proposed. Respondents are most likely to say this about being drunk or on drugs (12%), voluntarily going home with someone (11%), wearing revealing, provocative or sexy clothing or not clearly saying no or physically fighting back (both 10%). This was a European study and included Ireland.

The ability to give consent is also relevant. The Sexual Health and Attitudes, Galway (SHAG) Report was carried out by Elaine Byrnes, doctoral researcher, and Dr Padraig MacNeela of the School of Psychology at NUI Galway. Data from 1,691 participants was analysed for the report, with women accounting for more than two-thirds of the respondents, while 53% were single, 46% were in a relationship, and 1% were married or divorced.

One aspect covered in the survey was the role of alcohol — 76% of females and 69% of males agreed they are less nervous about sex after drinking, while 35% of females and 58% of males agreed they had sex with people with whom they wouldn't if sober. It also found that 31.5% of females and 57% of males find it harder to say “no” to sexual advances after drinking.

The extent of alcohol consumption also influenced some results: 43% of female and 39% of male frequent binge drinkers reported regretted sexual experiences, compared to 25% of female and 31% of male infrequent binge drinkers, 12% of female and 13% of male rare binge drinkers, and just 3% of both females and males who never engaged in binge drinking. Among issues relating to consent, the report found that 50% of females and 58% of males agreed or strongly agreed that they would just keep moving forward in sexual behaviours or actions unless their partner stopped them. It also found that 12.5% of females and 2.5% of males reported ever having experienced sexual contact where physical force or threats to physically harm them were used, while 20% of females and 5% of males reported ever having experienced sexual contact being attempted using physical force, or threatening to cause physical harm that was not successful.

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## A change in perspective for the future

NPCpp feel that positive reinforcement should be the method employed in teaching these issues to students as opposed to the negative, i.e. don't talk to strangers, don't dress in a particular way, don't drink alcohol, don't share pictures, etc. We need to teach our children to be aware of what they are saying 'Yes' to.

We should be helping pupils gain skills and resources that lead to personal development. We need to help them to improve their self-concept and personal interaction skills. Parents know from raising their own children that a focus on confidence building and knowledge are the core to responsible choices in life.

The world is moving so fast that parents and teachers need ongoing training and education themselves to keep up with requirements to educate and protect our children. It is incumbent on All educators - teachers, schools, DES, parents and youth clubs to work together to ensure that the required 'education for life' is delivered properly and effectively to our children.

Common sense and statistics tell us that education on alcohol is a significant part of any education on consent. This demonstrates that we should move away from a narrow definition for any planned education programme. Consent is a broad subject and is relevant to all areas of a student's life.

Peer pressure, the pressure of fitting in and the influence of social media all need to be counteracted with the ability to establish a greater control over their own lives. Making educated and informed decisions in this area of life is the key to empowerment. Sexuality education should have an emphasis on communication skills, negotiation skills and problem solving skills. Our students need to be socially cognitive and empowered to make their own decisions in all personal aspects of their lives and have the ability to resist enforced pressure from others.

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## **In conclusion**

Real education is achieved through presenting and discussion facts. Properly informed adolescents will be able to understand issues and make correct decisions and will therefore carry with them influence to ensure better respect within society and better understanding of personal and societal health matters.

NPCpp, representing parents at all post primary schools and following substantial consultation with parents, strongly support the development and implementation of a robust and factual RSE curriculum. This should be delivered by competent trained teachers, without influence from biased or agenda based outside agencies, and supported by informed parental involvement. The schools and parents working respectfully together to properly inform and empower our teenage children.

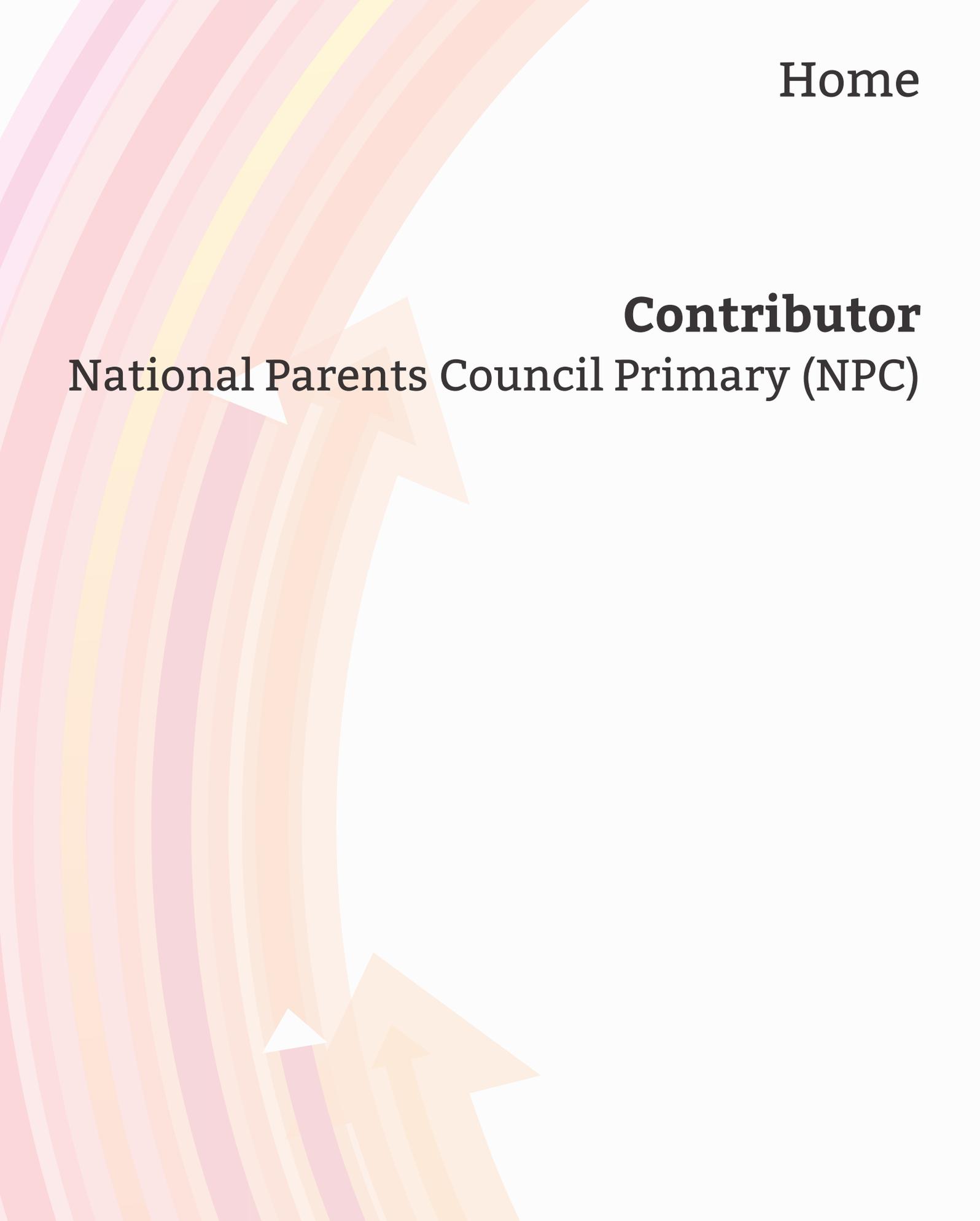
NPCpp thank the NCCA for the opportunity to make this submission and look forward to participating in discussions and involvement in the development and implementation of a new chapter in RSE education in our secondary schools.

***NPCpp – Working towards a better education system for all***

**Directors:** P. Rolston, P. Beddy, E. Bell, S. Bennet, J. Carr, B. Dennehy, M. Fanning,, R. Hemeryck, D. Hogan, C. Kelly, R. MacMahon, A. Mulligan, J. Murphy, G. O'Hara, S. O'Riordan, M. O'Shea.

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Home

**Contributor**

National Parents Council Primary (NPC)



## National Parents Council (Primary)

Submission to the  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment  
on the  
Relationships and Sexuality Curriculum



January 2019

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## **Introduction**

National Parents Council Primary (NPC) is the representative organisation for parents of children in primary or early education. NPC was established as a charitable organisation in 1985, under the programme for Government, as the representative organisation for parents of children attending primary school. It received statutory recognition in the Education Act 1998.

### **NPC Vision**

NPC want to see an Ireland where **every** child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

### **NPC Mission**

NPC exists to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC will work to increase the capacity and capability of the primary education sector, to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all children.

### **NPC's Key Activities are:**

- Representing the parents' voice in primary education
- Advocacy
- Building participation
- Service delivery

### **NPC Service Delivery**

NPC services are aimed at empowering parents so that they can support their children in all aspects of education.

### **Helpline**

The NPC helpline is a national confidential service for parents. The helpline staff listen and give information and support to parents to help them make the best possible decisions for and with their children.

### **Training and Development**

The NPC Training and Development programme is a national programme of training, development and support for parents. The purpose is to empower parents to play an active part in their child's education at every level.

### **Website**

The NPC's website [www.npc.ie](http://www.npc.ie) aims to provide parents with information regarding primary education. The site also allows parents an opportunity to give NPC their views regarding primary education issues.

## **NPC Submission**

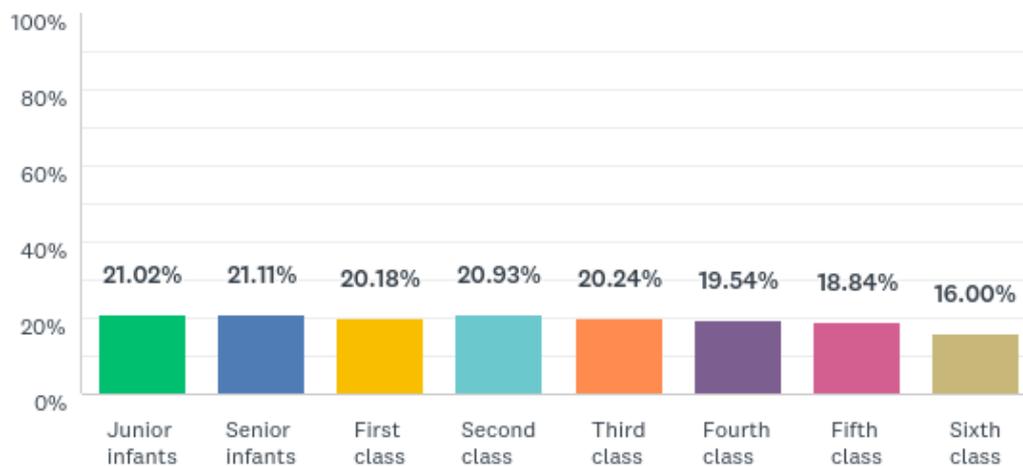
NPC welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum for primary schools in Ireland.

In order to make this submission National Parents Council Primary surveyed NPC members and those on our Contacts database from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2019. There were 3,306 responses to the survey.

Following are the results of the survey, please note that parents were able to comment on question 4 and give 'Other' responses to questions 6, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 14 and expanded responses to questions 16, 17 and 18, these responses can be found in the Appendix. Respondents were asked to briefly outline the reasons for their answer choices in question 15, these are also included in the Appendix.

**Q1: What class/es in primary school do/es your child/ren attend? (please tick all/any that apply)**

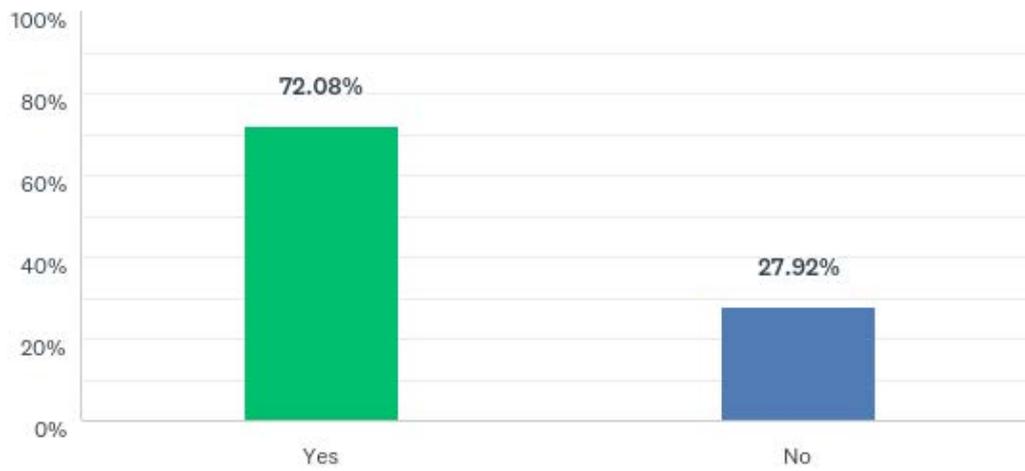
Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Junior infants	21.02%	695
Senior infants	21.11%	698
First class	20.18%	667
Second class	20.93%	692
Third class	20.24%	669
Fourth class	19.54%	646
Fifth class	18.84%	623
Sixth class	16.00%	529
Total Respondents: 3,306		

**Q2: Are you aware of the Social and Personal Health Education programme that is taught to all children in PRIMARY school from Junior Infants to 6th class?**

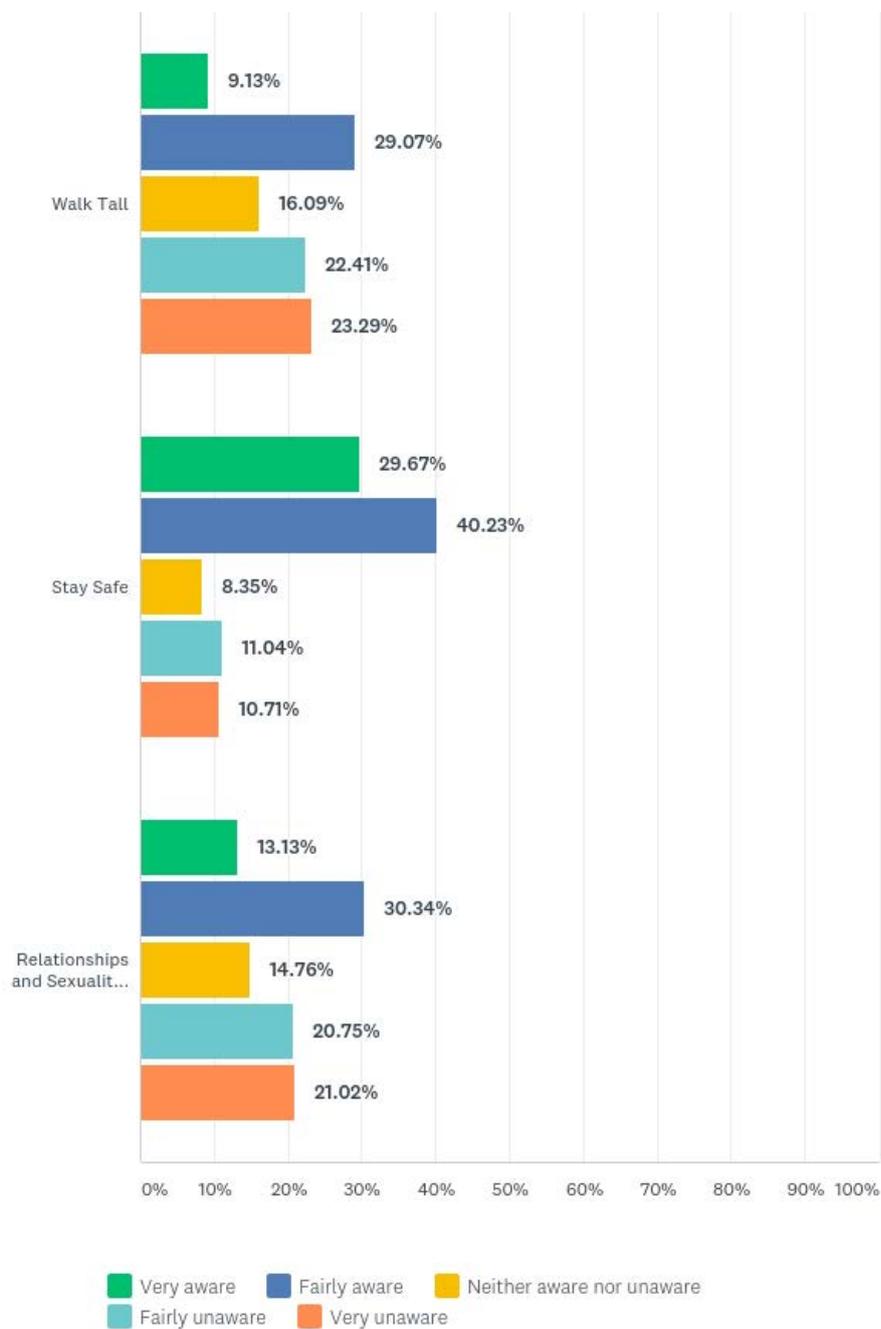
Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.08%	2,383
No	27.92%	923
TOTAL		3,306

### Q3: What is your awareness of the content of 3 main areas of the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum that is taught to your child?

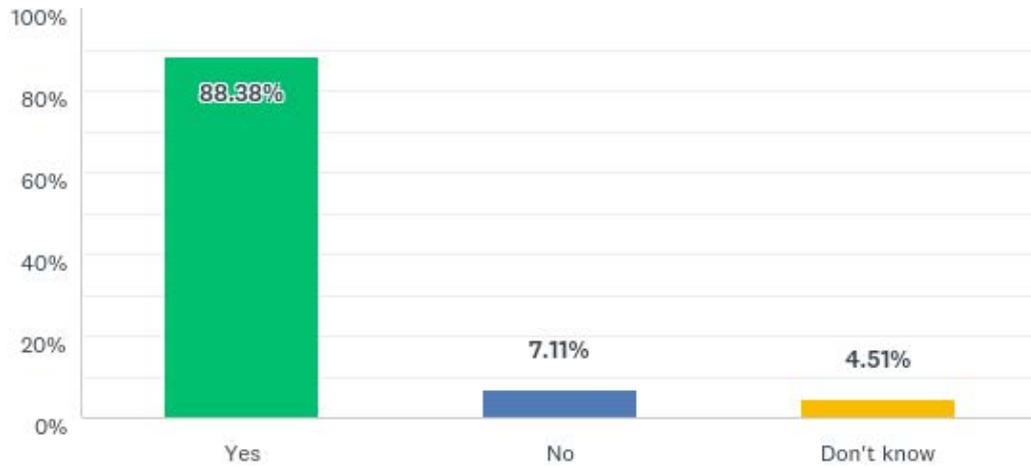
Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



	VERY AWARE	FAIRLY AWARE	NEITHER AWARE NOR UNAWARE	FAIRLY UNAWARE	VERY UNAWARE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Walk Tall	9.13% 302	29.07% 961	16.09% 532	22.41% 741	23.29% 770	3,306	3.22
Stay Safe	29.67% 981	40.23% 1,330	8.35% 276	11.04% 365	10.71% 354	3,306	2.33
Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)	13.13% 434	30.34% 1,003	14.76% 488	20.75% 686	21.02% 695	3,306	3.06

**Q4: Do you think Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an important aspect of the curriculum in primary school from Junior Infants to 6th class?**

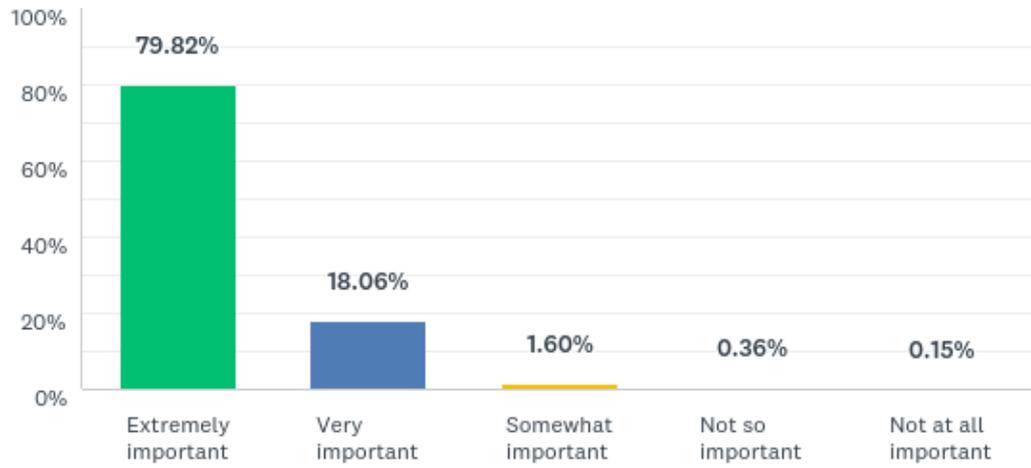
Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	88.38%	2,922
No	7.11%	235
Don't know	4.51%	149
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,306</b>

**Q5: As a parent how important do you believe your role is in educating your child in Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?**

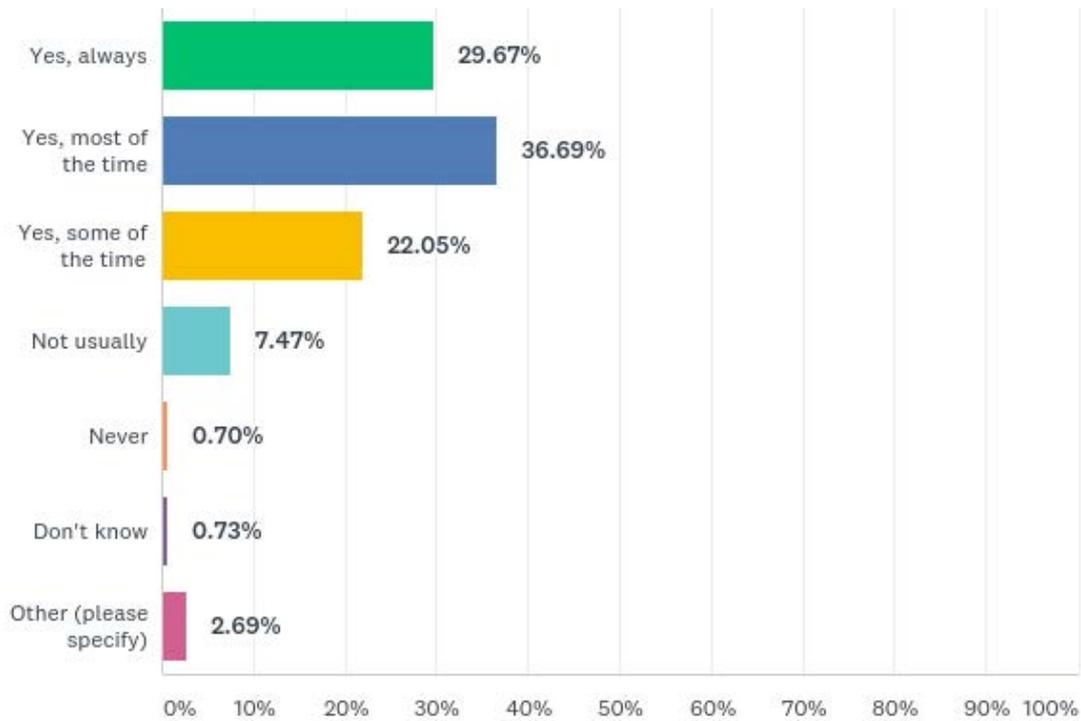
Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely important	79.82%	2,639
Very important	18.06%	597
Somewhat important	1.60%	53
Not so important	0.36%	12
Not at all important	0.15%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,306</b>

**Q6: Do you as a parent feel equipped to have age-appropriate conversations with your child about relationships and/or sex?**

Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0

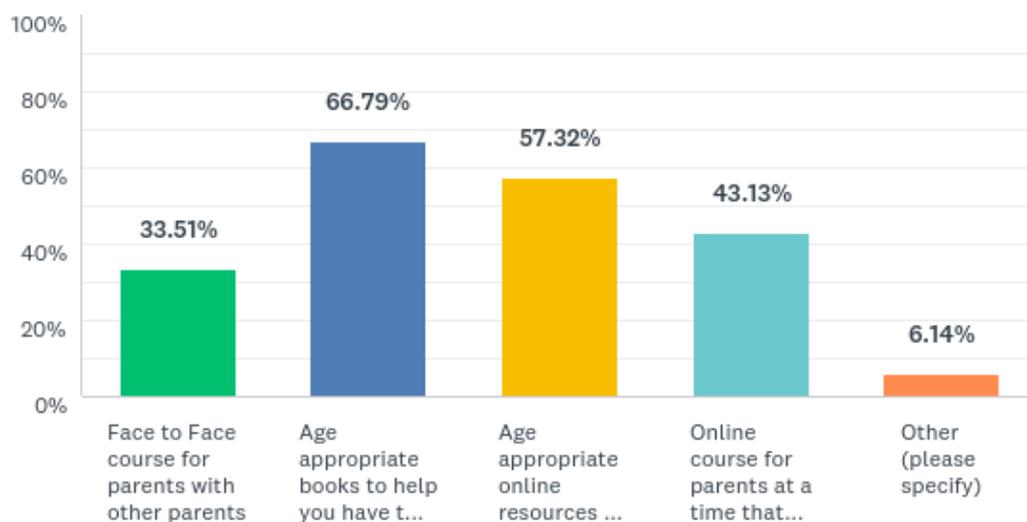


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, always	29.67%	981
Yes, most of the time	36.69%	1,213
Yes, some of the time	22.05%	729
Not usually	7.47%	247
Never	0.70%	23
Don't know	0.73%	24
Other (please specify)	2.69%	89
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,306</b>

For 'Other' responses please see the Appendix.

**Q7: Are there any supports that would help you as a parent to be better equipped to have age appropriate conversations with your child about relationships and/or sex? Please tick all those that you think would help you**

Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0

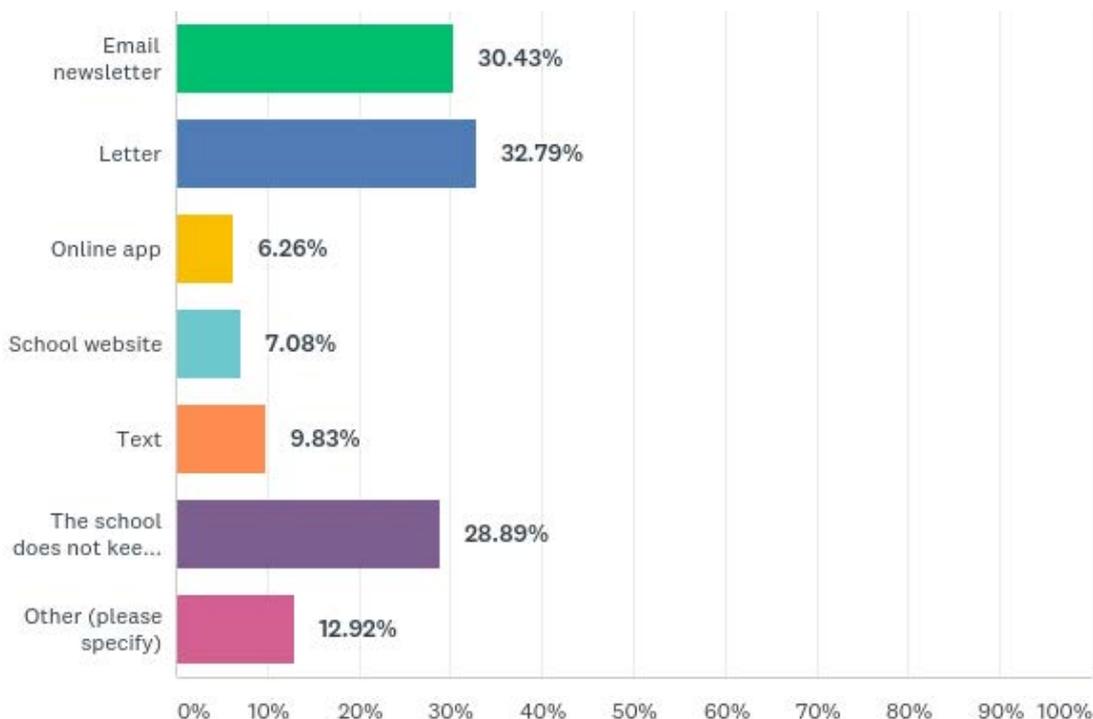


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Face to Face course for parents with other parents	33.51%	1,108
Age appropriate books to help you have the conversation	66.79%	2,208
Age appropriate online resources to help you have the conversation	57.32%	1,895
Online course for parents at a time that suits you	43.13%	1,426
Other (please specify)	6.14%	203
Total Respondents: 3,306		

For 'Other' responses please see the Appendix.

**Q8: How does your child’s school keep you informed about Relationships and Sexuality Education?** Please tick all that apply

Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0

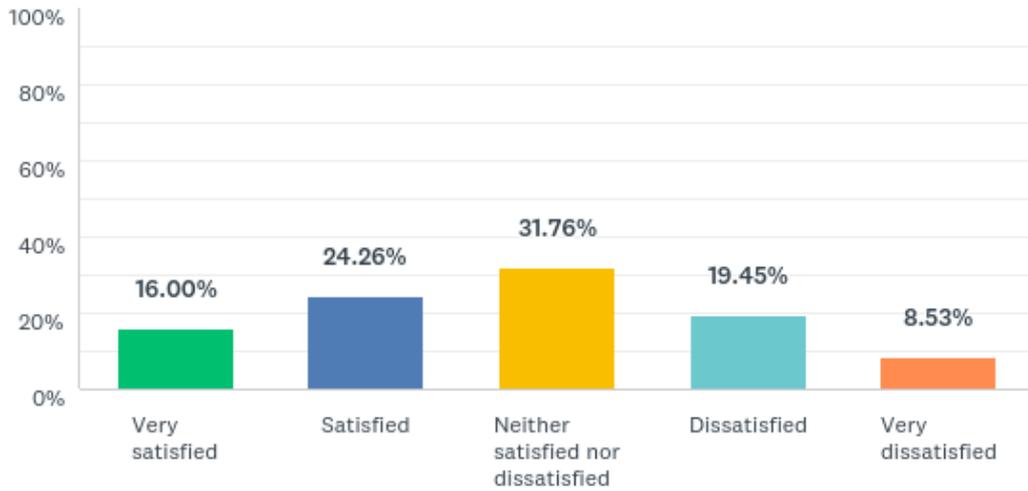


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Email newsletter	30.43%	1,006
Letter	32.79%	1,084
Online app	6.26%	207
School website	7.08%	234
Text	9.83%	325
The school does not keep me informed	28.89%	955
Other (please specify)	12.92%	427
Total Respondents: 3,306		

For ‘Other’ responses please see the Appendix.

**Q9: How satisfied are you that your child’s school keeps you informed about Relationships and Sexuality Education, such as what is being taught and when the classes are scheduled?**

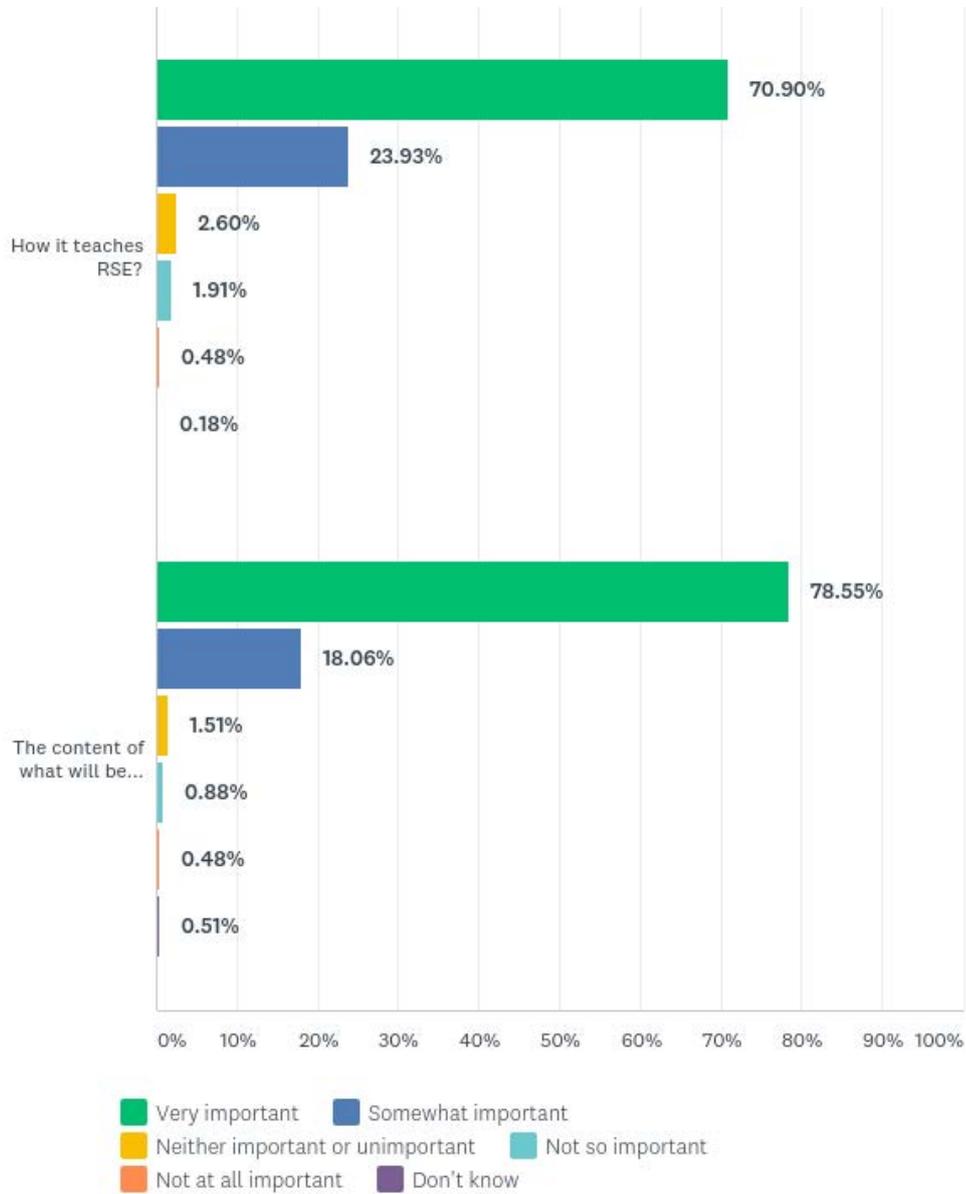
Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very satisfied	16.00%	529
Satisfied	24.26%	802
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	31.76%	1,050
Dissatisfied	19.45%	643
Very dissatisfied	8.53%	282
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,306</b>

**Q10: How important is it to you that your child’s school consults you about:**

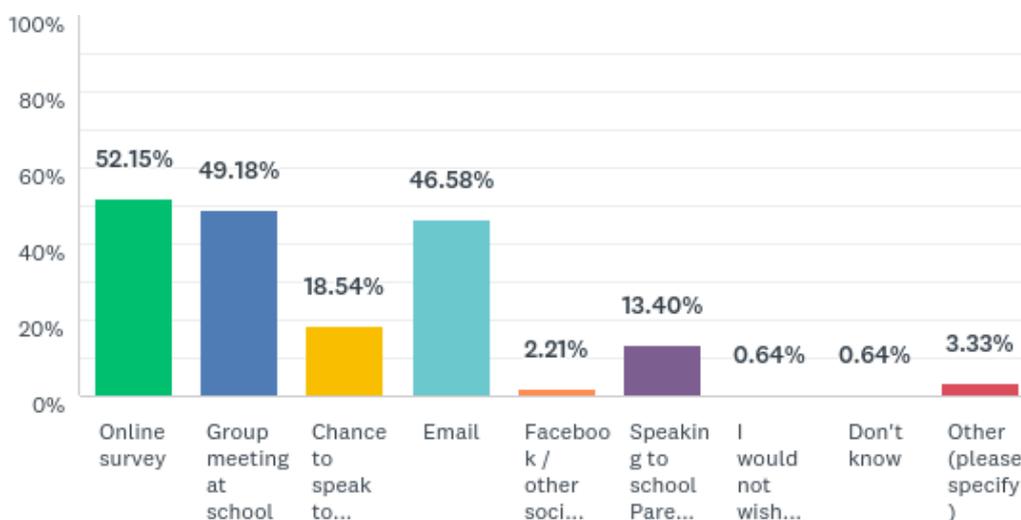
Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NEITHER IMPORTANT OR UNIMPORTANT	NOT SO IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
How it teaches RSE?	70.90% 2,344	23.93% 791	2.60% 86	1.91% 63	0.48% 16	0.18% 6	3,306	1.38
The content of what will be taught in RSE?	78.55% 2,597	18.06% 597	1.51% 50	0.88% 29	0.48% 16	0.51% 17	3,306	1.28

**Q11: If your child's school were to consult parents on RSE course content, how would you like them to do so? Please tick options that most strongly appeal to you**

Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0

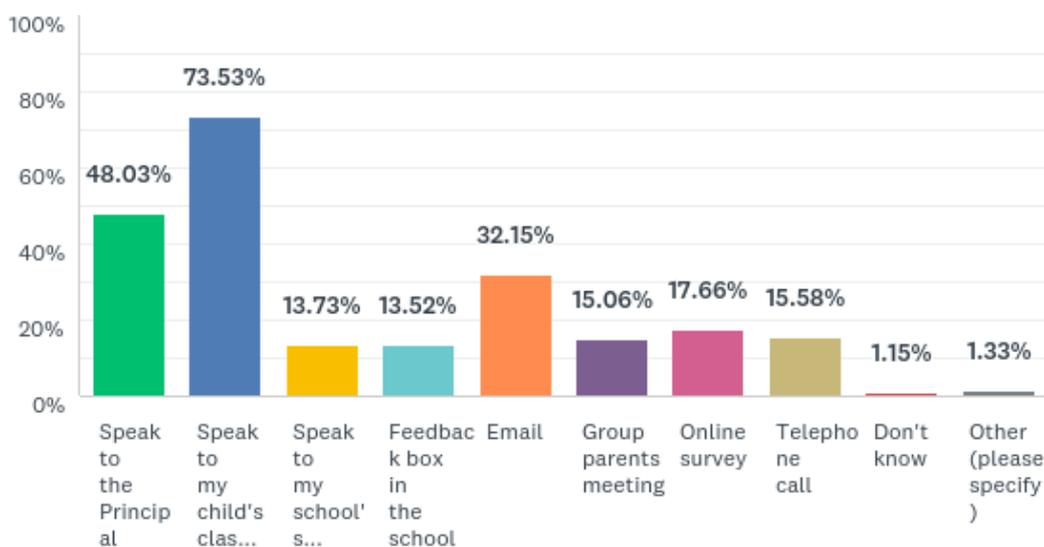


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Online survey	52.15%	1,724
Group meeting at school	49.18%	1,626
Chance to speak to Teacher/Principal one to one	18.54%	613
Email	46.58%	1,540
Facebook / other social media	2.21%	73
Speaking to school Parents' Association	13.40%	443
I would not wish to be consulted	0.64%	21
Don't know	0.64%	21
Other (please specify)	3.33%	110
Total Respondents: 3,306		

For 'Other' responses please see the Appendix.

**Q12: If you had concerns about the content of RSE, how would you prefer to raise them?**  
Please select up to 4 responses only.

Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0

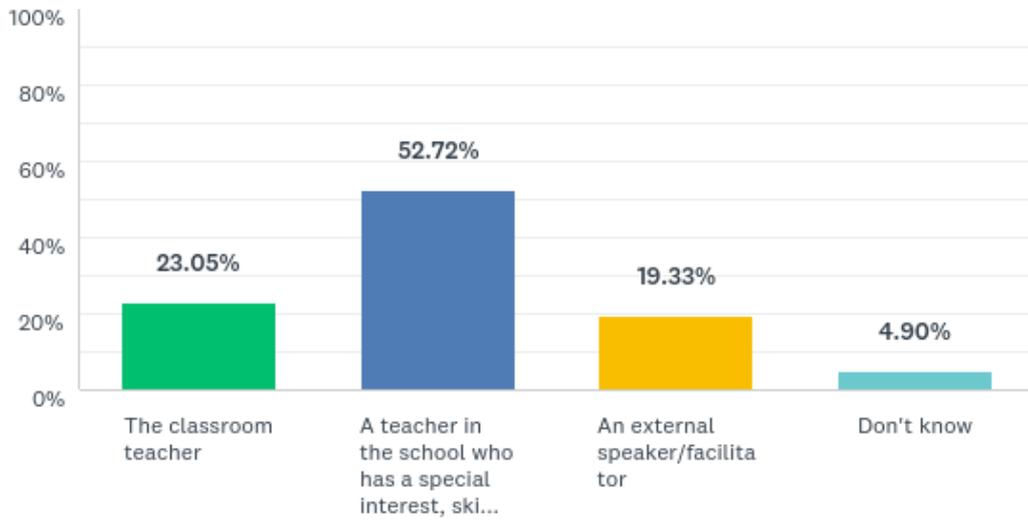


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Speak to the Principal	48.03%	1,588
Speak to my child's class teacher	73.53%	2,431
Speak to my school's Parents' Association	13.73%	454
Feedback box in the school	13.52%	447
Email	32.15%	1,063
Group parents meeting	15.06%	498
Online survey	17.66%	584
Telephone call	15.58%	515
Don't know	1.15%	38
Other (please specify)	1.33%	44
Total Respondents: 3,306		

For 'Other' responses please see the Appendix.

**Q13: Who do you think is best equipped to teach RSE in school?**

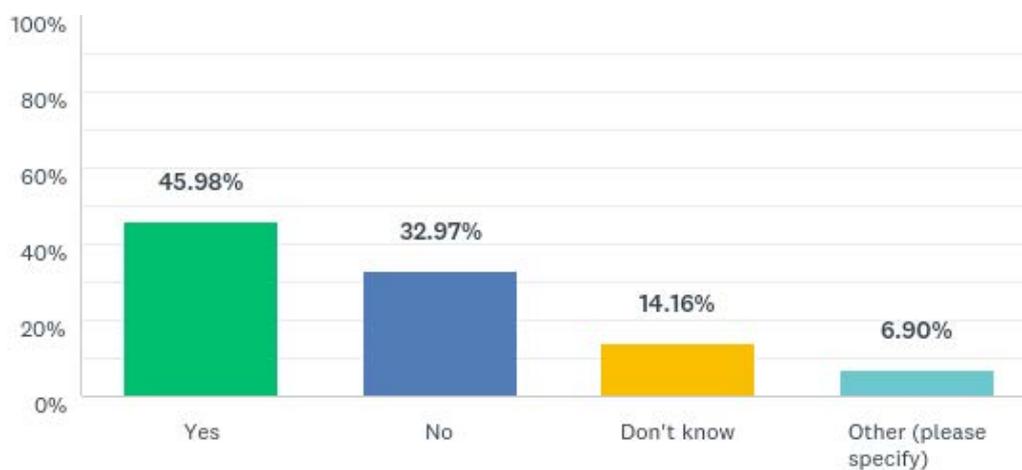
Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The classroom teacher	23.05%	762
A teacher in the school who has a special interest, skills and training in RSE	52.72%	1,743
An external speaker/facilitator	19.33%	639
Don't know	4.90%	162
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,306</b>

**Q14: Do you think parents have a right to withdraw their children from Relationships and Sexuality Education class in primary school**

Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0

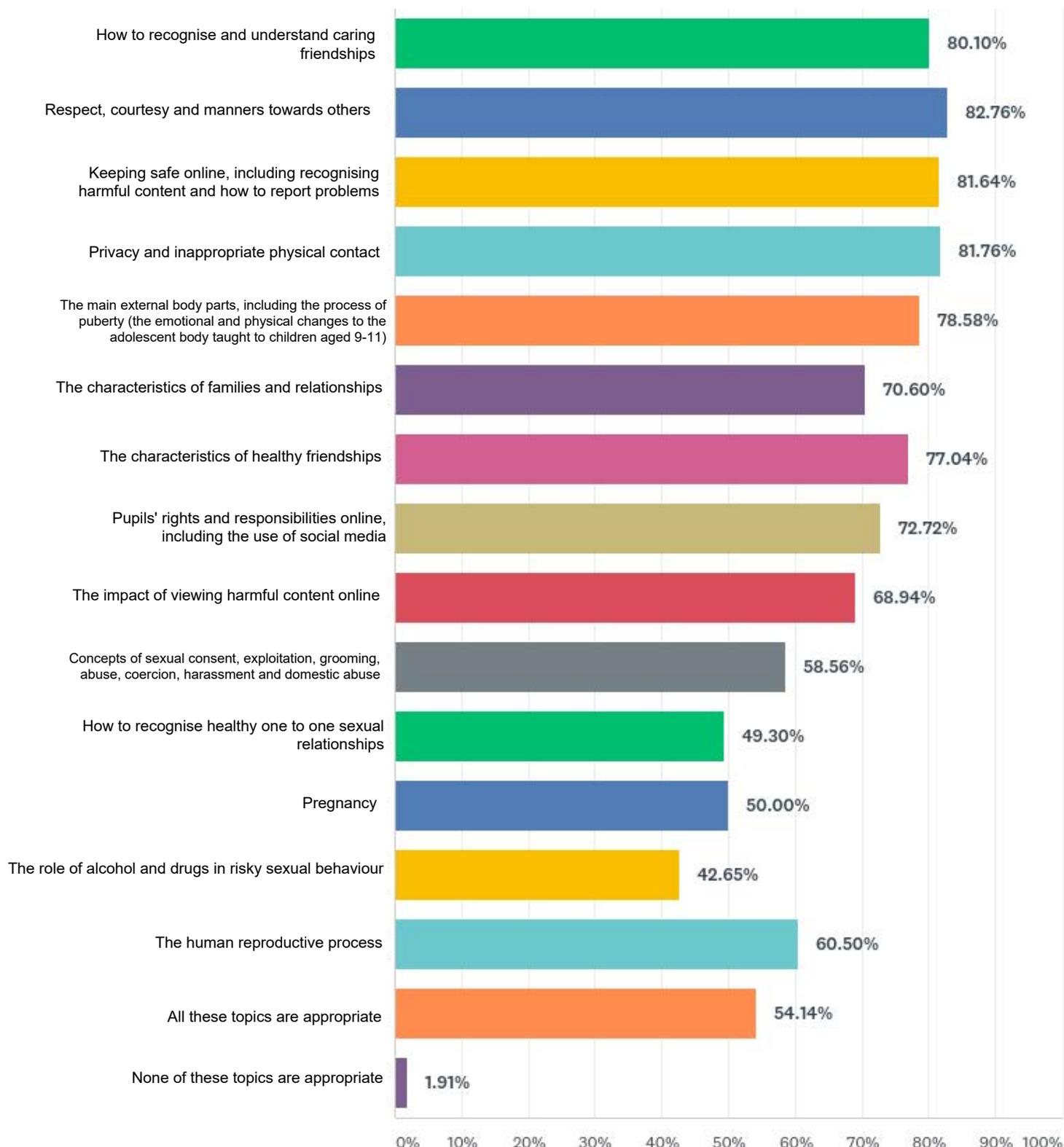


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	45.98%	1,520
No	32.97%	1,090
Don't know	14.16%	468
Other (please specify)	6.90%	228
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,306</b>

For 'Other' responses please see the Appendix.

**Q15: Which of the following, would you consider APPROPRIATE to teach to children of PRIMARY school age in Relationships and Sexuality Education classes? Please select all that apply**

Answered: 3,306 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
How to recognise and understand caring friendships	80.10% 2,648
Respect, courtesy and manners towards others	82.76% 2,736
Keeping safe online, including recognising harmful content and how to report problems	81.64% 2,699
Privacy and inappropriate physical contact	81.76% 2,703
The main external body parts, including the process of puberty (the emotional and physical changes to the adolescent body taught to children aged 9-11).	78.58% 2,598
The characteristics of families and relationships	70.60% 2,334
The characteristics of healthy friendships	77.04% 2,547
Pupils' rights and responsibilities online, including the use of social media	72.72% 2,404
The impact of viewing harmful content online	68.94% 2,279
Concepts of sexual consent, exploitation, grooming, abuse, coercion, harassment and domestic abuse	58.56% 1,936
How to recognise healthy one to one sexual relationships	49.30% 1,630
Pregnancy	50.00% 1,653
The role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour	42.65% 1,410
The human reproductive process	60.50% 2,000
All these topics are appropriate	54.14% 1,790
None of these topics are appropriate	1.91% 63
Total Respondents: 3,306	

Respondents were asked to briefly outline the reasons for the answer choices. Please see the Appendix.

## Appendix

Q4 Do you think Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an important aspect of the curriculum in primary school from Junior Infants to 6th class?

#	PLEASE COMMENT	DATE
1	Extremely important. Set the seed early at an appropriate level e.g. Breasts are for... feeding babies in junior infants and correct names	1/26/2019 10:28 PM
2	Very important to help establish healthy attitudes, acceptance, inclusion and respect for themselves and others.	1/26/2019 7:48 PM
3	I'm not sure that this subject should be taught to children of this age	1/26/2019 7:10 PM
4	Kids should be left alone. Sex education has nothing to do with kids. They should enjoy their youth. They will be introduced to Sex when times come. Not now.	1/26/2019 6:28 PM
5	I think it is important but sexuality does not need to be taught in infant classes in any way. Relationships, friendships etc. should be taught at all levels.	1/26/2019 2:26 PM
6	Since I am not aware of its content so I can't say either way, but I do feel it's an important topic for children.	1/26/2019 10:36 AM
7	They are kids that should not be exposed to all these kinds of immoralities.	1/26/2019 9:46 AM
8	To an extent.. what is OK for one parent may not be OK for another, RSE should have a home focus also and maybe info sent out on topics of information covered per class year	1/26/2019 5:49 AM
9	But I think from what I hear they giving too much information to younger children eg 3/4th class	1/25/2019 11:41 PM
10	Yes it is vital to equip children with life skills need as they enter puberty	1/25/2019 11:20 PM
11	No too early...certain things should be taught scientifically for when they are older, you want them to grow quicker, we already have enough with the internet ...we just want them to be safe!	1/25/2019 11:08 PM
12	I dont know what is thought during the years, but i would want my kids being comfortable knowing correct terms for certain things and being comfortable enough to ask me. My 4th class boy knows im very open and has questioned me as has one of his friends on issues and im honest so they feel comfortable asking and knowing things age appropriate.	1/25/2019 11:03 PM
13	Manners towards and people around are the most important aspect of the curriculum which should have been introduced	1/25/2019 10:44 PM

Question 4 comments continue on page 20

## Review of RSE Curriculum

14	They need to know about their bodies and what happens them in different stages	1/25/2019 9:42 PM
15	absolutely it is a very important topic that every child should be educated on in an appropriate manner	1/25/2019 8:57 PM
16	Essential aspect to all children's development	1/25/2019 8:51 PM
17	I did feel 5th class was very young to get the talk and also Kate did remark that her teacher had dressed very formal etc which already makes the children feel uncomfortable about what was to be discussed. I understood and external person was brought in to talk to the children.	1/25/2019 8:41 PM
18	Very important for all classes and something that may not be raised in all family environments. Giving all children the basics in school in an open, honest and frank way provides them with the knowledge to enter puberty with a basic understanding of the changes and challenges ahead.	1/25/2019 7:18 PM
19	I don't believe my child should be taught about relationships and how to have an abortion	1/25/2019 6:56 PM
20	Although to be honest I am apprehensive of how this teaching might change since the gay marriage vote and all the talk of transgender etc.	1/25/2019 6:55 PM
21	I think that for children below the age of 10-12, Relationship and Sexual Education should not be relevant at all, these children should NOT deal with these topics at this age at all.	1/25/2019 6:38 PM
22	I think senior classes are most appropriate for this type of education. Also keeping parents properly informed of what is being taught is very important.	1/25/2019 6:11 PM
23	I think it should be taught from the start so they are aware of their bodies and more comfortable talking about issues.	1/25/2019 5:34 PM
24	It good for kids from 1st class onwards	1/25/2019 5:34 PM
25	For older children. Age 11+	1/25/2019 4:18 PM
26	Role play needed to embed acceptable ways of behaviour- kindness etc.	1/25/2019 2:58 PM
27	From 4th class upwards, I don't think children younger than that need to learn about these things in school	1/25/2019 2:53 PM
28	Core beliefs about respecting self and others are important from a very early age	1/25/2019 2:13 PM
29	This should be normalised by being introduced as early as possible in the appropriate manner	1/25/2019 1:55 PM
30	Age appropriate content.	1/25/2019 1:52 PM
31	I think these are very important. However I think sexual education should be geared more towards the age of the child. I thought some of the topics taught at junior and senior level were not age appropriate. My daughter found them slightly confusing and ended up using incorrect terms or misunderstanding the concept.	1/25/2019 1:40 PM
32	It is but not at the expense of the ethos of the school or removing all fundamental rights of the parents as their primary educator . The right to parental consent must be always upheld.	1/25/2019 1:26 PM
33	Being open and honest is the most important thing to keep our kids safe	1/25/2019 1:18 PM
34	i think its very important for this to be taught in schools all pupils together learning and especially for questions they may have or any discussion they can have together so they are correctly informed .	1/25/2019 1:11 PM
35	I feel it is my job as a parent to have control over what my child is taught in this area.	1/25/2019 1:08 PM
36	From a child protection point a view	1/25/2019 12:49 PM
37	Too early	1/25/2019 12:48 PM
38	I think to start RSE at early as junior infant is too young! May 4th or 5th would be more acceptable!.	1/25/2019 12:45 PM
39	Im not a religious nut but sex education doesnt need to be taught to Jr or Senior Infants, and Gender Identity / Gender Dysmorphic Disorder teaching has no place in Primary Schools around impressionable children.	1/25/2019 12:13 PM
40	it should start from 2nd class onwards, not necessary for classes less than this	1/25/2019 12:08 PM
41	To be honest, I think 5 is a little too young to be learning about this.	1/25/2019 11:55 AM
42	As a parent, I know that it can be difficult to broach these matters at home. It can be difficult for parents to find an age-appropriate way to describe relationships, body parts etc. I feel it would be best for schools to have an external speaker come in to discuss these issues with children, and to have a booklet sent home for parents outlining the things that were discussed.	1/25/2019 11:54 AM
43	Parents have a responsibility too	1/25/2019 11:39 AM

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44	Maybe 5th 6th class but not any younger.there is a time to learn and that time is not when they are to small with no need to know.	1/25/2019 10:58 AM
45	It should be given more importance	1/25/2019 10:57 AM
46	More info given to parents first then to the children	1/25/2019 10:42 AM
47	The school have not given much info so don't know much about it but I hear back from the children on it. Very important part of their education.	1/25/2019 10:35 AM
48	This education is not really important for infant classes.	1/25/2019 10:34 AM
49	Below 5th class might be too young.	1/25/2019 10:33 AM
50	Think children should be allowed be children and think that this level of explicit sex education is too much.	1/25/2019 9:08 AM
51	It's absolutely essential. Given that every household is different all children at least are getting the same education at the same time.	1/25/2019 8:32 AM
52	From 4th class up	1/25/2019 8:16 AM
53	Absolutely it is important that it has a place in primary school curriculum	1/25/2019 7:52 AM
54	They need to learn things in a safer environment. Their questions & curiosity is answered by teachers using the materials that was designed by trained psychologists. Growing up is part of life & hence whatever changes occur in their bodies should be discussed.	1/25/2019 6:24 AM
55	Yes, for safety and awareness of their own body.	1/25/2019 1:16 AM
56	Don't know the content of school sexual education.	1/25/2019 12:13 AM
57	I believe talking about sex education to a 4 / 5 / 6 is way too early	1/25/2019 12:05 AM
58	It is not age appropriate and is encouraging early specialisation in young children	1/24/2019 11:43 PM
59	It's essential to teach children about their bodies, about respect and about healthy relationships and sexuality. It's possible to start learning about that from JI. To get children to talk about their bodies and be comfortable in doing so.	1/24/2019 11:11 PM
60	I believe it is an important part of a child's formation that should be handled by the family at this age.	1/24/2019 10:57 PM
61	Discussed with children in a proper way to each stage as child matures.	1/24/2019 10:46 PM
62	They have to know about these issues at some stage in life but I think primary school children are just to young for this education.	1/24/2019 10:37 PM
63	Use age appropriate and a note to say when material will be spoke about.	1/24/2019 10:34 PM
64	It's important to be open about things from the earliest age so things don't become a big deal and something to be ashamed off later on	1/24/2019 10:33 PM
65	I do think what is taught in 5th and 6 th class is too much for their age. I totally disagree	1/24/2019 9:51 PM
66	To an extent . Young children should not be taught about how the body matures until aboit 9 yrs old. Children in 4th class or lower should be taught about how to form good friendships and such, not going into details about relationships as in dating, physical attraction and so on.	1/24/2019 9:47 PM
67	It is a very important element of my children's education	1/24/2019 9:39 PM
68	The less taboo around it and more education the less it will seem as a forbidden fruit in teenage years. Besides kids need to know the consequences of certain actions and the earlier they know the earlier it will become a normality.	1/24/2019 9:18 PM
69	As long as it's age, content & language appropriate	1/24/2019 9:05 PM
70	I don't know what is involved so can't comment	1/24/2019 9:01 PM
71	Particularly areas around consent, and at an older age internet safety and relationships	1/24/2019 8:57 PM
72	I do understand that the world has changed dramatically regarding genders and sexuality. Although i have nothing against this, I do believe children are to young to be hearing this.	1/24/2019 8:55 PM
73	I think maybe 6th class. I would not like my child thought or told about any sexual education untill atleast 6th class.	1/24/2019 8:45 PM
74	Every child is individual and parents know very well how to give this knowledge to their children from their certain ways.	1/24/2019 8:10 PM
75	Avoid abuse	1/24/2019 7:38 PM

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76	Most of it seems to happen in 5th and 6th class	1/24/2019 7:26 PM
77	Because in my Faith we follow our Holy book and we teach the kids at home our Holy book which it's guide the kids about the relationship between boys and girls even a certain age.	1/24/2019 7:00 PM
78	They are too young to be given sexuality education in schools.	1/24/2019 6:56 PM
79	I think parts of it are important. Like teaching children biology and how their organs including reproductive organs work so there's less confusion, embarrassment and stigma associated with sex. The part about relationships, I feel is more personal and for the parents to discuss. I don't want my children taught by someone else about sexuality and relationships, I want them to feel comfortable coming to me with anything and we can discuss these things in a relaxed environment.	1/24/2019 6:43 PM
80	Parents should also be given some training and learning that how can they counter protect their children or can satisfy their questions	1/24/2019 6:04 PM
81	these kids are too young to be taught of such in school, rather parents could/should know when appropriate to let them know. So it shouldn't be introduces in primary schools	1/24/2019 5:10 PM
82	Yes and I feel more time could be dedicated to it along with mental health awareness.	1/24/2019 4:10 PM
83	Any educational tool to empower children is critical.	1/24/2019 3:09 PM
84	For older years, maybe 5th and 6th	1/24/2019 2:36 PM
85	It is too early to talk about that topic. When we start to talk and explain things that they don't understand, I think we pushing children to mature too early.	1/24/2019 2:27 PM
86	They are very young for this type of education. And they get scared as they are not ready for this type of education.	1/24/2019 2:02 PM
87	I need more clarification on this sensitive issue and more information.	1/24/2019 2:01 PM
88	However how the content is discussed is vital in giving the children and sound self esteem and healthy self image. As a parent I am the first point of support and information in this subject and then the school.	1/24/2019 1:48 PM
89	I feel the Stay Safe program is sufficient until 2nd class.	1/24/2019 1:48 PM
90	I consider this category of pupils too young to be exposed to this supposedly adult life and living at school level	1/24/2019 1:24 PM
91	But maybe not from Junior level.	1/24/2019 1:17 PM
92	Age appropriate	1/24/2019 12:17 PM
93	It is not relevant to them at all specially at the primary school, and I think it is issue of parents to teach their children about ,not one else. It is a kind of privacy and traditional.	1/24/2019 12:10 PM
94	I would rather they find out from the teacher rather than some nonsense they might hear in the school yard(biased/inaccurate data from other children).	1/24/2019 12:10 PM
95	Maybe in Senior classes from 5th and 6th	1/24/2019 12:09 PM
96	That's a parents job to teach these sensitive issues	1/24/2019 12:01 PM
97	Yes to keep children aware of sexual abuse. Good touch and bad touch,	1/24/2019 11:48 AM
98	Would sometimes wonder if such detail needs to be conveyed to children at such a young age but understand if not mentioned at that age they could fall through the loop and be mis-informed later on in life.	1/24/2019 11:15 AM
99	While I think stay safe is important , I think sexuality and relationship not at relevant for primary.. Too early education can be traumatic and shocking for children,that let them to react differently. Some doget curies to know more and use search engiene, make unsafe realation. Some on the othersite do fear of having future relation as ""disgusting" .. That do lead to isolation or having relation with same sex which could be stigmatizing, prohibited in some culture. Again note difficulties to them. I strongly ecourse Re revision of that	1/24/2019 11:03 AM
100	I don't believe certain views and morals should be impressed upon children in school. These values should be allowed to be taught at home only. Anything to do with how you treat others is fine, and basics on body parts, etc fine.	1/24/2019 11:02 AM
101	Very important	1/24/2019 10:58 AM
102	I think it should be age appropriate. Parents should be part of the process. Social issues should not influence the content ie transgender issue	1/24/2019 10:58 AM
103	We already teach consent (my body my rules) in an age appropriate manner.	1/24/2019 10:56 AM

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104	Far more information with parents needs to be shared including details of when the content of the various programmes are being taught so that conversation at home can be encouraged at the same time.	1/24/2019 10:51 AM
105	Yes to be safe they should know something about it, in accordance to their age.	1/24/2019 10:48 AM
106	I see it as vitally important to my child's development. The ability to establish and sustain loving, healthy relationships is a life skill. Also, in this age of social media and the bombarding of children with sexual messages, I feel their knowledge of sex needs to begin early so they realise that it should take place within the context of a loving relationship. This will enhance their self-esteem.	1/24/2019 10:40 AM
107	Leave us as Parents to discuss and educate Our Children! If i have the right to withdraw then we withdraw.	1/24/2019 10:35 AM
108	DEFINITELY,they are then much more confident in talking about sex education	1/24/2019 10:21 AM
109	I think junior and senior infants are way to young to comprehend this	1/24/2019 10:00 AM
110	It should be stay safe programmes only not the sexuality awareness	1/24/2019 9:58 AM
111	Extremely important in deed!	1/24/2019 9:55 AM
112	Absolutely. It is imperative that children are thought about these things in an open factual manner	1/24/2019 9:47 AM
113	We are in a changing world, children are exposed to sexuality earlier than we can imagine, and need to be aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable from the early age.	1/24/2019 9:29 AM
114	I don't believe sexuality is needed as young as infants	1/24/2019 9:21 AM
115	but the parents also need to have a hand in educating as well. too many times it's just left up to the school	1/24/2019 9:13 AM
116	R&S should be something that all children are given the confidence to talk about and learn	1/24/2019 9:12 AM
117	On a basic level, importance of respect & male and female differences	1/24/2019 8:59 AM
118	You're ripping the Innocence from the kid which's very important aspect in these years. Please stop it!!!	1/24/2019 8:24 AM
119	Yes as there is so much content of sexual matter available to children via the Internet and it is being discussed at a much younger age nowadays,not always in a healthy and responsible or respectful manner.	1/24/2019 7:37 AM
120	It is good to know they are learning in stages and age appropriate blocks in a safe environment	1/24/2019 6:50 AM
121	Very much in the fence about it, I do think it should be talked about but maybe from fist class on.. junior -senior classes r just babies still & they r still finding there feet in big school.	1/24/2019 1:51 AM
122	Well that rather depends doesn't it? What exactly is your definition of relationship? Are we speaking friendship and getting along together orr sexual relationships? I don't believe children from Junior infants to 6th class is appropriate if it's sexual. That's my responsibility. The school should be helping the adults. Not taking over our job or taking it away from us. Last time that happened we had sexual abuse en masse.	1/24/2019 1:47 AM
123	But at appropriate ages	1/23/2019 11:40 PM
124	Depends on what class the bigger topics are introduced!	1/23/2019 11:29 PM
125	The school my children attend they are taught RSE from the beginning and I feel this has been a great advantage to them.	1/23/2019 11:26 PM
126	I think it's important for the children to learn about RSE but not maybe it should be more of a parental concern. Maybe if I knew more about what the curriculum contained then I would be better able to answer the question. I never really considered this issue and only really know about the RSE talk in 6th class.	1/23/2019 11:13 PM
127	1. It's good that kids can learn the correct terminology at an early age. 2. It's good that these topics are discussed openly in a group environment. 3. It's good that they have a standardised curriculum for all kids.	1/23/2019 11:06 PM
128	Children need to learn and be comfortable around these issues	1/23/2019 10:34 PM
129	I would need to know exactly what is being taught to each age group before deciding on its importance.	1/23/2019 10:26 PM

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130	No. First, this is such sensitive topic, that I as a parent would like to have my own exclusive authority to present it to my child in best way. Only I know my child in a very personal way and because of that only I will know how to do it proper and gentle way that will work only with that individual. Second, Junior infants? Really? Those kids are way to young for this. Waking up sexual senses in such young age causing troubles only at later stage of development.	1/23/2019 10:18 PM
131	It depends on how it's being taught. Probably am important aspect from 5th and 6th classes	1/23/2019 9:58 PM
132	Well I think junior infants are too young,but I certainly think from 2/3 class onwards it shouldv be raised at an appropriate level.	1/23/2019 9:55 PM
133	Children don't need too much information on sexualityat this stage and their innocence should be protected for as long as possible. They should be educated on the reality of different kind of dangers out there, like pedophiles or the importance of speaking out or reporting any kind of inappropriate behaviour from adults they get in contact with.	1/23/2019 9:54 PM
134	Age depending	1/23/2019 9:44 PM
135	Parents job	1/23/2019 9:28 PM
136	It should not be taught in schools. Parents are the primary educators and this sensitive topic should be the role of parents alone to teach.	1/23/2019 9:27 PM
137	We feel strongly that this is something that parents should be teaching their children at home and not leaving it to the Dept of Education.	1/23/2019 9:25 PM
138	Children at that age should not be talked about sexuality. It raises questions in them that can't be answered with full honesty. I find it very inappropriate to talk to very young children about sex.	1/23/2019 9:17 PM
139	Many parents do not teach this to their children so it is very important that it is done in schools.	1/23/2019 9:09 PM
140	Think it needs to be tailored by ages don't know if really necessary in junior and senior infants	1/23/2019 9:07 PM
141	As long as it is always age appropriate and there is follow up with pupils as in a forum to ask questions privately ie question box and then also that any such questions are acually answered and addressed.	1/23/2019 9:01 PM
142	It is for parents to teach to their children.	1/23/2019 8:51 PM
143	we need to help children understand their emotions,desires, needs..., how to express them in a healthy manner, listening to others, comunication and knowladge is important at all levels, developing creative thinking to make desicions in the future.	1/23/2019 8:47 PM
144	I think the parents as promary educators of the child are responsible and that schools can offer help on this but on a voluntary opt in basis.	1/23/2019 8:41 PM
145	It is very wrong to teach such in primary school, I mean this is very very bad and wrong to teach primary school about sexuality.	1/23/2019 8:40 PM
146	It's a subject for a family not for a government.	1/23/2019 8:39 PM
147	They are too young to know all about this	1/23/2019 8:09 PM
148	All children need knowledge of life at all ages	1/23/2019 7:52 PM
149	Only last classes of primary school are suitable in my opinion.	1/23/2019 7:21 PM
150	Maybe from 3rd class up to 6th	1/23/2019 7:10 PM
151	It's about understanding own body and needs. Learning respect to the other gender and paying attention to health relationship.	1/23/2019 7:03 PM
152	At least from 3rd class to 6th class anyway	1/23/2019 7:01 PM
153	I don't think it is suitable for junior infants upto 4th class	1/23/2019 6:52 PM
154	Maybe from 3rd class up	1/23/2019 6:50 PM
155	Very necessary but important that's it's not taught in an "embarrassing way" like in the past	1/23/2019 6:42 PM
156	I'm wondering what age are they specifically talking to kids about sex at? I think junior infants is too young. I thought this aspect was started in 4th class	1/23/2019 6:20 PM
157	I believe it is important to make the child aware of the importance of safety at a young age, and be aware of age appropriate sexual education/safety to help prevent STDS or early pregnancy etc	1/23/2019 6:19 PM
158	Age appropriate education is essential	1/23/2019 6:10 PM

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159	I don't think it should be introduced in junior end, and think it should be in line with ethos of school. If not it should be left to parents.	1/23/2019 5:50 PM
160	Most definitely. I feel the subject should be taught in an age appropriate manner at school.	1/23/2019 5:33 PM
161	Depending on age appropriately content	1/23/2019 5:31 PM
162	Balanced view on trans issues can't be properly balanced as there are not allowed open discussion within national broadcasting stations. Influential language either ignorantly used or biased to one section can't be damaging at certain ages as children can be influenced to thinking a certain way, especially as they develop into adolescent ages where hormonal related drugs don't have a restriction on them. I'm all for an open minded society but at what cost.	1/23/2019 5:07 PM
163	It's so important.	1/23/2019 4:56 PM
164	IT IS SO RIDICULOUS TO TEACH MY LITTLE GIRL OF SEXUALITY! AND PEOPLE WHO THINK IT IS THEIR BUSINESS TO TEACH MY CHILD ABOUT SEXUALITY, SHOULD GO TO JAIL FOR PHEDOPHILIA IMMEDIATELY! I will explain to her everything she needs to know at the time she is ready for it, not when some smart pedophil tells me to! it is important for her to know, but at the time i will see its the best for her!	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
165	It's helps the children understand the rights and wrongs an there space an safety	1/23/2019 4:38 PM
166	Comes into many aspects of daily lives.	1/23/2019 4:38 PM
167	parents need to be more informed regarding what the program entails...so they know how to support it.	1/23/2019 4:32 PM
168	I don't mind in 5th and 6th, but I would to see kids be allowed to be kids and not have to take on adult issues sooner than they need too.	1/23/2019 4:23 PM
169	Depend on how deep it go into.	1/23/2019 3:02 PM
170	In an overly sexualised world it's pivotal that young children are made aware of how to respect the human body.	1/23/2019 2:48 PM
171	My daughter completed this programme and found it very useful. Also I think it is very important to introduce the concept of consent in primary school especially for 5th and 6th class children.	1/23/2019 2:40 PM
172	None of the 3 options apply. I think a basic level of RSE should be done through schools. The majority of this education should be family lead. The inclusion of information on different genders and abortion is not suitable to be thought in school and to children so young.	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
173	tailored to senior classes	1/23/2019 1:49 PM
174	Similar to programs in the UK I believe specialist guided age appropriate learning in this area should start from Junior Infants.	1/23/2019 1:44 PM
175	Basic knowledge of body parts necessary; some age-appropriate relationship details needed in 5th and 6th class	1/23/2019 1:33 PM
176	Awareness & education is important and children will listen more if it comes from school.	1/23/2019 1:32 PM
177	Shouldn't be taught in infant classes	1/23/2019 1:09 PM
178	Obviously content rekevant to age.	1/23/2019 1:05 PM
179	Education in this area can only help equip our children to make informed choices	1/23/2019 1:03 PM
180	It reinforces the information received at home. Also not all children receive information at home so it's important that they received accurate information from outside the home.	1/23/2019 12:52 PM
181	from 5th class onwards - think below that they are too young to understand	1/23/2019 12:51 PM
182	In our school there is no proper sex talk til last week in 5th and 6th class. This is way too late. Children need to be taught from a young age so that it's not frightening or strange. Most children are finding out misinformation from their peers as the use of tablets social media etc is at such a young age now. We need to move with the times.	1/23/2019 12:47 PM
183	I'm not aware of how in-depth the curriculum is or what is taught at each level.	1/23/2019 12:44 PM
184	Not necessarily from junior infants up as information should be as per each child's age appropriate level or when they have questions.	1/23/2019 12:34 PM
185	Completely inefficient at present. LGBT+ and contraception and abortion excluded. It's a disgrace.	1/23/2019 12:32 PM
186	In general children from Junior Infants to 4th class should not be taught sexual education.	1/23/2019 12:29 PM
187	Kids need to be aware and thought proper words	1/23/2019 12:19 PM

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188	Yes but for older classes not junior classes.	1/23/2019 12:13 PM
189	I believe the knowledge would make the kids know what is and isn't normal. And how to act in relationship.	1/23/2019 12:08 PM
190	Older children can get embarrassed talking to parents. When this is discussed in school, it is done in an open setting, with room to hide ! if you need it. It also lets them know that is important, and so its discussed at school.	1/23/2019 12:02 PM
191	It's very important that sexuality and gender is presented as what it is (a normal healthy part of life!) from a young age to prevent shame/stigma/confusion later on. Properly educated children are less likely to encounter serious issues such as bullying, rape, unwanted pregnancy or suicide.	1/23/2019 11:49 AM
192	Leave them their innocence. And don't dismiss parental responsibility of talking about Relationship and Sexuality.	1/23/2019 11:40 AM
193	Parents could be included more in what the child is doing regarding RSE	1/23/2019 11:32 AM
194	I feel the more relationships and sexuality are spoken about in every day life, the less taboo they are.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
195	Great to be having these conversations both at home and in school.	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
196	There were so many mistakes made in the past. We have to learn from them and let children know what is appropriate. It should be age appropriate.	1/23/2019 11:20 AM
197	I don't believe primary school students before 6th class should be exposed to this. There is an over sexualisation of society and this leads very young children to query fundamental matters prematurely. Immediately prior to entry into secondary school these matters should be broached with the youngsters to give them some initial information to start to form their own opinions. In particular this information disseminated as part of the RSE must be objective and neutral, not simply a reflection of the some of the social mores prevalent at the time.	1/23/2019 11:12 AM
198	Relationship and sexuality should be taught from day 1, it is an intrinsic part of our being. Children need to know feelings and emotions are normal in an age-appropriate way, they also need to understand boundaries and respect for others. I do have issues with "stranger danger" I think it confuses kids into believing that only a "stranger" would hurt them when we all know this is the not the case. There should be concentration on 'your body belongs to you'. I always taught to follow your gut, If you think something is wrong, follow your gut and tell me. If a car slows down beside you and your gut tells you to run away, run. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, tell them, then tell me.	1/23/2019 11:05 AM
199	Separation of religion from the syllabus.	1/23/2019 11:03 AM
200	In an age appropriate way of course! But yes.	1/23/2019 10:55 AM
201	It is a life skill that parents and teachers need to teach children and have good communication with I also have a child in 4th class.	1/23/2019 10:51 AM
202	A little unsure of junior infants being the appropriate starting point, as a parent of a five year old I feel maybe more of a 1st class to six class thing. Some of the elements already discussed in my sons class have caused a bit of confusion and when he attends after-school other children of the same age have not had these talks and are therefore unaware of certain words that my son now knows about and tells his classmates in after-school about. To some parents these terms are shocking for a five year old to know, for me I'm okay that he now is aware but I feel it could have waited for another year or two in order for him to process a bit more	1/23/2019 10:46 AM
203	Consent and bodily automony should be taught from early ages.	1/23/2019 10:42 AM
204	It is my decision as a parent to talk to my child about these issues when they are brought up by my child. When he/she is interested and ready for them. The process must be child-led and take into consideration the individual, rather than an agenda imposed by external parties when and how they see fit. Why dragging the children at such a young age it these types of agendas????	1/23/2019 10:41 AM
205	Yes put in age appropriate format. Junior classes should have more interactive content and role playing demonstrations as their comprehension of words and their meanings can lead to confusion.	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
206	The most important thing that a person should learn is how they themselves work and when it is not taught then they may never understand properly.	1/23/2019 10:37 AM
207	It is a vital part of their education and development.	1/23/2019 10:37 AM
208	yes because most children are at the same level and if the children have questions the parent s can work around what they have learned	1/23/2019 10:35 AM
209	Children should be taught to understand the basics of safety and respecting each other.	1/23/2019 10:34 AM

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210	I think it is very important but I do not believe the current curriculum is appropriate.	1/23/2019 10:34 AM
211	Especially when coupled with visual scenarios for the children to relate to...content relative to the child's age	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
212	Once it age appropriate for each class	1/23/2019 10:32 AM
213	I think that Sex education should be left for the home. Kids can start asking questions in relation to Sex Ed at very different ages. I think its up to the parents to judge when the right time is to educate there kids.	1/23/2019 10:29 AM
214	Sexual education and relationships education where it touched on sexuality, should NOT be taught to very young children, probably not even to older age primary school children. There is far too much risk of destroying their natural innocence by this manner. These topics are best left to parents to handle as they see fit for their own children.	1/23/2019 10:27 AM
215	In this day and age I think that this is a very important subject. However in our school it is not very taught very well as parents are not included in the teaching.	1/23/2019 10:22 AM
216	Vital that we educate boys and girls on issues of consent, sexuality, good sex/bad sex (how does it make you feel?), pornography (from age 10), tolerance and homophobic / transphobic bullying.	1/23/2019 10:17 AM
217	Not in the junior cycle of schooling 5th and 6th class is time enough	1/23/2019 10:17 AM
218	Currently our national school have a talk for 6th class about the fact of life, discussion on periods is not discussed til then which I think is too late.	1/23/2019 10:11 AM
219	Absolutely I feel strongly about this	1/23/2019 10:10 AM
220	As children have access to the internet, childre seem to be awake of sex earlier in life.	1/23/2019 10:08 AM
221	But within limits. I believe it's a parents role to educate their children on such matters. The school gives the child an open forum to listen to other views	1/23/2019 10:05 AM
222	As well as being informed at home, together its a good idea	1/23/2019 10:05 AM
223	Young children need to be made aware of their bodies, personal areas, consent etc. Also about not keeping secrets in terms of inappropriate sexual behaviour towards them.	1/23/2019 10:00 AM
224	Absolutely i think this is extremely important. Children use social media at young age, view sexualised music videos etc.there should be no religious/ moral constraints on the info they are given in school	1/23/2019 9:56 AM
225	Once it's relevant to child's age	1/23/2019 9:54 AM
226	Yes, assuming of course it is age appropriate and it is an educational programme not restricted where the school is a RC school.	1/23/2019 9:52 AM
227	RSE is a very important part of the curriculum for children as they are taught facts and discuss topics in a safe environment. What they hear from their friends is often not the truth and can be confusing. It is obviously firstly the parents job to make sure that they talk with their children on these topics but it is wonderful when it also discussed outside the home somewhere where they feel safe.	1/23/2019 9:51 AM
228	I do think it is important, but this can be taught at an age appropriate level, I think if kids ask questions then of course they should be answered honestly, but I think the information should be lead by the child, just because a child asks one question on a topic does not necessarily mean that they need to be informed of all areas of the topic.	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
229	It is extremely important for children to be aware of both biological facts and of interpersonal and social issues relating to relationships and sexuality.	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
230	Age appropriate info is important	1/23/2019 9:38 AM
231	I believe that it would be but cannot comment fully as I do not know the details of the topics covered	1/23/2019 9:36 AM
232	I think it is crucial! Obviously age appropriate.	1/23/2019 9:33 AM
233	It's difficult to comment on content which I have not been made aware of.	1/23/2019 8:38 AM
234	I do think it's important that is taught at home but also feel that it's good to be taught in a neutral place like school to educate what healthy sexual relationships are.	1/23/2019 7:55 AM

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235	Reinforcing these important messages in a school setting where children are used to absorbing information, questioning and being questioned is essential. Teachers are trusted by students and parents as skilled professionals and should be equipped to educate in this area of increasing importance. The message must be echoed at home also but as a society we cannot leave such an important topic just for home education. Myths that will inevitably emerge from peer groups need the opportunity to be surfaced and dispelled in the group setting	1/23/2019 7:52 AM
236	Teach it as early as possible so that the terminology is familiar to them from the start.	1/23/2019 2:53 AM
237	I believe children need to be taught about consent as early as possible	1/23/2019 12:59 AM
238	As my own child is V an anxious about this topic he doesn't want to talk about it ( only 9 ) & I do know that children DO have street talk & yard talk but as for my child that suffers with anxiety and other disorders, I feel I would rather talk to him .	1/23/2019 12:38 AM
239	I believe it is incredibly important and should be taught in a matter of fact and non biased and open way.	1/23/2019 12:18 AM
240	Very much so	1/22/2019 11:27 PM
241	Absolutely, preferably in combination with discussions at home; both are essential	1/22/2019 11:24 PM
242	It must be taught at home and in school regularly to avoid it becoming a taboo subject.	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
243	The more children know the better and safer they can grow, all contents age related of course	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
244	Would prefer to handle that at home.	1/22/2019 10:57 PM
245	Children need accurate age appropriate information.	1/22/2019 10:46 PM
246	Should not be influenced by religion	1/22/2019 10:37 PM
247	5th and 6th only	1/22/2019 10:36 PM
248	In recent light of all the child abuse scandals in Ireland I think it's very important that children know what's an appropriate relationship and what's not	1/22/2019 10:29 PM
249	Definitely once age appropriate	1/22/2019 10:28 PM
250	I would support this subject being taught in schools - it is important for society to be inclusive.	1/22/2019 10:27 PM
251	Unfortunately, I as a parent am completely unaware of what RSE is being taught to my child in senior infants, this survey is my first introduction to it and I will approach my child's class teacher to learn more, it has not been mentioned to me before nor have I done any homework on this topic with my child. I wish I had been informed about this subject as I like to feel included and be included in my child's education.	1/22/2019 10:27 PM
252	I don't believe this should be a discussion outside of the family. As parents we should have the right to teach our children according to our moral beliefs and religious beliefs. Encouraging such young children to become curious about sex at junior school age is inappropriate	1/22/2019 10:18 PM
253	Very important	1/22/2019 10:17 PM
254	Maybe aimed at 4-6th class, it is very difficult to give an answer because I would like to read or approve of the content that is presented to my children ideally.	1/22/2019 10:12 PM
255	Yes but from 1st class	1/22/2019 10:02 PM
256	But 5th class up only	1/22/2019 10:02 PM
257	As long as it is age-appropriated .	1/22/2019 9:37 PM
258	Essential	1/22/2019 9:28 PM
259	Vital for child safety, that they are body aware and removes the embarrassment and normalises sexual behaviour which is learned in the right environment in a slow and steady way.	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
260	Other than warning your child of the danger of strangers and pro-creation (5th & 6th class) the rest should be thought by the parents in particular the same sex and transgender topic.	1/22/2019 9:06 PM
261	Absolutely and should be provided by non religious affiliated persons	1/22/2019 9:00 PM
262	Vital our children learn about all types of healthy, and indeed unhealthy, relationships. Same goes for all types of sexuality . . Taught in a normalised, non biased form from a non religious base	1/22/2019 8:54 PM
263	It is important in so far as promotes a discussion amongst the class & gets the children thinking	1/22/2019 8:47 PM
264	Yes its important, but at age appropriate.	1/22/2019 8:47 PM
265	Most of the misinformation they will receive is from their peers and starts from the age of 8/9 from my experience so it is important that they are also given the correct information.	1/22/2019 8:35 PM

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266	Not in junior classes... maybe from 4th up	1/22/2019 8:35 PM
267	Yes I think by 11/12 they are very exposeand need honest unbiased information	1/22/2019 8:33 PM
268	I would prefer to deal with it at home	1/22/2019 8:25 PM
269	Yes when appropriate to age group.	1/22/2019 8:24 PM
270	But it's also very important for parents to discuss it's not just a school thing	1/22/2019 8:18 PM
271	Affects all relationships & challenges related to these.	1/22/2019 8:16 PM
272	I feel it should be free from any religious connotations or input.	1/22/2019 8:07 PM
273	Relationships but not sexuality	1/22/2019 8:04 PM
274	Yes it is very important for children to be better informed of age appropriate relationships and sexuality. Information is key for everyone including children however we are of Roman Catholic faith and I follow the doctrines view in that regard.	1/22/2019 8:02 PM
275	it is such an important aspect that it should be delivered in a modern inclusive manner. Religion CANNOT dictate what is and what is not being taught.	1/22/2019 8:01 PM
276	Extremely important, this education is a vital life skill/tool for children, introducing and teaching this subject from day 1 reduces the stigma associated with sexuality encouraging open communication between children and both their families and formal educators from an early age	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
277	Not from Junior infants, the last 2yrs in school this type of education is more relevant. Knowing to much too early is dangerous. We as children did receive any sex education until secondary school.	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
278	From around 3rd class	1/22/2019 7:44 PM
279	It is important create awareness among children from quite early stage in school how normal their body parts are, it is not shameful to name them in a proper age. My 4th class year daughter without me noticing started to get ashamed talking about any of topic in relation to her changing body, she feels even pronouncing the words is disgusting. I think the gap between when she was not really interested in any of such conversions and becoming turned was quite short and hard to spot. I think kids take a lot of thing in right way when they have not feel ashamed or offended very easily. I would start talking about relationships and sexuality with my junior infant much quicker and not wait till 4th class.	1/22/2019 7:37 PM
280	More applicable for kids from ages 9 and up	1/22/2019 7:35 PM
281	I think the earlier they are thought the better. It hopefully will make them more aware from an earlier age that everyone is d different and everyone should be respected.	1/22/2019 7:32 PM
282	I feel that children are struggling with friendships and relationships earlier then in previous generations. 8 year old acts like I did at 12.	1/22/2019 7:29 PM
283	Parents should really do the most teaching in this area but there should be awareness at school of these issues.	1/22/2019 7:15 PM
284	Yes to help normalise sexual relationship as to remove the many myths about it .	1/22/2019 7:13 PM
285	From 3rd -6th	1/22/2019 7:12 PM
286	I think the earlier kids are informed the better. Teaching them that everyone is different and every individual should be respected.	1/22/2019 7:04 PM
287	I would like more information about the content	1/22/2019 7:00 PM
288	I believe kids should be kids. They only need to know about stranger danger and know that no one is allowed to touch them inappropriately, which their parents should b teaching them from a very young age anyhow.	1/22/2019 6:50 PM
289	It's a basement for a country to develep everything, such as health, science, economy and culture etc.	1/22/2019 6:47 PM
290	Junior infants too young- don't feel they need to know	1/22/2019 6:29 PM
291	More important for older classes	1/22/2019 6:27 PM
292	It is important ant that every child at every age gets a general age appropriate education and information on relationships and sexuality. Also, an opportunity to discuss theses issues with peers in a supported environment where correct information can be provided is vital.	1/22/2019 6:26 PM
293	Last year my sons awareness and knowledge after the week was fantastic. Good curriculum and targeted at the children's age and ability. It also helps lead to questions and family discussion.	1/22/2019 6:24 PM

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294	Children at this age, in their formative years, need to learn reading, writing and mathematics (relevant to their age group) They should not be introduced to sex, sexuality or relationships (apart from friendship, sharing and kindness relating to relationships) any other questions a child might have about adult topics should be handled by the parents. It's not right to expose children to content beyond their age, which could lead to curiosity and create problems that would otherwise not arise until puberty when children develop naturally into young adults, and then when questions are asked, parents would have the opportunity to help the child understand the importance of abstinence and the value of true love in a healthy relationship.	1/22/2019 6:10 PM
295	To a certain extent and also the responsibility of the parents to discuss the topic also	1/22/2019 6:09 PM
296	We live in a very different world nowadays than 20 years ago and not all children are "street smart ". These tools are so important	1/22/2019 6:04 PM
297	The children need to be aware of social norms and expectations regarding this topic, and to feel confident and self-reliable when it comes to protecting themselves.	1/22/2019 6:03 PM
298	I think this programme should significantly more involvement with parents however. The awareness of the content and implementing it should be done by school and home.	1/22/2019 5:59 PM
299	Receiving this information with peers and being able to talk about these matters casually and understanding their importance and context in life is critical. Especially for children whose parents may not openly discuss any such matters at home. Stay safe is critical to children's safety.	1/22/2019 5:56 PM
300	I think it is important also to provide age-appropriate education, not something general.	1/22/2019 5:55 PM
301	2nd to 6th more age appropriate	1/22/2019 5:27 PM
302	I think we're teaching our kids about sex and sexuality at too young an age. I don't think it's up to the school to be providing this information in the first place. I'd like to be able to control what they know about this area and when they know about it.	1/22/2019 5:24 PM
303	It's a part of life, and should therefore be taught as such	1/22/2019 5:17 PM
304	Absolutely!	1/22/2019 5:14 PM
305	It's better for children to have the pepper facts from the right sources.	1/22/2019 5:08 PM
306	It would be easier to answer this if I was aware of the curriculum and exactly what and how it was being taught.	1/22/2019 5:02 PM
307	I don't think children need to know so much until 2nd class at least	1/22/2019 4:52 PM
308	It's good for all the kids to understand the same things at the same ages	1/22/2019 4:42 PM
309	Not necessarily from junior infants....start a bit older	1/22/2019 4:39 PM
310	I think we should be open about all aspects of life with our children so that the more knowledge they have the better they can make decisions in the future.	1/22/2019 4:29 PM
311	It needs to be normal to discuss these topics as this is the only way to prevent and/or spread diseases as well as to handle unplanned pregnancies, and obviously to also explain a no means no whether you are a boy or girl	1/22/2019 4:25 PM
312	Stops problems down the road mentally & socially	1/22/2019 4:20 PM
313	If it is age appropriate, yes. Sexual education should not be introduced in the early years of primary school.	1/22/2019 4:10 PM
314	important to be open and honest with children in an age-appropriate way. Supports keeping children safe. embeds the idea of talking about issues from a young age- essential for mental health and well-being especially for LGBTI+ young people.	1/22/2019 4:04 PM
315	Children have to be made aware of dangers and risks that are in society	1/22/2019 3:21 PM
316	Especially for the more senior students in primary school	1/22/2019 3:19 PM
317	Age-appropriate awareness and knowledge will give children more control and power over their own bodies and in relationships with others, I think this is extremely important.	1/22/2019 1:11 PM
318	Yes especially from Junior Infants as the younger students need to be more aware of sexual abuse in the home and what is acceptable and not.	1/22/2019 12:54 PM
319	To a limited degree some children are more ready for aspects of the curriculum	1/22/2019 12:53 PM
320	Not for junior or senior infants. Perhaps from first class onwards	1/22/2019 12:45 PM
321	Assuming it is age-appropriate content.	1/22/2019 12:40 PM

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322	Sexual education is hardly priority over civic expectation and education. Waste of teaching time no benefit what so ever.	1/22/2019 12:37 PM
323	It is important to discuss in primary school especially in 6th class as the children's bodies are developing and changing and discussing it openly helps them to realise it is a natural development that isn't only happening to them.	1/22/2019 12:35 PM
324	Should start with consent from Junior Infants	1/22/2019 11:23 AM
325	I would like more information on what is taught.	1/22/2019 11:23 AM
326	I wouldn't bother kids unless they are in secondary school	1/22/2019 11:11 AM
327	I think it's to much information for there age	1/22/2019 11:00 AM
328	While it is important there is a need for increased awareness of patents expectations and communication	1/22/2019 10:56 AM
329	I think maybe up to 1st class they are still a bit young and it is up to individual parents what they want to teach their children in regards to Relationships and Sexuality.	1/22/2019 10:37 AM
330	Role of the parent	1/22/2019 8:12 AM
331	Healthy attitudes towards relationships and sexuality requires openness and that children have good information - school should have a part to play in supporting that	1/22/2019 8:06 AM
332	As school is where they get to practice most of their peer relationships, the context, and the knowledge that the school has of how these relationships develop and what influences are at play, puts it in a good position to inform and be informed by the experience of their students.	1/22/2019 12:54 AM
333	I think this should be taught at home. Maybe 6th class or Post primary at the earliest.	1/21/2019 11:46 PM
334	Vital for children	1/21/2019 11:27 PM
335	Relationship yes but maybe not sexuality until 5th / 6th class	1/21/2019 11:17 PM
336	Must be at an age-appropriate level .	1/21/2019 11:02 PM
337	You can't start this too early. Age appropriate information is so important	1/21/2019 10:32 PM
338	It seems that children are sometimes pressured to fit into a box. Strait, LGBT at a very young age	1/21/2019 9:50 PM
339	At junior infants obviously basic relationships and more involved in the sexuality education when they hit around 11	1/21/2019 9:44 PM
340	Vitally important part of the curriculum	1/21/2019 9:00 PM
341	Infants to 3rd class - too early	1/21/2019 8:48 PM
342	Not the junior classes	1/21/2019 8:45 PM
343	Children are more aware these days with social media, TV, computer games etc.	1/21/2019 8:34 PM
344	I think children should know some things but not everything in sexual life,be aware of the protection of your body, and that is for me, not to be taught for the rapid development of sexual life in 13.16 years... to promote sexual life at an early age	1/21/2019 6:12 PM
345	The earlier a child learns the better their understanding. Especially in today's society it is easier for a child to ask an awkward question to understand. But as teenagers and adults if they have not had the education it is difficult to explore the subject correctly.	1/21/2019 5:45 PM
346	I don't know what is in the content so can't comment.	1/21/2019 4:51 PM
347	Age appropriate messages and teachings are a good thing esp in these times of social networks and online videos	1/21/2019 4:48 PM
348	I think it's extremely important.	1/21/2019 4:18 PM
349	I Believe it is a core part of child's education and one which should be treated similar to other core subjects.	1/21/2019 4:18 PM
350	Relationships yes up to 5th and then sexual relationships from 5th up but not earlier.	1/21/2019 4:03 PM
351	This should be the parents perogative	1/21/2019 3:57 PM
352	Yes as when I try to explain it to my child she has no interest.	1/21/2019 3:34 PM
353	It is primarily the parent's responsibility	1/21/2019 3:34 PM
354	Absolutely not. Wait till they are old enough to understand. Which in all fairness is probably when they are fully grown adults	1/21/2019 2:27 PM

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355	It is vital that children are informed of the facts of all aspects of life in an age appropriate way from early in their lives	1/21/2019 2:27 PM
356	It would depend on the elements. Some would be appropriate for all age groups, while other elements would be appropriate for older children only.	1/21/2019 2:27 PM
357	I think to gradually introduce things at a young age preferably through stories.	1/21/2019 2:12 PM
358	Very important for there development	1/21/2019 2:08 PM
359	High level age appropriate information	1/21/2019 1:58 PM
360	Should be taught at home. Not right that teachers have to do it. Should be part of normal conversation at home and not suddenly a 'big deal'	1/21/2019 1:54 PM
361	Sexuality exposure is happening at an early age for kids through media and easy access to iPads phones and computers.	1/21/2019 1:52 PM
362	Relationship education, with regards to treatment of others, friendships and bullying could be discussed from Junior Infants, but I feel Sexuality Education should be left for the older classes, maybe from 4th class.	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
363	In an age-appropriate way.	1/21/2019 1:31 PM
364	I'm unsure - I would have thought it's better coming from parents. There could be good arguments for it being in school that I'm not considered. My children are not in a catholic school but if they were I would have real objections to some of the churches views on these topics.	1/21/2019 1:28 PM
365	Unfortunately this subject is taught by Accord in Loreto Grange Rd. This is unsatisfactory and makes the girls ashamed of their bodies and also frightens them with misleading information	1/21/2019 12:56 PM
366	For the older kids in primary...feel Junior & Senior Infants etc are too young to understand...	1/21/2019 12:55 PM
367	I think that this is a very important area and would like to receive much more information on both this aspect of the curriculum and the other elements of the Social and Personal Health Education Programme i.e. 'Walk Tall' and 'Stay Safe' Programmes. To date I don't recall having received any information from school apart from a very brief note saying that the 'stay safe' programme was being thought and asking parents to give consent - which was unfair given that no detailed information was provided (i.e. a detailed outline / curriculum).	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
368	More so from 2nd class on wards.	1/21/2019 12:33 PM
369	I think this should be left to parents to explain not earlier then when kids are in secondary school	1/21/2019 12:13 PM
370	Yes, but age appropriate content should be considered	1/21/2019 12:12 PM
371	Extremely important	1/21/2019 10:05 AM
372	We would like to be informed of the perspectives and views developed by experts about the relationship and sexuality education. We would like to provide the same or similar, or corresponding education at home.	1/21/2019 9:10 AM
373	I highly agree this part of education is a must for all children.	1/21/2019 8:54 AM
374	Yes, it's very important that all children get a similar message at the same time. In school seems to me the perfect place.	1/21/2019 7:38 AM
375	it shouldn't in their curriculum until secondary school years	1/21/2019 2:48 AM
376	I do feel it's important. My kids have come home knowing what appropriate and what's not. What to do if something isn't.	1/21/2019 1:00 AM
377	Maybe 1st class up	1/21/2019 12:13 AM
378	I think it is very important, but am unaware of what is currently taught.	1/20/2019 9:20 PM
379	But with purely factual information given	1/20/2019 9:18 PM
380	Obviously it should be age appropriate, and I would like to know in advance the content of the course / information given to allow us to be in step with it.	1/20/2019 9:06 PM
381	I think it is more appropriate for this aspect of education to be the responsibility of the parents at this early stage.	1/20/2019 8:52 PM
382	Topics should be presented and discussed with kids from 5th class onwards; topics should be presented to create self and social awareness. The content presented should be aligned with the school ethos	1/20/2019 8:42 PM
383	Depends on the content and the way it is taught	1/20/2019 8:42 PM

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384	I think this aspect of the education, at this early stage, is primarily responsibility of the parents.	1/20/2019 8:03 PM
385	What children learn at home is important, but it is vital that they receive some form of education in these matters with their peers also.	1/20/2019 3:48 PM
386	I think it's the parents' duty and responsibility, not to be delegated to strangers who may not respect the family's values.	1/20/2019 9:39 AM
387	Don't think my son in 2nd class needs to know where a baby comes out.	1/19/2019 9:26 PM
388	Relationship education from juniors, sexuality education from 5th to 6th	1/19/2019 9:19 PM
389	I'd need to look into it more.	1/19/2019 8:54 PM
390	It is important for all students to be informed and understand every aspect of this	1/19/2019 7:36 PM
391	It should be delivered in a modern, non-religious capacity. It should reflect 21st century legislation and take into account diversity in cultures, disabilities, relationships and sexuality.	1/19/2019 6:59 PM
392	Really important. It's about providing core life skills and knowledge in an age-appropriate way	1/19/2019 6:12 PM
393	It's so important for them to no understand about relationships and learning about there bodies and making them aware off thing's really important	1/19/2019 5:51 PM
394	From 2nd class upwards	1/19/2019 5:20 PM
395	Age appropriately, yes.	1/19/2019 3:33 PM
396	It is preparing for the future by giving them age appropriate information.	1/19/2019 2:39 PM
397	Of course. We need to take the mystery and taboo out of it.	1/19/2019 1:57 PM
398	Introduction at an early stage is important in normalising sexuality and understanding boundries.	1/19/2019 1:35 PM
399	Particularly with my son and consent. He is very aware of his sister's privacy (she is 14) and being respectful - we're very proud of him.	1/19/2019 12:35 PM
400	Parents would have a lead role in this information also. It is important they receive factual information from parents instead of inaccurate information from peers, friends. Facts of life/menstruation talks for girls need to begin at eight, or nine as body changes can occur for this age group. I find these talks necessary andwe are not embarrassed discussing them, it is better to be open with your child to build up trust and they feel they can ask questions about facts of life at any stage	1/19/2019 11:28 AM
401	Yes - it is very important, and important that content is age appropriate	1/19/2019 10:46 AM
402	age appropriate of course	1/19/2019 8:22 AM
403	Crazy and irresponsible not to.	1/18/2019 8:37 PM
404	My eldest is only 5, and I feel she would ask me if she had any questions about R & S education	1/18/2019 7:47 PM
405	It's essential. Children need answers in age appropriate language.	1/18/2019 6:55 PM
406	Not for younger students	1/18/2019 6:18 PM
407	As long as it is inclusive of the LGBT community	1/18/2019 4:43 PM
408	I'm all for this but would like to know more about the content and the method of teaching it.	1/18/2019 3:52 PM
409	Principally for the older classes 5th and 6th	1/18/2019 3:33 PM
410	It is important to emphasize mutual respect and consent from an early age	1/18/2019 3:31 PM
411	It is very important as it teaches our children about themselves and helps with the confusion of change.	1/18/2019 2:46 PM
412	Increasing highly important.	1/18/2019 2:43 PM
413	It is good for the children to have gradual continuity regarding the area of RSE	1/18/2019 2:35 PM
414	with the world we live in now our children need to know how to protect themselves and what is right or wrong in situations	1/18/2019 2:30 PM
415	Important to know for children what is not appropriate or acceptable	1/18/2019 2:30 PM
416	I think in the older classes its important as puberty is starting and it's important for children to know/learn what a respectful and relationship is/can be like. As what they see on the telly and internet are usually not good or healthy for them	1/18/2019 2:02 PM
417	I think it is very important and should be taught in a factual manner. Relationship information is key to helping children identify their own personality and family and will help them in their development into young adults.	1/18/2019 1:39 PM

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418	We are living in different world now and children have to be protected and collected from school.	1/18/2019 1:30 PM
419	Children should learn from an early age that sexuality and relationships are natural, the later the education starts the more of a "taboo" it becomes.	1/18/2019 12:58 PM
420	I feel the younger the children start to learn and understand the less of a deal it is when they go to second level. It becomes the norm rather than be embarrassed	1/18/2019 12:27 PM
421	It is very important to teach the children RSE,. Its a great help for the children that they are aware of their own development.	1/18/2019 12:23 PM
422	Yes but should not be taught juniors. 4th/5th/6th only.	1/18/2019 11:35 AM
423	I think we should be teaching kids about this aspect of their lives with age appropriate content from early school going years it's such an important topic. Respecting themselves and others.	1/18/2019 11:01 AM
424	I don't know what the content is related to. Surely primary school is too young to be learning about sex?	1/18/2019 10:41 AM
425	The more educated we make our children about these issues the better. As humans have always done, we'll figure things out - best to be prepared so it doesn't need to be done the hard way. Reading news pieces from parts of the world where children are kept ignorant about these issues should also be enough incentive to educate instead of hiding information, or worse, providing bad information.	1/18/2019 10:26 AM
426	Yes, I think kids should be learning about this both at home and with their peers.	1/18/2019 10:13 AM
427	A lot of children receive guidance from home, but not all do; (and some children take what a teacher says a lot more seriously than what a parent says!), so it can only benefit them to receive guidance on what is a healthy relationship and to value their own worth.	1/18/2019 10:05 AM
428	Especially in 5th and 6th class	1/18/2019 9:49 AM
429	I think it's very important. Emphasizing the importance of consent starts from a very young age for both boys&girls.	1/18/2019 9:19 AM
430	The answer really depends on the content and context of education to be given to pupils. The topic is important enough not to shy away from, but foreign examples show that there is a risk of some groups trying to piggyback on RSE education and spread ideologies circumventing parental oversight in the domain of values.	1/18/2019 8:59 AM
431	I BELIEVE IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO SHOW THEM AWARENESS OF THEIR BODY CHANGES AND MOST IMPORTANTLY TO BE RESPECTFUL AND CONCIOUSS OF THEIR ACTIONS	1/18/2019 8:48 AM
432	But not enough information is sent home	1/18/2019 8:03 AM
433	I think it's vital that they learn about themselves and their peers altogether, so that they all find out together and get the same message.	1/17/2019 11:35 PM
434	Depends on content .. and hopefully the concept of consent is a feature on this?	1/17/2019 11:17 PM
435	I would like to have some control over the content being introduced to children.	1/17/2019 11:05 PM
436	I'm not sure because I don't know what is involved in the program. I would query how it is being taught to young children	1/17/2019 11:04 PM
437	However I do believe that more emphasis should be on parents to relate this information also rather than leaving it to teachers. Teachers have a role but I feel the emphasis on relationship and sexuality should be more focused on parents giving this information	1/17/2019 10:14 PM
438	Yes for older children ie 5th 6th class no for younger children	1/17/2019 10:08 PM
439	The three aspects above are important for children of all ages.	1/17/2019 10:03 PM
440	Teach it as a normal subject with out preconceived embarrassment from parents	1/17/2019 9:59 PM
441	Early age appropriate information works alongside parental input	1/17/2019 9:56 PM
442	I think from second class parents can start to teach them what is important so they can talk if anyone is touching their private so they are not molested .	1/17/2019 9:49 PM
443	Due to media influences these days things need to be taught earlier. I rather have children hear about these things from an informed source rather than friends or elsewhere. Ideally from the home but this rarely happens.	1/17/2019 9:37 PM
444	Maybe from 2nd Class. Might depend on an individual situation prior to 2nd for a teacher to be equipped to talk to a child about R And S.	1/17/2019 9:37 PM
445	Important in later primary school	1/17/2019 9:33 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

446	Yes absolutely. I do think we need to include consent. From a young age children should be taught how to say no and they are not comfortable with something. Explained age appropriately from not wanting a hug in the younger classes for example.	1/17/2019 9:31 PM
447	100% it's important for children to be aware and proud of their bodies.	1/17/2019 9:15 PM
448	I am always trying to educate my children on what is important with regards to there relationships with friends/peers and other people in their lives. I think that parents should be educated more to what is available out there now and also Irish parents were not brought up in homes where sexual health and sexual relationships were discussed. So I'm my opinion parents should be educated just like the children are.	1/17/2019 9:04 PM
449	From 6 th clasd	1/17/2019 8:56 PM
450	Important aspect of life	1/17/2019 8:39 PM
451	Not the sexuality part	1/17/2019 7:37 PM
452	It's a big part of life albeit when a child is older. Education needs to bear in mind age and a child's capacity to learn enough at the right time. Appropriate age vs learning scale is vital	1/17/2019 7:15 PM
453	I do think that RSE is important at an appropriate level, given by fully trained/accredited teacher/facilitator with the guidance and input from the class teacher. I feel strongly that Junior classes are too young.	1/17/2019 6:48 PM
454	It is an important window of opportunity to form a normal and healthy view of sexuality	1/17/2019 6:14 PM
455	No visibility of this yet	1/17/2019 5:40 PM
456	This should primarily be the domain of the family and not the government or the school. They are pre-pubescent and a lot of the content does not make sense to them.	1/17/2019 5:30 PM
457	Possibly from 2nd class to sixth class.	1/17/2019 5:22 PM
458	As long as it's gradual and age appropriate.	1/17/2019 5:05 PM
459	absolutely but also needs to be supported / supplemented in the home.	1/17/2019 4:36 PM
460	Important at all levels building in detail through the years... this should all be covered prior to entering secondary.	1/17/2019 4:36 PM
461	RSE should support children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. It is important that children become aware of their rights as an individual while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and the wider community.	1/17/2019 4:27 PM
462	In an information age it is critically important that you people have access to the right information at the right stage provided by a person they trust and respect. They will be exposed to all kinds of other information so they need to be thinking critically about the issues that affect them throughout their journey through primary education. They have a great capacity to understand if the issues re dealt with honestly and sensitively	1/17/2019 4:17 PM
463	It is important to discuss these issues from a young age and continue it into secondary school.	1/17/2019 3:54 PM
464	From what I hear from my son there has been no sexuality education to date and he is half way through 6th class. This is not a good thing in my view. Sexuality should be brought in much earlier in schooling.	1/17/2019 3:40 PM
465	It's a very important topic, kids hear information on this topic from media or older kids, I would like them to hear about it from an unbiased, informative source as well	1/17/2019 3:24 PM
466	to a certain extent . A limited knowledge for junior kids is acceptable let's not forget these children still believe in santa etc practical sexual health for 6th class is all acceptable	1/17/2019 2:49 PM
467	Intergral to education	1/17/2019 2:49 PM
468	Age appropriate and non-shaming discussions of relationships and sexuality are v important	1/17/2019 2:45 PM
469	It's very important as it deals with the issues that children are faced with on a daily basis - interpersonal relationships, personal safety, growing and developing, etc.	1/17/2019 2:44 PM
470	Yes but not until 6th class	1/17/2019 2:14 PM
471	Children need to know RSE at an early age so they can learn to respect people and themselves	1/17/2019 2:12 PM
472	I do agree with it but not when the children are so young maybe after communion class it should be introduced	1/17/2019 2:11 PM
473	I don't really think they should start it in junior infants but i think they should probably it in 1st class	1/17/2019 1:53 PM

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474	I think it best if most of this education can come from the parents but it is good to have it repeated/covered in school also.	1/17/2019 1:48 PM
475	It is very important as it teaching them how to form healthy relationships for life.	1/17/2019 12:51 PM
476	Essential. Needs to prepare kids for issues like consent, internet pornography, privacy etc. all very different from even ten years ago.	1/17/2019 12:19 PM
477	I think its too early for the kids this age	1/17/2019 12:19 PM
478	Not from junior infant, I would suggest from 4th or 5th	1/17/2019 12:13 PM
479	I think it should be taught for older classes such as 5th and 6th - not younger.	1/17/2019 12:05 PM
480	It's better to learn at school with your peers and speak openly about it ...make it a normal open conversation	1/17/2019 11:48 AM
481	These thing they must learn in secondary school.Children are too young to be put on so much information.	1/17/2019 11:47 AM
482	I feel v strongly that this should be delivered as a subject by the teacher from a young age. Factual information rather than moral guidelines from any kind of religious aspect is the only acceptable form for me	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
483	How about teaching them useful stuff? Like mental health. Or how to read a payslip. Or what the fuck the tax is for. My kids won't be doing rse with their school. Not a hope.	1/17/2019 11:40 AM
484	Everything is happening at a younger age now unfortunately and it is great schools are recognising that.	1/17/2019 11:35 AM
485	To an extent - I think the onus should be on parents to educate the child as well, not everything on the teachers, they've enough to do educating children.	1/17/2019 11:30 AM
486	I feel it helps children understand stuff more and more aware of things as the world has changed and more awareness needs to be around	1/17/2019 10:31 AM
487	I think 1 grade and 6th grade are totally dofferent age groups...it depends what school wants to teach to 1st grader...if it is a fact that boys have this body part and girls another one it is ok...but no more then that. No genderisms and other wrong lies.the same about relationships. At first class they look differently to this topic. As simple as possible. Btw- it is surprising that school can not provide a simple sport lesson outside but adding more and more topics. I dont think i need to tell grade 1 2 3 or 4 about sex. Better give them more time to eat.	1/17/2019 10:31 AM
488	RSE education should be age appropriated to the class and parents should be informed of and approve the content before it is presented to the child.	1/17/2019 10:26 AM
489	I agree to some extent. I believe RSE should be taught from 4th class up. I don't think bombarding younger children with information about relationships and sexuality is appropriate and wouldn't be happy if my 5 year old son came home asking me about stuff like that at his age	1/17/2019 10:24 AM
490	Age appropriate only	1/17/2019 10:17 AM
491	Kinds too you to comprehend the depts of sexuality	1/17/2019 10:07 AM
492	The kids are far too young to be exposed to such information	1/17/2019 9:38 AM
493	We need to be (age appropriately) open about this as it's a big part of living.	1/17/2019 9:14 AM
494	Yes and no ... There are some things young children need to know and there are some things that they shouldn't be introduced to at a young age	1/17/2019 9:11 AM
495	I have twin 7 yr old boys and they have questions all the time already, I found the stay safe program amazing to help me put into words how to stay safe without scaring them. I feel even at this young age they are so advanced they have questions that I find hard to put words in a correct way for their age.	1/17/2019 8:46 AM
496	I think for many children this may be the only guidance they get, many parents avoid these conversations.	1/17/2019 8:42 AM
497	Relationship is important, but at that age sexuality I don't think is important at all.	1/17/2019 8:16 AM
498	These days family structures are so different and children and parents need to be aware of all.	1/17/2019 7:44 AM
499	Especially from 4th up	1/17/2019 7:28 AM
500	I feel we need to talk more and educate better both in school and home to make children aware.	1/17/2019 7:20 AM
501	Education is key to understanding important aspects like consent and staying safe. Discussing among peers helps normalise the subject. Including it in the curriculum encourages open conversation.	1/17/2019 7:16 AM

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502	Not particularly, it all depends on the actual end product and the way it is taught to the Pupils.	1/17/2019 12:52 AM
503	I think that despite what we would like reality to be...it is unfortunately not and I believe talking to my kids in a safe and controlled way is a positive action I must take. I support the program.	1/16/2019 11:27 PM
504	Some children may not receive access to accurate information at home.	1/16/2019 10:45 PM
505	Parent should be the main educator of RSE	1/16/2019 10:08 PM
506	Openly talking about issues of sexuality and relationships is very important rather than keeping secrets or misinformation.	1/16/2019 10:01 PM
507	Maybe not as young as junior infants. Maybe from 3rd class	1/16/2019 9:52 PM
508	Must be relevant for our current lives	1/16/2019 9:51 PM
509	Absolutely. The catholic church should have no role in influencing this.	1/16/2019 9:47 PM
510	Children appear to be exposed to relationships & sexuality at a much earlier age. It is important to foster a healthy opposite sex environment, but ensure children understand there is no requirement to yield to pressure as a lot of it is incorrect.	1/16/2019 9:44 PM
511	Some of the content 1st class to 3rd class I believe is a bit much. 7 year old children don't need to know how a baby is born, keep the innocence to a degree	1/16/2019 9:43 PM
512	It should be but it doesn't seem to be given adequate time in the curriculum.	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
513	I think junior infants and senior infants are too young to be talking about sexuality, I also think this is more so should be dealt with at home rather than in school. I would want to be very aware of what the school were teaching regarding relationships & sexuality	1/16/2019 9:35 PM
514	I've explained facts of life to both my girls and would like to think the lines of communication on that topic and on relationships are now open between me and them. I would have some concerns that they might be taught things about relationships that are not necessary now because they are still very innocent but that may be a naive approach.	1/16/2019 9:31 PM
515	But age relevant. 3rd class above	1/16/2019 9:26 PM
516	Yes it is extremely important, especially in this current digital age. Children are being exposed to sexual material at a much younger age now online. Young kids very often have unfettered access to this as many parents are not digitally literate and very unaware of what is available online.	1/16/2019 9:19 PM
517	Maybe not from junior infants but yes from 3rd class.	1/16/2019 9:02 PM
518	The earlier these things are normalised, the better, in my view.	1/16/2019 8:59 PM
519	It is important that children are taught to be aware of the world	1/16/2019 8:56 PM
520	Awareness is important. Respect for each other & understanding how we are different	1/16/2019 8:55 PM
521	I think that learning about respectful relationships and knowing that you have choice in what you do with your body is important. I think that reproductive biology is important. Also that puberty should be discussed in school as many feel isolated in school when changes are happening to them.	1/16/2019 8:54 PM
522	Yeah but so far it's lacking and far below what is needed	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
523	Walk Tall and Stay Safe sound solid and useful, I would be concerned about what content might find its way into RSE	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
524	I think it is an important aspect of curriculum for this age group in the format that it is currently taught in. I agree with a program that teaches respect towards others, encourages self worth, teaches age appropriate sex education and the stay safe programme. I do not agree with any proposed changes to the programme where transsexual, LGBT matters for example are discussed.	1/16/2019 8:43 PM
525	I think general awareness and general 'rights and wrongs' should be taught from an early age, without having children lose their innocence, so in an appropriate age-manner (more details for older classes) and stressing the need to have someone to talk to...	1/16/2019 8:41 PM
526	RSE which is morality based should be taught in the home.	1/16/2019 8:21 PM
527	Kids need way more info than in this programme.	1/16/2019 8:15 PM
528	Yes I feel strongly that we should normalize the topic both in school and at home so that our children feel free to be able to talk openly	1/16/2019 8:06 PM
529	I don't believe junior to second class require RSE	1/16/2019 7:53 PM

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530	This should be taught at home by parents say a time that they feel is suited to their child rather than have the schedule dictated by the Department of Education.	1/16/2019 7:52 PM
531	I did not have that kind of education when I was small and have never had any problems in my personal life. It is parents who should educate kids in this, not school.	1/16/2019 7:49 PM
532	Yes, but I think some of the content is too advanced and, in some cases too aggressively taught from 4th-6th class. RSE isn't an exact science, many families will hold different views to what is being told to the children.	1/16/2019 7:43 PM
533	certainly the sexuality part shouldn't be done too early	1/16/2019 7:36 PM
534	As long as it concentrates on healthy relationships and respect rather than sex	1/16/2019 7:32 PM
535	The dynamics of family lives are changing all the time. All children should have some awareness of this.	1/16/2019 7:17 PM
536	For 5/6 the classes	1/16/2019 7:02 PM
537	Not time for every thing maybe this is up to parents	1/16/2019 6:59 PM
538	Extremely important for children to recognize wrong behaviour and feel safe to report it.	1/16/2019 6:57 PM
539	Yes as it is important to get a second line of information and children may find it easier to hear and maybe less embarrassing	1/16/2019 6:57 PM
540	It is important to have these talks early with children so they grow up comfortably discussing them	1/16/2019 6:56 PM
541	I think it will benefit, and hopefully protect, some kids. I think it's important to teach the message of consent generally. However I'm reluctant to give blanket approval to teach this through the school curriculum and I would have concerns about who decides what messages are appropriate to give to young children.	1/16/2019 6:50 PM
542	Think in an ideal world, a child should be left to be a child for as long as possible but unfortunately children aren't allowed to be now. I have no problem with them knowing about the physical body, about respect. I don't really like them covering the sexual act. At the same time I acknowledge that this information is a must as they are exposed to an adult world.	1/16/2019 6:48 PM
543	Evidence based age appropriate sex ed with no regard to school ethos or religious ideology needs to be the norm.	1/16/2019 6:41 PM
544	It's too early to involve this group of age on that program. They're innocent	1/16/2019 6:34 PM
545	No i dont think its important as they are too young i think it should be talked about at home at this age if interest is shown	1/16/2019 6:19 PM
546	Essential knowledge for life	1/16/2019 6:11 PM
547	Would prefer this to wait until secondary. Alot of what was covered this year was a huge learning curve for my daughter. I feel I snapped away alot of innocence by having to prepare her for what she was about to learn. She was very upset at having to learn all this now. I think it's important that children at 11 learn stay safe but full sex education is unnecessary at such a young age.	1/16/2019 6:00 PM
548	I think they are told too much too young. It can undermine parents role and also tell children thing before parents think its appropriate. If you take them out of class for it their friends will pass a comment. So its taking choice away from parents. Stay safe is good for all classes though.	1/16/2019 5:48 PM
549	Within reason	1/16/2019 5:41 PM
550	I think fourth class is soon enough for this conversation in school. A gradual approach should be taken. Different children depending on their circumstances will be exposed to more or less of this topic than others. Some children will be very innocent to the birds and the bees while other will have some idea about it.	1/16/2019 5:38 PM
551	I think they need to be inform.	1/16/2019 5:26 PM
552	It is important so that children understand what's appropriate touch and boundaries and the language	1/16/2019 5:23 PM
553	I think it should only be thought from 5th class onwards because I think the younger pupils are far too young for this.	1/16/2019 5:17 PM
554	As long as it is age appropriate.	1/16/2019 5:12 PM
555	Body awareness is crucial from an early age, and an increasing exposure to sexuality through media needs to be balanced with factual education and lack of shame/embarrassments around the topic.	1/16/2019 5:06 PM

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556	It is fundamental to teach children about safe and healthy touch in the wider systems they are engaged with	1/16/2019 4:58 PM
557	It is very important for children to learn about healthy relationships - from friendships to sexual relationships - and respect for themselves and others. Whilst this starts in the home, it should continue in the school by way of being imbued into the curriculum.	1/16/2019 4:56 PM
558	This should be taught as early as first class in an age appropriate manner	1/16/2019 4:51 PM
559	It is important for children to receive correct factual information in an age appropriate way. It will help children to understand the basics of reproduction and staying safe.	1/16/2019 4:41 PM
560	Emotional and sexual development awareness is very important	1/16/2019 4:39 PM
561	It should be taught and explained at home	1/16/2019 4:39 PM
562	Junior Infants is far too young to be teaching about Sexual Education. I would not teach this until at least 5th Class	1/16/2019 4:33 PM
563	Obviously more sexually detailed information for older kids	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
564	Think it should be taught in 4th class ... 6th is too old	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
565	They still very young to learn about sexuality. I prefer to talk to him about that.	1/16/2019 4:09 PM
566	Parents should be primary information providers, should probably be basic for younger children	1/16/2019 4:07 PM
567	I really think it is a very important aspect of the curriculum. Although I am very aware that as a parent, I am the primary educator of my child, I also believe that all children have to be formally educated on looking after their body and protecting themselves. In order for this important message to be passed to all children consistently, I believe that RSE is an important part of SPHE.	1/16/2019 4:06 PM
568	Let children develop a sense of self protection from an early age.	1/16/2019 4:05 PM
569	Relationships & sexuality are fundamental in life. Therefore it should be normal for their inclusion in education	1/16/2019 4:03 PM
570	Provided it is age appropriate and not tackling issues prematurely. I would also like to be given the materials that are proposed to be taught so that I am across the topics and can answer any questions my child might have	1/16/2019 4:00 PM
571	I think the level of detail has to be age appropriate and this should be shared with the parents in advance so that parents understand the content, particularly if children start to ask questions at home	1/16/2019 3:59 PM
572	It should be mandatory for ALL children. Those children, and their parents, who do not actively participate negatively effect their classmates.	1/16/2019 3:58 PM
573	Very important	1/16/2019 3:50 PM
574	more for the older classes I think, but I have no problem with these topics being touched upon from the earlier years too.	1/16/2019 3:33 PM
575	With so much mixed information out there it's important for our children to get the proper open and honest information from both parents & schools together.	1/16/2019 3:31 PM
576	Better to "teach child how to swim" than avoid every surface of water!	1/16/2019 3:29 PM
577	Although I feel that some content is taught too early and not entirely appropriate.	1/16/2019 3:27 PM
578	Consistent open discussion is vital in my opinion.	1/16/2019 3:21 PM
579	Yes children need to respect all walks of life and know it's OK to feel differently than others.	1/16/2019 3:17 PM
580	Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a very broad term and it would be more useful to give some explanation of what exactly children would be thought before doing the survey.	1/16/2019 3:13 PM
581	I think Sex education should start from class 5 where kids could realise and understand what they learn in holistic way.	1/16/2019 3:10 PM
582	This education is important however the content should be shared with parents	1/16/2019 3:02 PM
583	found it helped my daughter have the language to express herself and normalized these topics in an age /development appropriate way	1/16/2019 2:57 PM
584	The younger you make children aware, the more they can acknowledge feelings and ways to deal with situations.	1/16/2019 2:53 PM
585	Within reason.	1/16/2019 2:53 PM

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586	Should be discussed at home but important to reinforce at school and cover kids who don't talk at home	1/16/2019 2:48 PM
587	Children will often listen to their teachers more than their parents.	1/16/2019 2:47 PM
588	as far as it's going progressively	1/16/2019 2:47 PM
589	Phasing and content should be shared with parents	1/16/2019 2:46 PM
590	I like the idea that children get information from a source other than a parent's. This helps reinforce things.	1/16/2019 2:46 PM
591	Important	1/16/2019 2:42 PM
592	Important from 5th class on.	1/16/2019 2:42 PM
593	If content is age appropriate	1/16/2019 2:41 PM
594	I think some kids are a bit young for such a heavy subject	1/16/2019 2:39 PM
595	To use the right terms and words and starting on a level playing field boys and girls.	1/16/2019 2:36 PM
596	More emphasis on relationships perhaps and how ones behaviour affects others	1/16/2019 2:23 PM
597	I think parents should be given material as booklets or videos to use at home with children	1/16/2019 2:23 PM
598	I talk to my kids about RSE and I appreciate the school's effort to back me up on this subject. RSE is as important as any other subject and it's very important that this is taught as early as possible	1/16/2019 2:17 PM
599	Include impact of internet, video games and social media on early sexual awareness as well as understanding consent that is taught in age appropriate manner	1/16/2019 2:14 PM
600	Definitely	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
601	Yes and because it is such a sensitive and important aspect of the curriculum professional nurses should teach it, parents should teach it and teachers can also be involved but it should not be up to them. Parents are the primary educators after all.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
602	I'm not sure about junior infants but certainly upwards, it also depends much upon feedback from teachers and general common sense to gauge whether the subjects are appropriate for children of that particular year / age.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
603	It's very important for children to learn stay safe and personal boundaries	1/16/2019 2:04 PM
604	Children need to be aware of the danger and what is appropriate	1/16/2019 1:59 PM
605	Yes it is important that they are educated on subject from an early age.	1/16/2019 1:58 PM
606	But not for younger classes	1/16/2019 1:46 PM
607	More specifically for the older children in the school.	1/16/2019 1:44 PM
608	I don't think it is necessary for children to be taught about relationships and sexuality until the are in 5th/6th class.	1/16/2019 1:43 PM
609	Yes I am a firm believer in this .	1/16/2019 1:42 PM
610	I think jnr, snr and first class is too young	1/16/2019 1:42 PM
611	Children should know from a young age what is appropriate, right and wrong but the language used should be tailored to the age groups	1/16/2019 1:41 PM
612	Children are aware of a lot of sexual content at a much earlier age and social media/availability of online porn etc means they need appropriate education at the right time. This can lead to issues regarding relationships so the two areas are fundamentally intertwined.	1/16/2019 1:40 PM
613	I feel sex education should be started earlier in school as children are developing earlier and need to be aware of their bodies	1/16/2019 1:38 PM
614	It is imperative that children are provided with as many tools as possible from all aspects of society to ensure that they can navigate their way through adolescence successfully.	1/16/2019 1:38 PM
615	I think RSE is an imperative part of a child's education in every year of school.	1/16/2019 1:34 PM
616	In think from 4th class onwards.	1/16/2019 1:30 PM
617	I'd need to know more about the content to judge if it's suitable. Definitely the relationships aspect is important but I'd want to know more about the content of the sexuality aspect.	1/16/2019 1:25 PM
618	Relationships very important from juniors up. Sexual relationships from 5th or 6th class up.	1/16/2019 1:23 PM

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619	I consider this subject extremely important in the child's development and education as their ignorance on the subject could cost them dearly.	1/16/2019 1:23 PM
620	Yes.. these topics need to be part of the kids normal conversation so there are no issues when things need to be discussed	1/16/2019 1:23 PM
621	I dont know enough on what is being taught to comment	1/16/2019 1:16 PM
622	I do believe in 6th class it should be taught thoroughly but not before hand as I feel kids are too young and won't retain it	1/16/2019 1:15 PM
623	Yes but not in a way that increases anxiety - why am i not getting beard, why girls don't talk to me, when will i be taller, my voice is still not grave enough Knowledge should always be accompanied by maturity to handle that knowledge. All children don't reach puberty at same time nor do they have similar inclination to various matters	1/16/2019 1:11 PM
624	Every child should have some level of understanding when it comes to their body including places of inappropriate touching and people who are classed as safe/unsafe people when it comes to concern in private areas.	1/16/2019 1:10 PM
625	Nowadays children are exposed to the subject whether we like it or not, Internet and tv are filled with sexuality and violence. Curriculum should keep up with changes in society. Its important to educate children appropriately and promote awareness.	1/16/2019 1:10 PM
626	It looks more important health education, gaining healthy habits, good manners and safety at early age but also learning relationships and sexuality education at the secular level at the same age as religion preaching	1/16/2019 1:09 PM
627	Our children need to learn about relationships outside of the home too. Also sexuality education is still taboo in some households so it's good the school is discussing it.	1/16/2019 1:07 PM
628	I grew up in a society that treated this as a taboo conversation. I entered adulthood with poor knowledge. I think its matter to talk openly and honest to children from an early age	1/16/2019 1:05 PM
629	particularly for children from 3rd class	1/16/2019 1:03 PM
630	Scandinavian countries have proven that an early and knowledgeable sexual information has a pivotal role in unwanted pregnancy/ understanding of what is acceptable and not acceptable, unwilling sexual intercourse. As a parent i don't feel equipped with age appropriate information etc	1/16/2019 1:00 PM
631	In an way appropriate for their age I am convinced that children should learn about healthy relationships from a very young age, both from their parents and from school.	1/16/2019 12:55 PM
632	Yes especially in 6th class as when they go to Secondary I believe it's presumed they no more than they do .. no continuity.	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
633	Absolutely as well as arwbts k ow what to say to kidz	1/16/2019 12:49 PM
634	RSE is crucial to their personal and emotional development. Taught appropriately it enables parents and schools to work together to ensure that children are educated about the pleasures and dangers associated with this area.	1/16/2019 12:48 PM
635	Would like to see more about safe touch & consent throughout all the years	1/16/2019 12:48 PM
636	If is known that this education decreases the instance of sexual health issues and underage pregnancy. I believe this education should be properly detailed with correct anatomical terminology, and absolutely no religious aspect or religiously driven exclusion of differing gender or sexuality information should be permitted. This further protects children from sexual abuse, as it allows them to define it and know what's wrong.	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
637	As parents its our responsibility to teach our children about relationships & sexual health. However to have this in school is also v welcomed	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
638	Pstents responsibility to teach it	1/16/2019 12:45 PM
639	For the younger classes stay safe is a great program don't think children should be exposed to anything too graphic or detailed in line with their age	1/16/2019 12:43 PM
640	It is important if it isn't delivered by a religious group. If Accord or other such religious organization do it, it's completely pointless and I wouldn't allow my kids do it.	1/16/2019 12:42 PM
641	I feel it is important for children to grow up with age appropriate awareness and understanding about relationships, their bodies, sexuality etc as it is a normal and healthy part of life, also to give them a sensible and well rounded approach as they grow up, to feel safe and aware of unsafe situations and to know how to care for themselves in these areas	1/16/2019 12:34 PM
642	Children all cover the subject at the same age and nobody is left uninformed if matter was only down to parents	1/16/2019 12:33 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

643	Yes particularly in the area of respect and consent. The have a cup of tea age appropriate video is a good example.	1/16/2019 12:32 PM
644	As important as maths or English.	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
645	It is vital that children learn the important messages from the RSE programme from a very young age. It should be initiated as early as possible in an age appropriate way.	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
646	It helps to eliminate misinformation among pupils.	1/16/2019 12:27 PM
647	It needs to be redeveloped .... boys and girls should always be taught together	1/16/2019 12:21 PM
648	Normalizing and demystifying all aspects of RSE from an early age is key	1/16/2019 12:18 PM
649	Relationships and Sexuality Education is very important to talk about it. Children should be educated from early age.	1/16/2019 12:13 PM
650	It is essential but very little is communicated to parents	1/16/2019 12:07 PM
651	It should be part of learning right from the start to normalize it and remove stigma.	1/16/2019 12:04 PM
652	I don't believe is is applicable before 3rd class	1/16/2019 12:04 PM
653	But not some of the content. It's not age appropriate	1/16/2019 12:04 PM
654	Yes kids need to learn about sexuality and relationships in young stage of they life so they can have healthy view about that for rest of their lifes	1/16/2019 12:01 PM
655	teach them from young	1/16/2019 11:51 AM
656	The concept of consent is extremely important and needs to be taught and modelled from an early age	1/16/2019 11:48 AM
657	It is crucially important to keep the children safe, teach them to respect their bodies and the truth about sexual encounters etdc	1/16/2019 11:31 AM
658	I think it's really important that all children from when they start school and throughout have an opportunity to explore and engage in age appropriate language issues of relationships and sexuality, to ensure understanding around consent, respect, friendships and other kinds of relationships, sexuality, pressure, communication etc. Even in junior infants, the kids in our school got caught up for a period in all talking about boyfriends and girlfriends and due to lack of understanding it caused difficulties with friendships and pressure and misunderstandings. It was well handled by the teacher when it was raised but it is clear that from early on, particularly as many kids have older siblings and are exposed to language and concepts they don't understand but which they share with the kids in their class, that it is important to discuss, engage and help children navigate these areas. We have an amazing opportunity to teach our young people about these critical issues in a context where it is relevant. Of course parents can discuss these issues but it is contextually appropriate in the environment where they are with their friends and classmates and where many issues related to this area are played out in their real lives.	1/16/2019 11:30 AM
659	For the older children. Don't believe it's really relevant to junior children.	1/16/2019 11:28 AM
660	Children need to be taught this as soon as they enter school if not already at home with parents too	1/16/2019 11:25 AM
661	To a certain extent depending on age	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
662	Very important as children unfortunately need to be more aware at a younger age now - I wish this wasn't the case but feel it is.	1/16/2019 11:21 AM
663	I believe human biology should form an integral part from early on in the curriculum.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
664	Ireland should move out of the dark ages and prepare children properly in the area of RSE	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
665	It should start earlier than 5th	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
666	Absolutely. With the change in society and social media/television,children are becoming aware of these things at a much younger age.	1/16/2019 11:06 AM
667	Definitely not from Junior Infant, can we just let children be children for as long as possible? Start, perhaps, from First Class but not before then. I feel very strongly about not mentioning the LGBT spectrum as I believe that is something that can be taught later on in life. My child is four and I would like him to be blissfully unaware of LGBT for as long as possible.	1/16/2019 11:03 AM
668	It's important to start it early.	1/16/2019 11:01 AM
669	Not for junior infant's my child is 5 he doesn't need to know anything about this He doesn't need to know about sexuality education It would be up to me a parent to talk about this to my child	1/16/2019 10:57 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

670	I feel that children should know more about their bodily functions in an early age, and also feel that more awareness should be created about sexual contact, & how to keep themselves safe and to learn how to see warning signs if someone is acting inappropriately with them. Online presence has changed the while dynamics of children's perception with relationships on all levels also. I feel that especially, in post primary level, that students are unaware of grooming and are susceptible to be pressurised into various situations where they are exposed or manipulated for sexual favours. It's an awkward subject to discuss, but if more awareness was made for the parents as well as the children, then it could help open up the relationships between parents and their kids? This area has been pretty much made taboo fit a long time, and kids are sexually active from a young age. Knowledge is key in this area, it's inevitable that kids will learn about sex & all that goes with it, but engaging them from a young age with appropriate material would be paramount in making them more assertive about their bodies. Involving parents is another aspect that should be included more.	1/16/2019 10:56 AM
671	So long as it is not mixed up or filtered by religion or religious influencers	1/16/2019 10:21 AM
672	Changing times from tv to social media kiss are more aware.	1/16/2019 10:17 AM
673	Yes depending on the content. I think issues around respect and girls is important. Girls are earlier getting periods and young boys and girls haven't a clue what this is. They don't know how to address it and how to respect children that are going through this at an early age.	1/16/2019 9:40 AM
674	It should be up to parents to teach their children about relationships and sexuality. I'm a firm believer that children should be taught to their level and allow them to be children for as long as possible. The stay safe programme is reasonable but again what is the content as I wouldn't like my daughter worrying about this and having it on her mind.	1/16/2019 9:25 AM
675	Maybe from aged 8 upwards	1/16/2019 9:25 AM
676	I think children need to learn the tools for dealing with interpersonal relationships from v early, but in no way from any christian/morality standpoint	1/16/2019 8:04 AM
677	School should be about more than the traditional academic subjects. It is important to help children develop into fully rounded people who learn empathy, kindness, understanding and acceptance of others. Also how to stand up for themselves, problem solve and conflict resolution. There are age appropriate lessons that incorporate this.	1/16/2019 7:38 AM
678	For the older classes only... Not the younger classes	1/15/2019 11:41 PM
679	Not for kids as young as juniors to 1st class. They are still babies	1/15/2019 11:04 PM
680	I say yes but only in extremely age appropriate measures to ensure that children are aware of private areas and keeping them safe.	1/15/2019 10:39 PM
681	In 6th class children will be aware if changes in their bodies etc and it is important that this as well as relationships is discussed both at home and in school.	1/15/2019 10:38 PM
682	If agree with parents education and is suitable to the age of children	1/15/2019 10:36 PM
683	I do not think sex should be spoken about to a child younger than 6th class.	1/15/2019 10:24 PM
684	Yes I feel kids will listen more in school, it will enable them to discuss more openly and hopefully if they need to talk they will feel confident to do so	1/15/2019 10:22 PM
685	It is important that all children recieve factual information from one reliable source	1/15/2019 10:09 PM
686	I think 5thclass 6th class only , also I feel it's the parents Job for younger children to be told . Older kids might find it easier with a teacher etc	1/15/2019 9:43 PM
687	If we instil into our children certain unacceptable and inappropriate behaviours you would hope that they would carry this on into adult life. To respect and accept their bodies and others.	1/15/2019 9:33 PM
688	Not so much junior infants through to 3rd/4th, we would want them to know about body safety, what's right or wrong,but not sex itself.	1/15/2019 9:13 PM
689	Junior infant to 3rd class is not that important(not very detailed education)I feel bigger children should be educated	1/15/2019 8:59 PM
690	I would appreciate learning A LOT more about this subject. As we moved from the UK 2 years ago, my kids started school in Ireland in Snr infants and 2nd class so I feel I may have missed a lot of relevant information about the curriculum and the school system here.	1/15/2019 8:49 PM
691	The age at which teaching it starts seems a bit young	1/15/2019 8:37 PM
692	This would depend on content, I don't feel sexual preference etc needs to be discussed but maybe appropriate actions etc	1/15/2019 8:25 PM
693	2nd class onwards is better	1/15/2019 8:19 PM

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694	Only from 3rd class onwards. The others are too young to hear this stuff.	1/15/2019 7:36 PM
695	It is important to educate children from early on and in an age appropriate manner but as a parent I have no idea of what SPHE covers and therefore, do not follow up in parallel with what is taught at school which I feel is a great shame, especially on this topic.	1/15/2019 7:35 PM
696	They need to understand especially if they may be in danger	1/15/2019 7:30 PM
697	Kids don't understand people's sexuality, they are too young to process that, with the exception of maybe fifth and sixth class. The education must be age appropriate.	1/15/2019 7:10 PM
698	As long as its age appropriate	1/15/2019 7:01 PM
699	Not for junior classes	1/15/2019 6:57 PM
700	If taught from young age, removes the stigma around necessary conversations and the misconception that these are adult only topics.	1/15/2019 6:56 PM
701	In today's society of social media and all the pressures that that entails I feel it is very important that children are educated on relationships and sexuality	1/15/2019 6:44 PM
702	i think kids should have some life skills included with school curriculum as well as at home	1/15/2019 6:36 PM
703	Age appropriate information to build a broad understanding of relationships and sexuality which supports children to develop skills and confidence in this area from a very young age is key to enabling children to manage their relationships and sexuality in the more challenging teenage years.	1/15/2019 6:36 PM
704	Yes in relation to building good relationships and inappropriate sexual conduct	1/15/2019 6:10 PM
705	Even at junior infants level we can see how strongly influenced our child is to the reaction of her friends to topics, words, foods and everything else. If this topic was dealt with exclusively at home we would never know that there was a sensible conversation being guided and monitored amongst her peers. This more general dialogue is not really open to individual sets of parents, but the influence on a child of their peers can very strong so needs to be encouraged and challenged by trusted professionals in a safe environment I think.	1/15/2019 5:57 PM
706	Yes it's just as important as any other subject!	1/15/2019 5:48 PM
707	It's very important that all age groups receive full & proper rse education in the formative years & that they grasp it as something normal	1/15/2019 5:34 PM
708	I would prefer to deal with this myself in a family context.	1/15/2019 5:04 PM
709	Essential!	1/15/2019 5:00 PM
710	Relationship and sexuality should be discussed within the family	1/15/2019 4:59 PM
711	Children are taught what is right and wrong from a young age	1/15/2019 4:55 PM
712	My concern is that the education on sexuality may be adapted in delivery to concur with a specific religious ethos - that of the school	1/15/2019 4:48 PM
713	As long as it is age appropriate.	1/15/2019 4:43 PM
714	most of the children have not developed sexually at all. Warning them of strangers is one thing, warning them of paedophiles is a whole other thing	1/15/2019 4:41 PM
715	Yes! Absolutely 100%. Learning now will build respect and resilience and will inform and affect decision making around issues such as consent , sexuality etc at a later stage! It is important that we address these issues now in an open and age appropriate manner that challenges taboo!	1/15/2019 4:32 PM
716	Safe touch and consent need to be talked about from a young age	1/15/2019 4:22 PM
717	I think its very important of all children to have an understanding of their own bodies, self respect and respecting others.	1/15/2019 4:13 PM
718	Obviously only the minimum and no sexuality for the younger classes but as they get older it's important to have some neutral education (as in not formed by religious ethos)	1/15/2019 4:07 PM
719	I consider this a vitally important part of the curriculum to back up and supplement information received from parents/guardians	1/15/2019 4:02 PM
720	Once it's age appropriate, for juniors and seniors.	1/15/2019 3:53 PM
721	Unsure if Junior and Senior should be included	1/15/2019 3:37 PM
722	As it complements what's being taught st home	1/15/2019 3:27 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

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723	I thik it is important but I rarely engage with my child on what she is learning. She is very well read and mature for her age. Her mother is inclined to speak to her about sexuality issues also.	1/15/2019 3:26 PM
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## Q6 Do you as a parent feel equipped to have age-appropriate conversations with your child about relationships and/or sex?

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	We have always had a relatively easy going attitude to talking about sex and relationships in an age appropriate way. We've spoken about how babies are made, puberty, men, women, girls boys, hygiene, LGBTQIPA and consent.	1/26/2019 7:48 PM
2	It can be difficult to know what is age-appropriate.	1/26/2019 10:36 AM
3	Hasn't come up yet	1/25/2019 7:53 PM
4	I don't feel equipped at all. My child is 6 and very unsure of age appropriate language or when I should start talking about things	1/25/2019 12:07 PM
5	I think 6th class is too late in today's world to be talking about sex and sexual development with our children. Children are developing at a younger age and at the very least this should be done in 5th class	1/25/2019 8:32 AM
6	M k	1/25/2019 8:16 AM
7	j	1/25/2019 8:05 AM
8	Too early to teach about sex	1/25/2019 8:04 AM

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9	My children the still so youg is not time to start talk about that but is going to be the I will talk to them	1/24/2019 11:23 PM
10	My kids are still young. When they are older I will learn how to speak to them about it. As my kids are now 4 and 5. I'm learning to teach them about staying safe and to tell an adult if the feel anything wrong is done to them. I also teach them that nobody I allowed to abuse them in any way.	1/24/2019 9:47 PM
11	Yes once the certain age.but not from primary level school.	1/24/2019 7:00 PM
12	Would love support around this	1/24/2019 8:49 AM
13	This is family roll not the school	1/24/2019 8:24 AM
14	Yes, when the time will come, not earlier.	1/23/2019 10:18 PM
15	Age relating	1/23/2019 9:44 PM
16	She's too young to ask questions	1/23/2019 9:07 PM
17	a	1/23/2019 8:47 PM
18	I want to educate my children myself about that when they reach a certain age.	1/23/2019 8:40 PM
19	Sometimes the media (Paddy Jackson) start conversation that might not be necessary age ap.	1/23/2019 5:07 PM
20	nobody else but parents can talk about sex with little child. NO TEACHER WILL TEACH MY CHILD ABOUT VAGINA	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
21	Children to young yet	1/23/2019 3:19 PM
22	K	1/23/2019 2:42 PM
23	Very willing have no idea how to approach it or where to get suitable resources on it	1/23/2019 1:44 PM
24	Age appropriate might be different in different households but my husband and I have a very open attitude toward sexuality. We haven't discussed this topic with our daughter,she is only 5. But she is aware of the differences in male and female body. Whenever she has a question we discuss it openly as it is,there's no taboo in our house.	1/23/2019 11:08 AM
25	It's early days yet, my eldest just turned 5 and I haven't felt the need to explain anything much yet although I try to avoid her having concrete ideas and suggest to her that every relationship might be different, for example. Not necessarily man and woman / husband and wife dichotomy, for example. I have a great book called 'My Underpants Rule' which I would read to her form time to time which is a good resource about what is appropriate in that area.	1/23/2019 10:55 AM
26	Children of a certain age can get very embarrassed talking to a parent 're sex etc	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
27	More so with my daughter than my son	1/23/2019 10:02 AM
28	Find books and school programme helpful 0	1/23/2019 10:01 AM
29	I find myself stuck between what is too little or too much information at a given age.	1/23/2019 12:18 AM
30	My children don't always want to discuss it with me.	1/22/2019 10:46 PM
31	More school-home links needed re lessons covered so we as parents can continue from home and make it as natural as possible	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
32	I have tried to educate myself online, but I can't say that particularly as a parent I have reliable age appropriate and Irish school approved information	1/22/2019 5:55 PM
33	I bought a book that might help with this. When they are ready.	1/22/2019 4:29 PM
34	It hasn't arisen as yet	1/22/2019 4:10 PM
35	.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
36	Not to a senior infants child	1/21/2019 8:52 PM
37	Na	1/21/2019 4:18 PM
38	I do not believe there is a need at this point in time for us as parents to have such conversation with our child but when he is the right age I would say I am fairly equipped to	1/21/2019 3:01 PM
39	.	1/21/2019 2:33 PM
40	I believe in being open and answering questions, though some questions are better left to dad to answer.	1/21/2019 2:27 PM
41	N/a	1/21/2019 2:22 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

42	We've had many relationship conversations, but only touched on conversations re sex and abuse. I will turn to available literature when the time is right.	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
43	As my children are still quite young most of the conversations to date have been in response to general questions that they have asked and so I have not had to go into detail in relation to relationships and sexuality.	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
44	Would like more cooperation with school as to what stage they are at with the children.	1/21/2019 12:33 PM
45	With Leon's Autistim it can be hard to explain these things to him.	1/21/2019 8:54 AM
46	Finding the wording difficult	1/20/2019 10:16 PM
47	No comment	1/19/2019 1:57 PM
48	I do but we're just not at that age yet	1/18/2019 5:06 PM
49	Not at that stage yet as he is only 5	1/18/2019 10:55 AM
50	I don't think I am equipped	1/17/2019 11:04 PM
51	Yes always	1/17/2019 10:49 PM
52	Maybe offer a course/workshop for parents to deal with this, hard to find the wording to use when talking to your child	1/17/2019 9:41 PM
53	Being a mother probably less so with boys	1/17/2019 7:19 PM
54	Some of the time. My children are still small, but I believe that they already need my support to build safe and aware views on relationships and sex through age-appropriate messages. I am not sure though I am prepared and confident enough on this, and I would appreciate support/capacity building to acquire the right skills.	1/17/2019 4:27 PM
55	generally in response to child's questions - which is likely to be in response to what is being taught in school - thus as a parent I am not driving these discussions	1/17/2019 4:05 PM
56	as a parent it is my job to speak to my children about sexual health and relationships	1/17/2019 2:49 PM
57	My son is only 5 so conversations like that won't be had for a while	1/17/2019 10:24 AM
58	He's too young	1/17/2019 8:58 AM
59	there is no supporting material available to parents that compliments the school curriculum on RSE	1/17/2019 7:55 AM
60	Briefly touching on the subject of their body changes	1/16/2019 10:16 PM
61	When they are small it is easy. At twelve she is painfully embarrassed about all bodily things. I have to keep info short and sweet and offer lots of opportunities for her to talk. However she has two great books and has come to me about things that are worrying her eventually!	1/16/2019 8:54 PM
62	they are 5 and 7, conversations about sex are completely inappropriate	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
63	.	1/16/2019 8:31 PM
64	Would like better written resource book than the hse one	1/16/2019 8:15 PM
65	I'm only starting to navigate the discussion now with my eldest child so I'm not sure	1/16/2019 8:06 PM
66	I think we need more detail on the content and when it is being delivered so that we can back up the message and not cause any confusion to the child?	1/16/2019 5:33 PM
67	Not at the moment	1/16/2019 3:59 PM
68	Yes	1/16/2019 3:28 PM
69	we are learning together to have these conversations	1/16/2019 2:57 PM
70	Not applicable, he's 5	1/16/2019 2:36 PM
71	I would like some guidance on what is considered appropriate at each age	1/16/2019 2:17 PM
72	Not a parent	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
73	for our x 3 daughters with their mother always with their father not usually but I am informed by the mother. If we had sons then I as the father would take more of a lead role, I think !!	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
74	When the time is right I will address the issue	1/16/2019 1:53 PM
75	Expect guidance is appreciated	1/16/2019 1:51 PM
76	I feel my child was not ready up to now but intend to discuss basics before next sex ed class. I have purchased a book on puberty etc to help!	1/16/2019 12:32 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

77	Yes, some of the time, however without accurate knowledge of what is being taught in school is paramount otherwise children might receive mixed messages and contradictory information.	1/16/2019 12:31 PM
78	Not always sure what needs to be known	1/16/2019 12:27 PM
79	Yes, but would like to talk to our child about areas that are being taught in school, at the same time they are being taught; to be informed what's being taught and when.	1/16/2019 12:25 PM
80	I would research first and then open up the conversation & discuss it in an age appropriate way..	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
81	Too young at the moment only 5	1/16/2019 11:07 AM
82	Yes, some of the time but I have to research to find age appropriate info. This info isn't always easy to find.	1/16/2019 11:05 AM
83	Sometimes, but because of how terribly these subjects were broached when I was young, I struggle.	1/16/2019 11:01 AM
84	Not required yet	1/16/2019 9:56 AM
85	Like what give an example please	1/15/2019 8:32 PM
86	The key for me is knowing what is "age appropriate".	1/15/2019 7:35 PM
87	Havnt had the conversation yet so don't know	1/15/2019 5:11 PM
88	I answer questions to the best of my ability when they arise but im not aware of the best practice approach	1/15/2019 5:08 PM
89	too early to speak about sex yet, but relationships yes	1/15/2019 3:54 PM

**Q7 Are there any supports that would help you as a parent to be better equipped to have age appropriate conversations with your child about relationships and/or sex? Please tick all those that you think would help you**

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I feel personally confident in communication of the topics with my child	1/26/2019 8:24 PM
2	My child's school is quite conservative. It doesn't take easy well established opportunities to celebrate diversity in sexual orientation and gender. I'd love to see a strong influence and presence of support for schools like my child's to help them become more open, accepting and progressive on this.	1/26/2019 7:48 PM
3	I don't want my child's to be introduced to Sex whatsoever	1/26/2019 6:28 PM
4	I'm pretty happy to talk to my kids and have bought lots of books	1/25/2019 11:55 PM
5	T	1/25/2019 10:30 PM
6	None	1/25/2019 9:41 PM
7	I am more than capable of discussing this with my child	1/25/2019 6:56 PM
8	None	1/25/2019 6:27 PM
9	N/A	1/25/2019 3:00 PM
10	one-pager for key parts of the school course (same vocab use, etc)	1/25/2019 2:13 PM
11	None, its not rocket science...	1/25/2019 12:13 PM
12	I have all I need	1/25/2019 11:39 AM
13	Age appropriate books are available in easons and there for parents when the time is right to have discussions with their child.	1/25/2019 10:07 AM

Other responses to Question 7 continue on page 51

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14	Catholic teachings	1/25/2019 9:08 AM
15	However parents need to be responsible themselves about this and not depend on school	1/25/2019 8:32 AM
16	No	1/25/2019 8:12 AM
17	My children not interested in these things	1/25/2019 8:04 AM
18	No	1/24/2019 11:46 PM
19	No	1/24/2019 11:43 PM
20	Interactive website	1/24/2019 10:34 PM
21	I haven't looked into it	1/24/2019 9:01 PM
22	Any or all above	1/24/2019 7:58 PM
23	From our Faith and culture we would like teach them at home when they will be in age of 16.	1/24/2019 7:00 PM
24	Not available at the moment	1/24/2019 6:04 PM
25	Option of books and face to face	1/24/2019 3:44 PM
26	Communication between schools and parents so we are all singing off the same sheet	1/24/2019 3:05 PM
27	I am a stay at home mum so I need to take care of my young kids so online course would be easier for me.	1/24/2019 2:31 PM
28	Don't need books or online resources,I had parents who knew how to talk about any topic with me.	1/24/2019 2:27 PM
29	Conversations and information from a religious perspective	1/24/2019 1:48 PM
30	From the worldly experience.	1/24/2019 12:10 PM
31	Knowing age development	1/24/2019 11:03 AM
32	So I have the info in a handy way to explain them better	1/24/2019 10:48 AM
33	Leave us as Parents to discuss and educate Our Children!	1/24/2019 10:35 AM
34	None	1/24/2019 10:25 AM
35	No	1/24/2019 9:58 AM
36	Knowing what's already been taught in the school	1/24/2019 8:59 AM
37	no	1/24/2019 8:44 AM
38	You don't need all of the above it's natural instance look at the animal who tell them where is their mothers breast first day when they're born	1/24/2019 8:24 AM
39	From my religion backgrounds support	1/24/2019 7:25 AM
40	Any bit does help as it's not any subject to talk about .	1/24/2019 1:51 AM
41	Face to face meetings for Parents with people in the field of sex education so we can speak to our kids for anyone who feels unequipped or has questions.	1/24/2019 1:47 AM
42	Talk in schools for parents	1/23/2019 10:34 PM
43	Face to Face conversation with people who's their children or grandchildren have happy marriages and families. I just want the same for my children and I am very interested how they achieved this. So, generally, learning by examples and experience.	1/23/2019 10:18 PM
44	Schools not interfering in this regard	1/23/2019 9:27 PM
45	no. i feel comfortable enough speaking about it with my child	1/23/2019 9:13 PM
46	Video clips to show children.	1/23/2019 9:09 PM
47	I feel equipped	1/23/2019 8:51 PM
48	a	1/23/2019 8:47 PM
49	I don't want my children to be educate about sexuality in primary school please.	1/23/2019 8:40 PM
50	Moral guidance from christian teaching and beliefs	1/23/2019 8:39 PM
51	No, I'm always ready to talk with my children.	1/23/2019 7:21 PM
52	I think introducing an age appropriate sex Education programme in school could benefit	1/23/2019 6:19 PM
53	No	1/23/2019 5:07 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

54	She is only 7 so it will be a while before that conversation comes up hopefully	1/23/2019 5:02 PM
55	i have my own head.	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
56	Hi	1/23/2019 4:48 PM
57	not sure at moment	1/23/2019 4:23 PM
58	Depending on the content all of these options may be beneficial	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
59	We believe we are able to source material we feel is appropriate ourselves	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
60	Guidance from the school perhaps	1/23/2019 12:51 PM
61	I feel equipped	1/23/2019 12:50 PM
62	Help with special needs child	1/23/2019 12:41 PM
63	For our state funded schools to do their part	1/23/2019 12:32 PM
64	every material is ok, important that is made with a secular approach and not avoiding any subject because religious ethos	1/23/2019 11:53 AM
65	face to face with children present also	1/23/2019 11:41 AM
66	help is always welcome.	1/23/2019 11:40 AM
67	Don't really need school guidance on this issue. Especially as most schools are of a christian ethos.	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
68	Conversation about what? Sexual intercourse, sexuality, sexual practices, family structures. What constitutes "the conversation"?	1/23/2019 11:12 AM
69	Think for themselves, not to rely on the state	1/23/2019 11:03 AM
70	Although online is better for the sake of trying to fit yet another thing into a busy family/work life schedule, face to face is far more beneficial as you can hear more, learn more and absorb the information better vs online. Problem is finding the time to attend seminars like this	1/23/2019 10:46 AM
71	With a bit of research and if you are deeply connected with yourself and with your children you will be able to respond to your child's needs when the time comes. The parent is unquestionably the best person to do this.	1/23/2019 10:41 AM
72	A follow up sheet or book on what is been taught in school would be great. Every teacher has their way of explaining but doesn't always transfer the relevant information to the child. A parent may have alternative way to explain to their child.	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
73	No	1/23/2019 10:36 AM
74	Links between parents and teachers 're teaching of the emotional aspects at home	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
75	A lot depends on the nature of the materials listed above - there are good books and bad books / good conversations and bad conversations	1/23/2019 10:27 AM
76	Info Talk for parents	1/23/2019 10:27 AM
77	just meeting other parents at school and chatting about it	1/23/2019 10:05 AM
78	Even information on what is currently being covered.	1/23/2019 8:38 AM
79	Partnership with the school so messages are reinforced or opportunities for further discussion captured	1/23/2019 7:52 AM
80	None	1/23/2019 12:59 AM
81	App to refer to.... like a 'bible' or 'how to' guide	1/22/2019 11:27 PM
82	I'm confident about speaking with my kids about these topics	1/22/2019 11:11 PM
83	Who decides what is appropriate for a specific age group?	1/22/2019 10:36 PM
84	Information from the school about what exactly is being taught to my child, as mentioned above, this is my first introduction to RSE education and up until now I was unaware that my child was studying this.	1/22/2019 10:27 PM
85	I	1/22/2019 9:51 PM
86	It is important these resources are all evidence-based	1/22/2019 9:45 PM
87	Either/both of the above	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
88	All or some of the above would be hugely beneficial	1/22/2019 9:08 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

89	A set of facts/information that parents MUST discuss with their children before the topics are covered in school. This is the parents job not the schools! Much better for our children to here it from us than their teacher.	1/22/2019 8:38 PM
90	Z	1/22/2019 8:16 PM
91	None, I feel well capable in this area	1/22/2019 7:54 PM
92	Any resources need to cover same sex relationships, transgender, contraception, abortion . They need to cover real life scenarios, not ones only dictated by the church	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
93	Home-school links	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
94	When my child comes to me with a question relating to relationships and or sex, I feel confident I will be able to answer them, being in a committed sexual relationship with my marriage partner.	1/22/2019 6:10 PM
95	I think books would be a great resource to help those parents and children who may not be wholly comfortable with the "awkward"conversations.	1/22/2019 5:59 PM
96	Face to face would be very good, but I think parents in Ireland would be too embarrassed to talk about this topic	1/22/2019 5:55 PM
97	All of the above	1/22/2019 5:14 PM
98	No	1/22/2019 4:39 PM
99	I grew up with being able to discuss everything openly with my parents	1/22/2019 4:25 PM
100	There's none, i teach from experience.	1/22/2019 4:20 PM
101	No I'm happy enough	1/22/2019 1:26 PM
102	Irrelevant	1/22/2019 12:37 PM
103	It would be helpful to know exactly what the children are thought at each age as sometimes it would be helpful to know how much other children are told - I am not from Ireland and there are significant differences in how this topic is discussed in my country if origin, I.e. in Finland we were a lot more open about it	1/22/2019 8:06 AM
104	Consult friends and grand parents about how to approach and get advice from family members.	1/21/2019 11:46 PM
105	7	1/21/2019 10:25 PM
106	.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
107	An honest open relationship with your child from a very early age allows this conversation	1/21/2019 8:55 PM
108	we have been watching the child's films together with the child, and there is no problem speaking from the experience of the grandfather, saying! talking about everything	1/21/2019 6:12 PM
109	Being able to attend an RSE talk like the one that is given to primary school children with a discussion and Q&A opportunity	1/21/2019 5:38 PM
110	Resources in Irish as we are an Irish speaking family	1/21/2019 5:35 PM
111	Face to face course with psychologists and educational professionals	1/21/2019 3:58 PM
112	.	1/21/2019 2:45 PM
113	Haven't thought about it. My kids are to young	1/21/2019 2:27 PM
114	Input from school re the topics to be discussed at the various ages.	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
115	No	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
116	Talks	1/21/2019 12:55 PM
117	All of the above would be very helpful along with more information / detail as to what information is being provided by the schools.	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
118	Maybe I could use some visual resources for child ( in english)	1/21/2019 2:48 AM
119	I don't think I need any now that my daughter is just 7.	1/20/2019 9:07 PM
120	The all thing is very simple, I wonder why we should complicate life.	1/20/2019 8:42 PM
121	.	1/20/2019 7:05 PM
122	Unaware	1/19/2019 3:33 PM
123	No comment	1/19/2019 1:57 PM
124	Time with other parents who have been through say adolescence with their kids ahead of you	1/18/2019 8:37 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

125	Personally I don't think I need any extra support but I'd imagine other parents would like online supports	1/18/2019 7:57 PM
126	Info on what they should know at different ages in relation to their peers	1/18/2019 6:42 PM
127	Anything that might help	1/18/2019 6:18 PM
128	Sex is not just mechanics or animal behaviour, but a loving thing with consent.	1/18/2019 1:30 PM
129	Notes sent hme on the programme as they lern it at school to continue the conversation at home	1/18/2019 12:21 PM
130	All this is great sometimes we get info from school but it would be great to get more info without having to go looking for it. Perhaps an info pack every year.	1/18/2019 11:01 AM
131	None	1/18/2019 9:38 AM
132	More help is always good	1/18/2019 8:03 AM
133	All options should be available	1/17/2019 11:35 PM
134	All or any!	1/17/2019 11:04 PM
135	none	1/17/2019 10:59 PM
136	A	1/17/2019 10:14 PM
137	Meeting and dialogue with school on what the approach is.	1/17/2019 9:49 PM
138	Please see my comment above regarding this.	1/17/2019 9:04 PM
139	Understanding better what formal teaching is being given at school	1/17/2019 7:35 PM
140	Online learning resources for parents to use with children	1/17/2019 7:00 PM
141	None	1/17/2019 6:01 PM
142	Haven't looked for any supports	1/17/2019 5:40 PM
143	there is a wealth of information available. Mostly its about being present and listening. Information needs to be explained little by little.	1/17/2019 4:17 PM
144	All of the above	1/17/2019 3:53 PM
145	i believe every parent knows there children best and is equipped to deal with it That's not to say all parents are aware of all sexual health and relationships themselves. I think it's the parents job but also school having a small conversation with age appropriate children is welcomed	1/17/2019 2:49 PM
146	Notifying parents when these talks are happening in school so engagement can also be made at home	1/17/2019 1:03 PM
147	leaflets to come home on what the children have been talking about so we can continue the conversation.	1/17/2019 12:34 PM
148	Feedback sessions following delivering of subject to childreb	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
149	Bible, husband,	1/17/2019 10:31 AM
150	School / home meetings open forum	1/17/2019 10:07 AM
151	None of the above	1/16/2019 10:30 PM
152	face to face course for parent with a trained person in the RSE program.	1/16/2019 10:16 PM
153	Resources vary widely in terms of quality and it is difficult to assess them - guidelines on recommended books/websites would be useful. Some sort of FAQs would also help.	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
154	To be aware of what is being taught in school & when so we are prepared for questions	1/16/2019 9:26 PM
155	if teacher could inform you whatthey have covered in each term	1/16/2019 9:04 PM
156	I'm quite capable myself	1/16/2019 8:56 PM
157	I think an online quiz that parents and children should do together as homework while the teacher is discussing in school would be a good way to link the two important places of child development, home and school.	1/16/2019 8:54 PM
158	I think we should be offering you assistance as I don't think the program is in-depth enough or covers the realistic basics	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
159	books and online is already available, which is enough for me	1/16/2019 8:41 PM
160	.	1/16/2019 8:31 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

161	Better curriculum	1/16/2019 8:15 PM
162	Resources may be useful, they are not in any way essential.	1/16/2019 7:52 PM
163	anything that helps is good	1/16/2019 7:36 PM
164	1	1/16/2019 6:40 PM
165	No	1/16/2019 5:27 PM
166	All the above resources are available if one needs them.	1/16/2019 4:56 PM
167	No support required for now	1/16/2019 4:23 PM
168	Access to the curriculum so that I can stay on point with what children are learning at school.	1/16/2019 3:49 PM
169	resources supplied during school year to support classroom based learning	1/16/2019 3:41 PM
170	Video or short age appropriate movie	1/16/2019 3:28 PM
171	N/a	1/16/2019 2:56 PM
172	What's appropriate at what age level	1/16/2019 2:47 PM
173	To be more aware of the topics of discussion at school	1/16/2019 2:44 PM
174	no supports are needed	1/16/2019 2:16 PM
175	Not a parent	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
176	a close relationship with the school as to what stage they are at in teaching so we can support or assist in educatino as appropriate.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
177	I think age appropriate booklets for children to bring home and discuss with a parent they feel comfortable with is a good idea for the basics. More in depth should be first relayed to parents and then to the children.	1/16/2019 2:04 PM
178	I'm happy with the book & DVD we get from the school - busy bodies	1/16/2019 1:42 PM
179	I have age appropriate books and talk openly from an early age so they feel comfortable approach me with question	1/16/2019 1:30 PM
180	We are well equipped, what is more important is that the full message in reinforced by other sources, i.e. in school.	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
181	none	1/16/2019 12:35 PM
182	I am open to any kinds of education in helping me as a parent, since my parents were not comfortable covering this topic and we had minimal education on it in junior school growing up, I do not feel confident in approaching it appropriately with my own children	1/16/2019 12:34 PM
183	Online resource to dip into as needed	1/16/2019 12:27 PM
184	courses for families where we all learn together. Parents in Ireland were reared with a skewed understanding about sex and we as people. We too need to learn.. so as not to mess our kids up. Having us learn wuth our kids would be great	1/16/2019 12:21 PM
185	No. Happy to do it.	1/16/2019 12:19 PM
186	I would like to know topics being covered in advance so we could chat about and follow up at home	1/16/2019 11:48 AM
187	Leaflet / info packs	1/16/2019 11:43 AM
188	I think that all schools should have an agreed route that we all follow, that way all children learn the same and it is not an issue.	1/16/2019 11:43 AM
189	Giving parents as many opportunities as possible to upsklll in this area & to be in align in what's being taught in school	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
190	Overview of the course content given to the children so both the school and parents are "on the same page"	1/16/2019 10:57 AM
191	A seminar with opportunity to discuss and meet with other parents	1/16/2019 9:41 AM
192	Talks from experts in that field	1/15/2019 10:32 PM
193	Not really	1/15/2019 9:33 PM
194	Feel well equipped	1/15/2019 7:54 PM
195	Feedback from teachers on what course entails and the general (expected or otherwise) reaction from the children.	1/15/2019 7:35 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

196	No. A copy of the curriculum would be sufficient	1/15/2019 6:57 PM
197	Age appropriate online resources to further support the parental conversations	1/15/2019 6:56 PM
198	N	1/15/2019 6:44 PM
199	either homework or some other interaction with the curriculum at the time as it is being implemented.	1/15/2019 5:57 PM
200	none	1/15/2019 4:59 PM
201	no other	1/15/2019 4:34 PM
202	no, I think this is something that is taught through example at this age (up to age 10)	1/15/2019 3:54 PM
203	I found the NPC RSE course for parents very useful - organised by school PA	1/15/2019 3:29 PM

## Q8 How does your child's school keep you informed about Relationships and Sexuality Education? Please tick all that apply

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I was unaware but this maybe my own fault	1/26/2019 8:24 PM
2	They had AIDS West come for a three week period to deliver some sex r to my child's 5th class last year. But that was it. No mention of sex Ed or any other supports for kids ever! Overall ,quite dissapointing.	1/26/2019 7:48 PM
3	Not interested	1/26/2019 6:28 PM
4	I am not aware if the school has information about this, although I assume they might? I am not aware of it however.	1/26/2019 10:36 AM
5	my child might be too young for them to communicate yet.	1/26/2019 7:01 AM
6	S	1/25/2019 11:41 PM
7	Cant recall any info	1/25/2019 11:03 PM
8	Classroom display	1/25/2019 9:05 PM
9	It has not been raised yet, possibly because the children are in Junior classes.	1/25/2019 8:51 PM

Other responses to Question 8 continue on page 58

## Review of RSE Curriculum

10	Looked up curriculum online myself, school didn't provide any info on the different strands.	1/25/2019 7:18 PM
11	Information evenings	1/25/2019 6:27 PM
12	admission form	1/25/2019 5:34 PM
13	email	1/25/2019 3:00 PM
14	I havent heard about anything yet	1/25/2019 2:53 PM
15	Not aware	1/25/2019 2:45 PM
16	Children have not started the Programme yet	1/25/2019 2:40 PM
17	Not yet	1/25/2019 12:45 PM
18	School included information in their admission form	1/25/2019 12:08 PM
19	It's not relevant yet	1/25/2019 12:07 PM
20	I never hear anything b4 now	1/25/2019 10:58 AM
21	Letter requesting permission in sixth class. That's all	1/25/2019 10:57 AM
22	Unsure	1/25/2019 10:43 AM
23	Information seems adhoc	1/25/2019 10:40 AM
24	Have not been informed of any education on this matter yet	1/25/2019 10:37 AM
25	They includeed it in the admission form	1/25/2019 10:34 AM
26	No communication so far	1/25/2019 10:10 AM
27	Work she brings home	1/25/2019 9:32 AM
28	I received a memo and when I told them I was very uncomfortable with my 4 year old being told about penis and vulvas I was just told it was part of the curriculum.	1/25/2019 12:05 AM
29	Notes home	1/24/2019 11:49 PM
30	Usually notes home but can be sometimes short notice	1/24/2019 10:34 PM
31	Noted/mentioned in PTA Meeting Minutes	1/24/2019 9:05 PM
32	first time i recieved anything regarding sexuality	1/24/2019 8:55 PM
33	They haven't yet, but i'd Say they will	1/24/2019 7:58 PM
34	Only informed of 'sex talk' in 5th and 6th	1/24/2019 7:26 PM
35	Basically I don't want it to teach my kids in that age.once she will be higher school than will teach at home.	1/24/2019 7:00 PM
36	I rarely hear about it but when I do, it's usually in letter I believe.	1/24/2019 6:43 PM
37	Information meeting	1/24/2019 6:18 PM
38	School work is sent home to be signed.	1/24/2019 4:10 PM
39	She is in junior infants but general correspondence is by email and text	1/24/2019 3:44 PM
40	Parent's talk	1/24/2019 3:21 PM
41	Not sure as my child has just started in junior infants	1/24/2019 3:16 PM
42	in the general meeting school menstioned about sex aducation	1/24/2019 12:30 PM
43	Handouts to children	1/24/2019 12:17 PM
44	There is a folder in the school that can be accessed anytime by parents.	1/24/2019 11:37 AM
45	n/a	1/24/2019 10:56 AM
46	parents meeting with the educaters of what will be covered	1/24/2019 10:07 AM
47	none	1/24/2019 9:55 AM
48	Have not received information to date but child has only started this year	1/24/2019 9:47 AM
49	I'm new to the school	1/24/2019 8:49 AM
50	My daughter has come home with snippets of information but at no stage have I been informed prior to the teaching or about the content so I can't answer below question.	1/23/2019 11:40 PM
51	nothing yet	1/23/2019 11:09 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

52	Current teacher sends sternly letters	1/23/2019 10:54 PM
53	handouts sent home	1/23/2019 10:20 PM
54	What is going on here? Is this really happening? I did not get any info!	1/23/2019 10:18 PM
55	school arranged parents group meeting	1/23/2019 10:06 PM
56	No info	1/23/2019 10:00 PM
57	I cant s	1/23/2019 9:55 PM
58	Email	1/23/2019 9:37 PM
59	None	1/23/2019 9:27 PM
60	Not sure it's taught in senior infants	1/23/2019 9:07 PM
61	Just a consent form for Stay Safe upon enrolling in the school	1/23/2019 8:51 PM
62	a	1/23/2019 8:47 PM
63	Can't remember	1/23/2019 8:25 PM
64	probably email, but I do not always read every email very thorough	1/23/2019 7:51 PM
65	I can't remember having one.	1/23/2019 6:52 PM
66	Not sure	1/23/2019 6:46 PM
67	We had an information evening for our older daughter	1/23/2019 6:44 PM
68	Some information has been sent home with the child's homework.	1/23/2019 6:16 PM
69	We need more awareness	1/23/2019 6:10 PM
70	Meetings with parents	1/23/2019 5:42 PM
71	Not sure, email?	1/23/2019 5:21 PM
72	It doesn't.	1/23/2019 5:07 PM
73	because there is thankfully not education like that yet.	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
74	i dont remember i have been informed.	1/23/2019 3:02 PM
75	Don't think there's been into but maybe I missed it or it's on the website?	1/23/2019 2:58 PM
76	Homework	1/23/2019 2:35 PM
77	Child is in junior infants so still all new	1/23/2019 2:27 PM
78	I have received consent forms for certain parts of RSE	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
79	Not sure if it's started yet in JI in my daughters school. My sons school send home booklets as part of homework.	1/23/2019 1:44 PM
80	There was a parents evening for 5th/6th class parents to meet the RSE facilitator.	1/23/2019 12:52 PM
81	I'm not sure if I have not received information because my child may not be old enough for the curriculum.	1/23/2019 12:44 PM
82	There was a reference to RSE on one of the newsletters a couple of years ago, but I don't recall seeing anything since.	1/23/2019 12:38 PM
83	only 6th class parents receive information	1/23/2019 12:34 PM
84	Im not sure if ive ever heard from school	1/23/2019 12:15 PM
85	sometimes they use newsletter to speak about relationship but never heard anything about Sexuality	1/23/2019 11:53 AM
86	Very poor communication from school .	1/23/2019 11:51 AM
87	Occasional emails.	1/23/2019 11:49 AM
88	more detail would be great	1/23/2019 11:41 AM
89	In person	1/23/2019 11:40 AM
90	Something in homework sometimes	1/23/2019 11:32 AM
91	We get notice that they are starting a programme but very little information on what the content will be.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
92	Opportunities to talk with the teacher	1/23/2019 11:31 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

93	My child keeps me informed.	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
94	we have to sign homework	1/23/2019 11:20 AM
95	Nothing received to date.	1/23/2019 11:12 AM
96	Haven't received anything yet but I presume it will be through email.	1/23/2019 11:08 AM
97	We only started in Sept, it hasn't come up but I would expect to hear through the email newsletter	1/23/2019 10:55 AM
98	E	1/23/2019 10:46 AM
99	Not sure, we get a mix of emails and texts about various topics	1/23/2019 10:42 AM
100	Is the school currently running such classes?	1/23/2019 10:41 AM
101	It does not	1/23/2019 10:36 AM
102	Meeting/briefing in the school	1/23/2019 10:34 AM
103	Only when I find worksheets in school bag on stay safe	1/23/2019 10:25 AM
104	Open communication	1/23/2019 10:23 AM
105	I don't know, was discussed at agm	1/23/2019 10:23 AM
106	They send out work sheets that the child has taken part in over the 9 week course. We are not told in advance that they talks/classes are going ahead.	1/23/2019 10:22 AM
107	Hold talks	1/23/2019 10:18 AM
108	Haven't been informed yet	1/23/2019 10:07 AM
109	Information is limited in terms of the Content of the education programme	1/23/2019 9:52 AM
110	Can not recall any such infomriaton but not long in school	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
111	Not sure yet as only in J.I	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
112	for the 6th class programme we were informed about the talk from Accord but this was only held in 4th class with no further information as to what would be covered in 6th. I think for these exteranal talk that have a lot more detail the parents should be allowed see the content of the programme. I asked for this from Accord but was told they could not supply it.	1/23/2019 9:43 AM
113	Nothing yet but that might be because she's in junior infants	1/23/2019 7:52 AM
114	Don't know	1/23/2019 7:42 AM
115	As my child has only started in school I am not very familiar with the process or how the school communicates their approach with parents.	1/22/2019 11:29 PM
116	Handouts/copies of Papers home in school bag	1/22/2019 11:24 PM
117	Email message	1/22/2019 11:11 PM
118	Not sure about sexuality, didn't read anything from school about sexuality, I don't know if they inform about that matter	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
119	Unsure as haven't looked really into it, may be on their website.	1/22/2019 10:57 PM
120	Just a letter it is happening	1/22/2019 10:36 PM
121	Only got one letter informing us that the class would be having the various RSE talks and what they were about in 4th class but I've heard nothing since and that same child is in 6th.	1/22/2019 10:35 PM
122	They inform us at Parent teacher meeting	1/22/2019 10:09 PM
123	It hasn't come up yet	1/22/2019 9:45 PM
124	However it is not very clear on the communication	1/22/2019 9:37 PM
125	Classes may be too young at this stage so not aware	1/22/2019 9:22 PM
126	A meeting in the school briefing re programme	1/22/2019 9:19 PM
127	Not sure	1/22/2019 9:11 PM
128	Perhaps my children are young .. I am not sure at what age this important aspect of the curriculum is taught.	1/22/2019 9:08 PM
129	RSE Not started in school yet	1/22/2019 9:06 PM
130	Letter	1/22/2019 8:56 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

131	So far we have gotten letter from teacher.. no sexuality Ed yet, unfortunately as I believe we should be teaching consent etc.age appropriately, from juniors	1/22/2019 8:54 PM
132	Have had no correspondence regarding this yet	1/22/2019 8:40 PM
133	I haven't received anything but I may have missed it	1/22/2019 8:35 PM
134	Not sure yet	1/22/2019 8:33 PM
135	Not sure. Haven't received info as yet	1/22/2019 8:32 PM
136	I have not signed consent for sexual education as I don't think it is appropriate for 1st class pupils	1/22/2019 8:27 PM
137	Only tell us about the stay safe prog.	1/22/2019 8:11 PM
138	Nothing about it yet	1/22/2019 8:00 PM
139	Dojo app	1/22/2019 6:44 PM
140	We are told that the children are engaging with a programme and given a link to access further information.	1/22/2019 6:26 PM
141	We got a PDF information on the weeks lessons. The teacher also placed pictures on the class app	1/22/2019 6:24 PM
142	I am not sure whether there is or not information regarding the topic on the school website, but I am aware of the programme being scheduled for teaching from the school calendar.	1/22/2019 6:03 PM
143	During class update meetings with parents	1/22/2019 5:56 PM
144	Meeting for parents pre course	1/22/2019 5:21 PM
145	Unknown	1/22/2019 5:17 PM
146	Not that I'm aware anyway	1/22/2019 5:12 PM
147	Not received any info to date	1/22/2019 5:11 PM
148	An email with link to ask me to complete this survey if the first and only contact I have had from the school on this topic.	1/22/2019 5:02 PM
149	Haven't heard of it but may have missed some communication.	1/22/2019 4:56 PM
150	Not really sure as have not received anything as yet	1/22/2019 4:10 PM
151	Just started school	1/22/2019 3:34 PM
152	I don't recall being told directly by the school, unless it's to do with bullying etc	1/22/2019 1:14 PM
153	Havent had any information on this	1/22/2019 11:23 AM
154	i dont know	1/22/2019 10:45 AM
155	though school homework or journal	1/22/2019 10:25 AM
156	I have no idea of the content and only remember signing a consent form once with sparse details. I am unhappy about this as I consider it a huge part of my role as a parent to lead this discussion with my children.	1/22/2019 9:35 AM
157	We have a copy of their sphe programme	1/22/2019 8:06 AM
158	meeting	1/22/2019 6:53 AM
159	Haven't had communication yet	1/22/2019 12:54 AM
160	Very little info given to parents from school. Really just a notice for the start of the week but nothing else.	1/21/2019 11:46 PM
161	It is discussed at a meeting at the start of the school year	1/21/2019 11:24 PM
162	I haven't been made aware of any yet as I think my Child may be too young to be receiving it	1/21/2019 10:50 PM
163	Curriculum meeting in September	1/21/2019 10:35 PM
164	Not sure this counts for us just yet	1/21/2019 10:23 PM
165	Only stay safe programme in first class	1/21/2019 10:12 PM
166	It's not something I've been looking out for until recently so I don't want to say they don't keep me informed, they may have communicated and I didn't read it	1/21/2019 10:02 PM
167	Meetings	1/21/2019 9:54 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

168	Not applicable at junior infants.	1/21/2019 9:45 PM
169	At a parent meeting also	1/21/2019 9:27 PM
170	Parent information meeting	1/21/2019 9:16 PM
171	Additional email communication	1/21/2019 9:00 PM
172	Notes from teachers.	1/21/2019 8:59 PM
173	unknown yet	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
174	I think perhaps the program doesn't stay until they're older because the school keeps us very informed about Stay She so it would be strange if they weren't keeping us informed of this. However it would be useful to be told when they enter junior infants what age/class this program will start.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
175	talks	1/21/2019 8:52 PM
176	Meeting at start of the year	1/21/2019 8:34 PM
177	Parents' meeting	1/21/2019 8:12 PM
178	Talks	1/21/2019 8:03 PM
179	But not a newsletter, just to class parents	1/21/2019 7:26 PM
180	Parents meetings	1/21/2019 6:19 PM
181	If they are it's not very obvious or clear how it's done.	1/21/2019 5:44 PM
182	Topics and dates, but not content	1/21/2019 5:38 PM
183	specific email about the subject not in newsletter	1/21/2019 4:25 PM
184	I don't know. Don't think I have had communication from the school about this yet.	1/21/2019 4:18 PM
185	Might get a sheet handout now and again but really not sufficient. Would love to be able to do online course.	1/21/2019 4:03 PM
186	Meeting	1/21/2019 2:58 PM
187	I'm not aware of anything the school does in this area	1/21/2019 2:56 PM
188	N/A	1/21/2019 2:44 PM
189	not aware of having received info on that	1/21/2019 2:31 PM
190	Not sure.	1/21/2019 2:27 PM
191	N/a	1/21/2019 2:22 PM
192	Introduction at the start of the year.	1/21/2019 2:17 PM
193	They do hold a meeting in 5th and 6th class and they do text to let us know when the main piece is being done but there is no information on ongoing education	1/21/2019 2:07 PM
194	We get told once a year when the teacher will be discussing these topics.	1/21/2019 2:03 PM
195	RSE policy on website; other than that I have only been made aware of a couple of Stay Safe lessons, nothing was communicated on sexual education	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
196	Emails re Stay Safe	1/21/2019 1:38 PM
197	I am unaware of how I'm informed of this, if I am	1/21/2019 1:31 PM
198	email (not a newsletter)	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
199	I'm not sure that I've heard too much if it's been taught?? My 5th classer has 'the talk' coming up so I expect we'll hear before hand. Parents should be made familiar with what's being taught when it is being taught.	1/21/2019 1:28 PM
200	Depends on the school we have one in RETNS and another in Loreto	1/21/2019 12:56 PM
201	I don't recall seeing much, if anything?	1/21/2019 12:55 PM
202	As mentioned only a brief letter asking parents to confirm willingness for this area to be covered in school.	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
203	Typed News letter at beginning of year. I do not feel that this is enough and would like to know what stage this information is at on a more regular basis.	1/21/2019 12:33 PM
204	I do not know	1/21/2019 12:23 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

205	Very short email	1/21/2019 12:04 PM
206	We review some worksheets that the kids do in school	1/21/2019 12:01 PM
207	class information evenings	1/21/2019 10:11 AM
208	I'm not sure if I have ever spoken about this with LETNS as Leon only started in the school last September	1/21/2019 8:54 AM
209	So far nothing about RSE	1/21/2019 2:48 AM
210	The child comes home with news	1/21/2019 12:17 AM
211	There is one talk in sixth class and we get an email notification to opt in or opt out of this talk.	1/21/2019 12:11 AM
212	Sheets brought home from what was covered	1/20/2019 10:16 PM
213	Hasn't come up yet, so unaware	1/20/2019 9:06 PM
214	Email	1/20/2019 12:57 PM
215	The Stay Safe programme is only just starting in my child's school. So far a letter has been sent home with a website address for more information but that is all.	1/20/2019 11:23 AM
216	This is my first contact as child is only in first class	1/20/2019 8:31 AM
217	School meeting once a year	1/19/2019 10:04 PM
218	Don't hear much	1/19/2019 9:26 PM
219	Attend Accord's parents information evening.	1/19/2019 6:59 PM
220	Part of awareness meetings	1/19/2019 3:05 PM
221	Whatsapp	1/19/2019 1:57 PM
222	not come up yet other than consent form	1/19/2019 8:22 AM
223	my child has only started school. in junior infants	1/19/2019 1:52 AM
224	Parents association	1/18/2019 9:35 PM
225	I'm not sure whatever comes home in his homework is what i am aware of	1/18/2019 5:06 PM
226	Email before the class takes place	1/18/2019 4:56 PM
227	At the start of the school year the teacher holds a class meeting with parents informing them of what the child will learn that year.	1/18/2019 4:12 PM
228	I dont know, they probably do, my wife usually gets the letters in his bag.	1/18/2019 4:10 PM
229	Minimal description of content covered to date.	1/18/2019 3:33 PM
230	n/a started this year in junior infants.	1/18/2019 2:45 PM
231	Randomly, by sheets that come home in the school bag	1/18/2019 1:32 PM
232	Notice the odd time that the ids take part in it thats it...I am unaware of the content or when it's carried out	1/18/2019 12:21 PM
233	And homework and discussions with the kids	1/18/2019 11:05 AM
234	haven't heard anything but my son is just in senior infants	1/18/2019 11:02 AM
235	As for earlier q	1/18/2019 11:01 AM
236	Not applicable at moment	1/18/2019 10:55 AM
237	There may be others, but I only see the mailings.	1/18/2019 10:26 AM
238	We haven't heard yet but it most likely will be a letter	1/18/2019 10:20 AM
239	By letter, I mean a letter home in the schoolbag from the child's teacher.	1/18/2019 10:05 AM
240	I don't know if the school keeps me informed	1/18/2019 9:38 AM
241	Parents are involved in delivering Stay Safe curriculum, part of homework.	1/18/2019 8:59 AM
242	Too high level	1/18/2019 8:03 AM
243	I	1/18/2019 7:21 AM
244	Perhaps the school HAS informed me but I haven't seen it...	1/18/2019 2:00 AM
245	Nothing so far	1/17/2019 11:40 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

246	Can't remember.	1/17/2019 10:56 PM
247	Haven't been informed as yet	1/17/2019 10:38 PM
248	Meeting	1/17/2019 10:20 PM
249	Dont remember being informed before	1/17/2019 10:16 PM
250	Kids come home with letters after topic was discussed ....and not before, as expected.	1/17/2019 10:13 PM
251	Our school invited all parents into school to see all the material to be used during sex education class	1/17/2019 9:56 PM
252	Probably didn't apply yet	1/17/2019 8:39 PM
253	I have received any information yet	1/17/2019 8:25 PM
254	Does not apply yet	1/17/2019 7:57 PM
255	This could be as my child is only in Snr Infants... and also relates to below	1/17/2019 7:15 PM
256	I expect that they will inform me in due time. My child has only started in Junior Infannts	1/17/2019 6:48 PM
257	Rest don't even know	1/17/2019 6:01 PM
258	I am not sure, since my son just started junior infance last september.	1/17/2019 4:27 PM
259	We had no information until we were told to keep our child out of school if we didn't agree with Accord providing the RSE course.	1/17/2019 4:17 PM
260	note home to say happening but no detail on content	1/17/2019 4:05 PM
261	Maybe they do on website. Reluctant to criticise great school.	1/17/2019 3:54 PM
262	Presentation from Teacher about curriculum	1/17/2019 3:43 PM
263	Not yet anyway	1/17/2019 3:29 PM
264	I have not heard anything about it as of yet	1/17/2019 3:15 PM
265	Email	1/17/2019 2:45 PM
266	Haven't had any correspondence regarding RSE yet apart from the enrollment form.	1/17/2019 2:44 PM
267	No information yet.	1/17/2019 2:22 PM
268	It might be mentioned at parent & teacher meeting	1/17/2019 2:12 PM
269	Generally hear via email although have not received any yet related to this	1/17/2019 1:58 PM
270	Possibly by email I don't recall seeing anything	1/17/2019 1:46 PM
271	Not sure..haven't received anything to date	1/17/2019 12:52 PM
272	i imagine when my kids are near the age they would keep me informed	1/17/2019 12:51 PM
273	Not heard from them regarding this area	1/17/2019 12:38 PM
274	I am not sure I have received anything on this subject	1/17/2019 12:25 PM
275	N/a	1/17/2019 12:19 PM
276	notes in homework journal	1/17/2019 12:17 PM
277	they send letter to the kid , if we forgot to check the bag then we won't be able to know what's going on.	1/17/2019 12:13 PM
278	It was mentioned in newsletter that the course was starting but not what is entailed	1/17/2019 12:08 PM
279	Not sure!	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
280	Not at all.	1/17/2019 11:40 AM
281	not aware of course in school...	1/17/2019 11:30 AM
282	I dont know	1/17/2019 10:39 AM
283	I have wish to see and hear more what my child do in school....like for example this week we did/will do this or will not do this, we learnt aboat that....so no...i am not happy at all about Gaelscoil na mi in Ashbourne.	1/17/2019 10:31 AM
284	Information is usually quite vague as to the content of what's been taught	1/17/2019 9:19 AM
285	We get a letter to say that they will be covering the subject but not a detailed plan of what will be involved	1/17/2019 9:11 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

286	A few years back they organized an information evening. They should probably do that every year	1/17/2019 8:48 AM
287	During PT Meetings and info in bags to sign	1/17/2019 8:42 AM
288	I am not aware of any information form the school	1/17/2019 7:55 AM
289	My child tells me	1/17/2019 7:23 AM
290	Dojo	1/17/2019 7:09 AM
291	I	1/16/2019 11:50 PM
292	Told about it in the general class meeting	1/16/2019 10:32 PM
293	mentioned @ PT meeting that would be a talk that year & the general gist of the topic	1/16/2019 10:08 PM
294	in 5th class parents are given a chat	1/16/2019 10:00 PM
295	Not much information on content of the Prog but we are given option to discuss further with teachers	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
296	Not sure as only in junior infants, probably by email	1/16/2019 9:35 PM
297	Work sheets as part of home work	1/16/2019 9:30 PM
298	Not advised as yes expect this is due to age of my children	1/16/2019 9:26 PM
299	I'm not sure	1/16/2019 9:12 PM
300	N/A yet	1/16/2019 8:59 PM
301	Not as yet, but he in only in Junior infants	1/16/2019 8:56 PM
302	When we're meeting	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
303	Face to face yearly meeting	1/16/2019 7:48 PM
304	not that im aware of?	1/16/2019 7:36 PM
305	meeting	1/16/2019 7:20 PM
306	Letter once	1/16/2019 7:09 PM
307	Not sure that I am informed	1/16/2019 6:59 PM
308	Invited to 6th class meeting	1/16/2019 6:48 PM
309	Children not at appropriate age	1/16/2019 5:58 PM
310	Homework items	1/16/2019 5:56 PM
311	does not	1/16/2019 5:56 PM
312	sometimes we are not informed for example when stay safe being discussed	1/16/2019 5:48 PM
313	The school should not have to inform a parent if children are being taught to NCCA guidelines.	1/16/2019 5:41 PM
314	Invitation to evening meeting and meeting in september	1/16/2019 5:21 PM
315	Not sure	1/16/2019 5:18 PM
316	Parent teacher meetings	1/16/2019 5:08 PM
317	Homework notes, parent teacher meeting	1/16/2019 5:07 PM
318	Just one email so far.	1/16/2019 5:03 PM
319	The school is excellent at keeping us informed on all issues.	1/16/2019 4:56 PM
320	Print newsletter	1/16/2019 4:25 PM
321	Communication seems to be improving recently which is great. Previous years not much was shared.	1/16/2019 4:23 PM
322	I haven't heard anything yet	1/16/2019 4:14 PM
323	Parent Teacher meeting	1/16/2019 4:08 PM
324	Note home, such as commencement of stay safe program	1/16/2019 4:07 PM
325	Email note	1/16/2019 3:51 PM
326	Too early to say	1/16/2019 3:51 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

327	School informed us that it would form party of the curriculum ongoing until 6th class. So fat no updates from school	1/16/2019 3:49 PM
328	Parents Assoc	1/16/2019 3:31 PM
329	I dont recall getting any informatio from the school on this subject.	1/16/2019 2:58 PM
330	conversation with teacher	1/16/2019 2:57 PM
331	Note	1/16/2019 2:50 PM
332	through the homework instruction	1/16/2019 2:47 PM
333	Meetings on specific programs	1/16/2019 2:46 PM
334	More details on the topic would be appreciated rather than briefly informing parents that children will be doing RSE	1/16/2019 2:44 PM
335	????	1/16/2019 2:40 PM
336	It doesn't. It's only pupils in 6th Class that get the talk and their parents	1/16/2019 2:38 PM
337	only to say it's happening in class	1/16/2019 2:23 PM
338	I'm not aware of such information	1/16/2019 2:17 PM
339	Not a parent	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
340	Printed sheets to be discussed and signed. Parent teacher meeting.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
341	We got a page at the beginning of the course. I d love to get updates more often.	1/16/2019 1:56 PM
342	This may be because my children have yet to reach the age when this is focused on?	1/16/2019 1:55 PM
343	Very uninformative letters	1/16/2019 1:53 PM
344	Has not risen for me yet	1/16/2019 1:53 PM
345	not sure	1/16/2019 1:49 PM
346	My child is in junior infants	1/16/2019 1:46 PM
347	.	1/16/2019 1:44 PM
348	My child is not an appropriate age yet so I have not been informed yet.	1/16/2019 1:43 PM
349	Aladdin app	1/16/2019 1:42 PM
350	I don't know	1/16/2019 1:39 PM
351	Email from class teacher	1/16/2019 1:38 PM
352	Im not aware of how the school keeps parents informed of this topic.	1/16/2019 1:36 PM
353	Mentioned at curriculum meeting	1/16/2019 1:34 PM
354	Information night for parents	1/16/2019 1:33 PM
355	We've not been at the school long enough to judge	1/16/2019 1:30 PM
356	This is the first time I have had any correspondance re RSE	1/16/2019 1:28 PM
357	they don't really.	1/16/2019 1:28 PM
358	It's possibly on the school website, I don't really look at it	1/16/2019 1:25 PM
359	Note from teacher	1/16/2019 1:23 PM
360	First I've heard of RSE but we are new to the school	1/16/2019 1:23 PM
361	Too early only junior infants	1/16/2019 1:16 PM
362	Occasionally work is brought home and i can see what is neing discussed	1/16/2019 1:13 PM
363	At parent teacher link meetings	1/16/2019 1:05 PM
364	Meetings to update parents	1/16/2019 12:58 PM
365	Meeting with parents	1/16/2019 12:57 PM
366	Our children will tell at home what they have done in school, or the teacher might explain face to face what they have been working on, but we don't get information directly from the school as such about Relationships and sexuality Education in a formal way.	1/16/2019 12:55 PM
367	Send home stay safe worksheet pages once completed.	1/16/2019 12:51 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

368	Don't know	1/16/2019 12:49 PM
369	They don't	1/16/2019 12:48 PM
370	School Facebook page(closed group for parents only)	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
371	Very upset the school does not let me know	1/16/2019 12:45 PM
372	I think this must be through their website, but I have not checked it.	1/16/2019 12:35 PM
373	We sadly were informed two days before sex ed class in the form of a consent form from the body that had were giving it. Since then we have been kept informed of the attempts etc to find a new practitioner for this year via the app and newsletter	1/16/2019 12:32 PM
374	Handout comes home with the child (not in an envelope) but I feel the information is left pretty vague given the topics being discussed, and perhaps a handout the children can freely read themselves isn't the most appropriate way to inform parents of these things.	1/16/2019 12:31 PM
375	Paper newsletter	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
376	Usually just get a text to inform us when it's happening. Parents given a great talk on it as well last year though.	1/16/2019 12:25 PM
377	Only through homework sent home	1/16/2019 12:22 PM
378	with work kids have completed... basic worksheets	1/16/2019 12:21 PM
379	First email I have ever received was last week ! My eldest is in 2nd class	1/16/2019 12:07 PM
380	Policy doc	1/16/2019 11:59 AM
381	A letter extremely rarely	1/16/2019 11:46 AM
382	we received letters home to show that the stay safe programme had been covered in class and the topics covered but never receive anything for Relationships and Sexuality Education.	1/16/2019 11:44 AM
383	I have not anything yet but the school is usually excellent at keeping parents informed of all topics	1/16/2019 11:43 AM
384	email from Teacher of timing of class. I had to request what content is being covered and when. Information not freely made available.	1/16/2019 11:37 AM
385	meeting	1/16/2019 11:33 AM
386	Only when getting the talk in 5th and 6th class	1/16/2019 11:32 AM
387	The school is very poor at communicating about this area	1/16/2019 11:31 AM
388	I have had no correspondence from school	1/16/2019 11:28 AM
389	Not sure if anything specifically	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
390	Only if page in homework	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
391	In policy documents and app notifications.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
392	I am happy with the communication from the school, I'm not happy with the content that's being taught, I feel it is outdated & ineffective for what children are facing now. Children are more willing to learn & ask questions within the classroom as part of their lessons., than sitting down with parents.. children find that awkward & esp if the parents are being awkward themselves based on their own experience, bias or ideas it can lead to further confusion & lack of information for young people at a time.. that is naturally curious time.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
393	PA Meetings	1/16/2019 11:10 AM
394	Don't know	1/16/2019 11:07 AM
395	Not sure	1/16/2019 11:04 AM
396	The email received today was the first on the subject.	1/16/2019 11:03 AM
397	During PTM	1/16/2019 11:03 AM
398	Only about the sex education aspect	1/16/2019 11:00 AM
399	homework	1/16/2019 10:55 AM
400	Send home worksheets	1/16/2019 10:54 AM
401	Usually keeps informed by letter sent home, but haven't been informed yet about ongoing or beginning of sexuality education.	1/16/2019 10:46 AM
402	Presentation and handout about curriculum at the start of the year.	1/16/2019 7:38 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

403	Documentation sent home with child	1/16/2019 6:59 AM
404	I have not heard anything thus far	1/15/2019 10:39 PM
405	Newsletter	1/15/2019 10:32 PM
406	It doesn't	1/15/2019 10:24 PM
407	Not sure	1/15/2019 10:09 PM
408	Email letter	1/15/2019 9:29 PM
409	no information from school	1/15/2019 9:22 PM
410	Letter sometimes, but no detail	1/15/2019 7:57 PM
411	Unknown	1/15/2019 7:55 PM
412	She's only in junior infants so they may not have done this yet. I haven't been informed of anything anyway.	1/15/2019 7:54 PM
413	I have had no communication from the school on this topic, maybe they do it in older classes	1/15/2019 7:46 PM
414	Not clear on what has been communicated.	1/15/2019 7:35 PM
415	Only when older child has relevant homework	1/15/2019 6:56 PM
416	Class teacher communications abd childs homework	1/15/2019 6:50 PM
417	Don't remember	1/15/2019 6:46 PM
418	N	1/15/2019 6:44 PM
419	Email	1/15/2019 6:41 PM
420	W	1/15/2019 6:32 PM
421	Not sure, this is our first year and youngest child.	1/15/2019 5:57 PM
422	Have not been informed to date.	1/15/2019 4:43 PM
423	Maybe not appropriate age yet	1/15/2019 4:31 PM
424	a permission slip is sent home and this also sets out a time when parents are allowed to review the material that will be taught	1/15/2019 4:13 PM
425	Have not been informed	1/15/2019 3:53 PM
426	Sometimes it's mentioned in homework. The PA ran a talk on this.	1/15/2019 3:29 PM
427	It is very vague. I have had texts in the past and letters but I am not really sure of what the policy is. But maybe I am just ignorant of it.	1/15/2019 3:26 PM

**Q11 If your child's school were to consult parents on RSE course content, how would you like them to do so? Please tick options that most strongly appeal to you**

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Don't want it	1/26/2019 6:28 PM
2	letter of choice to decide whether I agree or not to it	1/25/2019 10:44 PM
3	A full outline of exactly what is going to be discussed should be passed on to parents. And if parents have any concern they should be able to liaise directly with parents. The information in the program should be based on facts and not be subject to religious bias	1/25/2019 8:51 PM
4	Information evening	1/25/2019 6:27 PM
5	A letter or pack sent home, to coincide with what they are teaching, that way you can follow at home what is being taught in class	1/25/2019 2:53 PM
6	Letter	1/25/2019 10:37 AM
7	I would be concerned that a group meeting could have negative consequences.	1/25/2019 8:52 AM
8	Just sent us the details of the content	1/25/2019 12:13 AM
9	opportunity to comment on the content of material and resources used	1/24/2019 11:11 PM
10	Mi	1/24/2019 9:47 PM

Other responses to Question 11 continue on page 70.

## Review of RSE Curriculum

11	Text	1/24/2019 7:38 PM
12	u	1/24/2019 11:48 AM
13	.	1/24/2019 11:21 AM
14	I will definitely attend that course and incoureg more people to do so	1/24/2019 9:58 AM
15	Need to explain my views based on my culture and religion	1/24/2019 7:25 AM
16	If?!! They SHOULD before they teach anything. I would want to be consulted about a class and it's contents before its taught even, so I can have the option of withdrawing my children from class if its inappropriate and not what the State deems inappropriate. My husband and I are our children's Primary Educators. Not the State or the Church..	1/24/2019 1:47 AM
17	would be nice to know the content	1/23/2019 10:28 PM
18	Schools shouldn't teach rse. This is the parent's responsibility.	1/23/2019 9:27 PM
19	By letter as i don't always see my email	1/23/2019 5:31 PM
20	Send home sheet with topics being raised and have comment boxes available so parents can write comment about issues that are very new in our society for all, parents, teachers and students. Genderisations is a very new topic to all, and wording in favour of it or not should be carefully selected.	1/23/2019 5:07 PM
21	and explain to them, my girl is not ready fur such an awful learnig.	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
22	Any or all of selected. Just needs to be more open, inclusive and collaborative between parents and teachers.	1/23/2019 1:44 PM
23	I'm not sure what should be discussed, so happy to let experts lead the way.	1/23/2019 12:02 PM
24	I have no problem is schoold deciding how to teach RSE, IF Rse is teacheed in a modern way and without any gender and religious Bias	1/23/2019 11:53 AM
25	I guess I would like to be sure it's not religious based and that LBGQ etc... is treated as normal sexual behaviour and as such part of the talk. I would be unhappy to discover this was not the case, surely 10% min of class fits into this category.	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
26	Approach a market research company conduct professional research.	1/23/2019 10:42 AM
27	. Don't consult me	1/23/2019 10:36 AM
28	A	1/23/2019 10:36 AM
29	Textaparent app	1/23/2019 10:18 AM
30	Any of the above ticked	1/23/2019 6:47 AM
31	Text	1/23/2019 1:05 AM
32	Written circular	1/22/2019 11:27 PM
33	Hi	1/22/2019 11:25 PM
34	I would like it to be much more a part of normal class however as school is religious run I want to know what is in research classes. I donly not want them to believe anything is wrong, ie gay sexuality, so this is only reason I want to know syllabus	1/22/2019 8:54 PM
35	Do not involve parents association I believe it would be wholly inappropriate	1/22/2019 8:50 PM
36	Not social media	1/22/2019 8:32 PM
37	Highlights of the curriculum to be provided at the start of each year.	1/22/2019 8:01 PM
38	I trust school to decide, probably email	1/22/2019 7:54 PM
39	a letter home would suffice	1/22/2019 7:20 PM
40	All the above	1/22/2019 6:15 PM
41	Online app	1/22/2019 6:04 PM
42	Letter	1/22/2019 5:45 PM
43	Letter	1/22/2019 5:44 PM
44	note home	1/22/2019 5:41 PM
45	Whats App group	1/22/2019 5:17 PM
46	.	1/22/2019 11:31 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

47	I don't think it's hugely important or always necessary to hear what individual parents think about a specific item on the curriculum, i.e. very conservative or ignorant parents shouldn't have an impact on what is taught through the national agreed curriculum. I do think the topic should be discussed way more openly, but can't imagine that would be done, any discussions at school level could lead to huge problems between parents and teachers, so better that the curriculum is agreed at national level.	1/22/2019 8:06 AM
48	A mini-training in the course content and delivery	1/22/2019 12:54 AM
49	Alladin	1/21/2019 10:42 PM
50	.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
51	Offering parents to attend an RSE talk like the one that is given to primary school children with a discussion and Q&A opportunity	1/21/2019 5:38 PM
52	While I wish to be consulted about many aspects of my child's education I fundamentally believe that RSE is a core subject and a national curriculum should be agreed and delivered in every school in Ireland without exception to ethos and patronage of school or religious belief of individual parents	1/21/2019 4:18 PM
53	Written information on the contents of the curriculum for RSE	1/21/2019 3:58 PM
54	I feel the same information should be given in all schools - if you have parents input from every school there is a chance that some kids will miss out. This should be done at a national level not school by school	1/21/2019 2:07 PM
55	I would like to be aware as to when such education will take place so I can be prepared. The one and only time one of my kids got a "sex education" lesson, she came home and started to share her information with her younger sibling. I wasn't aware that the lessons was going to take place and thus couldn't prepare nor inform her beforehand.	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
56	More information on the website	1/21/2019 1:31 PM
57	I wouldn't mind a group meeting but I am not sure how that would go over with other parents	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
58	Newsletter	1/21/2019 1:20 PM
59	I find the parents association Loreto principal and management do not listen to parents in this regard	1/21/2019 12:56 PM
60	A mix of the above - present (draft) programme content and get feedback on this and allow parents the opportunity to ask questions and make comment.	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
61	I have a full confidence in our school's ability to teach this topic appropriately but like to be informed when this takes place so I can support learning at home also	1/21/2019 9:23 AM
62	N/a	1/19/2019 8:50 PM
63	No comment	1/19/2019 1:57 PM
64	We should get a copy of what is taught don't at present	1/18/2019 2:15 PM
65	On line survey	1/18/2019 11:35 AM
66	I do not want to have a Facebook account and would be very annoyed if I was left out of communication if they chose to communicate that way.	1/18/2019 7:41 AM
67	Speak to principal	1/17/2019 10:49 PM
68	8	1/17/2019 8:23 PM
69	Note/Letter home	1/17/2019 8:01 PM
70	An online survey to gather honest free parent opinion followed up by a group meeting to inform parents of outcome and proposals to implement it	1/17/2019 7:35 PM
71	Option to speak to teachers always needed, but survey is good to get overall picture from parents.	1/17/2019 4:40 PM
72	Booklet	1/17/2019 3:24 PM
73	Talk before to start all that nightmare	1/17/2019 11:47 AM
74	I think there should be strong curriculum and parents should be informed but not have input. Kids need to be informed in an age appropriate manner. Parents often underestimate what information that kids need and can process.	1/17/2019 11:40 AM
75	A letter home to say what exactly will be covered	1/17/2019 9:11 AM
76	Anyway	1/17/2019 12:11 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

77	A print out of the content that is discussed in class.	1/16/2019 11:05 PM
78	Both meetings and regular updates by letter	1/16/2019 10:45 PM
79	Being from another European country, it would be great to give ideas on what should be included	1/16/2019 8:41 PM
80	Any of the above as long as we are aware of what is being communicated and when	1/16/2019 5:33 PM
81	To be notified as to the content in whatever format is easiest	1/16/2019 4:39 PM
82	As a parent I know I can have a one to one discussion with my child's teacher if I had any concerns about the topic being taught	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
83	This should not be through the parents associated	1/16/2019 2:22 PM
84	I believe direct, personal communication ensures that the information is received and understood. Online info to support this provides a resource to parents thereafter.	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
85	Not a parent	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
86	my experienc eis that other paretns can tend to be 'way off the mark' and somewhat irritating to listen to.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
87	Letter explaining details and questions to be made to children full context of the rse	1/16/2019 1:59 PM
88	School app	1/16/2019 1:44 PM
89	Aladdin app.	1/16/2019 1:42 PM
90	School meeting.	1/16/2019 1:36 PM
91	Content should be government led	1/16/2019 1:05 PM
92	letter/ survey	1/16/2019 12:55 PM
93	Letter	1/16/2019 12:34 PM
94	questionnaire home	1/16/2019 12:10 PM
95	Written document or newsletter	1/16/2019 11:53 AM
96	written updates as with the Stay Safe programme would be very helpful	1/16/2019 11:44 AM
97	Maybe an information powerpoint that we can view at home	1/16/2019 11:31 AM
98	I	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
99	discuss with baord of management	1/16/2019 11:07 AM
100	Letter offering opportunity to meet if necessary	1/16/2019 11:03 AM
101	Group meeting though I think meeting should be with a small group and follow up meetings as the year progress I think it should be closely monitored and in line with children's experiences in any RSE matters that arise throughout the year	1/16/2019 9:41 AM
102	I don't want my children's RSE to be limited by the conservative views of a small number of parents. I trust the teachers and the school to deliver the course content. My only concern about the content is the absence of discussions normalising the LGBTQ community.	1/16/2019 9:28 AM
103	Letter	1/15/2019 11:41 PM
104	individual class meetings	1/15/2019 8:32 PM
105	Letter	1/15/2019 8:31 PM
106	Email outlining cirriculum followed by meeting	1/15/2019 6:57 PM
107	Not entirely sure. We trust the school so once we're in the loop we feel happy we could raise a question really if and when appropriate so let them get on with it.	1/15/2019 5:57 PM
108	Although I believe all parents have the right to be consulted re what will be taught, in the interests of child protection, relationships & sex education etc there needs to continue to be a mandatory curriculum that must be taught - children's ability to deal with both appropriate and inappropriate relationships should not be left to individual groups to decide upon content.	1/15/2019 5:00 PM
109	Letter	1/15/2019 3:34 PM
110	From experience parents will not respond to online surveys, especially foreign nationals. Infact most parents don't engage at all with anything from my experience.	1/15/2019 3:26 PM

**Q12 If you had concerns about the content of RSE, how would you prefer to raise them? Please select up to 4 responses only.**

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Not interested	1/26/2019 6:28 PM
2	I don't find the school approachable.	1/25/2019 10:35 AM
3	I have spoken to the principal about my concerns and that it is inappropriate in my opinion to be discussing it in such detail at such an early age	1/25/2019 12:05 AM
4	I don't want raise this issue.	1/24/2019 7:00 PM
5	Have the option of withdrawing our children from the classes at any stage, addressing the Board of Management, the Minister for Education and any other relevant body or person we need to including social media if necessary.	1/24/2019 1:47 AM
6	hgxfzfhfgchcj :(	1/23/2019 10:28 PM
7	Use class dojo to communicate with the teacher	1/23/2019 6:20 PM
8	Tell the child maybe theirs a different view to that and share maybe the family view or the view in a scientific way. And to also maybe let the child have its own views without influen e	1/23/2019 5:07 PM
9	i cant even believe somebody discuss to have RSE for little kids. they should be 12+ to learn about relationships and sexuality. NOT 5 !	1/23/2019 4:55 PM

Other responses to Question 12 continue on page 74.

## Review of RSE Curriculum

10	Think very little RSE happens in our school	1/23/2019 11:51 AM
11	A	1/23/2019 10:36 AM
12	Letter	1/23/2019 7:55 AM
13	I'd like a meaningful way to opt out of any religiously influenced RSE teachings	1/22/2019 8:01 PM
14	Board of man	1/22/2019 7:48 PM
15	Online app	1/22/2019 6:04 PM
16	Chairperson of board and or patron	1/22/2019 5:52 PM
17	Just as a working parent face to face meetings are difficult to plan	1/22/2019 4:25 PM
18	.	1/22/2019 11:31 AM
19	Speak out there and then at the information evening.	1/21/2019 9:06 AM
20	Wrote to the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs	1/19/2019 6:59 PM
21	Our principal is very approachable but my son's class teacher would be my first point of contact	1/19/2019 3:09 PM
22	Not a role for the parents association in my opinion	1/18/2019 6:18 PM
23	The school Parents Association in our school has its own views about RSE and it seems ridiculous that I would use a conduit to convey my views when they PA don't seem to be able to clearly articulate what theirs are first or communicate them to me. I would rather speak directly to those responsible for teaching it.	1/18/2019 7:41 AM
24	Note to the teacher/Principal	1/17/2019 2:44 PM
25	It should be taken up with those responsible for curriculum. I would have strong objections to Church having input!	1/17/2019 11:40 AM
26	School Organised meetings with all teachers as child mainly have teacher for 1 year all would be lost and so the pattered continues . Trading for all teachers and patents would give it the ownership it really requires as a minimum to be schieveable	1/17/2019 10:07 AM
27	1st teacher then principal if still concerned	1/16/2019 9:26 PM
28	No point. Too religious in school. Not willing to teach more relevant info	1/16/2019 8:15 PM
29	I know other parents who raised concerns about the content were ridiculed by the Principal and their concerns were shared with other teachers and parents, which is disappointing	1/16/2019 7:43 PM
30	see if other parents feel the same	1/16/2019 7:36 PM
31	First port of call would be to the teacher and take them futher if necessary	1/16/2019 6:57 PM
32	In whatever format is outlined to parents	1/16/2019 4:39 PM
33	Class teacher would be my first contact face to face then the principal only if necessary	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
34	Would have a discussion with my child in relation to the content	1/16/2019 4:07 PM
35	ncca	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
36	Not aparent	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
37	Home school liason	1/16/2019 1:10 PM
38	I have sent letters	1/16/2019 12:45 PM
39	Online is great as most parents cant get to meeting but some issues need to be very clear so a meeting may be necessary with parents	1/16/2019 12:32 PM
40	I dont have concerns	1/16/2019 11:46 AM
41	Contact Department of Education presuming they approved the content	1/16/2019 11:37 AM
42	Write in a note	1/16/2019 11:32 AM
43	School takes it bit negatively	1/16/2019 11:25 AM
44	Group parents meeting with principal and teacher present	1/16/2019 9:41 AM

## Q14 Do you think parents have a right to withdraw their children from Relationships and Sexuality Education class in primary school

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Depends on skills of communicator	1/26/2019 8:24 PM
2	Absolutely not! It's essential that all the kids receive factual, safe and health affirming information. Parents don't pull their kids from history or English class do why should they be able to pull them from sex and relationships lessons?	1/26/2019 7:48 PM
3	Withdrawing your child should not be allowed except in very extreme cases	1/26/2019 10:43 AM
4	Yes I do, like they can do so for any subject, including religion.	1/25/2019 7:18 PM
5	Depends if they feel it's being taught effectively	1/25/2019 6:55 PM
6	It depends on the content of the class. If it is teaching abstinence, religious values, disinformation etc, then yes, of course they should have a right to withdraw. But if the content is good, scientific and open, then no.	1/25/2019 4:41 PM
7	If done appropriately, without religious bias, all children need to know	1/25/2019 2:58 PM
8	Difficult one - in a previous school, I withdrew my children from (Catholic) religion class so it would be hard for me to deny another parent that right. But RSE should be core to developing future citizens so it is more fundamental than religion class.	1/25/2019 2:13 PM
9	parents teachers should agree on age wise content	1/25/2019 12:08 PM
10	If they feel the child us to young	1/25/2019 10:58 AM
11	This is a difficult one but the most comfortable environment to learn for young children is amongst their peers. Once a parent knows it's benign taught they can talk about it beforehand and follow up afterwards. I think once it's age appropriate it should be compulsory	1/25/2019 8:32 AM
12	Generally it is good to teach kids that subject but I wasn't aware they start so early	1/25/2019 12:13 AM
13	Not withdraw them but to feel listened to if they have concerns	1/24/2019 10:34 PM
14	If you don't, other kids will tell them what they have taught and they are shocked	1/24/2019 9:51 PM
15	As long as it is age appropriate it is very important	1/24/2019 9:42 PM

Other responses to Question 14 continue on page 76.

## Review of RSE Curriculum

16	But it very valuable	1/24/2019 7:58 PM
17	Sure, but It would be a great disservice to both	1/24/2019 3:09 PM
18	We have different ideas sometimes so maybe it's too much for some parents	1/24/2019 10:48 AM
19	So it is important to have a parallel programs for parents/ teachers too	1/24/2019 9:55 AM
20	Yes they should have the right, but I personally wouldn't.	1/24/2019 9:24 AM
21	Yes since we weren't consulted	1/24/2019 8:24 AM
22	Yes parents know better when to start this process and what to say at differ ages based on knowing their child understanding and capabilities as well for to consider people ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds and religions	1/24/2019 7:25 AM
23	We have to acknowledge the multicultural aspect in our schools so this may lead to withdrawal but ultimately I would like to see a programme that is science and fact based to as large an extent as possible eliminating "need" for withdrawal	1/24/2019 7:12 AM
24	Course a parent has a right to remove there child, why they would want to I don't no! This is so important even though its such a pity having to teach 4 year olds about it, but times are changing and it is important nowadays for kids safety	1/24/2019 2:23 AM
25	depending on the age of the child	1/23/2019 11:29 PM
26	They do have a right but they shouldn't	1/23/2019 11:04 PM
27	I would need to know why they felt it was ok to deny their children this information	1/23/2019 10:28 PM
28	As long as it's age appropriate and that parents are informed of what's being said.	1/23/2019 9:58 PM
29	depends on the facilitator	1/23/2019 9:42 PM
30	The fact is a parent DOES have a right. They are the primary educator. It doesn't matter what I think.	1/23/2019 8:51 PM
31	It depends on the content and family religious or other beliefs	1/23/2019 8:15 PM
32	I can not think of any reason why any parent would not want their child to be educated in R and S.	1/23/2019 7:51 PM
33	Each to their own. It's a Parents right to do what they feel appropriate	1/23/2019 6:20 PM
34	yes if its based on culture or religious grounds	1/23/2019 6:19 PM
35	Definitely not!	1/23/2019 5:33 PM
36	If they wish	1/23/2019 5:31 PM
37	Society based Sex Ed isn't a good idea as a whole for individuals. It's very coherent and not in the best influence for an individual child. Children develop differently.	1/23/2019 5:07 PM
38	It is part of the curriculum for all children	1/23/2019 5:02 PM
39	YES, YES, YES, YES!	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
40	Yes, but encourage parents to have their children included	1/23/2019 2:18 PM
41	Absolutely they have the right and any attempt to force RSE participation would be a complete breach of parental rights	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
42	I suppose parents should have a choice in what could be deemed as a sensitive area. However I feel that makes it more important than ever. Some parents don't talk with their kids about these important issues.	1/23/2019 2:00 PM
43	As long as the content is not presented from any particular point of view all children should have to attend. Facts are facts that children need to know. Opinions on facts are different.	1/23/2019 12:52 PM
44	I feel this is essential education for all children	1/23/2019 12:50 PM
45	yes parents should be able to choose what their children are being taught as sometimes topics are not in line with the families moral code or beliefs and some teachings may be too graphic or explore areas which promote teaching outside of family values	1/23/2019 12:34 PM
46	I suppose everyboby might feel different so i dont know,i wouldnt withdraw any of my children.	1/23/2019 12:15 PM
47	Yes they have but only if they make the conversation about the subject with their kids themselves. I believe the knowledge is important whatever the social background, religion, etc...	1/23/2019 12:08 PM
48	I do not SUPPORT the right to deny a child proper education, but I do begrudgingly acknowledge it	1/23/2019 11:49 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

49	But it should be non-confrontational content.	1/23/2019 11:40 AM
50	Don't know if we have a right but believe we should have the right to withdraw.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
51	I think all kids need RSE. I don't like the way it is usually taught, which is exclusive of trans* and non-binary kids, same-sex relationships, and so on. I am a gender & sexuality educator & researcher at 3rd level & my students routinely are misinformed about the basics of reproduction. Scientific, behavioural & humanities research from the 1980s hasn't influenced primary & secondary education at all, it seems.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
52	Too broad a question, this is circumstantial	1/23/2019 11:01 AM
53	If the parents are not happy with the age appropriate content or the manner in which the information is been delivered the should be allowed to choose an alternative.	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
54	A	1/23/2019 10:36 AM
55	Only in certain circumstances	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
56	Depending of the age and topic that is discussed	1/23/2019 10:25 AM
57	Yes, but this should only be allowed when there is appropriate awareness of the effect of this on the child	1/23/2019 10:23 AM
58	Parents should have a choice and should be consulted.	1/23/2019 10:22 AM
59	Depends on what is being taught	1/23/2019 10:02 AM
60	Yes but should not and if they do they should be spoken to as many kids could be in harm and they would never know it unless they are taught if a parent said no to there child been taught then thus should be flag in someway and parent will be told flag it with tusla etc	1/23/2019 9:53 AM
61	Where special education needs may preclude the child from understanding information pitched at age group	1/23/2019 9:38 AM
62	I would rather parents didn't withdraw their kids but it should be up to them.	1/23/2019 9:27 AM
63	Yes, but how could you withdraw you child from all that and not expect them to get a garbled version from their peers. These lessons are the ones which protect our children - why would a parent wish to withdraw a child?	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
64	In my opinion they have the right, but shouldn't have to do it as it's as very important part of life to learn and therefore it helps children to be safe	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
65	It's a free country but I would be concerned for that child then!	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
66	if not satisfied with how's been taught	1/22/2019 9:05 PM
67	Oh that's a very difficult question, it's such a personal topic I can't say what right in someone else's family.	1/22/2019 8:59 PM
68	Depending on their religion or child's emotional development was delayed I think they should have the right	1/22/2019 8:36 PM
69	No if unbiased and scientific. Yes if biased and influenced by religion or non factual information	1/22/2019 8:33 PM
70	Perhaps if ther is a culture/religious conflict, but they then must be available to supervise/collect early so as not to put the supervision burden back on the school.	1/22/2019 8:24 PM
71	Yes but with caveat that they cover topic themselves.	1/22/2019 8:16 PM
72	They MUST have that right, specially in light of the religious influence within primary schools.	1/22/2019 8:01 PM
73	Possibly on religious grounds but would lean towards an answer of no but	1/22/2019 7:35 PM
74	While I wouldn't agree with removing child from this it is the right right of a parent	1/22/2019 6:24 PM
75	It depends on the content	1/22/2019 5:59 PM
76	Parents should always have a right concerning their child however, some parents may not realise the importance of such information even dealing with feelings, resilience, mindfulness etc will be critical in this increasingly stressful workplace.	1/22/2019 5:56 PM
77	They may have the right, but it's normal part of normal development	1/22/2019 5:55 PM
78	It depends on if the child has special needs or if that child has been abused in any way.	1/22/2019 5:53 PM
79	maybe if the child has anxiety around it	1/22/2019 5:45 PM
80	They have the right but I don't think that is in the child's best interests	1/22/2019 5:21 PM
81	In 6th class, No. For younger classes yes	1/22/2019 4:48 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

82	If they strongly disagree with it	1/22/2019 4:39 PM
83	I think they have the right but don't think it should be an option	1/22/2019 4:23 PM
84	depends on the quality of the programme- some teachers are not suited to delivering- might have bias etc.	1/22/2019 4:04 PM
85	They have the right to withdraw, but they shouldn't	1/22/2019 2:49 PM
86	I'm not sure if the question means whether they legally have a right or should have a right	1/22/2019 1:26 PM
87	Theoretically they do; however I think all children should have an understanding of RSE for the health and safety of all children (ie STIs, consent, etc) so this is a debatable issue!	1/22/2019 12:21 PM
88	.	1/22/2019 11:31 AM
89	I feel that it is important however some parents of strict religion may not approve. I understand this, however it is a shame that their children will missed out on the factual talk as no doubt they will hear incorrect information in the yard etc.	1/21/2019 11:24 PM
90	All children should havey this education it's extremely important to recognize healthy relationships and normalize age appropriate sexual education. By allowing parents to opt out I feel it would be used as an excuse for less hassle having to explain what was learned in school at home. I also feel that parents should be advised what is going to be discussed in class in advance and should have a say on what is appropriate.	1/21/2019 10:53 PM
91	Possibly if they feel the topic is for an older age group	1/21/2019 10:44 PM
92	I wouldn't but respect that others may	1/21/2019 10:32 PM
93	I think parents do have the right as they are guardians but I don't it is right to do so as a parent	1/21/2019 9:02 PM
94	I think if parents are made aware before sensitive topics are taught this shouldn't be a problem.	1/21/2019 8:59 PM
95	Yes the parents have a right to withdraw their children but I believe this would be a missed learning opportunity	1/21/2019 5:20 PM
96	Under special circumstances, otherwise I would feel it's as important as the rest of the curriculum.	1/21/2019 3:01 PM
97	I believe it should be compulsory	1/21/2019 2:46 PM
98	Yes but it could be detemental to their social skills and understanding	1/21/2019 2:17 PM
99	Possibly if they feel strongly that the child may not be ready for it. Maybe for religious reasons but I think there should be some basic learnings on consent etc..	1/21/2019 2:07 PM
100	Depends on the circumstances and if the child has additional learning needs	1/21/2019 1:57 PM
101	The parent should have the final say in how this topic is raised with children on a case by case basis	1/21/2019 1:52 PM
102	Depends upon the content and whether it is balanced to allow for different views	1/21/2019 1:31 PM
103	Every child is different and one six year old might not be as ready as another etc.	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
104	Yes I think that this option should be available (but with the right information provided in advance I would hope that parents wouldn't withdraw their children. I get the sense at the minute that schools don't give parents information as they don't want to really engage on this issue.	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
105	I feel it should be strongly encouraged to help all children now and in their future	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
106	I feel that all children in the same class should be taught at the same time together.	1/21/2019 12:33 PM
107	If they choose to.	1/21/2019 8:54 AM
108	They have the right but should be encouraged not to withdraw their children.	1/21/2019 7:38 AM
109	If parents are fully informed of the content and are consulted about it, I think they would be happier for their children to attend RSE classes in school. If not, I think they have the right to withdraw their child.	1/20/2019 11:23 AM
110	Only if there are existing issues	1/19/2019 9:19 PM
111	can't answer for other parents	1/19/2019 8:50 PM
112	If I thought that it disrespected their LGBTQ rights I would	1/19/2019 6:59 PM
113	Freedom of their own views	1/19/2019 6:40 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

114	People have the right to monitor what their child is exposed to however unwise we might think that would be	1/19/2019 3:09 PM
115	It is up to each household what they want the children to learn when it comes to such sensitive subjects.	1/19/2019 2:56 PM
116	I would hope parents wouldn't but it's parents right to choose I suppose	1/19/2019 10:46 AM
117	depends on what (content) and how RSE is communicated	1/19/2019 8:22 AM
118	It is vital for most children but some are not ready at the same time as their classmates. But I would hate to think many parents would feel they need to do this.	1/18/2019 8:37 PM
119	As a parent, they probably have the right to do it, but they should know they also have the obligation to provide their children with an education	1/18/2019 8:00 PM
120	I don't believe that the RSE curriculum is robust enough as it is, so to remove a child altogether from any exposure to RSE content is not a good move. Unless in those instances, the parents in question are arranging for their child to receive RSE education from a safe and professional external resource.	1/18/2019 7:11 PM
121	Depends on your beliefs i for example would be uncomfortable with junior infants learning about various sexual orientations as i feel it is too confusing for them, that is not appropriate for the school to teach in my opinion	1/18/2019 6:18 PM
122	Only if a good reason is given and detailed discussion had with Principal.	1/18/2019 5:49 PM
123	I would be happy for our children to be present but i suppose it would depend on the circumstances for withdrawing a child	1/18/2019 5:06 PM
124	They have a right but should be discouraged from doing so. An open conversation as to why they want their child excluded would be helpful.	1/18/2019 3:31 PM
125	Yes, if the ethos of the school is not respected through the choice of RSE body contracted to cover this subject. We are an educated together school.	1/18/2019 1:32 PM
126	No they shouldn't have the right it's no harm and too many parents don't bother informing their kids...probably the same ones that would object if they could	1/18/2019 12:21 PM
127	But I personally think all children have the right to access that information	1/18/2019 10:20 AM
128	This probably depends on what is being taught (e.g. is it solely religion based).	1/18/2019 10:13 AM
129	Yes. Preferably, asking for explanation / reason for it. This could be a feedback mechanism.	1/18/2019 8:59 AM
130	They have a "right" but they absolutely should not.	1/18/2019 2:00 AM
131	If a child had special needs which may affect their ability to comprehend the topic being discussed	1/17/2019 11:51 PM
132	It's personal choice but I think parents and school need to work together so that the children learn the facts properly.	1/17/2019 11:17 PM
133	yes have the right but shouldn't do it	1/17/2019 10:53 PM
134	Yes we do.	1/17/2019 10:49 PM
135	Depends on the extent of content. Some may feel its not age appropriate and therefore should be allowed to opt out on that occasion.	1/17/2019 10:36 PM
136	Possibly for certain topics, but definitely not all.	1/17/2019 9:39 PM
137	Every parent has a right over their child's education, but each child needs to be taught what is healthy and unhealthy in relationships and if themselves are coming from a home with an unhealthy relationship it is creating mixed emotions and feelings for a child as they are being taught one thing and seeing another. So I do think it should be mandatory to have this type of education in schools many might think differently.	1/17/2019 9:04 PM
138	They have the right I just wouldn't agree with their choice.	1/17/2019 8:04 PM
139	Parents should have a right to withdraw if inappropriate external speakers are being brought in to indoctrinate children in a factually inaccurate fashion.	1/17/2019 7:46 PM
140	K	1/17/2019 7:37 PM
141	If it is based on religious ethos or not inclusive	1/17/2019 6:14 PM
142	I think it would be a huge missed opportunity for the child. School should try to sensitise all parents on the value and importance of RSE.	1/17/2019 4:27 PM
143	I would hope with good communication it would not be necessary	1/17/2019 4:17 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

144	If they are unhappy with content/how its taught, yes	1/17/2019 2:45 PM
145	Some parents might think it's there place to tell there child about RSE not the school as every child develops different	1/17/2019 2:12 PM
146	Mi	1/17/2019 1:12 PM
147	I think they should have the right to withdraw if there is evidence of homeschooling on the matter.	1/17/2019 11:59 AM
148	Parents have the right to do but I wouldn't agree with them if they did so!	1/17/2019 11:52 AM
149	I believe parents must have such right	1/17/2019 9:38 AM
150	It would be a terrible shame for thier child's development in this world if a parent withdrew them. However, I suppose they do have the right to do that.	1/17/2019 8:51 AM
151	Every child needs this education and not all parents approach the subject at home so this should be compulserly	1/17/2019 8:46 AM
152	Only if they have an alternative plan for the child	1/17/2019 8:42 AM
153	Depending on the content.	1/17/2019 7:55 AM
154	it all depends how its done. i wouldn t want judgemental views to be expressed...	1/16/2019 10:00 PM
155	They have right but shouldnt	1/16/2019 9:52 PM
156	At the end of the day it's up to the parents	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
157	They shouldn't have that right.	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
158	I feel they have the right but I don't feel they should excercise this right.	1/16/2019 9:33 PM
159	It would be a shame if they did, but I wouldn't want to make someone's decision for them.	1/16/2019 8:59 PM
160	Very individual	1/16/2019 8:56 PM
161	They shouldn't	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
162	Individual choice	1/16/2019 8:39 PM
163	It's a personal choice	1/16/2019 8:16 PM
164	The withdrawn kids need it more. Need the info that thy may not get at home	1/16/2019 8:15 PM
165	I don't think they should but every case should be assessed on its personal merrit	1/16/2019 6:57 PM
166	Yes but unfortunately not a wise move in this day and age	1/16/2019 6:48 PM
167	Some kids If developmentally delayed although In mainstream	1/16/2019 6:47 PM
168	I agree with a right to withdraw from a young age but not for senior classes	1/16/2019 6:14 PM
169	No as I feel it's worst on the child hearing it second hand from another child	1/16/2019 6:00 PM
170	Some kids If developmentally delayed although In mainstream	1/16/2019 5:53 PM
171	As long as the parents are "normal"	1/16/2019 5:48 PM
172	This is a hard one.on the one hand yes parents should have the right. On the other hand children have the right to get this information even if their parents object. Maybe they should have to get permission from the board to withdraw their child from it.	1/16/2019 5:30 PM
173	The have a right to, but they shouldn't withdraw them	1/16/2019 5:27 PM
174	Parents should have a choice however this content is too important to dismiss	1/16/2019 4:58 PM
175	I would not withdraw my child, however the parent is the primary educator of the child and therefore I think parents should have a right to withdraw their child.	1/16/2019 4:56 PM
176	I'd be loathe to say they don't have the right, but I do feel it's critical that all children are informed, both for their safety and the safety of others. My question would be why they want to withdraw and how could their concerns be addressed?	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
177	I don't see why they would need to	1/16/2019 4:14 PM
178	When the child's cognitive abilities require special individual Programme for SPHE or RSE and the general content would not meet their needs.	1/16/2019 4:11 PM
179	I believe that the content should be shared with parents so that parents know what is being taught and can be comfortable with this	1/16/2019 3:59 PM
180	Na	1/16/2019 3:48 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

181	yes I think so, even though I wouldn't withdraw my child	1/16/2019 3:33 PM
182	I think it would be good if this subject was a compulsory	1/16/2019 3:13 PM
183	As long as its sensitively approached and age appropriate I believe all children should be participating.	1/16/2019 2:53 PM
184	If they don't agree with content	1/16/2019 2:42 PM
185	Yes everyone has the choice. But i believe children are better to learn together.	1/16/2019 2:36 PM
186	Depends on the content	1/16/2019 2:17 PM
187	It's the parents choice but I think RSE will only be successful if all students are taught the same guidelines	1/16/2019 2:14 PM
188	No, these issues particularly around consent have to be taught early	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
189	They should have the right to withdraw from ANY subject	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
190	I don't agree as it should be mandatory like the rest of the school curriculum is	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
191	in fairness yes, but more that likely in those cases it would be disadvantageous to the childs learning / development.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
192	There should be two RSE classes - a basic information one to be compulsory and the ordinary one should be optional. Parents should be given specific details of both.	1/16/2019 2:04 PM
193	I believe they have a right but it wouldn't be a wise decision to withdraw a child frim RSE classes	1/16/2019 1:56 PM
194	Each to their own opinion, however withdrawal would not in my opinion be the best option for the child.	1/16/2019 1:53 PM
195	Would depend on child ie if they had any special needs	1/16/2019 1:38 PM
196	They have a right, but that doesn't mean they should. RSE is very important for all children	1/16/2019 1:28 PM
197	Depends on the nature of objection	1/16/2019 1:11 PM
198	Yes, but its not in the child's best interest.	1/16/2019 12:58 PM
199	If the course content is misleading or inappropriate.	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
200	Probably but it's so important so I'm not sure	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
201	I guess so but it's very important for kids to learn	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
202	Only if the school are really bad at teaching it otherwise I think it is vitally important that kids know as much as its appropriate to their age about their sexuality	1/16/2019 12:48 PM
203	Yes, although it should be properly documented that they are taking that decision and understand the impact it may have on the child's awareness and ability to protect themselves.	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
204	This is an important subject. As important as Maths etc. We can't withdraw kids from being taught maths so no this too is a very important topic for lifeling learning. Get the correct info early from the right people	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
205	Well of course they have a right in particular if they feel strongly against a religious group giving it but every effort should be done to make sure the child gets some sex ed ie the chikdren that did not attend perhaps have teacher or principal go through it with them with parental approval	1/16/2019 12:32 PM
206	Yes, in cases where parents feel it's inappropriate for their beliefs, or if they feel it's being inappropriately handled by the teacher/school.	1/16/2019 12:31 PM
207	I'd prefer they didn't but ... what can you do if they insist? Makes it worse for the child I think.	1/16/2019 12:25 PM
208	cls teachers should be trained	1/16/2019 12:21 PM
209	Parents in our school (Dublin based ET school) have withdrawn their children based on having Accord teach it.	1/16/2019 12:05 PM
210	No, we are in 21.century !!!	1/16/2019 12:01 PM
211	Absolutely not. These classes are crucial for children's safety.	1/16/2019 11:31 AM
212	Individuals differ	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
213	If there is religious content or context.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
214	Do a parent have the right to withdraw their from English or maths lesson.. in the interest of safety & the welfare of the child.. no it's essential to their wellbeing.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
215	Are only factors	1/16/2019 11:08 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

216	Depends on the child's nature	1/16/2019 11:03 AM
217	In consultation with the school I think yes as not all children mature at the same rate. I do not think they should be withdrawn on religious grounds	1/16/2019 10:57 AM
218	Yes they do but I feel it in the best interest of the child to participate in rse	1/16/2019 10:54 AM
219	I know they do but it is better that they don't and allow their child to access this information	1/16/2019 10:53 AM
220	While it is most certainly a parents decision I believe if it would effect other pupils	1/16/2019 10:51 AM
221	Yes, if my kids would express felling uncomfortable or confuse (not ready, or any other way expressing dislike ) attending the class of rse education, I would withdraw my child from educational class till he feels more confident about it.	1/16/2019 10:46 AM
222	Yes, but may not be beneficial.for the child	1/16/2019 9:30 AM
223	Only if a legitimate reason	1/16/2019 9:25 AM
224	I would think they would have to have a very good reason to deny this info to their child in this day and age	1/15/2019 10:39 PM
225	I don't think you should be able to opt out-it is too important a topic	1/15/2019 10:28 PM
226	No for my child but others might not be comfortable	1/15/2019 7:55 PM
227	Yes I think parents have a right to withdraw children but it is important that the children have an opportunity to learn RSE	1/15/2019 5:31 PM
228	Yes but i think all children should partake	1/15/2019 4:28 PM

## Q15 Which of the following, would you consider APPROPRIATE to teach to children of PRIMARY school age in Relationships and Sexuality Education classes?

#	BRIEFLY OUTLINE THE REASONS FOR YOUR CHOICES ABOVE	DATE
1	Please spell check your surveys- disheartening to see spelling mistakes when being asked about educating children	1/26/2019 10:28 PM
2	There is a risk of over exposure if all the topics above are taught. Some of them are overly inappropriate at this level.	1/26/2019 9:45 PM
3	I feel it's important that the children are given the correct information from a responsible person that they know and trust like their teacher.	1/26/2019 8:57 PM
4	All of these topics could be very helpful in day to day life in the future for children.	1/26/2019 8:44 PM
5	The idea of families has changed in Ireland. We need to shift our thinking a little from the old convention of a married man and woman only to include all kinds day of people and relationships. Those that actually reflect many of our actual homes lives.	1/26/2019 7:48 PM
6	I think discussion of sexual health should be considered on a child by child basis and in most cases the best people for that discussion are the child's parents	1/26/2019 7:10 PM
7	All to be age appropriate for each class	1/26/2019 3:12 PM
8	Children are from 5 - 11. Give them a chance to be children before introducing some very grown up concepts.	1/26/2019 2:26 PM
9	Children will encounter sex at some stage in their lives, being prepared for it, and understanding it, is vital.	1/26/2019 12:31 PM

Other responses to Question 15 continue on page 85.

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10	Manner and ethics of families and friends is the only thing to teach the children	1/26/2019 12:21 PM
11	I think these are all necessary topics, assuming that the syllabus is structured in an age-appropriate manner; i.e: the more advanced topics are introduced in later years. I assume this would be the case.	1/26/2019 10:36 AM
12	The last 4 are only appropriate to kids from 11 upwards. The content would only frighten smaller kids as oppose to educate them.	1/26/2019 10:13 AM
13	I think pregnancy & drink/drugs may be a bit much for under 12s.	1/26/2019 9:58 AM
14	I will and have already started the basics of all the above with my 7 and 4 yr olds. Open and unashamed conversation take away the taboos that society puts on them. I have no issues with any trained professional talking in a frank open and age appropriate way with my kids at school about any health and sex related topics including gender awareness and homosexuality too.	1/26/2019 7:26 AM
15	All topics ticked can be directed but as a parent I felt the sexual content taught to my fifth class child was explicit and inappropriate as pupils older had not covered material he was a young ten year old	1/26/2019 1:21 AM
16	Those are the topics appropriate for their age	1/26/2019 1:18 AM
17	Safe childhood and production of healthy effective adult.	1/25/2019 11:29 PM
18	I believe that all topics are appropriate provided they are done in an age appropriate manner. I would also like to have a clear outline of what is covered in class yearly so I know how I can support the schools RSE programme & also how what they are learning will support me when I'm educating them at home on the important elements of RSE.	1/25/2019 11:26 PM
19	If children are hearing about all of these topics in a safe environment with their peers they hopefully will be willing to take on board the importance of the the themes and are able to bring their knowledge to face the challenges that invariably they will meet in adolescence and teen years .	1/25/2019 11:20 PM
20	Why you want kids from primary schools to be aware of certain things...they are still small...then kids will talk about certain things in the yard beside smaller kids and smaller kids will be aware of inappropriate tings which are not relevant to his or her age! You are just making it confusing like religion...school is about math and reading creating having fun doing sport thinking wise being reaponsible creativ, thinkers...not to pin them down about adult problems...!	1/25/2019 11:08 PM
21	the choices I made will encourage the child to be a better human being in the future	1/25/2019 10:44 PM
22	I think it's important that children should know the boundaries of their body what's appropriate and what's not specially about their private parts	1/25/2019 10:37 PM
23	think consent alcohol and drugs conversation are more age appropriate for secondary school age children	1/25/2019 10:22 PM
24	As they have a right to know the ones I ticked and the ones I didn't are for secondary school	1/25/2019 9:42 PM
25	All PG enough that I ticked. Do not think primary school is the place for actual sex education or intercourse way too young and some children are not as advanced as others and it's generating curiosity. Too young.	1/25/2019 9:41 PM
26	All families are unique but I think a consistent approach to relationships may help those who may not be living in a healthy environment at home.	1/25/2019 8:41 PM
27	Respect and courtesy very important	1/25/2019 7:53 PM
28	It is for me to teach my child about healthy relationships and what I believe is morally right at the time I think she is mature enough to understand. I don't believe that the content proposed will be right for all children at the same time, children learn at different rates and ages	1/25/2019 6:56 PM
29	I think the parents have the role to introduce the concept of Sex to their kids, hopefully that happens before the school teach it. I think primary kids are way too young to be introduced to conversations about sex trade, grooming etc.	1/25/2019 6:55 PM
30	Age appropriate Education is so important and honesty with our kids unfortunately with the world we live they need to be Informed so we can keep them Safe.	1/25/2019 6:50 PM
31	I believe that we need to create an open and honest dialogue around these taboo. Issues to protect our children from harmful relationships or predators... This should be be done in an inclusive and open way	1/25/2019 6:45 PM
32	These are absolutely not appropriate for children below 10	1/25/2019 6:38 PM
33	I think it is important for children to be aware of above, they will hear it from their peers otherwise and not always in the most appropriate way or correctly. It could be easy for them to get mislead or misleading information.	1/25/2019 6:11 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

34	There is so much going on in the world that at an age appropriate level they should be informed.	1/25/2019 5:34 PM
35	Once taught in an age appropriate way and at the correct stage of development all of these topics are important.	1/25/2019 5:21 PM
36	I'm choosing based on what is appropriate for my 6 year old. I'm finding it hard to determine what is appropriate for a 10-12 year old.	1/25/2019 3:25 PM
37	Delivering too much information to children in this age might be confusing rather than accurately achieving the required level of orientation and protection. Pregnancy could be part of reproductive process. I think sexual behaviour associated with alcohol and drugs may suite secondary schools rather than primary and healthy sexual relationships as well.	1/25/2019 3:09 PM
38	Children should be given age appropriate information and knowledge. What inappropriate is-grooming, manipulative behaviour, intimidation and that there is a qualified person to go to in school in confidence if they have questions. Sexual issues should be dealt with late in 6th class or early in first year of secondary school as this is the hormone explosion time.	1/25/2019 2:58 PM
39	I think some of the more serious topics should be kept for the older children forth class and upwards and the more broad relationship topics taught to everyone	1/25/2019 2:53 PM
40	I chose based on the ages of my children currently	1/25/2019 2:31 PM
41	All of these topics, depending on age (pregnancy, sexual consent, risky sexual behaviour for 5th/6th class - all the others for all ages really)	1/25/2019 2:13 PM
42	Would have reservations on the appropriateness of drugs and alcohol's role in risky sexual behaviour.	1/25/2019 2:06 PM
43	Education and accurate information will positively influence their choices later on.	1/25/2019 1:52 PM
44	I think all topics are appropriate but they should be geared towards the chiids age. Topics like online grooming, pregnancy, alcholol and drugs should be focused more on senior girls. (4th-6th)	1/25/2019 1:40 PM
45	All should be covered	1/25/2019 1:31 PM
46	You must remember that this is for primary school children. The parents are the primary educators particularly on topics above of a sensitive nature. Premature sexual information to a child in a large classroom who is not capable of integrating premature sexual imagery and information within the proper context of moral principles is completely negligent this needs to be thought by the parents.	1/25/2019 1:26 PM
47	All appropriate to primary level but sexual behaviour, relationships etc only to senior classes	1/25/2019 1:19 PM
48	When a person is given correct information and guidelines for correct behaviour its always a good choice its just a very good decision to have your child educated on what is appropriate and what is not	1/25/2019 1:11 PM
49	I wouldnt approve of Homosexual or transgender normalization or teaching in Schools, and I would withdraw my child if it was being taught in schools, I have apprehension about the "Characteristics of Families and Relationships" class if it even touched on same sex couples and transgender normalization. Polygamy also should not be taught or encouraged.	1/25/2019 12:13 PM
50	Again this should be agreed between parents and teachers as per the age of the kid	1/25/2019 12:08 PM
51	Obviously all subjects should be made age appropriate to the child and the parents advised as to what the children are learning that week so they can help them to understand	1/25/2019 11:19 AM
52	If this these topics are addressed in an age appropriate way, I think it's important to start conversations early.	1/25/2019 11:06 AM
53	I think if they no to much they will want to no more so knowing about the healthy stuff, sex pregnancy ect is fine but not putting stuff into there head that should not be there.	1/25/2019 10:58 AM
54	All of these are relevant for 11/12 year old. We talk about it at home to make sure correct info is passed on instead of hearing it in the yard with incorrect info.	1/25/2019 10:57 AM
55	I feel the older children should be thought about sexual relationships and what goes with them as when barriers are broken down it will be easier for the child to speak out if they have a problem or question later along. We need to normalise speaking about sex and relationships as they get older as there will not be a taboo when they become teenagers then.	1/25/2019 10:43 AM
56	Once the teaching methodologies employed are meaningful tot eh child and topics are age appropriate, in my opinion all areas should be covered within the curriculum.	1/25/2019 10:40 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

57	These topics are the basis of life. Understanding healthy relationships is an issue that is more fundamental than any academic knowledge and therefore must be a priority. Good sexual health and self respect are vital	1/25/2019 10:35 AM
58	Concepts related to sexual relationship are best understood after 12 yes of age. We must give kids time to settle down with the new changes in their bodies like puberty etc before getting to know the sexual relationships.	1/25/2019 10:34 AM
59	i think some aspects would be a bit advanced for primary school children. i think the remaining aspects i didnt tick would be more suitable for secondary school	1/25/2019 10:15 AM
60	There is a need for broad knowledge and understanding all of these aspects	1/25/2019 10:13 AM
61	I personally believe its not age appropriate to discuss sexual relationships / sexual behaviour to under 11s but do believe children have to and must know that abuse is not right.	1/25/2019 10:05 AM
62	I do t seem any harm in giving children the information they need to understand the world around them. They need information if we want them to stay safe.	1/25/2019 9:47 AM
63	All topics are important, just nothing about controlling your sexual desires. from young age children have to learn that they have to wait for things. If programs dont teach children, then later they will rape young girls or children. Most important topic is taken out. children have to wait till they grow up and find a wife or husband and then they can experiment.	1/25/2019 9:04 AM
64	The topics above are all appropriate at some level.	1/25/2019 8:52 AM
65	I think the one topic I didn't tick is because it might be a little too advance possibly 6th class	1/25/2019 8:32 AM
66	*girls and boys need a seperate books *Children should be though how to care about they body *risks of sexual relationships STD *importance of contraception	1/25/2019 8:04 AM
67	I think it is important to teach these topics in an age appropriate manner all through primary school.	1/25/2019 7:48 AM
68	Pupils these days are more exposed due to technology hence the need to guide them in the right direction.	1/25/2019 12:42 AM
69	Obviously not everything from very early age	1/25/2019 12:13 AM
70	Primary school children are too young to discuss more explicit sexual sexual behaviour and relationships	1/24/2019 11:49 PM
71	I think at this young age we should be focussed on the factual (human reproduction etc) and the positive (how to foster healthy relationships etc). I worry about the impact of opening the children up to the "negative" topics knowledge of exploitation, abuse, alcohol, risky sexual behaviour etc that they (hopefully) did not previously have. I do not speak from an evidence base so if the evidence shows it is positive to discuss these matters with young children then perhaps it should be considered. However, with the rate of child sexual abuse in Ireland being 1 in 4, and they are likely to be in primary school as well as secondary school, we should really be discussing grooming and abuse with the children and teach them to be empowered and to identify those situations and seek help accordingly.	1/24/2019 11:11 PM
72	Kids need to be educated so they can make informed decisions for themselves and to help others.	1/24/2019 10:46 PM
73	All important matters use tailored to the class I think they should all be cover throughout all years not like 6th class like we did at school	1/24/2019 10:34 PM
74	No reason to keep secrets as it may induce shameful connections to sex	1/24/2019 10:33 PM
75	I think is too early for their age to accept and understand sexuality.	1/24/2019 9:51 PM
76	The ones I have chosen I feel is age appropriate. The ones I haven't chosen I feel should be taught in secondary school as kids in primary school should not be engaging thus do not need to know about it it yet. Also if u teach all this in primary school, information could be intentionally or unintentionally shared with the younger children.	1/24/2019 9:47 PM
77	The latter topics for older primary classes	1/24/2019 9:42 PM
78	Depending on the child's age all above could be taught just at the appropriate level	1/24/2019 9:29 PM
79	The more the kids know about relationships the better they are equipped. Putting stigmas and taboos on the topic only sparks unhealthy curiosity that might lead to unhealthy relationships, potential harm to kids, STIs, unwanted pregnancies. It will also have a huge impact on the well-being of the kids.	1/24/2019 9:18 PM
80	I feel they are appropriate with deeper topics saved until the later years of primary. I feel the ones left off are more suited to older children as some 6th class primary children remain innocent to them	1/24/2019 8:57 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

81	Why on earth would i agree that my 7 year old daughter should be able to recognize a healthy sexual relationship.	1/24/2019 8:55 PM
82	Age appropriate	1/24/2019 7:58 PM
83	Obviously it depends on what class they're in!☆	1/24/2019 7:38 PM
84	Should be discussed differently for each class so it's age appropriate.	1/24/2019 7:32 PM
85	The earlier you introduce these topics the better. Healthy and positive choices need to be explored first.	1/24/2019 7:26 PM
86	From our Faith point of view we teach kids those issue at home which will keep privacy their life.so don't want it this issue teach them in small age in school	1/24/2019 7:00 PM
87	Children need knowledge to understand these and all issues they face	1/24/2019 6:50 PM
88	They are too young to go for advance topics. The more you expose more curiosity arises.	1/24/2019 6:04 PM
89	some of these topics not appropriate for primary school	1/24/2019 6:03 PM
90	These kids are still too young for some of those teachings	1/24/2019 5:10 PM
91	The ones selected are age appropriate for primary school. The others should be address by parents and secondary school ehen child is more mature	1/24/2019 4:46 PM
92	I feel children should be educated fully both at home and school in all these areas so they are fully informed rather than learning incorrect information from other children. Also it should be more openly discussed so there is no embarrassment or reluctance to speak about issues.	1/24/2019 4:10 PM
93	It would need to be aged appropriate and taught by someone with skills in those areas	1/24/2019 3:44 PM
94	Sexual education should be taught at home	1/24/2019 3:37 PM
95	What to do in the case of somebody approaching a child, abusing a child, or if a child has a concern about these topics	1/24/2019 3:37 PM
96	All of the above are relevant at an age appropriate level	1/24/2019 3:21 PM
97	My kids (6 and under) do not engage online . I suppose at a later time that may become important. The topics further down the list are more appropriate at secondary school level.	1/24/2019 3:09 PM
98	The points that I left unchecked should only be taught to 5th and 6th class	1/24/2019 2:36 PM
99	But I am honestly not sure what age is best to teach kids	1/24/2019 2:31 PM
100	Some are more appropriate the older the child gets in primary school	1/24/2019 2:28 PM
101	The topics shown, should be coming from us parents first. In general a loving home is where the foundation should be placed for the further development of the children	1/24/2019 1:48 PM
102	My choices above are about respect,manners, online safety,and healthy friendships Sensitive subjects should be taught by parents	1/24/2019 12:01 PM
103	These are life skills needed as knowledge is power	1/24/2019 11:48 AM
104	All the above topics are extremely important. Of course some of the topics should be addressed age appropriately. It's extremely important that all of the above should be addressed by 6th class as the children will be entering the age for secondary school & will be mixing with pupils whom are older then.	1/24/2019 11:37 AM
105	I do not believe sexual content should be taught to primary school children. Stay safe, yes. Healthy friendships and bullying yes.	1/24/2019 11:25 AM
106	It is important that our children are aware of all of these topics, they are all linked and it is important for our children to feel comfortable and confident to discuss these topics with their teachers and parents.	1/24/2019 11:21 AM
107	Good to have children aware of inappropriate use of social media and to learn about it in school. Not good for children to have the dept of education's opinions about sex and sexuality impressed on them - should come from parents/guardians. Fine to learn about biology, ie body parts and pregnancy.	1/24/2019 11:02 AM
108	Important that all these areas are covered	1/24/2019 10:58 AM
109	All aspects of sexual education and relationships should be taught from a young age in an age appropriate manner to all pupils	1/24/2019 10:56 AM
110	My kids are too young now so that's why I think these chosen ones are the best for them at the moment.	1/24/2019 10:48 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

111	I'm not sure if the characteristics of families and relationships is appropriate as there are so many different types of family set ups. I wouldn't want any child to feel that their family wasn't the "norm" as defined by this teaching but I'm not entirely sure what is taught in this element. The other 3 I haven't ticked seem more appropriate to secondary level but I'm open to education/persuasion on the reasons for them to be included.	1/24/2019 10:40 AM
112	Leave us as Parents to discuss and educate Our Children! If i have the right to withdraw then we withdraw.	1/24/2019 10:35 AM
113	Obviously age appropriate for some subjects	1/24/2019 10:21 AM
114	Knowledge is power. parents need to realise that the more information provided to children will help them make safe and informed decisions as they grow older	1/24/2019 10:16 AM
115	Obviously age appropriate, drip fed to students at the relevant age but definitely all before secondary school.	1/24/2019 10:07 AM
116	I think it's bad effect on child's mentally helth to teach him or her about sexuality openly then there concentration is divert between sex and studies you can't control there brains	1/24/2019 9:58 AM
117	Specially, I think sexual consent is a critical topic to consider. I work in this area and I have been talking to my daughters from the age of 3 years old about this issue.	1/24/2019 9:55 AM
118	The are all important as they will be exposed to all types of relationships and will be exploring their own relayionships/bodies/,sexuality	1/24/2019 9:47 AM
119	I believe they are way to young for certain topics, and exposing their young minds to them would attract a lot of distraction and question, they may not be able to handle answers to.	1/24/2019 9:29 AM
120	All are appropriate. Taught in an age appropriate way	1/24/2019 9:24 AM
121	As long as it's communicated in an age-appropriate way, then we should normalise RSE and not make it a taboo subject. We want kids to become well adjusted adults with informed, heathly attitudes towards sex and relationships. Gone are the days of old nuns talking about raindrops merging on a window!	1/24/2019 9:24 AM
122	Kids mostly already know the concept of privacy and inappropriate contact, they need to be given the confidence and tools to learn how to deal with it and to talk about it. I would guess this is covered in consent and abuse etc.. I would be concerned that if privacy is taught in the wrong way a child might then feel too embarrassed to talk about something that is inappropriate.	1/24/2019 9:12 AM
123	These are all important subjects and I am sure can be taught in a way that is age appropriate.	1/24/2019 9:02 AM
124	Sexual relationship content shouldn't be discussed at primary level, let children be children for as long as possible.	1/24/2019 8:59 AM
125	All depending on age	1/24/2019 8:49 AM
126	It's important to educate kids at an age appropriate level of all of the above. Maybe not in very much in detail some of them but they certainly need to know about all of these things. Abuse etc DOES happen with primary school aged kids too. I do educate them of most of these, as I said, on their level of understanding. Some of these topics are probably more appropriate for older primary school kids though.	1/24/2019 8:44 AM
127	Our children are being exposed to it online and in the media. We should be leading the communication at an early stage	1/24/2019 8:43 AM
128	As I mentioned before this is the family's roll not school and if you think some family not full filling their rolls then all this education should be directed at the parents	1/24/2019 8:24 AM
129	Age appropriate all these areas are part of forming healthy relationships,if we don't inform and influence our children in a healthy manner then they find it out through unhealthy and a misinformed manner.Safety of our children in and out of school is very important to most parents.	1/24/2019 7:37 AM
130	All relayed in a very age appropriate manner and language without being too explicit	1/24/2019 7:12 AM
131	I think primary children need to learn about their own body & how it works, recognising how to stay safe & what's appropriate when with other people. I don't believe RSE is the place to learn about being online & social media. Also the point on characteristics of families and relationships I don't believe it's possible to teach this there are so many types of families and relationships I don't think they could all be covered I think teaching children acceptance of people and situations that are different to their own would be easier	1/24/2019 6:50 AM
132	All appropriate	1/24/2019 2:23 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

133	<p>We find this outline given here vague and inappropriate. Sexuality education should not be given to a child under the age of eleven and is tantamount in our minds to sex abuse if given before that. It's exposing them to something at an inappropriate age. It's a given that children will be exposed to stuff online IF they are given unrestricted, unsupervised or unsafe access to it. Schools being a primary example! Parents are better able to supervise online activity if educated in it and Parents should be educated in it. It should be compulsory for Parents to attend an online safety course at least once a year and allowances made for them attending it. A Teacher cannot supervise over 20 kids online activity at once and it's unfair to ask them even if they have an app to see as they usually have to go into it and back out again plus they have to keep an eye on what's physically going on in the room. Bring in a law that states children under the age of 17 can only have a push button phone so they're not exposed that way or can access pornography. Make it illegal for them to buy smartphones and fine those who do if they're not that child's parent. Each parent knows their child's maturity level. Further, what do you mean by PRIVACY and inappropriate physical contact? Children should be made aware that it's inappropriate for anyone to fondle their genitalia in a sexual way in primary school; adults or children and should be taught to inform a trusted adult or appropriate agency. The way that question was stated above could mean anything...as could many of those questions. The dangers of alcohol and drugs are I believe already discussed. If it's not 6th class then why is risky sexual behaviour mentioned? You need to be careful you're not overexposing children to things and in so doing being the cause of abuse yourselves by damaging them psychologically and emotionally. For example, why are "healthy sexual relationships" being discussed as appropriate for children from Junior infants to 6th class? In what context? Surely that should be a secondary school matter and children informed they could face legal prosecution for statutory rape if they willingly take part in sexual activity before the age of 17. Will contraception be discussed? Will they be told when and where and how to access it? If they are told when, where and how to access it, why would you believe this is appropriate for children in primary school? Would it not lead to risky sexual behaviour and relationships? Further, it's taking knowledge and control in the raising of our children away from Parents by the school being their primary source of information and undermining our authority and autonomy in the raising of our children. I for one find this survey very dangerous if not read properly a number of times.</p>	1/24/2019 1:47 AM
134	<p>I don't want to take that innocence that a primary school child should have but I would like them to be equipped with a certain amount of knowledge. We live in the county there are no massive estates, you can't walk anywhere so my child will be shielded from certain aspects of above topics until she enters secondary school, which I am very happy with.</p>	1/23/2019 11:40 PM
135	<p>I think all these topics are appropriate not sure about alcohol and drugs as children this age may not quite be ready for this topic but they should be thought in secondary school. While I ticked most of the boxes I believe it should be age appropriate. I do feel it is very important to teach children about growing up.</p>	1/23/2019 11:26 PM
136	<p>Kids are too young to get exposed to online content and Falling into bad company</p>	1/23/2019 11:09 PM
137	<p>All topics should be covered by the time a child leaves primary school</p>	1/23/2019 10:34 PM
138	<p>I am in favour of giving children age appropriate information about relationships and sexuality but also am conscious of allowing them to remain innocent on certain topics where possible ie if it isn't something they absolutely need to know</p>	1/23/2019 10:28 PM
139	<p>My responses are topics that I feel should be discussed or taught at an age appropriate level at some stage in primary school. I feel that the others are best left til secondary school.</p>	1/23/2019 10:26 PM
140	<p>/</p>	1/23/2019 10:06 PM
141	<p>All age appropriate. Any not selected are not age appropriate</p>	1/23/2019 10:02 PM
142	<p>There is a merging of all the topics above at some level. Respect is key. Relationships are key. The difference between health and unhealthy relationships. The biology of sexuality at age appropriate level. Social media and substance availability and the negative impacts these have -again at age appropriate level. Each persons own personally responsibility and consequence of decisions....</p>	1/23/2019 10:00 PM
143	<p>I believe talks of a sexual nature should be taught at secondary schools. I think they are still immature at primary. However this would be something that would need to be discussed with parents.</p>	1/23/2019 9:58 PM
144	<p>Parents are responsible for the sexual education of their children not a stranger in a school setting even if that person is their class teacher.</p>	1/23/2019 9:53 PM
145	<p>Age appropriate</p>	1/23/2019 9:44 PM
146	<p>using alcohol and drugs as an example can lead to victim blaming.</p>	1/23/2019 9:42 PM
147	<p>The more information the better, at appropriate ages obviously.</p>	1/23/2019 9:40 PM
148	<p>Obviously some topics are more appropriate at an older age in primary school.</p>	1/23/2019 9:37 PM

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149	Fosters inappropriate curiosity. Completely undermines how parents choose to raise their children. Indoctrinates particular beliefs which in many cases are very inappropriate.	1/23/2019 9:27 PM
150	I believe Parents should be the ones to teach these things to their children.	1/23/2019 9:25 PM
151	Some children might not realise they're in danger unless they're shown what a "normal" relationship is.....give them tools to deal with real problem s	1/23/2019 9:16 PM
152	An informed child will understand better, and sooner they are informed age appropriately then the better and the less misinformed they will be.	1/23/2019 9:13 PM
153	All are important. They are discussed at home but great if they are reinforced in school.	1/23/2019 9:09 PM
154	They seem age and topic appropriate for primary level pupils	1/23/2019 9:01 PM
155	I don't know if sex is in their radar at that age, and I don't want growing to quickly so maybe is best to wait till secondary school for those topics (the ones didn't tick)	1/23/2019 8:47 PM
156	The government are not the ones to teach their views on these matters as the views presented are not accommodating the moral and religious beliefs of many people whose views and opinions are based on Christian teaching.	1/23/2019 8:39 PM
157	My choices are based on what I'm teaching and intend to teach my kids as they get older. Pregnancy should be for 5-6th class.	1/23/2019 8:19 PM
158	The latter options are not ticked as I think these are only appropriate for older children attending primary school (age 11 +)	1/23/2019 8:15 PM
159	They all play an important role in helping your child to understand and cope with all that is going on with their friendships, body and environment	1/23/2019 7:52 PM
160	All the above are things that children might face as they grow up. Having learned about it in school, makes it easier to talk about and more likely kids will tell their parents about any concerns or questions they might have around the above subjects.	1/23/2019 7:51 PM
161	Not too sure about the viewing of explicit content. I think the majority of the younger students would not know about it and it might prompt their inquisitive nature.	1/23/2019 7:49 PM
162	I feel it would give the children a better understanding of friendships and relationships and what is acceptable in both	1/23/2019 7:22 PM
163	I think everything except talking about actual sexual intercourse is appropriate in primary schools. I think 6th class only should be taught about sex	1/23/2019 6:50 PM
164	As long as they were covered in age appropriate way. A lot of these would only be appropriate to 6th class	1/23/2019 6:36 PM
165	All topics are important but I feel these areas should be covered first in detail to lay a foundation. If the teacher felt it appropriate and that the class understood these concepts, then moving on to the other ones would be appropriate	1/23/2019 6:34 PM
166	I'd like to think that it's not necessary to teach sexual consent and related issues until secondary school	1/23/2019 6:20 PM
167	I think it's really good to educate them early on in life but the last few options that I did not tick I think should be done in secondary school	1/23/2019 6:20 PM
168	Perhaps naively, I would hope that discussion regarding alcohol, drugs and risky sexual behaviour would not be required in primary school and would wait until secondary. Again, at 11 years old or younger, it seems a little early to discuss healthy one to one sexual relationships.	1/23/2019 6:16 PM
169	Items selected are age appropriate for a healthy primary school pupil	1/23/2019 6:10 PM
170	I think parents should be responsible for this important area and it should be taught in a way that respects the values of the family.	1/23/2019 5:50 PM
171	I think 9/10 is a bit young to teach my daughter about how to get pregnant. It would depend on the level of what you were saying.	1/23/2019 5:50 PM
172	Under 10 no need for education re sex	1/23/2019 5:30 PM
173	They are all appropriate for different reasons	1/23/2019 5:21 PM
174	All these topics are relevant if taught in an age-appropriate manner that children will understand without raising unnecessary concerns	1/23/2019 5:20 PM
175	There is too much taboo & shame around our bodies, sex, sexuality & relationships. If children are explained what is ok & what's not ok at a young age they will be more open minded & more likely to talk about these things.	1/23/2019 5:16 PM

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176	An 9-11 yo doesn't need to recognise one on one sexual relationships. It's parents that should be should how to understand grooming and monitor online till age 11. Slight recognition to absurd online behaviour should be outlined, but that age bracket is too low.	1/23/2019 5:07 PM
177	All children should be aware of certain aspects and older classes could reflect on certain issues if deemed necessary and appropriate	1/23/2019 5:02 PM
178	Assuming the content is age appropriate then all the above are important topics. Getting to teenage years and introducing these issues is too late.	1/23/2019 4:58 PM
179	All are appropriate, if done appropriately. Kids vary enormously at this age, so a one size fits all approach won't work.	1/23/2019 4:56 PM
180	I dont mind if my child learns about whos good friend for her or report if she doenst like somebody doing something bad, recognizing bad from good etc. But. Excuse me but who has a rights to talk to little girl about boobs, penis, how adults make baby, these are things should be discussed when parents see that child is ready to hear it, not when somebody who might not even have a kids tell me to. i dont want her to try things before she is ready, because she learned about it from some adult from school, i dont want to be scared when she will be in her room- does she check her vagina or not behind closed door INSTEAD OF PLAYING WITH DOLLS AND TRAINS.	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
181	6th Class	1/23/2019 4:47 PM
182	Such a wide ranging subject that nowadays needs much more attention.	1/23/2019 4:38 PM
183	concepts of grooming need to be addressed but very sensitively without getting into consent as that is NOT.	1/23/2019 4:32 PM
184	These are all a part of life. However, I know it is not relevent here but I strongly believe that bullying policies in schools are just that...policies and bullying is our main problem that is not being properly addressed.	1/23/2019 4:19 PM
185	I think pregnancy/drugs etc should be thought in 6class and not any younger to have them aware of these things before going into secondary school	1/23/2019 4:16 PM
186	Self respect, value of self, self esteem,	1/23/2019 3:53 PM
187	The characteristics of families as long as it covers all types of modern families	1/23/2019 3:38 PM
188	I believe that all of these are appropriate and necessary for children for learn, once they are thought in an age appropriate and open manner. I believe it is important to ensure children understand that modern families are made up of different mixes of people and that same sex relationships are no different to male /female relationships. I find it very hard to keep up with modern technology/social media so it is great that school are also teaching about safe online use. It's been a great help, because I worry I am missing things.	1/23/2019 3:33 PM
189	At age appropriate stages an RSE programme should progress to educate children in a healthy respectful environment where children can comfortably ask questions and learn to respect these very important topics and social skills	1/23/2019 3:24 PM
190	I think by highlighting the healthy relationships it should make them aware of negative ones . I think perhaps secondary school the content could be more detailed re the specific dangers/ grooming, abuse etc.	1/23/2019 2:58 PM
191	Educating children at an age appropriate level will help to equip them should they experience, in real life, any of the topics listed above.	1/23/2019 2:56 PM
192	Some depending on age.	1/23/2019 2:55 PM
193	Sexual health is a very important part of the development and philosophy of self just as much as physical and mental health are and I feel all of the above encompass principles that need to be openly discussed in the classroom as a norm.	1/23/2019 2:48 PM
194	All of these topics are important	1/23/2019 2:40 PM
195	Each should be covered in an age appropriate way. Not all are appropriate in junior infants for example but may be appropriate in sixth class.	1/23/2019 2:40 PM
196	They are all invaluable in today's society	1/23/2019 2:32 PM
197	All of the topics are appropriate but at the right age the role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour only in 6th class.	1/23/2019 2:27 PM
198	It's very important children are very aware, it's dangerous out there and the more they know, the more aware they are themselves.	1/23/2019 2:21 PM

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199	Pregnancy, concepts of sexual consent for older classes, respect for others in peer group, ie touching class mates in inappropriate at school.. Still happen!! Sexual preference, gay, lesbian, transgender ect. For 5th/6th class	1/23/2019 2:18 PM
200	This options are very broad. Again the level of information being given is the concern and the age at which they are introduced. One to one sexual relationships may be appropriate for 6th class but not for below.	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
201	All the topics mentioned are likely to be discussed or considered by children from a young age. We would rather have the kids enlightened by a well-informed, caring adult than to leave them in the dark or be mis-informed by peers. We do feel that we as parents are primarily responsible for this type of education but we don't see any harm in a second source of information from school.	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
202	Believe that children should be educated in this area	1/23/2019 1:58 PM
203	I'd say that the last 5 items would only be appropriate to the 6th class and would need to be taught in a very sensitive manner with regard to the children's age.	1/23/2019 1:50 PM
204	I do not children in primary schools should have access to internet without a parent's authorisation and presence. As result anything relating to online safety and content could be postponed to secondary school curriculum. Other topics may also best be tackled in secondary school when the child has acquired enough maturity to process issues relating to sexuality rather than reproduction.	1/23/2019 1:49 PM
205	Sounds like all these topics could be touched on, some probably in more detail than others.	1/23/2019 1:49 PM
206	Children are exposed to so many new ways to build relationships its very important to be able recognise risk factors and how to handle themselves	1/23/2019 1:47 PM
207	All of these are very important but I think the family relations one is too varied and specific to be taught by schools. Although I'd be open to correction on that. I also would hate to think of someone who disagreed with certain family set ups to be teaching my child that they are not "normal" family groups.	1/23/2019 1:44 PM
208	Information & learning builds confidence & removes the taboo effect so hopefully our children will make wise & safe choices	1/23/2019 1:03 PM
209	Children are exposed to all above topics at increasingly younger ages therefore need to be equipped to deal with them.	1/23/2019 1:02 PM
210	In theory I have no issue with any of the topics above. However my children are adopted and family and birth has a different meaning to them. Many adopted children have no information about their birth or what they were like as a baby and pregnancy and these issues can cause concern and distress for them. If these topics are presented in an understanding fashion(i.e. not assuming that everyone knows everything about when their mother was pregnant with them or their birth or even early years then that is fine).	1/23/2019 12:52 PM
211	Content of sexual consent, exploitation, grooming abuse etc - think they are too young for this... Its very heavy topic. Perhaps in 1st - 2nd yr in secondary school	1/23/2019 12:51 PM
212	School children in general are way ahead of where children their age are even 10 years ago as a result of phones tablets and social media. They are mentally not able to deal with it all as they know nothing about it until the end of 5th/6th class.	1/23/2019 12:47 PM
213	Forewarned is forearmed, helps children to understand what is appropriate and acceptable in a confusing time for them so they can form healthy boundaries and develop and maintain self respect	1/23/2019 12:46 PM
214	I think they're all appropriate to teach. However I hope the topics about sex are taught with an emphasis of waiting till an appropriate age.	1/23/2019 12:44 PM
215	I think that children should be taught biological reproduction but that other types of sexual activity should not be explored at primary level. Questions to do with contraception and sex while a child should be directed to parents. Children should of course be aware that any adult or older teen has no right to touch them or groom them.	1/23/2019 12:34 PM
216	Some not appropriate for primary school level	1/23/2019 12:34 PM
217	RSE is something personal that should primarily be taught by parents	1/23/2019 12:29 PM
218	Children should be given all the facts at age appropriate levels	1/23/2019 12:17 PM
219	I have an older daughter in secondary school and she covered all of the above in primary, and I knew more about it as she got older and I suppose it was easier as she knew what she was learning about.	1/23/2019 12:15 PM
220	Some of these would be age appropriate and not suitable for small children.	1/23/2019 12:13 PM

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221	The full knowledge is important, what makes me very worried is the social media and how it will change in time when my kids would like to use it. How it will affect the relationships and other aspects of life. How to keep them safe. How to limit it for just personal contact with friends or educating themselves. I believe the teacher for this subject needs to be easy to deal with, funny, respectful and NOT STRICT. My child's school and their teachers are very strict and especially my child's class teacher is very puritanical. Strictness in this subject is contraproductive I think. The choice of the teacher for this is important, I don't think any teacher from the school would fit this. External teacher would be needed.	1/23/2019 12:08 PM
222	Because these are the areas I would cover with my child before they transfer to secondary school.	1/23/2019 12:05 PM
223	A professional needs to gauge levels of awareness regarding content. Parents must be given an outline of what topics will be covered and when so that home can support school and relevant conversations can happen between parent and child.	1/23/2019 12:04 PM
224	most important that is age appropriate discussion. I do believe the 'hard' discussions (e.g. domestic abuse) should be touched on, but I don't know how. It's difficult for me to say. I tell my own children to talk to me (or Dad) if they are worried about anything or anybody. And we will sort the problem for them.... So try to keep the lines of communication open within families.	1/23/2019 12:02 PM
225	Keep it to biological changes predominantly	1/23/2019 11:59 AM
226	The children are aware and exposed of all these topics by way of media and friends. It is important not to leave them learn these topics on their own, but to provide proper structure and support. Sex and relationships are a natural and beautiful part if the human condition, and cannot be viewed as taboos.	1/23/2019 11:57 AM
227	More info, is better. Clearly all the info should be scientific based, and not bias but catholic ethos	1/23/2019 11:53 AM
228	I think online safety must be taught within the school curriculum. It is the most important topic affecting our children today. Many parents do not feel equipped to teach children about this topic as may not be IT savvy . Studies have shown that internet safety should be taught from junior infants upwards .	1/23/2019 11:51 AM
229	I do not see why any part of human life should be taboo or off limits. It's only a big deal if you make it a big deal.	1/23/2019 11:49 AM
230	Children are more exposed than ever to images about sex and relationships and these topics are crucial	1/23/2019 11:43 AM
231	Opening the whole array of sexual conduct, orientation and content of online sites will confuse and frighten kids who otherwise would be quite content and assured about Sexuality and Relationships.	1/23/2019 11:40 AM
232	I believe it is our role as parents and educators to not only teach children maths and english but to prepare and educate them for what will confront them in life and to do so in a way that sees consensual sexual activity as normal and healthy and to recognise deviant behaviour and have a zero tolerance approach to it. The topics of exploitation, coercion, role of drugs etc would I assume be dealt with in an age appropriate way and at an age when children would be old enough to not be afraid of what they are being told.	1/23/2019 11:37 AM
233	my 9 year old son and his friends were advised by a girl in their class to google "big tits" which they did and led them to porn. Due to miscommunication between his parents he had access for weeks. Then they started to call the corner in school the sex cave. No teacher is equipped for that - which they need to be but so too do parents and the children to some extent. Most parents would be horrified to know this and teachers are afraid that they will.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
234	As much as I believe most of these topics may be necessary, as a parent I would like to be the one to discuss the more sensitive topics with my children. They are also still young and innocent at 11 & 12.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
235	11 is too late for some kids to learn about the process of puberty!	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
236	I would be concerned that the teacher may be uncomfortable having these talks and may be bias	1/23/2019 11:20 AM
237	My child is 7. I believe he is able to receive the concepts delivered in a child appropriate manner.	1/23/2019 11:14 AM

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238	If you could guarantee that these topics were only to be taught in 6th class then my selection would be broader. However, I would be concerned that some of these topics would be premature for students below 6th year and would act as an accelerator rather than an aid. There is a fine balance to be struck between allowing children to develop at their own rate and forewarning them of potential future events. I don't want to see the primary school system exacerbate an already well advanced trend where very young children are introduced to sexualised material from a very young age.	1/23/2019 11:12 AM
239	My eldest is 11 and has been asking lots of questions over the past year. He thought he knew everything from friends in school etc of which was all wrong so we as parents had to explain so he would understand properly!	1/23/2019 11:10 AM
240	Knowledge is power.They more they know the safer they are. I prefer that my child receives first hand information from me or (and her dad) her teacher rather than from an "uncensored" source.	1/23/2019 11:08 AM
241	I think it important to be careful when discussing families with students, a family can be very different things to different children.	1/23/2019 11:05 AM
242	You cannot skip facts to facilitate faith and religious teachings	1/23/2019 11:03 AM
243	All are relevant but as social media and online games are more relevant it's extremely important to make them aware of online predators	1/23/2019 11:03 AM
244	All of the topics are very relevant in today's world and kids need to know about it and hear it first hand from knowledgeable teachers and experts	1/23/2019 10:59 AM
245	In general all of the above are appropriate for the older 5th/6th class boys but some I don't think would be appropriate or beneficial for the younger classes	1/23/2019 10:57 AM
246	I would definitely keep detail in most of these areas until 5th/6th class, focusing on the first two ONLY until 3rd/4th. But I would like to think that when entering secondary school my child would have a basic understanding of the more adult themes. I would have hoped that evaluating sexual relationships and alcohol and drug issues could wait until secondary school but if that's naive then I would accept it in the interest of children who come from different backgrounds who need this information.	1/23/2019 10:55 AM
247	With social media and primary school children having phones and unsupervised internet access - even if I restrict my child - others in their environment are looking at who knows what content - information and open discussion of appropriate behaviours are key to preventing harm and supporting healthy development.	1/23/2019 10:54 AM
248	These are appropriate but at different stages of primary education	1/23/2019 10:49 AM
249	I think some children may be too young or immature for some of the topics that I haven't selected. I.e drugs alcohol & sex.	1/23/2019 10:46 AM
250	Personally, I don't find the content of the RSE sufficient for pupils in 6th class. My daughter gets most of the information re sexuality etc. at home. in a much more open way.	1/23/2019 10:42 AM
251	Do children need this information at this young age?! The school should put the child at the heart of all its decisions. I would like to see the school being more preoccupied with providing children with more opportunities for free play, expression of individual self and providing them an education for enlightenment.	1/23/2019 10:41 AM
252	Both children are in junior classes so not all of the points would be within their comprehension just yet. All areas very important but just teaching them at the right stage is crucial, otherwise the information will be either loss on them or create unnecessary fear.	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
253	If the topics are not taught then information must be discovered and can be confusing and incorrect	1/23/2019 10:37 AM
254	I think its a vital part of their education and both the responsibility of parents and the school to help our kids grow into informed teens capable of making good decisions and taking care of their mental and physical well being.	1/23/2019 10:37 AM
255	Education about relationships and sexual education is really important to teach from an early age	1/23/2019 10:35 AM
256	Because my son is 11, sexual activity is not age appropriate but learning about relationships and respecting people is.	1/23/2019 10:34 AM
257	Age appropriate teaching of all of the above can lead to healthier understanding and hopefully happier, healthier and confident children and young adults.	1/23/2019 10:34 AM
258	Children need as much education in these areas as possible. These topics should be normalised so children can learn to feel comfortable talking about them.	1/23/2019 10:33 AM

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259	Using age appropriate teachings is a good way of demonstrating how to conduct yourself in relationships of all kinds for the benefit of all concerned.	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
260	I think that they would all be appropriate for secondary but some of them are a bit heavy for primary.	1/23/2019 10:29 AM
261	I think there are aspects of the riskier sides of sexual behaviour that are better covered in secondary school - though I don't know where to draw the line.	1/23/2019 10:28 AM
262	The problem with the options listed is that they can mean all kinds of different things to different people. For example, what comes under 'the characteristics of families and relationships' - what concept of family is being proposed under this heading? Or 'how to recognize healthy one to one sexual relationships' - whose concept of what a 'healthy sexual relationship' is being proposed? These are questions that larger society cannot agree on, therefore any attempt to teach them in school is almost guaranteed to impose a particular view that may be at odds with the child's parent's / family's views. These topics are for the most part best left to parents to handle at home; though there may be some lazy parents that couldn't be bothered to teach them to their kids and would prefer someone else took responsibility for this vital part of their child's social education instead. We ask schools to teach our kids geography, history, maths etc., because we believe teachers are more trained in the specifics of these than we are, for the age, and because if we are working we simply don't have the chance to do so, even where we have such knowledge. However, any parent worth their salt will supplement these subjects with their own knowledge whenever possible, taking an interest in their child's education, just as any parent worth their salt helps their child learn to read etc., where they can. However, we feel we are the best people equipped to teach our kids about sexuality, relationships, drugs etc, as, while we can agree on the main points of geography, maths etc., there are too many differing opinions on these other topics for them to be taught in school without impinging on some families' views on the matter.	1/23/2019 10:27 AM
263	Knowledge is power. When this information is given to children (in an age-appropriate manner) from a very young age, it mitigates the "taboo" nature of the subject and better equips them to better make responsible choices by the time they're old enough for it to matter - adolescence.	1/23/2019 10:25 AM
264	It is important that children receive age appropriate information on all issues.	1/23/2019 10:23 AM
265	Any sexual relationship involving a primary school child is an unhealthy one and that should be the main message. I think lessons in healthy friendships and relationships should be sufficient at this stage. I think the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse should be made clear and the message should be very strongly that they shouldn't be engaging in that behaviour full stop. I don't think that it is necessary to link alcohol and risky sexual behaviour at this stage. My son is only in Senior Infants though - maybe I'll feel differently when he is at the other end of primary school.	1/23/2019 10:18 AM
266	Up to 12 children have a need to understand the basics of sex ed. But I believe teaching children how to recognise good and respectful behaviour from harmful and dangerous behaviour can go a long way to how they behave in future. I don't believe that they need everything about sex and relationships delivered too young. It is a topic that should be done from age 6 or 7 up to mid teens. Parents should be more complicit in teaching their children these things. Morals should not only be thought by strangers.	1/23/2019 10:16 AM
267	I think particularly the younger groups in primary do not need to be taught about the role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour, maybe by 6th class.	1/23/2019 10:15 AM
268	I have chosen the above because I am a firm believer that by educating our children early on these topics they will be safer and better prepared. I also feel that discussing most aspects of personal development and relationships from a young age normalises it.	1/23/2019 10:14 AM
269	a person with information can make a better judgement than that with none.	1/23/2019 10:12 AM
270	They need to know how to stay safe and what changes will happen to their bodies	1/23/2019 10:11 AM
271	I think children should be thought about relationships and about alcohol and drug use as they might be stuck at home and unsure what to do.	1/23/2019 10:08 AM
272	It's necessary for the children to have an age appropriate awareness of all these things	1/23/2019 10:07 AM
273	I think the latter topics should only be given to pupils in 6th class / 1st yr secondary , and by specially trained personel, ..	1/23/2019 10:05 AM
274	Some of ghe last items are for older children	1/23/2019 10:05 AM
275	Some of topics could start later, maybe 4th class but most of it should start at junior infants.	1/23/2019 10:04 AM

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276	I am torn on the "Concepts of sexual consent..." option above, children need to know that adults can abuse them, without too much detail and where to go if this happens to you or what to do if it starts to happen or what you can do now if it has happened to you. this is very important as children are vulnerable if they don't understand some basic concepts as to what is acceptable and what you can say no to and when to tell a teacher, parent etc. however the overall heading suggests there may be some harrowing detail that a child would not need to be aware of/hear... children should not have to deal with adult problems unless it is going to affect them...	1/23/2019 10:02 AM
277	Positive that child are taught in a secure environment at an appropriate age by a well informed teacher and this is reiterated at home	1/23/2019 10:01 AM
278	Educate enough to inform but it too early to be giving them "ideas". Importance of online behaviour is quite appropriate for these times.	1/23/2019 9:57 AM
279	Discussing in an environment with their peers will make these topics more open. Parents need to back up what's taught in school with discussions at home to make sure their child understands	1/23/2019 9:56 AM
280	All are relevant and can be discussed as appropriate with all ages. They are hearing them on the news anyway so better to have responsible explanation than school yard theories	1/23/2019 9:55 AM
281	Definite no regarding healthy sexual relationship. Primary school child is mentally and physically too immature to understand truly what it is being that intimately involved with someone.	1/23/2019 9:54 AM
282	For the world our children live in now and into the future - all these topics are now facing them. We need to make these subjects part of their learning - take away the 'taboos' - it is our responsibility to ensure they are prepared for a very different world to what their parents experienced growing up.	1/23/2019 9:52 AM
283	These topics are what we encounter in life. Nowadays, children are growing up quicker and are far more informed than we were when we were their age. I would prefer my child to have correct information and instruction rather than hear half truths. It is also so important for our children to know that these subjects are not taboo and that they can come and talk about all of the above without recrimination. How to recognise healthy sexual relationships and The role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour should be in secondary school. I don't think these two topics are for children of the ages of 12 and under.	1/23/2019 9:51 AM
284	I think if these topics are discussed at an age appropriate level then all are important but it should be assessed on a class level if teachers/parents feel that their child might need some open conversation on a particular topic then it could be brought to the attention of teacher and discussed with all the class so as not to single any individual out but also not force some topics to a class/child that may not necessarily be ready to hear about some of the above.	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
285	I believe the child needs the foundation of healthy relationships to be reinforced at this stage, a relationship that begins with the child knowing him/herself - which is of primary importance.	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
286	Some of those topics drugs and risky sexual behaviour are too much for primary children.	1/23/2019 9:38 AM
287	If taught in an age-appropriate manner then all topics are relevant, especially in 5th and 6th classes before secondary school.	1/23/2019 9:38 AM
288	I think it is vital that they (in an age appropriate way) are aware of all the above issues. but as a parent I need help knowing what level of detail to give when questions are asked.	1/23/2019 9:33 AM
289	I didn't tick 'Concepts of sexual consent, exploitation, grooming, abuse, coercion, harassment and domestic abuse' because it all depends on how it's taught. I don't want children scared unnecessarily but do want them to be prepared.	1/23/2019 9:27 AM
290	It is important that our children are equipped to make safe and healthy choices and educating them is the best way to do this	1/23/2019 9:07 AM
291	I think all of these topics should be thought.	1/23/2019 8:56 AM
292	All the above topics must be discussed in primary school in an age appropriate manner to equip children before they go to secondary school	1/23/2019 8:36 AM
293	When delivered in the right way knowledge is key to understanding the correct message and what's right and wrong	1/23/2019 7:55 AM
294	I think it's important topics are raised in an age appropriate manner as early as possible. Topics such as alcohol drugs and risky behaviour and recognising healthy sexual relationships would be appropriate in the latter stages of primary. I'm unclear what the characteristics of families means but if it relates to discussing how families come in all varieties of make and format then I'd support that	1/23/2019 7:52 AM

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295	Naturally age appropriate but by fifth and sixth class especially most children will have heard about or even experienced all the topics above. Better to have they explained clearly and correctly by the teacher	1/23/2019 2:53 AM
296	Anything to do with sexual relationships, drink drugs would not be suitable for primary school kids. Definitely at secondary level though	1/23/2019 12:56 AM
297	I think they are all important but some more than others. I believe its important that they are taught openly and honestly so they can discuss openly any questions or issues they have without stigma or embarrassment	1/23/2019 12:18 AM
298	In an age appropriate manner they are all very important to be taught, and sometimes in a group setting it is easier to see peer pressure leading opinions away from what may be taught at home and dealt with asap	1/22/2019 11:44 PM
299	5th and 6th class only for some of the topics	1/22/2019 11:31 PM
300	I believe in being open and honest (while age appropriate). Children will get incorrect info elsewhere if their education about these subjects doesn't satisfy their need to understand.	1/22/2019 11:27 PM
301	All of these topics go towards building well-rounded individuals and should be touched upon during such discussions	1/22/2019 11:24 PM
302	I think this content is age appropriate without being scary and is in the context of loving relationships and changes to their bodies.	1/22/2019 11:11 PM
303	These are very important LIFE issues and primary school is a preparation for life.	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
304	The more information and education they get the best.	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
305	Online is scary, want to shield them from it, dont want to start warning them about harmful content so as not to make them curious. Dont have access to internet at home presently, carefully monitored.	1/22/2019 10:57 PM
306	The items not ticked above could be addressed at secondary school level.	1/22/2019 10:49 PM
307	Some topics I haven't selected, I believe are not appropriate for the age group.	1/22/2019 10:46 PM
308	It is in their faces everywhere they should be taught what is right and wrong.	1/22/2019 10:36 PM
309	I think children are more savy at this age then we give them credit for . On this basis I think they should be given the correct information rather than making it up between themselves or having predictors groom them into their way of thinking	1/22/2019 10:29 PM
310	I work in sexual health so I consider each of these relevant . It needs to be age appropriate obviously	1/22/2019 10:28 PM
311	Should be taught at age appropriate level.	1/22/2019 10:27 PM
312	I feel children need to be informed with factual correct information, there is so much incorrect information out there easily accessible to them that if they have honest factual information it may help to protect them	1/22/2019 10:27 PM
313	I would prefer to discuss the other topics with my child myself and not in a classroom environment.	1/22/2019 10:23 PM
314	Include consent but not issues around exploitation etc.	1/22/2019 10:21 PM
315	Primary school children do not need to be introduced to sexuality, why would we want to corrupt their innocence and force them to grow up and mature before it's necessary????	1/22/2019 10:18 PM
316	Good and honest communication is essential to children's healthy future	1/22/2019 10:17 PM
317	I think all of these are appropriate as long as the content us by age. I think pregnancy and sexual behaviour may be slightly advanced for primary level	1/22/2019 10:12 PM
318	When dealt with in an age appropriate way all the above are appropriate. There is now younger exposure to sex and having the basic principles of respect to yourself and others embedded at a young age is key. ( in an age appropriate way )	1/22/2019 9:59 PM
319	It's inportant to introduce topics in an age appropriate way at an early stage, to get kids used to discussing them. Also before they get too embarrassed to engage	1/22/2019 9:45 PM
320	I think it's good to give children a broad sense of all topics at any early age before they get 'hang ups' about issues.	1/22/2019 9:42 PM
321	All are very relevant, it can certainly open for conversation at home as well. I'd be open to discuss what they have talked at school, however it would be better if I knew what they had covered in advance.	1/22/2019 9:37 PM

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322	The more information the kids have the better they should be equipped for the years ahead	1/22/2019 9:28 PM
323	However, some of the topics above do seem advanced for a child under 10 and would require a special facilitator to discuss them, like drugs, alcohol, grooming, healthy one to one relationship and the topic of consent etc.	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
324	Should be thought from an early age so its not a taboo so kids can learn to be open	1/22/2019 9:20 PM
325	I think the latter topics which I have not ticked should be taught in 6th class, not earlier than this	1/22/2019 9:19 PM
326	We are ok with school teaching the basics regarding safety and pro-creation but when it comes to relationships under no circumstances should our children be thought this unless it was based firmly on relationships clearly defined in the Bible. The family unit and gender is being redefined to such an extent it is too complicated to be explaining to a young child. This will only confuse them. It is imperative the parents of the children bring them up in the beliefs and values they hold. This is not for the education system as the Christian faith is being systematically removed from schools and a more secular view is being promoted. This is unacceptable as we want our children brought up on the Word of God as written in the Bible.	1/22/2019 9:06 PM
327	Some of the topics are a bit advanced for primary & may not be understood.	1/22/2019 8:59 PM
328	Education is key and if we can talk openly about the difficult subjects to our children from a young age it may help keep that doorway and conversation flowing through the teenage years.	1/22/2019 8:59 PM
329	I feel the selected choices are age appropriate perhaps with touching on details which lead to how babies are made but sensitively not explicitly, this can I believe be covered during first year in secondary school, certainly understanding consent from an early age in any respect not just sexually needs to be explained	1/22/2019 8:50 PM
330	personally I feel my children will be too young to explore some of the more complex topics suggested here & I while I am happy for them to be dealt with in a school environment I feel secondary school maybe better. Regarding Families & relationships I have some reservations in the RSE programme not being representative enough of modern society & having a Catholic ethos which would be difficult for many	1/22/2019 8:47 PM
331	They are all appropriate at some stage but at different age levels.	1/22/2019 8:47 PM
332	There are a lot of challenges facing children and they need to know what is appropriate and what isn't, they should feel comfortable if they have any concerns and need to talk to someone they can trust.	1/22/2019 8:37 PM
333	From sexual consent down they should have some knowledge of these topics as due to social media, internet, etc they are more exposed to the adult world than previous generations and if they find themselves unexpectedly in an advanced conversation or situation with their peers they need the basic skills to deal with it.	1/22/2019 8:35 PM
334	Same sex relationships and alternative families must all be covered.	1/22/2019 8:33 PM
335	Any age appropriate education would be welcome	1/22/2019 8:32 PM
336	Presumably the subjects are taught in an age appropriate manner	1/22/2019 8:29 PM
337	Children are exposed to many environmental issues at home and in society, education is key to empowering any young child in speaking up, protecting themselves and staying safe.	1/22/2019 8:24 PM
338	They are all part of life and being informed helps a child's mind know what's what	1/22/2019 8:18 PM
339	Each area should be age appropriate	1/22/2019 8:15 PM
340	I feel pregnancy, healthy sexual relationships and drink and drugs should be covered in 5th/6th class. My oldest daughter secondary school had huge issues with in first year with sex amongst students and alcohol use. I feel that it is important children are	1/22/2019 8:12 PM
341	topics excluded above would be more suitable for secondary level students	1/22/2019 8:06 PM
342	.	1/22/2019 8:04 PM
343	Relationships and sexuality are extremely important for both parents and children to be better informed. Children today have ways via technology to also find out information however it can be both false and misleading and therefore the school where the child feels safe in a friendly environment is better equipped to teach our children on these very important issues. It's imperative that our children be informed on these issues starting small. Information is key to everyone including children.	1/22/2019 8:02 PM
344	I do not feel that younger children need to know about all of the topics in detail.	1/22/2019 8:01 PM

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345	It must be age appropriate. Some of the subjects above certainly shouldn't be addressed for kids under 11! From the subjects I agree are appropriate, these must be delivered free from religious judgement and guilt.	1/22/2019 8:01 PM
346	The ones that i have left un-checked, i am undecided if it is appropriate, its not that i don't want my child to know, but i think the level of detail is appropriate, and then how to handle any questions she would have. I think its all very important, but again it the level of detail appropriate to the age of the child.	1/22/2019 7:50 PM
347	Children need to hear these things from a correct , reliable source before they start hearing twisted versions of it from peers and the internet.unfortunately it is a big bad world out there children need to know volatile dangerous situations. There is no point saying they are too young as they could be in situations at any age that warrant the correct information and steps for help. I do think the healthy sexual relationship one could be left until secondary school.	1/22/2019 7:48 PM
348	Children need to be taught, in an age appropriate manner, about all types of relationships, same sex, transgender etc. Organisations like Accord have no place in the teaching of this subject matter.	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
349	Information delivered in age appropriate way is crucial to keep children safe The attitude and and a top d of Catholic Church in the past towards children who were abused SICKENS me . We need to learn as a society and surveys such as this are very helpful and welcome. Everything that can be done to keep children safe should be done	1/22/2019 7:35 PM
350	All are appropriate provided they are done at an appropriate stage in an age appropriate manner, ie. some topics only in 6th class. 11-12 year olds are potentially exposed to all topics online, and some in real life & I'd prefer they were taught about these matters appropriately by responsible adults.	1/22/2019 7:33 PM
351	However I think the last four should be kept for fifth and sixth classes.	1/22/2019 7:32 PM
352	Knowledge is v beneficial to children	1/22/2019 7:30 PM
353	Also think it is important to teach about breastfeeding when discussing pregnancy/ body parts. Normalizing it at an early age and desexualising breasts in the lesson.	1/22/2019 7:29 PM
354	I believe no topic should made to seem "taboo". Open & honest conversations will ensure our children better equipped to deal with real world situations	1/22/2019 7:29 PM
355	IO think all these topics can be catered to different age groups appropriate for their level of understanding	1/22/2019 7:20 PM
356	It is better to recognise these issues that the child to learn through actual experience	1/22/2019 7:12 PM
357	Children have more access with phones so it's important to hear the correct information .	1/22/2019 7:12 PM
358	Age appropriate in my view	1/22/2019 7:09 PM
359	It's vital that children are given all available information - it encourages more discussion which is healthy and for the child to feel they can ask any questions	1/22/2019 7:04 PM
360	Maybe some of these topics should be for 6th class only the last 4 topics.	1/22/2019 7:04 PM
361	Sometimes children know too much, or think they know too much. There has to be limits in primary school as to what is taught. Online is becoming a serious issue.	1/22/2019 6:56 PM
362	I believe children shld allowed to b children & only learn whats relevant to their age. There is no need to discuss sexual behaviours.pregnancy etc with a 10 year old ! They are children & in my opinion don't have the capabilities to deal with such issues on an emotional level. Whats the rush ?	1/22/2019 6:50 PM
363	I think all these above are suitable need.	1/22/2019 6:47 PM
364	Important for the biological aspects of maturation and development of secondary sexual characteristics to be taught. Emotional aspects of relationships and orientation are best left to families	1/22/2019 6:32 PM
365	I think religious ethos should not influence the curriculum. Churches are free to teach their perspectives in church and parents can do so at home	1/22/2019 6:29 PM
366	Innocence should be preserved for as long as possible	1/22/2019 6:29 PM
367	I feel secondary school would be more appropriate for the remaining topics.	1/22/2019 6:26 PM
368	Introducing all these concepts at a young age by the school will make the process normal as the children grow. It will make them more aware of what is wrong and also due to the normality of the teaching it will help the child report abuse. I think homosexuality and transgender should also be discussed/ introduced	1/22/2019 6:24 PM

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369	All the above content is necessary for young people to be aware of going forward themselves into teens/adulthood	1/22/2019 6:13 PM
370	I think consent should be taught very early on from the point of view of children not being forced to give someone a hug or kiss and the concept of their "space bubble". I'm not sure about domestic abuse, grooming exploitation and harrasment and corruption come up under online abuse and safety.	1/22/2019 6:12 PM
371	In conjunction with parents	1/22/2019 6:09 PM
372	I don't agree with the definition of family in Ireland(#same sex partners). Some if the topics I havn't selected are too explicit or unnecessary(not age appropriate)for primary school pupils.	1/22/2019 6:03 PM
373	I think all of these topics are appropriate however they should be taught when age appropriate.	1/22/2019 5:59 PM
374	They conversation should be age appropriate and worded not to worry children but to inform them.	1/22/2019 5:59 PM
375	Every one or these topics will affect our children throughout their childhood and their lifetime. They are all critical and not always understood or even thought about until openly discussed. This is critical to well adjusted children who are sexually safe and aware.	1/22/2019 5:56 PM
376	I don't think a child up to secondary school needs to know about pregnancy, or impact of viewing harmful content.	1/22/2019 5:55 PM
377	Not all parents fulfil the protective role and it is important that there is another avenue such as school for children to learn about sex and relationship as knowledge may help protect them. It may also help some children understand if someone is abusing them that it is wrong, not their fault and hopefully may encourage them to speak up.	1/22/2019 5:52 PM
378	It is important for children to be taught boundaries around these situations an discussing in school may help them if they have problems outside school and are confused or unsafe	1/22/2019 5:45 PM
379	Age appropriate	1/22/2019 5:45 PM
380	information and communication in this area is crucial for children particularly in the upper end of primary school	1/22/2019 5:41 PM
381	Unfortunately kids are exposed to all of the above from an early age so it's important to make sure they have the correct information.	1/22/2019 5:33 PM
382	I feel that the responsibilities for giving my children an appropriate sexual education resides with the parents. Parents best understand their children and they are best placed to judge how any information provided is being received, interpreted, etc.	1/22/2019 5:24 PM
383	Once it's done in an age appropriate way all are relevant and assist in moral and emotional development	1/22/2019 5:21 PM
384	Age appropriately everything should be taught, always!	1/22/2019 5:17 PM
385	Some topics only suitable for 5th/6th class?	1/22/2019 5:14 PM
386	I believe some of the wording above can be misleading and/or open to misinterpretation. Without knowing the content of these topics or when and how they are presented to the children it is difficult to give informed feedback. For example, items 2 and 3 on the list could easily cover item 8.	1/22/2019 5:02 PM
387	Open communication should always be encouraged. Take away the mystery. If we are open and honest children will not be afraid to ask questions	1/22/2019 5:01 PM
388	Depending on how the message is delivered and to which age group, it will hopefully make a young person aware of acceptable behaviours and consequences that may arise and never to be afraid to ask for help. It is best to hear the message via a classroom (or parent) as opposed to mixed messages that are received/discussed in the play ground.	1/22/2019 4:57 PM
389	My children are 5 and 6 (and 3) so respect, decency, confidence and friendships are most important now. However, I am sure that when they are 11/12/13, the more advanced items listed above will be appropriate and indeed necessary.	1/22/2019 4:56 PM
390	Everything is important to know in an age appropriate way.	1/22/2019 4:56 PM
391	All are widely available online and all children have some access regardless of how secure we as parents feel it is. Hearing this information from a trained professional or someone in authority other than a parent has a more powerful impact.	1/22/2019 4:55 PM
392	All cover every day life.	1/22/2019 4:54 PM
393	The topics I have not ticked I believe are appropriate for 6th class only	1/22/2019 4:48 PM
394	All of the above at age appropriate times.	1/22/2019 4:47 PM

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395	These are all necessary topics for children to be aware of in this day and age.	1/22/2019 4:45 PM
396	Not sure primary age children (say, under 11) would or should be equipped to recognize healthy sexual relationships (as opposed to healthy relationships in general) or need to know in detail about reproduction. I may be naive.	1/22/2019 4:44 PM
397	Most are appropriate, I just think some should be up to parents or a dual system so parents and teachers are backing each other up, particularly regarding online and social media.	1/22/2019 4:42 PM
398	Not all from junior infant age though. Common sense is needed	1/22/2019 4:39 PM
399	Reality is that bad things can happen and sometimes we only learn from our mistakes but young children and teens may not understand what is wrong and right or who to talk to after a bad situation. If they know early signs to watch out for it may prevent them falling into the wrong hands.	1/22/2019 4:29 PM
400	Kids need to be aware of social rules and appropriate behaviour and more important what's not okay and to how not to get into difficult situations	1/22/2019 4:25 PM
401	Because I think children should be fully equipped with all the knowledge possible in an age appropriate way	1/22/2019 4:23 PM
402	Education no matter who is teaching i.e parents, teachers. It should be like the Netherlands, Holland, they have a great sex education there, don't think the Irish are ready for that. It's sad	1/22/2019 4:20 PM
403	To teach the children respect for themselves and their bodies. To also teach respect of another's body. To equip them with the necessary life skills required to protect themselves and their friends and to make good, wise life choices.	1/22/2019 4:20 PM
404	I think some topics should be for older primary school children only. Content and topics should be age appropriate.	1/22/2019 4:12 PM
405	In today's world of social media, bullying etc, it is so important to have children prepared emotionally and mentally	1/22/2019 4:12 PM
406	it depends on the age of the children 11 to 12 for concepts of consent etc	1/22/2019 4:11 PM
407	I think the ones I have ticked are suitable for primary school children	1/22/2019 4:11 PM
408	Information is a valuable tool. By raising awareness they are more likely to be safe.	1/22/2019 4:10 PM
409	I think that the topics that I have ticked are general topics that all children need to be aware of. I think that perhaps in 5th/6th class it would be appropriate to start the conversation around sex and sexual consent and pregnancy in an age appropriate way and the other boxes that I have not ticked as some children could already be experiencing some of these already	1/22/2019 4:08 PM
410	some topics from the impact of viewing harmful content online onwards are more appropriate to older primary school children and need to be delivered in an age appropriate way with close communication with parents so they are prepared to answer questions at home.	1/22/2019 4:04 PM
411	I think the ones I didn't tick would be ok to discuss on an age appropriate discussion and with age appropriate wording	1/22/2019 3:35 PM
412	topics discussed at home reinforced at school	1/22/2019 3:26 PM
413	Has to be age appropriate	1/22/2019 3:19 PM
414	Children are beginning to ask questions and find out misleading information from 10 years onwards so all these topics are needed at an introductory level.	1/22/2019 3:11 PM
415	Family make up is very varied and different. All combinations cannot be covered and would accidentally lead to exclusion. Healthy relationships/friendships should be taught and recognised.	1/22/2019 2:49 PM
416	I feel the more intimate topics should be taught in Secondary School when the children are more mature.	1/22/2019 1:56 PM
417	I want my kids to be taught as much as possible to ensure they are equipped with all the facts which can only serve to protect them as they grow in to young adults. I never got this type of education when I was young and I wish I had. Kids tend to learn most stuff from their peers, who aren't necessarily as well informed as they think, so the less of this that is left to chance the better.	1/22/2019 1:55 PM
418	I think all are appropriate, but some may only be appropriate to 6th class	1/22/2019 1:26 PM

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419	All topics are appropriate but need to be age appropriate. Some are heavily loaded such as: the impact of viewing harmful content- what is harmful content and who defined that? Could telling kids the impact of this make them worry or give them nightmares? Or possibly make them more curious and look for what they consider harmful content? There is a lot of research in academia about online behaviour and a more balanced approach would be helpful rather than taking what the media chooses to sensationalize	1/22/2019 1:14 PM
420	As long as its age appropriate I think knowledge gives kids choices and is much more likely to keep them safe	1/22/2019 1:11 PM
421	I think it is better to for your child to be informed so they can protect themselves	1/22/2019 1:05 PM
422	All topics are appropriate but some to a much more limited degree	1/22/2019 12:53 PM
423	The have access to information that not every parent restricts so they need to be educated by an adult with their peers not by their peers with misunderstood information so they know facts and have a standardised learning.	1/22/2019 12:43 PM
424	Children are exposed to so much; it's better that they learn these in an appropriate setting and where an informed educator can gauge whether their whole class understands what's being said to them (through open Q&As). And we need the message to be consistent to all children, especially with regards consent, etc (if this was left to parents, that wouldn't happen). I also think when they learn these things together in class, children take these things onboard (I recall my daughter coming home after the Webwise talk telling me about the "would you wear that on a t-shirt" discussion... it was effective; I also remember well when I learned about pregnancy and birth control in school - I was 14 (living in the US) and it stuck!)	1/22/2019 12:21 PM
425	.	1/22/2019 11:31 AM
426	All aspects of sexual health should be addressed WITHOUT religious ideologies, building year on year as any other subject would be. All proper names for body parts should be used by all teachers and staff working with children	1/22/2019 11:23 AM
427	I think its important to teach children all of the above in age appropriate ways so that they can grow up safe, and respecting and understanding themselves and others. It is also important that they can be comfortable in asking any questions that they may have and feel that these subject's are something that can be discussed openly.	1/22/2019 11:23 AM
428	I wouldn't bother kids with sexual themes unless they are in secondary school	1/22/2019 11:11 AM
429	Whilst sex education is very important and is dealt with very well in most schools, in todays world the online aspect in relation to all aspects of sex is more important e.g. recognising grooming, how to be safe on the internet, pornography etc, things that some parents may not be clued up on i.e. they are not IT confident	1/22/2019 10:50 AM
430	They are all part of growing up and I think the more aware they are early on the better equipped they are when they are older.	1/22/2019 10:37 AM
431	I believe that elements of all these topics, if the content is appropriate to a child's age, could be included in the teaching of RSE. I think parents should receive more information on the content of the lessons than we currently do and how they are facilitated. For example, are boys and girls separated for discussion on periods?	1/22/2019 10:11 AM
432	Sex, sexualiy and relationships need to be explained to children from a source outside the home. A lot of adults don't even have a good understanding of a lot of these topics.	1/22/2019 9:20 AM
433	Some topics should be left till secondary school	1/22/2019 8:31 AM
434	The primary school should have no place is edu sting a child about Sexuality and sexual relationships. Any education about the body should be scientifically led by biologists - not social scientists.	1/22/2019 8:12 AM
435	Children should be given information about all these topics in a safe environment from a reliable source at the same time as peers.	1/22/2019 8:12 AM
436	Children are becoming more sexually aware younger and younger so they should be armed with the tools to help keep themselves safe	1/22/2019 8:08 AM
437	If done in an age appropriate way talking about all of these topics should start early to foster healthy attitudes and to make sure children have appropriate information	1/22/2019 8:06 AM
438	it is a parent responsibility, to teach at home first. some topic can be taken too far in class, and parents do not know what has been told. unless a pre curriculum would be given to parents to know what will be though, this topic should be in a basic educational in science.	1/22/2019 6:21 AM
439	Some content needs to be age appropriate and more explicitly outlined.	1/22/2019 5:13 AM

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440	All of these are very relevant, but expertise and knowledge in delivering these serious aspects is needed	1/22/2019 12:54 AM
441	Everything here is vital for a healthy happy relationship with sex	1/21/2019 11:27 PM
442	Points 11, 12 and 13 should be for 6th class children as some younger children may not be mature enough to understand. But if necessary it could be discussed with 5th class too.	1/21/2019 11:24 PM
443	Whilst we may all strive to maintain our children's innocence and naivety, modern society dictates that a certain level of knowledge (age-appropriate level) is essential,even in 9 year old! And,they will be informed by their peers in the playground;better off learning correct/accurate information in formal setting!	1/21/2019 11:02 PM
444	All topics are important topics and should be discussed at appropriate age. All should be discussed in primary school with a few being discussed at later stages of primary school eg 6th class	1/21/2019 10:53 PM
445	All of the above topics but in an age appropriate for the class age.	1/21/2019 10:45 PM
446	I believe children need truthful information	1/21/2019 10:35 PM
447	All the topics should be addressed in an age appropriate way. Children need to learn about all of the topics and be comfortable with the language and words so nothing is taboo	1/21/2019 10:02 PM
448	It should be noted that parents should be given the opportunity to discuss the topics with their childrdrn before its done in school	1/21/2019 9:50 PM
449	I think that it should be general enough at a young age, so I haven't ticked about one to one sexual relationships however, but I think should maybe be touched upon in 6th class most definitely	1/21/2019 9:44 PM
450	All topics are appropriate once they are discussed with children at an appropriate age. eg role of alcohol & drugs etc should b taught in 6th class	1/21/2019 9:41 PM
451	Teaching children from a young age an awareness of themselves and others be in online, face to face makes them better equipped and aware. Also, facts and knowledge (age appropriate) help a child make correct decisions and doesn't make sexuality of any nature a taboo.	1/21/2019 9:31 PM
452	I thinks the concepts of these core issues can be built upon as children get older. It appears that children as young as 9 are accessing sexual material on websites. I think we have a duty to provide age appropriate factual information in a safe environment that counteracts the false messages on websites. I don't agree lying to children about how the body works or sticking our heads in the sand. Eg. pregnancy	1/21/2019 9:27 PM
453	Some content more appropriate for older children	1/21/2019 9:19 PM
454	I think children need clear factual information about relationships and sexuality at primary school level. More abstract concepts are perhaps too difficult to grasp though maybe some of the issues around consent harassment etc would be appropriate for 6th class.	1/21/2019 9:16 PM
455	I think the topics I haven't ticked should be primarily covered in the early years of secondary school but an introduction to the concepts could be included in 6th class.	1/21/2019 9:15 PM
456	Personally I feel the topics I have not selected are more suitable for 1st/2nd year secondary school pupils	1/21/2019 9:10 PM
457	As not all parents do educate their children and children mature at different stages it is best to have them with the knowledge.	1/21/2019 9:02 PM
458	Rse should be part of the curriculum from an early an age as possible to ensure a healthy understanding. It should also help parents to support these discussions at home	1/21/2019 9:00 PM
459	I think all topics can be covered in an age appropriate way	1/21/2019 8:59 PM
460	I think it's important for children to be equipped with the tools to navigate today's society. I hope when leaning about the characteristics of families that they would learn not just about heterosexuals families but all types of families and would learn that homosexuality etc is fine.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
461	Some of the topics such as grooming, sexual consent and alcohol & drugs wld only be approp for 6th class and in an age appropriate way.	1/21/2019 8:54 PM
462	All relevant in today's society	1/21/2019 8:34 PM
463	I think that senior pupils in primary can cope with all of these topics if taught sensitively. It seems a little reckless not to touch on the riskier topics listed as they may come across them and need to be prepared.	1/21/2019 7:07 PM
464	All extremely important. Children are "experimenting" at a younger age now. Social media has a huge impact on their thought process	1/21/2019 6:21 PM

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465	If all children are taught in school there is more awareness on issues and may cause healthy conversations in the school environment. If these topics are left to the parents some children will never be educated therefore views on consent, online abuse etc can be seen in different ways when it is in fact black and white!	1/21/2019 6:03 PM
466	need to prepare children for the world they are emerging into, as they grow the time away from home / parents increases along with exposure to above situations. Discuss with them to prepare them & how they may react eg. if someone showed them pornography on a phone etc.	1/21/2019 5:56 PM
467	Children should understand the main areas which could affect them, learn the warning signs etc.	1/21/2019 5:45 PM
468	The more & better informed a child is the better decision they will make when the time comes.	1/21/2019 5:44 PM
469	A number of these topics can be addressed or touched upon in combination with other subjects like art, literature, history, religion,...	1/21/2019 5:38 PM
470	I think they need to be aware but no need to go into explicit detail regarding sexual relationships. Maybe oldest class could discuss this but no one under 10.	1/21/2019 4:51 PM
471	But not appropriate to younger classes. I think our school teaches age appropriate content very well. I would like to know what is being taught so as I can support my child.	1/21/2019 4:44 PM
472	more specific sex orientated subject from 5th class onwards.	1/21/2019 4:25 PM
473	I believe all topics are very important but it is important to teach them in an age appropriate way.	1/21/2019 4:18 PM
474	All topics are extremely important and inter related and can all be taught in an age appropriate manner. Furthermore they should be delivered by class teacher. Any other person delivering these subjects will only serve to de normalise these important subjects.	1/21/2019 4:18 PM
475	I think some information is needed but the remainder should be taken up in secondary when more relevant to that age group.	1/21/2019 4:03 PM
476	Importance to keep conversations/topics age appropriate.	1/21/2019 3:54 PM
477	I think it should be taught before 6th class.	1/21/2019 3:31 PM
478	It's hard to choose, all of them at some point and in appropriate manner to children. I am no expert of this. While I personally want to talk about this to my children I don't know how to do and I don't know that there could be consequences in the school if I teach them "too much".	1/21/2019 3:07 PM
479	I feel all these topics are appropriate if done at an age appropriate level. Some should only be touched on at primary level. I feel consent is hugely important right from the start.	1/21/2019 3:01 PM
480	In conjunction with parents, having different viewpoints on these sensitive topics is very important. It also keep communication open on these topics.	1/21/2019 2:59 PM
481	I'd want my children to be educated and informed as possible on all of the above	1/21/2019 2:48 PM
482	Getting more exposure at younger age now through video games, online etc. It's important to discuss early so is not such a big deal and is more natural for them, and they have the facts rather than running riot with inaccurate information	1/21/2019 2:44 PM
483	I think it is important for children to have an understanding about all of the above, some topics more applicable to older children though. I think the more it becomes spoken about, the less children are afraid to talk about problems or ask questions.	1/21/2019 2:27 PM
484	I hesitated on one or two choices but decided to pick them all because children need to be so much more aware now days .	1/21/2019 2:12 PM
485	I think there should be a basic level that is appropriate for all. After that what is taught should be child led and in smaller groups eg if you have children that are more mature and involved in risky behaviour then this is discussed with this group. Another group may benefit more from spending time on healthy relationships. Different family situations is something that would be appropriate for all - not every family is 2 adults, 2 kids - many have 1 adult, kids moving between parents, grandparents etc..	1/21/2019 2:07 PM
486	The more delicate topics such as sexual relationships, role drugs and alcohol in risky sexual behaviour, concepts of sexual consent should only be thought in the very last year of primary school or maybe 1st year of secondary and I don't feel children would be ready before that. It will also depend very much on age of children 12 +	1/21/2019 2:03 PM
487	General awareness v important	1/21/2019 1:57 PM

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488	Children around 11-13 in primary will or have started puberty already and need to know what's happening to their bodies. What happens in healthy relationships, they need to understand no means no. They need to understand and be able to show respect and have respect for themselves. Wait till they already and to ensure they themselves are able to say no to peer pressure and not to peer pressure their friends into situations.	1/21/2019 1:57 PM
489	All of the above are valid topics at each stage of a child's development. I feel they are all to be acknowledged.	1/21/2019 1:56 PM
490	Topics need to be taught relative to the age of the child	1/21/2019 1:55 PM
491	All are part of it	1/21/2019 1:54 PM
492	They are all important topics for a child's development and safety.	1/21/2019 1:52 PM
493	Children from 4th class should learn about their body changes and puberty, as it can affect children before they are teenagers. But pregnancy and reproduction should be done in 6th class.	1/21/2019 1:46 PM
494	My daughter is the youngest in her class and emotionally immature. Teaching does not address the child's emotional ability to digest and understand certain topics. It places all kids in a class under the same blanket. The age difference between my child and the oldest girl in her class is a year and 4 months. I'm aware that my child is exposed to older content because of the older kids in her class, but I feel that it would be best if she is excluded from certain topics, or at least being informed on those topics by her parents prior to hearing about them from school. It is very important that parents are made aware of the content of the RSE lessons at least two weeks in advance so we can inform and prepare our kids. The one and only lessons that I am aware of that was taught at school was without our knowledge and it was rather amusing to the kids when they learned about the body parts. Overall it was comical to them, rather than educational. I also heard from other parents that some children felt they were being "lied" to by their parents just because they didn't get the information from them first.	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
495	I think children should be gradually introduced to these concepts with those such as role of alcohol and drugs, sexual consent, grooming to be taught in senior primary.	1/21/2019 1:38 PM
496	Having two teenagers as well as my youngest, I think that we really have to recognise that the children are hearing so much more now than the past, kids today are at least 3/4 years ahead of kids 10 years ago. therefore the RSE curriculum needs to cover all the above topics age appropriately and teachers need to be trained to do it. As a parent I have answered questions from 9/10 year old that I wouldn't have expected until 14/15, it's the world we are in. Kids can't go to secondary not being prepared.	1/21/2019 1:37 PM
497	The topics I have not ticked I would consider possibly appropriate at a basic introductory level to sixth class.	1/21/2019 1:31 PM
498	I have a very open relationship with my children and I've discussed sex and relationships with them all individually, when they were ready or curious, no question was silly or embarrassing and they didn't feel under pressure to fit in to a box that society/educators suggest they should. Children build relationships on their own character. I feel it is up to the parents to nurture and educate their children on sexuality and relationships. Sexuality isn't just sex, it's nurturing your child so they love themselves and their bodies. It's teaching them to respect others and themselves. I think by doing this it provides a child with a healthy understanding of both sexuality and what it is to have healthy relationships in all forms.	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
499	some of it depends on how much detail one goes into but in my experience if you don't make a big deal about something but just talk about it matter-of-fact then it isn't a big deal. there are many families though that don't discuss these topics when they come up naturally as a child develops so you will have a big diversity to deal with - good luck!	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
500	I didn't tick 'characteristics of families & relationships' as I'd only be happy with his aspect if the school was including all types of families inc. same sex & single parents etc but if they are then great	1/21/2019 1:28 PM
501	To encourage age appropriate conversation around uncomfortable or difficult topics. Have evidence based framework of correct information.	1/21/2019 1:11 PM
502	Knowledge is power. There are primary school children in bad situations. Shielding them keeps them ignorant of the dangers and powerless to ask for help.	1/21/2019 1:06 PM
503	The more informed about and engaged with these topics children are the better. If they are part of their learning from an early age, they just become normal topics for discussion and there is no taboo around them. Fostering healthy relationships and discussion about sexuality and consent is so important for the long term mental health of young people.	1/21/2019 1:06 PM
504	I just feel a good rounded education and information on all topics- if taught in the appropriate way - can only benefit children	1/21/2019 12:55 PM

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505	I think that the majority of these areas are important but need to be age appropriate - as the parent of 7 year old twins I wouldn't want all of these areas addressed at this stage but down the line when they are older they would be more appropriate or necessary.	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
506	I strongly feel that there is a large difference in what should be taught to the more senior classes and the younger students. ALL OF THESE APPLY TO THE OLDER CHILDREN BUT I FEEL THAT ONLY THOSE MARKED APPLY TO THE YOUNGER CHILDREN.	1/21/2019 12:33 PM
507	It's not just WHAT is taught, it's HOW	1/21/2019 12:22 PM
508	Kids should have as much information as possible	1/21/2019 12:13 PM
509	I think we should be as open as possible about this	1/21/2019 12:09 PM
510	I believe that children have the right to know about these issues. I believe that knowledge is key in preventing unwanted attention/ abuse etc. I am open and honest with my 6yr old and answer his queries to the best of my abilities and at what I hope is an age appropriate level.	1/21/2019 12:08 PM
511	I think all are appropriate but the content should be pitched at an age appropriate level	1/21/2019 12:05 PM
512	Not sure how much primary school aged children need to know about sexual relationships/grooming/abuse/alcohol & drugs & risky sexual behavior... I appreciate all schools & children are different, but as a mother of 3 children aged 10, 8 & 5yrs, I don't feel any if them would benefit from this information, until secondary school. I'd imagine it would terrify them. Perhaps they lead a 'sheltered' life at the moment, but I would rather let them enjoy their innocence in childhood while they can.	1/21/2019 12:01 PM
513	All content at he right age appropriate time, it's building block by block to work up towards a full understanding.	1/21/2019 11:54 AM
514	I do not think it is necessary to have sexual education until the beginning of puberty (maybe around 10?) My child does not have access to mobile phone/tv/social media, so I do not think it is necessary to talk about it until late in primary school. Neither do her friends she plays with after school. I think all of the above topics are important to include in the RSE scheme, but only in perhaps 5/6th year, my daughter is in 2nd class so I don't think all of the above is appropriate yet. I would like her to stay in her imaginary child world as long as possible, which is why I think the educational part of school is not as important as the social aspect until secondary school.	1/21/2019 11:22 AM
515	I think that some of these topics should be for 6th class only	1/21/2019 11:03 AM
516	Children need age appropriate explanations and no embarrassment from parents or teachers; if we make talking about drugs, sex etc awkward then children pick up on this and get information from other places.	1/21/2019 10:05 AM
517	primary school age children do not need to know what are components of a healthy sexual relationship, and surely these are very varied, ,how can one know if someone else's relationship is healthy without a great deal of detail and legally children shouldn't be sexually active until 16, I feel it is too early in primary school to be going into great detail when kids here are so varied in development. Such detail is better coming from the primary educator ie the parent.	1/21/2019 9:37 AM
518	I would hope that alcohol and drugs discussion would be a bit early for primary school children but support this in principle as a preventative measure. Concepts regarding grooming and abuse are difficult ones but I support discussion of these as long as they are done in an age-appropriate and nor in a scare-mongering way.	1/21/2019 9:23 AM
519	It is important that Primary school children are made aware of the importance of respect for themselves and others and respect for personal space. Without overloading them with too much information they could be educated on the emotional and physical changes that might occur for them leading up to puberty without too much content on sex	1/21/2019 9:14 AM
520	I believe all of the above are very important in the education of all children.	1/21/2019 8:54 AM
521	Needs to be age appropriate and positive. Most children do not come across nor need to know about grooming, etc. Put them in a position to say 'it was not supposed to be like this,' and to ask for help.	1/21/2019 8:06 AM
522	I believe that children should be taught about these things using age appropriate language from an early age - it is never too young to start. With access to social media/internet, I think that a lot of children are already aware of these but the delivery of it can give them the wrong idea/impression.	1/21/2019 7:35 AM
523	Some of the topics seemed more appropriate for secondary level. Or perhaps for one on one discussion at home with parents rather than in a group/class situation in my opinion.	1/20/2019 11:37 PM
524	It isn't too early to learn about the above although some of the topics are more appropriate for the later classes (4th-6th class).	1/20/2019 10:50 PM
525	I have left un-ticked the options I feel may be to advanced for 12 yr olds and under.	1/20/2019 9:20 PM

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526	I believe it's important that children should be well educated in all of the above, obviously with the assumption that a lot of the above is left till nearly the end of their Primary education, and will be continued thereafter in secondary.	1/20/2019 9:06 PM
527	I think The school has a role in teaching about respect and friendships and online safety, but I think that primary school is too early to teach about sexuality and sexual relationships and that these topics should be introduced at home when the parents see that the child is ready, not because it is on the curriculum.	1/20/2019 8:52 PM
528	I think it's very important to discuss consent, and present it in a positive light. Topics like abuse, violence etc. may be too much for primary schools pupils	1/20/2019 8:42 PM
529	I believe that some of the options that I didn't tick should be taught to SECONDARY school children, while others should be responsibility, only of the parents.	1/20/2019 8:03 PM
530	Not sure if primary school age need to hear about sexual relationships or pregnancy in detail! Or alcohol or drugs.... but don't have older kids so hard to judge!	1/20/2019 6:39 PM
531	These are all important and should also be taught by parents, it seems like an awful lot to fit into one subject	1/20/2019 6:18 PM
532	However, some should be only taught to the older classes that have the ability to understand.	1/20/2019 3:48 PM
533	Grooming and abuse would need to be handled very carefully, it's a dreadful topic to have to explain, could cause distress to children? In particular the younger kids..although any child having experience of it should be able to approach the school in total confidence	1/20/2019 12:57 PM
534	All topics are appropriate but they need to be delivered when age appropriate. For example, the topics of sexual relationships and pregnancy, role of alcohol/drugs and the human reproductive process would be more appropriate towards the latter years of primary school, whereas the earlier topics are appropriate at all ages.	1/20/2019 11:23 AM
535	Relationships education and sexual education are very important, however while relationship education can be taught to a wider audience (recognise bullying, what a good friend is etc should be taught to the pupils all together to help them understand that this is about them, it's interpersonal), sexual education is way to sensitive to be explained to a wide group. Each child has a particular sensitivity and a teacher simply cannot address such delicate topic while considering the individual child's response to what is being taught, the same way a parent can do with this own child whom he knows better. It is simply something that should be taught at a one to one level. In addition it is often heard that teachers teach certain information incorrectly and without respect for the parents personal beliefs.	1/20/2019 9:39 AM
536	it should be age appropriate	1/20/2019 9:17 AM
537	Accurate age appropriate information for all the children will mean that the taboo of talking about these things might eventually be lessened	1/19/2019 10:04 PM
538	Arm the children with information to set them up for a positive and safe future. Knowledge is power.	1/19/2019 9:19 PM
539	I believe all I've selected could be processed in the minds of primary school children if taught appropriately for their age.	1/19/2019 8:56 PM
540	I think every box needs to be discussed at different ages and stages	1/19/2019 7:36 PM
541	Obviously some of them are mainly appropriate for children in at least 6th class (sexual consent etc) but given online access of many younger children there may be a need to find ways of having age-appropriate conversations earlier about things that they may be exposed to online. Or create safe spaces to tell teachers (obviously parents role is key here but if they don't have a trusting relationship with parent) if something has upset them or made them uncomfortable	1/19/2019 6:12 PM
542	I think primary school children are too young to understand risky sexual behaviour as they hopefully won't encounter the topic	1/19/2019 6:01 PM
543	Some topics wouldn't be appropriate for primary school it be more secondary schools for example drug's pregnancy etc but certain topics healthy relationships about the body is suitable for primary school	1/19/2019 5:51 PM
544	I think the more informed our children are the better they are able to have happy and healthy relationships.	1/19/2019 5:30 PM
545	All of the above very important for all children to be aware of	1/19/2019 4:51 PM
546	Primary school children are exposed to a wide range of complicated and potentially distressing situations online. Starting age appropriate discussions with children at school on a wide range of topics enables the conversation to be continued at home. We should aim to talk openly and honestly about issues at home and school with no taboo.subjects.	1/19/2019 3:09 PM

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547	Age appropriate information as children are not usually exposed to drugs, drink and sexual contact until secondary school. All the other information is relevant to these ages and it is important to hear it in school as well as at home.	1/19/2019 2:39 PM
548	Possibly affects of drink and drugs only bring taught in 6th class!	1/19/2019 1:46 PM
549	The approach needs to demystify and encourage open discussion.	1/19/2019 1:35 PM
550	A/N	1/19/2019 1:07 PM
551	The more informed our children are, the better decisions they will make, more confident they will feel and a lot safer in an ever changing environment. We should not be put off by their age. If we don't teach them, they will learn from inappropriate sources! They will also feel less embarrassed in asking us questions.	1/19/2019 12:35 PM
552	Children can be exposed to all this content and it is better to equip them early with factual information.	1/19/2019 11:28 AM
553	sexual transmitted diseases	1/19/2019 10:47 AM
554	age appropriate. With older classes need to learn about pregnancy and human reproductive process etc	1/19/2019 8:22 AM
555	I feel the role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour might be more appropriate for first years. However, I also feel that knowledge is power; many questionable choices are often made due to ignorance. Once these topics are tailored to appropriate ages and handled sensitively, perhaps they are all appropriate for primary school children.	1/18/2019 10:12 PM
556	All the topics are relevant, assuming they are covered in an age appropriate way	1/18/2019 9:20 PM
557	Provided the talks are age appropriate and given by someone who is GOOD at it. There are some teachers I know who might not be.	1/18/2019 8:37 PM
558	I think they are all important if explained appropriately to their age.	1/18/2019 8:00 PM
559	I would like to protect my daughter from some of the topics that I haven't selected for as long as possible	1/18/2019 7:47 PM
560	I believe the above I have selected for me personally are age appropriate for Primary Schools For 4th 5th and 6th.	1/18/2019 7:29 PM
561	I think Irish people in general need to get past their prudish and embarrassed tendencies and ensure our children don't grow up with the same hang-ups and uncertainties and sexual ignorance that previous generations have experienced and lived through. As long as the subject matter is taught in an age appropriate manner and using age appropriate language, I don't think any of these topics should be considered off limits.	1/18/2019 7:11 PM
562	Children need to be equipped to be aware of inappropriate behaviour towards them by others and to be able to tell a trusted adult.	1/18/2019 6:55 PM
563	Consent exploitation alcohol drugs etc is in my opinion only suited to 5th/6th class	1/18/2019 6:18 PM
564	Children should be taught all topics in an age appropriate way. What is not relevant to them will go over their heads so parents concerns that they are being told 'too much' are unfounded. The more correct information we give our children the better.	1/18/2019 5:49 PM
565	Age appropriate	1/18/2019 5:09 PM
566	Fact based teaching is important - particularly in relation to both biology and sexuality.	1/18/2019 4:23 PM
567	All these topics are appropriate as long as they are targeted according to the class year as is the case at the moment.	1/18/2019 4:12 PM
568	All of these topics are appropriate when introduced in an age appropriate way. The ability to do this is through the adequate provision of training & resources by the DES	1/18/2019 3:56 PM
569	Unfortunately, in this day & age, our kids are exposed to so much through social media etc and they need to be aware of what's good & bad....but age appropriate teaching. What's taught to a 12 year old would probably not be suitable for a 5 year old.	1/18/2019 3:52 PM
570	Whilst all the topics are appropriate (when taught at an age appropriate level), the objective way in which they are taught, and the reinforcement of values for a happy society is what is most important.	1/18/2019 3:33 PM

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571	Parents know best where their children are developmentally and how much is needed to be discussed with them to avoid unnecessary stress, anxiety or over concentration on sexual relationships. With too much emphasis on sex and sexuality at such an early age I have seen children doubting their healthy friendships and being obsessed about who "has a crush" on who and who is "in love". There's a pressure on children in 6th class to get a boyfriend/girlfriend now. Children that have friends of opposite sex get teased constantly that they are a couple which is extremely upsetting for them.	1/18/2019 3:27 PM
572	I believe all topics are equally important. This will equip our little ones for the world and its horror and how to cope with it in a positive and productive way and protect them from falling into situations that can be avoided.	1/18/2019 2:46 PM
573	I believe all of the topics are important as they are all intertwined with each other. It would give them confidence and belief in themselves	1/18/2019 2:02 PM
574	I believe that (age appropriate) if the mystery is taken out of the subject of sexual activity and sexual health that in time it will be factual and teenagers will be more open to discussing questions or concerns with parents or teachers.	1/18/2019 1:39 PM
575	Respect shown to all sexual orientations	1/18/2019 1:32 PM
576	Sex shouldn't be a dirty thing or pornography or abuse.	1/18/2019 1:30 PM
577	All the above are relevant; it is important that particular focus is put on online behavior and content as this is becoming more and more relevant for children growing up. Potential long term implications of certain behaviors such as posting sexually related comments and pictures should also be included in the RSE curriculum. Children need to understand that everything they share online will be permanently associated with them which is particularly important/sensitive when talking about sexual identity and sexually relevant content.	1/18/2019 12:58 PM
578	Internet usage & safety should be addressed as a different topic. Pregnancy is possibly more appropriate at secondary school.	1/18/2019 12:55 PM
579	I feel children need the basics before the go to second level so they are aware of how to keep themselves safe	1/18/2019 12:27 PM
580	Alcohol and drug abuse not so necessary at a young age, may get confusing at such a young age	1/18/2019 12:21 PM
581	As kids have access to everything on line now all of the above is appropriate	1/18/2019 11:32 AM
582	Children should have a clear understanding of all topics above in order to provide a solid base from which to work from when they face challenges of secondary school years and beyond.	1/18/2019 11:30 AM
583	I think learning and normalizing discussions from an early age with the support of similar conversations in the home will help ensure children remain open on these topics and seek advice guidance or help when they need it - and also help them make good choices in the moment.	1/18/2019 11:05 AM
584	Once all done in a child friendly way, and some to just older classes	1/18/2019 11:02 AM
585	As long a they are introduced at the right age all of the above are appropriate topics.	1/18/2019 10:54 AM
586	I don't think primary school kids should be introduced to drink, drugs and sex at that age.	1/18/2019 10:41 AM
587	Education is a good thing. Provided by qualified professionals (happy to have it be a teacher if/when possible, but probably best left to someone with specific training and knowledge in that area?) it should be a positive thing. They will either learn it correctly through education or learn it incorrectly through word of mouth and the internet. I'd go with option A.	1/18/2019 10:26 AM
588	As I read down the list, it would all depend on the age of the child, some content would suit the older classes but definitely not the younger classes.	1/18/2019 10:20 AM
589	I think nothing should be off limits here - it is al around the kids in the world we live in and we need to equip them with knowledge and skills to cope.	1/18/2019 10:13 AM
590	I think that children need education about lots of topics which previously they would have been considered too young for, because they are being exposed to adult pressures, and teen pressures, a lot earlier (mainly through smartphones/tablets). They are too young to fully understand the ramifications of their actions online, and need help (when it is not being provided from home) in resisting pressure to overshare, and to think before they post online.	1/18/2019 10:05 AM
591	A child needs to know all about sex the rights and wrongs. All about internet	1/18/2019 9:49 AM
592	That's life and the world we live in. Some parents are able to talk to their kids but I know a lot who find it uncomfortable to do so	1/18/2019 9:44 AM

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593	Ok once they are done according to their ages. These topics need to be talked about. Information & discussuon with rhe children is the best way for them to know what to do if/when confronted with the above situations. Parent's embarrassment can be a prohibiting factor. Age appropriate books can be a good aid for parents. Keeping the lines of communication open is crucial to keeping our children safe. If a child asks about any of the above, a parent needs to be able to respond appropriately.	1/18/2019 9:19 AM
594	Many of the questions (and their right corresponding curriculum contents) depends on age - Primary school covers quite a big age range, where content depth and context matter a lot. I prefer age-appropriate incremental depth throughout the years, adjusting the contents according to group maturity and interest.	1/18/2019 8:59 AM
595	This is the age that we need to educate the children about these topics in order to provide them with tools to make god decisions in the future. But also a vulnerable age when they could accept/normalize in appropriate behavior	1/18/2019 7:59 AM
596	I do think a number of the above should be taught from 4th/5th to 6th class e.g. online safety and sexual health.	1/18/2019 7:54 AM
597	I believe it is impossible to raise a child in our world today without giving them the power of knowledge of these issues as they would be very vulnerable to exploitation without that knowledge	1/18/2019 7:41 AM
598	All topics are appropriate provided the age of the child is considered.... eg: "The role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour" should be discussed with older children...	1/18/2019 2:00 AM
599	Think all is appropriate except drugs and alcohol which I think could wait until post primary	1/18/2019 12:14 AM
600	A broad based RSE programme that is age appropriate is required to ed update children on all aspects of RSE	1/17/2019 11:51 PM
601	All topics are relevant to all kids at different age groups. They are vital in today's society.	1/17/2019 11:35 PM
602	The importance of knowing when somebody says no that they mean it. Falls under respect I suppose.	1/17/2019 11:17 PM
603	The unticked ones for senior school level, first or second year.	1/17/2019 10:56 PM
604	Concerns about the perceptions of family characteristics and "healthy relationships"	1/17/2019 10:49 PM
605	I think it is important these potentially difficult or complex topics are not avoided - once the messaging is age appropriate, so not all would be appropriate for the younger years.	1/17/2019 10:40 PM
606	I feel that children are being taught sexual content too young. I think some content should be taught in first year of secondary school.	1/17/2019 10:36 PM
607	To prevent misinformation and to back up what patents try to do at home. Some content for senior classes preferably. Also, it would be lovely to see more manners and respect in evidence in society so it's welcome to have this included.	1/17/2019 10:30 PM
608	I think all topics apporoaite, but need to be delivered in an age appropaite manner. Ie some of the topics are for more the mature primary school students than those at the begining. Even for those in 5-6th class the topics will need to be delivered very sensitively. I also have issues about the meaning of healthy family relationships. For eg. around the time of the marriage referendum, my senior infant child was telling me about learning in school of same sex marriages in a story read out to them in class. I voted YES for marriage referendum, but do not think it is right that it is an apporiate to teach senior/junior infants of same sex familes ..not at this early age.	1/17/2019 10:28 PM
609	Internet safety	1/17/2019 10:16 PM
610	All of the above are appropriate if taught/discussed in an age appropriate format	1/17/2019 10:13 PM
611	I feel it's important all these topics are addressed at appropriate ages for children so that they can best protect themselves.	1/17/2019 10:10 PM
612	The subject of drugs and alcohol should be for older children. The other topics are appropriate. Parents could be taught about these too to help with questions at home.	1/17/2019 10:03 PM
613	Those not ticked feel like more teenager appropriate options. All others once age appropriate are good to discuss.	1/17/2019 9:56 PM
614	Many depends on ones moral viewpoint. I'd be all for facts and information but it really depends on who is teaching it and the ethical viewpoint they convey. I'd prefer to allow parents the option to teach it themselves and if they didn't then ask the school for kids to opt in.	1/17/2019 9:49 PM
615	I thought that's the importance, &for the pupils to learn about being responsible to know the fact than hearsay than from fellow pupils to learn to respect & wait when they are of age .	1/17/2019 9:49 PM

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616	All are appropriate but the areas of pregnancy, reproduction, sexual relationships should be for older kids 10+. I think it is too much for younger kids, too hard to comprehend.	1/17/2019 9:41 PM
617	Above points are key features to developing childrens awareness in regards all of these aspects	1/17/2019 9:39 PM
618	All are appropriate depending on age and the extent of the detail gone into.	1/17/2019 9:39 PM
619	Things children don't learn from school or home they'll find out some other way which could potentially be harmful with the amounts of misinformation out there.	1/17/2019 9:37 PM
620	Knowledge is everything but content should be age appropriate.	1/17/2019 9:37 PM
621	I think primary school age is a little young to discuss sexual behaviour topics that I haven't ticked above	1/17/2019 9:33 PM
622	All of these topics are appropriate but I feel the ones I specifically highlighted are more appropriate for age 9 to 11 and the rest for 6th class pupils.	1/17/2019 9:31 PM
623	I think it is important for children to be introduced to these issues/ topics.	1/17/2019 9:16 PM
624	All content essential for children's education. I feel this education needs to be taught minus Religion.	1/17/2019 9:15 PM
625	I did not select 'impact of harmful content' is I am not sure what is meant by 'harmful content'; I did not select the issue of drugs and alcohol as I feel this might be more suited for secondary school. Otherwise, I feel all of these topics are important for all children to be aware of.	1/17/2019 9:11 PM
626	Each of the topics outlined above are revelant to our current society and I do think children of all ages should be educated to help them recognize when something is unhealthy	1/17/2019 9:04 PM
627	I think characteristics of families vary so much as does the makeup of a family that this should be borne in mind and should not be taught in a strictly catholic format as this could be alienating for some students and families if they don't conform to what is being taught	1/17/2019 8:52 PM
628	All the topic are appropriate if taught ay the right age and the right way.	1/17/2019 8:39 PM
629	Once the topics are adjusted to be age appropriate, all should be discussed	1/17/2019 8:25 PM
630	Everything should be age appropriate and done in stages but children need as much information as possible to protect themselves and make good choices.	1/17/2019 8:04 PM
631	They need to be aware the world is not a safe place anymore unfortunately	1/17/2019 8:01 PM
632	How it relates to self esteem and body awareness and dressing to please self not anyone else	1/17/2019 7:57 PM
633	With obvious differentiations as to age range, everything on this list should be explored before a 12 year old child finishes primary school.	1/17/2019 7:46 PM
634	I think most of the primary school age group is not ready. Maybe 11/ 12 years old but not before	1/17/2019 7:37 PM
635	The topics I have left would ideally not be encountered by primary school children and so could give information which prompts interest but without the context or maturity to understand. These are better left to second year at secondary school.	1/17/2019 7:35 PM
636	They are age appropriate	1/17/2019 7:28 PM
637	To make each individual aware of there own safety online and to talk about body parts with the correct terminology and how comfortable they are with there body parts and how to care and look after them from a physical and hygienic point of view	1/17/2019 7:18 PM
638	Difficult one to answer... I answer this based on age appropriate teaching obviously - older primary school kids!	1/17/2019 7:15 PM
639	I believe there are some topics that 12 and under do not need lots of info on, their level of maturity makes it difficult to process too much info	1/17/2019 7:15 PM
640	All kids should be given the information they need to stay safe, healthy and happy - i.e. all of the above - as early as possible.	1/17/2019 7:00 PM
641	For the main external body parts I feel 9-11 is too young. I also feel that those relating to sexual content are also best left to 11+ years. I feel that the way these topics are approached and taught is very important and the content should be available to parents in advance.	1/17/2019 6:48 PM
642	I believe that these topics should be covered in an age appropriate way from very early on to normalise sexual health and relationships and allow development of healthy respectful relationships from from early childhood where most relationship and friendship skills are learnt.	1/17/2019 6:19 PM
643	Must be able to recognise what is safe and normal and how to keep themselves safe aswell as how to recognise and leave unhealthy/risky/abusive relationships.	1/17/2019 6:03 PM

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644	I thinks its important that children are well informed in order to protect from potential abuse. Children need to be thought this on school as parents can be influenced by religious beliefs, cultural beliefs and in correct knowledge passed down generation to generation. A factual base for all children is sensible.	1/17/2019 5:58 PM
645	I think the items I have not selected would be better taught at 2nd level.	1/17/2019 5:56 PM
646	The impact of alcohol abuse on a person's life, how alcohol is depressive and addictive.	1/17/2019 5:32 PM
647	Reproductive process to older primary school children.	1/17/2019 5:31 PM
648	9 is too young to explain about the sexual act and pregnancy in detail. It risks the early sexualisation of children and stealing their childhood. Likewise, there is a risk in all of the above content in frightening children and giving them a fearful impression of the world.	1/17/2019 5:30 PM
649	As long as they are taught at an age appropriate rate.	1/17/2019 5:05 PM
650	If handled correctly, with parents fully aware, all these topics are useful. It would help if parents knew exactly when the topics were being covered, so they can reinforce the content at home. Children should also be encouraged to raise any concerns they have at any time, and curriculum adjusted. e.g. if cyber bullying is happening, this needs to be covered ASAP and so flexibility in the schedule would be useful.	1/17/2019 4:40 PM
651	The two I didn't tick are covered in the secondary school curriculum. If discussed appropriately and at a good age kids can handle all of this very well.	1/17/2019 4:36 PM
652	whilst I would have my doubts about teaching one or two of the topics above, unfortunately, once children are on social media, they need to be aware of the dangers out there. Whilst it would be more favourable to wrap them up in cotton wool from a parenting perspective, the reality is that some of the issues above probably need to be at least skimmed over and not ignored, in 6th class.	1/17/2019 4:36 PM
653	All the topics above are appropriate and very important if explained in an age-appropriate manner.	1/17/2019 4:27 PM
654	I think they are all relevant topics for children of primary schools but obviously tailored for different age groups within the school.	1/17/2019 4:24 PM
655	Obviously all these topics are relevant and should be spoken about at the level of development of the children in that class. I would hope these issues would be dealt with each year through later primary and into secondary school	1/17/2019 4:17 PM
656	depending on the age of the child. I don't think it is appropriate to talk to junior classes about some of the topics but I think from 3rd class up the topics I have chosen are appropriate to teach,	1/17/2019 4:08 PM
657	saying no - to lots of things but esp bullying behaviours one witnesses	1/17/2019 4:05 PM
658	The earlier some of these concepts are introduced the better.	1/17/2019 4:02 PM
659	age appropriate. The unmarked topics are very important and there would need to be a clear progression from primary to secondary school in terms of what is being taught.	1/17/2019 3:54 PM
660	Sexuality should be taught in a positive, inclusive and undramatic manner. Maybe alcohol and drugs impact could be left until they are older but I think the primary school curriculum is a long way away from delivering that level of detail....and it is more important to discuss it positively before bringing in the fearful and potentially negative parts.	1/17/2019 3:40 PM
661	I feel all issues are important and most are suitable for primary school age with the exception of the role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour. This subject is not particularly suitable for children under the ages of 9-11.	1/17/2019 3:38 PM
662	I believe that the ones not ticked are a little to advanced for children that are in 5th and 6th class, I as a parent would like to have the choice when to talk to my children about sex and if it's been taught in primary school then it forces me to have to tell them before I'm comfortable with telling them, I'm happy with them learning it in first year as I will already have explained it to them and it's totally different with different kids and how mature they are.	1/17/2019 3:24 PM
663	I think that all children should be aware of these issues in a straightforward and non embarrassed way, the easiest way to ensure this is through on-going education, obviously with age appropriate resources and topics	1/17/2019 3:21 PM
664	I believe that being educated in these areas will keep children safe, reduce the risk of early pregnancy and std's	1/17/2019 3:20 PM
665	The sooner we talk to our kids about everything means it is not taboo	1/17/2019 3:07 PM
666	All of these topics are appropriate as long as they are age appropriate	1/17/2019 3:05 PM

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667	Once age appropriate they should learn early	1/17/2019 3:00 PM
668	obviously age will dictate level of complexity but all areas need to be addressed	1/17/2019 2:49 PM
669	Its a really important area!	1/17/2019 2:45 PM
670	Obviously the issue of age appropriateness comes into play with these topics - some are more suitable to senior primary classes e.g. issues re. sexual behaviour/relationships, etc.	1/17/2019 2:44 PM
671	All topics mentioned are appropriate but with age appropriate language and content.	1/17/2019 2:22 PM
672	All for 5 and 6 class children, don't think necessary for under this age	1/17/2019 2:14 PM
673	Everything is important especially on line issues as children uses on line everyday	1/17/2019 2:12 PM
674	These are things a child needs to know	1/17/2019 2:11 PM
675	It is important that children get accurate and factual information. Particularly today when so much is accessible online. Teaching them to make responsible choices in an informed way is the most important thing in keeping them safe and creating an environment where they can develop positively and healthily.	1/17/2019 1:59 PM
676	I think that parents should try to ensure that their children are kept safe online by restricting and supervising children's screen time. I think that primary school children are too young to be told about possible dangers online. It's not appropriate for them to know this. We need to protect them from this knowledge.	1/17/2019 1:48 PM
677	Way of life and responsibilities	1/17/2019 1:19 PM
678	As a person who teaches reproductive physiology in a vet school, thus very comfortable teaching and discussing reproductive function; i feel extending the primary curriculum to the explicit sexual exploitation, coercion, harassment is not appropriate. I believe these concepts should be discussed at second level, where the child is more mature. Certainly introducing the concept of sexual consent is important, but with an emphasis on the legal age of sexual consent. I understand that city based schools may feel it necessary to introduce alcohol and drugs in primary school, but I feel the school should have the right to decide if it is necessary in their school.	1/17/2019 1:10 PM
679	All this information is relevant to today's world. Information and education allows our children to have the correct tools to cope with situations.	1/17/2019 1:06 PM
680	its important that we prepare our children for the next level to keep them safe, I believe parents should have the the final say as to what is thought to their children	1/17/2019 12:51 PM
681	I think children should be made aware of aspects of life in an age appropriate way from a young age. It's easier to deal with than finding it all out in their adolescent years.	1/17/2019 12:51 PM
682	Some of these are not appropriate for younger classes in primary school but are for older classes.	1/17/2019 12:50 PM
683	I feel relationship education is best that national school - I as a parent will take care of the rest - Inc education regarding on-line threats that we generally get patronised about - the implication being as parents we don't understand this new fangled internet stuff - which of course we do!	1/17/2019 12:38 PM
684	All topics should be on the table, in an age appropriate way	1/17/2019 12:37 PM
685	Most Children will be subject to all or some of the above by friends / phone / Ipad / book / siblings etc so best to be told the 'real facts'	1/17/2019 12:34 PM
686	Most of the above topics are necessary to be introduced to the children at an age appropriate level. How much they actually understand is another matter. I also feel that children are now more confused about sexuality as they feel that they have to identify as a certain sexuality earlier. They need to be made aware that they are still developing and should not feel pressurised to having to decide whether they are attracted to opposite sex or the same sex or whatever. This is from experiences with my own children.	1/17/2019 12:29 PM
687	My 6 yrs old already asking questions. It is important that these are addressed in a natural open way from an early age	1/17/2019 12:25 PM
688	I think all of these topics are relevant and I think that it would be a good idea if parents started the conversation about these topics with their children prior to discussions and school and continue it when topics discussed at school to create a greater understanding and awareness. Parents could access information, tools & guidance to address these issues with their children with appropriate language from their schools and relevant government agencies eg HSE	1/17/2019 12:17 PM
689	It really depends on the age range of the RSE as some of these topics should not be taught to kids below 5th class	1/17/2019 12:05 PM
690	I think they're all appropriate subjects for discussion.	1/17/2019 11:55 AM

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691	My main worry for my children is if they were ever abused sexually or other. This is my main concern that they would be able to recognise an abuser	1/17/2019 11:52 AM
692	Kids are too young and they do not need to know about the sex and all that stuff in primary schools.What can 5-12 year old do about sex?Do you ghink is it not too young to touch these topics?	1/17/2019 11:47 AM
693	It's never too early to introduce these topics in an age-appropriate way	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
694	This is the most important subject to teach in school. Along with exercise, all aspects physical & emotional health is vitally important to learn from an early age. Unfortunately, as can seen from recent times, not talking leads to the worst of problems, education in basic life facts & skills can only improve the future.	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
695	I think to include rather more than less personally.	1/17/2019 11:40 AM
696	Contraception.	1/17/2019 11:39 AM
697	to provide a holistic education in respect, healthy relationship and unhealthy, harmful relationships	1/17/2019 11:39 AM
698	Children are growing up so quickly - they see and hear things from friends at school, some of whom have older brothers and sisters. There cannot be enough information provided to children - as long as it is delivered in an age-appropriate, non-frightening way. I feel if this content is supplied by a teacher from within the school (particularly one who specialises in this area) then the child(ren) will feel more comfortable asking questions at a later date (when they have not occurred to them at the time that the content is originally being delivered.	1/17/2019 11:38 AM
699	I am.not sure how much detail a school should go into regarding sexual relationships etc and also	1/17/2019 11:35 AM
700	some items are age appropriate, and may not be for Priamry school kids (in my naievty!) Parents should know how to handle many of these topics based on their family setup, the child, their interaction with others etc.	1/17/2019 11:30 AM
701	I would be mindful about focusing on negative consequences. I think it's better to raise positive awareness and instil confidence rather than fear.	1/17/2019 10:51 AM
702	Age appropriate and relevant at this stage of development	1/17/2019 10:49 AM
703	Pregnancy and sex for 9 years old????? Hello!!!!!! I will not support my child going to some talks about genderism, same sex relations and so on....so i don't trust this anyway. Everywhere now is just about equality....	1/17/2019 10:31 AM
704	In our modern world of social media, our children are exposed whether we like it not to all of the issues above and they need to be educated in this topics.	1/17/2019 10:26 AM
705	Some of the topics for 6th class children only	1/17/2019 10:24 AM
706	All	1/17/2019 10:07 AM
707	Age 9 & 10 is too young.	1/17/2019 10:00 AM
708	I think that in order for the conversation to be meaningful and impact the child's knowledge it has to be age and environment appropriate. Deeper sexual discussions should be held until the child goes into secondary school - ensure that in primary there is a common base of knowledge from which to build on in secondary (when some of that discussion becomes more topical and has greater impact). In primary school they are still children and don't need to know quite everything!	1/17/2019 10:00 AM
709	There are too many dangers our kids are exposed to through INTERNET	1/17/2019 9:38 AM
710	If done at an age appropriate level great as all elements of life and then can build on these over the years with their various teachers	1/17/2019 9:17 AM
711	Again all could be done age appropriately. I think there will be region differentiators. Drugs, pregnancy and concert would be too early in my rural school but it may be necessary in another region.	1/17/2019 9:14 AM
712	My kids are 4 & 6 the stay safe program they do is ok, safe grown ups, never keep a touch secret, friendships, things like that is ok,	1/17/2019 9:11 AM
713	the first 4 are applicable/relevant for all children and the last 3 perhaps from ages 9 upwards	1/17/2019 9:01 AM
714	In this day and ahe exposure to all of this is more common. Every child should be well equipped to recognise and cope with all manner of potential issues.	1/17/2019 8:51 AM

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715	Children are more aware of everything around them and the media in every shape leaves them with so many questions now at an early age I feel we have to teach our children early how to understand whats being talked about and how to cope with it all.	1/17/2019 8:46 AM
716	Children know more than we give them credit for, if we don't provide baseline information they will source it elsewhere. They could end up misinformed, overinformed (as appropriate for their age)	1/17/2019 8:42 AM
717	there is no point half teaching the subject, it will only lead to misinformation filling the void	1/17/2019 7:55 AM
718	Children are indirectly and directly exposed to all of these by the time their leave primary school through friends, social media, retail and experiences therefore education as to the correct understanding and meaning of them is key.	1/17/2019 7:16 AM
719	I have covered many topics already but I benefit from the information about rights and responsibilities online etc. I am open to exposing them to difficult things like grooming etc. And would appreciate guidance there as I am not that familiar with it all.	1/16/2019 11:27 PM
720	These are 'normal' topics for a child to learn, and to learn about them in a structured manner with all the correct information	1/16/2019 10:48 PM
721	Education is key	1/16/2019 10:47 PM
722	Learning should evolve as children mature. Some of the topics are probably better suited to first year in Secondary school.	1/16/2019 10:45 PM
723	Children are dealing with most of this at younger ages with parent and teacher input they are better prepared	1/16/2019 10:32 PM
724	1.Puberty can be early because better nutrition has lead to increase in average height and proportionate weight - weight is one trigger for early puberty - so they need to know about their bodies before any surprises. 2.Social media via either internet or phone data has brought pressures normally applied to adult, to bear on children of primary age and upwards.	1/16/2019 10:18 PM
725	My boys attend an all boy's school and I cannot see any advantage to discussing with them in detail the female reproductive organs, menstruation and products used for same	1/16/2019 10:16 PM
726	Lots of kids start puberty in primary school. Tweens and young teens are exposed to sexual behaviour on tv and online so they should be comfortable talking about it.	1/16/2019 10:15 PM
727	All of the above are important for the child to know as it will give them a better understanding of a healthy relationship.	1/16/2019 10:02 PM
728	Most children have access to the internet and teaching children with age appropriate information on the above topics helps to open a dialogue with parents/teachers about things they may accidentally see or read online rather than be embarrassed or misinformed.	1/16/2019 10:01 PM
729	Some material may be better suited to adolescents & may be too much for primary school children.	1/16/2019 10:00 PM
730	In an age appropriate manner, I feel it's important to address all that life throws at us. As part of this we should incorporate and practice using the tools/skills to help us with these scenarios.	1/16/2019 9:55 PM
731	I believe everyone should be taught as much as possible and as consistently as possible in all schools.	1/16/2019 9:47 PM
732	The above content is all relevant to kids in the modern age. Sometimes hearing information outside the family has more impact than just listening to the "parents "	1/16/2019 9:44 PM
733	I believe that not talking about it makes it a taboo subject so they are more at risk of doing something because of peer pressure whereas if it is discussed as a normal day to day topic it would take away the stigma, not to normalize under age sexual activity but to let them understand why is right and wrong,what is going on in their bodies is normal, that they can talk about it, it's ok to ask questions.	1/16/2019 9:40 PM
734	I am not totally sure how I feel about a lot of these topics being taught to primary school aged children especially the younger ones. I would need to know what way they were being taught and the content of it. I do think a lot of these topics should be dealt with at home primarily.	1/16/2019 9:35 PM
735	All the above points appear relevant once directed at an age appropriate audience.	1/16/2019 9:33 PM
736	Some topic I feel aren't suitable for young children	1/16/2019 9:33 PM
737	The kids in 5th class are very innocent and there are no relationships at all as far as I'm aware, let alone sexual relationships. Surely the earliest age that might become a risk is 13, so in secondary school.	1/16/2019 9:31 PM
738	Depends on ages/classes	1/16/2019 9:30 PM

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739	I wish my children to be correctly informed & to know the true facts	1/16/2019 9:26 PM
740	The above topics should be taught in an age appropriate way.	1/16/2019 9:19 PM
741	My daughter is only 10 so I feel some of the above are a little bit too advanced for her at this time	1/16/2019 9:16 PM
742	I feel that primary age children are not ready to deal with the unmarked topics	1/16/2019 9:12 PM
743	The language around puberty and sex etc needs to be normalised so thar our children feel comfortable talking about their bodies and later on about relationships. And hugely important for them to know what is NOT normal or appropriate to happen in the context of their bodies and unhealthy relationships or abuse.	1/16/2019 8:59 PM
744	It's a lot of work for teachers, but none of this isn't useful	1/16/2019 8:59 PM
745	There is no one thing that should be avoided absolutely. If a question arises it should be dealt with in an age appropriate way.	1/16/2019 8:54 PM
746	Primary school age children can perfectly understand this and it's the normal age of development were they start to realize difference between each other and ask questions	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
747	All of these topics are appropriate so long as they are introduced in an age appropriate manner. I do not feel primary school children should be taught about same sex marriage, transgender issues, etc.	1/16/2019 8:43 PM
748	I would reiterate comment above that the extent/details to which some of these subjects are discussed should be age-appropriate. Those of a younger age probably don't need to hear about the reproductive process and/or alcohol and drugs in context of risky sexual behaviour, etc... while those closer to secondary school do	1/16/2019 8:41 PM
749	My child is in fifth class	1/16/2019 8:18 PM
750	I would like to see all of these addressed even if it is just the concepts such that children leaving primary school have a foundation. Age appropriate zither he heavier topics being covered in 2nd part of 6th class	1/16/2019 8:16 PM
751	I think issues regarding sexuality, sexual consent etc drugs &,alcohol s role in risky behaviors is more suited to early second level rather than primary	1/16/2019 8:14 PM
752	I think RSE is very important but the topics I have not chosen I think require more maturity and should be dealt with in secondary school	1/16/2019 8:10 PM
753	A huge amount of this is parental responsibility too but compounded with this covered in school will really drive message home	1/16/2019 8:06 PM
754	Some perhaps to be in more detail than others. It is important that children know and learn at an early age to be confident and educated	1/16/2019 7:59 PM
755	Relationship education is ok, sexual is not, sexual is for parents to teach, no need to mix everything in one subject, these things are different	1/16/2019 7:49 PM
756	Maybe im a dinosaur but think kids might be too young for a few of these topics. Also its extremely important who is giving these talks and what their agenda is?	1/16/2019 7:36 PM
757	Children should be let remain as children in primary school	1/16/2019 7:32 PM
758	All relevant, all things all children need to know. Awareness and knowledge promotes safety. Lack of knowledge leads to risky inappropriate behavior.	1/16/2019 7:28 PM
759	Children will encounter information about the above topics whether we teach it in school or not. Far preferable for them to learn in a safe setting with structured curriculum than to be exposed to inaccurate information elsewhere.	1/16/2019 7:23 PM
760	Obviously kids mature at different rates so it can be difficult to come up with a one fits all list but I feel all of these topics are valid for discussion but maybe some only for 6th class.	1/16/2019 7:20 PM
761	Very age dependent but I think the area needs to be addressed in school and supported by materials at home. It is not the full reposnsibility of the school to educate children in all of these areas	1/16/2019 7:09 PM
762	Child would be able to understand all above	1/16/2019 6:59 PM
763	It is good to receive as much information as possible in relaxed and well known environment, among friends.	1/16/2019 6:57 PM
764	Truth be known, kids know alot and share their information, correct or incorrect with their peers, so correct information is of up most importance	1/16/2019 6:57 PM

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765	If feel it is important to discuss all of the above but I would like them to be age appropriate. Infant classes may not need to know all of the above.	1/16/2019 6:56 PM
766	Only very basic parts of sexual consent etc and only in sixth class	1/16/2019 6:51 PM
767	All topics are somewhat related and it's important to educate children so that they, in turn, can make safe choices.	1/16/2019 6:50 PM
768	All necessary in current climate	1/16/2019 6:47 PM
769	All of the above are important and should be discussed. However ethos and religious ideology should be kept put of it. It must be fact based because in any country where an abstinence only approach has been taken it has been a disaster Likewise religious ideology should have no role to play is a discussion which is essentially about bodies and health. Medical evidence and peer reviewed research on health and wellbeing should be at the core of any teaching. Likewise no external groups particularly those with any religious ties or ethos should be allowed into schools to discuss these issues with children.	1/16/2019 6:41 PM
770	All the ones I marked I think are important to be taught to all children, the others I think some matters should be taught at home or specifically to older classes through an outside facilitator.	1/16/2019 6:36 PM
771	I feel the above are suitable only in primary school. The rest should be taught in 2ndry school	1/16/2019 6:33 PM
772	To bring awareness.	1/16/2019 6:31 PM
773	I believe it is good for young people to Become familiar with these issues at a young age so as they do not find it embarrassing. It becomes a natural thing to talk about	1/16/2019 6:14 PM
774	Most of the topics are appropriate for 6th class students but not all of them for younger classes.	1/16/2019 6:01 PM
775	All necessary in current climate	1/16/2019 5:53 PM
776	I think sexual intercourse should only be discussed towards the end of 6th class.	1/16/2019 5:48 PM
777	In 6th class kids are ready and should learn all this stuff especially as they all have smart phones. Parents should get a copy of what's getting taught and can discuss	1/16/2019 5:30 PM
778	I think it's a good approach to inform peers on the above topics in the classroom. That way they all get the same consistent information. Some of the latter topics I think may be more appropriate to secondary level, although I'm aware that some children at primary level are exposed to some of these issues at primary ages. All on the basis that parents are fully aware of, and accept the proposed content beforehand.	1/16/2019 5:28 PM
779	The 3 I left out I feel are not suitable for primary school but maybe for 2nd year on (depends on the child's maturity also and special needs)	1/16/2019 5:23 PM
780	I think at an appropriate age children need to be aware of all of the above and need to see the positive and negative aspects of these topics	1/16/2019 5:18 PM
781	I would recommend the above to children from 5th class onwards. I feel below 5th class are far too young.	1/16/2019 5:17 PM
782	Delivered in age appropriate pieces they are vital to understanding relationships and families	1/16/2019 5:08 PM
783	I agree that all types of normal sexual and relationship behaviors should be discussed. However, risky sexual behaviours, I believe, would be more suited to discussion with early teens, as opposed to primary age children. I also believe that the process of puberty should be discussed prior to age 9, as the average age of puberty is dropping and children of 9 may already be experiencing changes.	1/16/2019 5:06 PM
784	Children are becoming sexualised earlier due to online content so they need to be educated earlier on the risks involved.	1/16/2019 5:04 PM
785	They are all so important as children are exposed to so much information this gives it important and structured explanation and allows child to discuss and or listen in the class	1/16/2019 4:58 PM
786	I left out two as I think these are not age appropriate for junior school and are more appropriate for young adults as they approach 14.	1/16/2019 4:56 PM
787	Concepts of sexual consent, exploitation, grooming, abuse, coercion, harassment and domestic abuse How to recognise healthy one to one sexual relationships The role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour The human reproductive process These areas should not be covered until 5th/6th class	1/16/2019 4:53 PM
788	I believe honestly is the best policy and explaining sexuality, relationship, social media and the dangers. I come from a Social Work background and have seen 1st hand how child can me misinformed and are vulnerable if they are not informed and educated on sexuality and relationship. In effect you are helping your child be more aware and protected and also can help children who are experiencing abuse to recognise it and seek help from an adult.	1/16/2019 4:41 PM

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789	Children can only be safe and prepared for change with the necessary knowledge	1/16/2019 4:39 PM
790	They are all appropriate if taught in an age relevant way relating to the the issue they are facing or are likely to face in the next 18 months.	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
791	I believe children need to learn all of the above before leaving primary school	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
792	We are teaching children about sex far too young. The parent has a responsibility to teach the child at an appropriate time.	1/16/2019 4:33 PM
793	For junior kids they need to know that people have bad intentions and how to spot the signs and including online stalkers	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
794	We need to tell them as much as possible as soon as possible before they see it on the internet and 'think' they know it ...	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
795	Children discuss things in the playground especially as they get older. It is better for the children that they're correctly informed rather than hearing misinformation through playground gossip. This is especially true of the older classes.	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
796	General information and knowledge about body/anatomy. All from a natural and positive approach rather than talking of negative topics such as "inappropriate physical contact", "exploitation, abuse, coercion....".	1/16/2019 4:23 PM
797	Children are already exposed to these issues at primary level but have not in many cases been given the correct information and rely on peers for clarity and guidance. Preempt the issues rather than react to an inappropriate experience or incident.	1/16/2019 4:11 PM
798	At age of 9 she doesn't need to know about sexuality.	1/16/2019 4:09 PM
799	it normalizes these types of conversations and helps remove any stigma associated with discussing sex	1/16/2019 4:08 PM
800	Basic knowledge is enough to enlighten.	1/16/2019 4:05 PM
801	I feel the better knowledge our children have the safer they will be.	1/16/2019 4:03 PM
802	Children need to have an age appropriate understanding of all of the above topics, in order to navigate through the modern world safely and successfully.	1/16/2019 4:02 PM
803	I feel some of the topics are best suited for the post primary setting. I do not wish my child to be exposed to scary topics like abuse or to more mature topics like sexual relationships. I feel reproduction is appropriate for 5th/6th class	1/16/2019 4:00 PM
804	The topics need to be age appropriate so some topics will be more appropriate than others at certain ages	1/16/2019 3:59 PM
805	Feel alcohol and drugs are not really appropriate to primary school kids in relation to sexual activity.	1/16/2019 3:59 PM
806	RSE curriculum should be age appropriate, comprehensive, and allow / encourage children to freely ask follow on questions as and when required. A restricted 'timid' curriculum does not encourage children to ask follow up questions. Plus children are exposed to a wide range of topics (internet, rumour, school yard sniggers) so must be prepared with tools to handle difficult situations.	1/16/2019 3:58 PM
807	The last 6 I haven't ticked seem more appropriate for 5th/6th class	1/16/2019 3:51 PM
808	RSE needs to reflect the real world children are living in, plus provide an understanding of the law and supports available.	1/16/2019 3:49 PM
809	More information is best for their understanding of this subject	1/16/2019 3:46 PM
810	some of the choices would only be appropriate in the later years of primary school	1/16/2019 3:41 PM
811	some topics I find hard to talk about with my child, so knowing they covered it in school would make conversations at home much easier.	1/16/2019 3:40 PM
812	Once it was age approite all these subjects are important	1/16/2019 3:36 PM
813	I have left out some topics that I think would be more suited to Secondary school: pregnancy, the role of alcohol and drugs - and I have left out more 'generic' topics such as good manners, characteristics of healthy friendships because I think they are more 'basic' and generic topics: I'd rather focus on what's specific to sexual education.	1/16/2019 3:33 PM
814	But of course being age appropriate, with most of it only taught to older kids. And basics to the smallies	1/16/2019 3:28 PM
815	All these are important when pitched age and maturity level appropriately	1/16/2019 3:27 PM

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816	I am assuming they are at an age appropriate level, I think awareness is important but not graphic details. And that's it's built upon year on year.	1/16/2019 3:21 PM
817	Some topics may be best taught to children of a slightly older age group.	1/16/2019 3:12 PM
818	I feel the social media and online issues are separate but necessary at another time.	1/16/2019 3:10 PM
819	These are basic steps where children can be prepared to handle for teenage related sexual and friendship encounters.	1/16/2019 3:10 PM
820	The appropriate equip them as they grow up.	1/16/2019 2:58 PM
821	All should be taught, at an age appropriate time and level. The only one I hesitated on was the alcohol one, as hopefully 12 year olds aren't there yet.	1/16/2019 2:56 PM
822	Some of these subjects are not appropriate until at least 10 years old	1/16/2019 2:53 PM
823	Everything with in reason and for topics to be suitable for different ages.	1/16/2019 2:52 PM
824	Not suitable for kids of all ages / maybe 5th and 6th class for most of this	1/16/2019 2:48 PM
825	All appropriate but customised to class age	1/16/2019 2:48 PM
826	.	1/16/2019 2:47 PM
827	I believe this foundational education is imperative and by delivering it in the classroom consistent messaging with peers is essential	1/16/2019 2:46 PM
828	Kids are more exposed and vulnerable from an earlier age nowadays so I would rather have my child educated than not about such issues but in terms and language suitable for them to understand.	1/16/2019 2:46 PM
829	All these topics are important.	1/16/2019 2:45 PM
830	I think that second level is too late for some of these topics	1/16/2019 2:45 PM
831	I would not like to encourage sexual relationships at this age whether it's in a healthy way or not!	1/16/2019 2:44 PM
832	Content should be age appropriate- would not be comfortable with 20 year old learning about rape, abuse etc...	1/16/2019 2:42 PM
833	I think it depends on the students in the class. Programmes have to be mindful of the age gaps and temperaments of kids in the class. Some children may be younger/ innocent. One of my kids is 1.5 to 2 years younger than a few of the kids in the same class. Academically and socially able thankfully.	1/16/2019 2:41 PM
834	They are to young to cover some of these topics ...but to get the general gist of safety and respect for themselves.	1/16/2019 2:36 PM
835	Must be age appropriate	1/16/2019 2:36 PM
836	I believe my choices are age appropriate inline with the average child's awareness of there physical and emotional feelings at that age	1/16/2019 2:31 PM
837	To hear this from a third party	1/16/2019 2:30 PM
838	They are all appropriate for different children at different ages. Infants don't need to know about drugs/alcohol and risky sexual behaviour, but 6th class might.	1/16/2019 2:24 PM
839	The more we talk about RSE topics, the less of a taboo issue it is. Important for all to feel comfortable talking about RSE.	1/16/2019 2:24 PM
840	Kids are still quite young and not ready to take on board some of the topics mentioned above.	1/16/2019 2:23 PM
841	With bigger children (class 6) it is ok to introduce discussion on consent, drugs and alcohol dangers and harmful content on line	1/16/2019 2:23 PM
842	I don't think primary school children need to be told about the ins and outs of sex and pregnancy. This will do in secondary. Some of the books aimed at primary children deal with issues such as orgasms etc which would seem age inappropriate	1/16/2019 2:19 PM
843	my kids are 4 and 8, I think most of the topics are appropriate, but knowing them, I do not think they need to know about pregnancy, reproductive system etc yet.	1/16/2019 2:17 PM
844	I think all topics should be up for discussion however I would not want to frighten a child or bring topics into their realm if they had managed to avoid them either by accident or design. I would hope that drugs, alcohol and sexual relationships wouldn't be of concern to a primary school child but it would be naive to think that none are aware or effected. It's a fine line on some of the topics.	1/16/2019 2:17 PM

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845	All are relevant and important. I would welcome a resource/information pack to review and revise with my child on future occasions. Such subject matters are not once off sessions. Parents need to follow up, plus i feel it's important to know what is being said to my child.	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
846	Most of this is tanging & explained in secondary schools and mandatory so it should start in primary school, age appropriately of course, like it took place for my son between 3-6th class (he is now in first year) but it is important to start it earlier which I believe changed a couple of years ago.. age appropriate	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
847	It can be frightening informatin to take on so i dint think all of the above is essential but the ones i have. Ticked I would like to feel would be the most relevant and most relateable to this agegroup.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
848	I think primary school age some of the topics mentioned above might be a little too much.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
849	While recognizing that children need to be taught about one to one sexual relationship and online harmful content it is important to remember that they are only children and can get very anxious about too much detailed information. Parents should have to attend compulsory courses on these issues and to learn to deal with them at home as it's their responsibility.	1/16/2019 2:04 PM
850	All these topics are appropriate	1/16/2019 2:04 PM
851	How to recognise abusive behaviour such as emotional and physical	1/16/2019 1:59 PM
852	it is important to talk about it all, on the specific age appropriate level. For younger ones it would be probably just enough to mention some of the dangers or bad/good things can happen	1/16/2019 1:58 PM
853	Obviously age appropriate but parents should be made aware Before the school is going to speak to your child about any sexual content.	1/16/2019 1:57 PM
854	All these topics are appropriate. The last 5 probably at class 6.	1/16/2019 1:56 PM
855	Pregnancy alcohol and drugs should be for those children 11 and over but yes to touch on all topics is good - parents need to talk about all those topics also and it would be helpful to know what topic is being covered so the family could discuss also at home.	1/16/2019 1:55 PM
856	I would like my child to have a broad level of knowledge about all types of relationships etc. I do not feel it appropriate for the education to have a slant or restrictions based on the religious ethos of the school	1/16/2019 1:53 PM
857	All topics are appropriate but is dependent on age	1/16/2019 1:51 PM
858	Age appropriate	1/16/2019 1:50 PM
859	Inappropriate contact from close family members ie parents/siblings	1/16/2019 1:44 PM
860	I feel each of these topics are relevent when taught in an age appropriate way	1/16/2019 1:43 PM
861	I believe that open teaching and talking with children helps prevent problems further down the line .	1/16/2019 1:42 PM
862	While it would be ideal if children were not exposed to more mature sexual or relationship issues until they were mature enough to deal with them, it simply isn't the case. Many issues arise (social media misuse, alcohol, consent etc) before children leave primary school so they need to be introduced by 5th/6th class.	1/16/2019 1:40 PM
863	Introducing harmful but potentially attractive subjects such as online port may lead to curiosity overriding warnings	1/16/2019 1:38 PM
864	These are all part of growing up & children need to feel comfortable having these conversations	1/16/2019 1:38 PM
865	Each of these topics is very important.I dont see why any one of them should be ignored.	1/16/2019 1:36 PM
866	The curriculum title here includes "Sexuality Education" classes and you haven't included many topics on sexuality at all i.e. sex - what it is etc or LGTBQI issues.	1/16/2019 1:34 PM
867	Many of these for 6th class. I believe in full education that will benefit the children as they become teenagers and face these issues in real life (if they haven't already). It is better for them to know via formal education than not. It can be delivered age appropriately which if done right can remove shame, embarrassment, misunderstanding etc.	1/16/2019 1:33 PM
868	A conversation regarding consent cannot start early enough.	1/16/2019 1:32 PM
869	I feel the topics of sexual consent, exploitation, healthy sexual relationships, risky sexual behaviour, pregnancy are all very important but feel they are more suited to secondary school. I think they should start at the beginning of secondary school and go into deeper concepts as students progress through the school.	1/16/2019 1:31 PM
870	sometimes it is easier to listen to them from a stranger but parents are responsible first and formost	1/16/2019 1:30 PM

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871	These need to be age appropriate, for example pregnancy and drugs should be discussed with older pupils eg. 5th and 6th class	1/16/2019 1:30 PM
872	All of the above need to be spoken about, but on an age appropriate basis i.e Jnr Infants don't need to hear about drugs/sexual content/grooming and more until they are a little more mature to understand. But a GRADUAL introduction to ALL of these subjects is important as they go through their school career.	1/16/2019 1:28 PM
873	There is a balance to be struck between making children aware so they can be safe and disclosing to them to the dangers of things they are not yet involved in (sexual relationships, social media)	1/16/2019 1:25 PM
874	The last 4 topics re sexual relationships, pregnancy etc maybe a slightly age appropriate explanation	1/16/2019 1:23 PM
875	A lot depends on the age group to which it is being taught. I would think all should be instructed about risks online and what constitutes respect of others etc, but perhaps stuff like reproduction, consent and sexual relationships might be more suited for secondary or maybe I'm just naive	1/16/2019 1:16 PM
876	relationship education is very important as well as age appropriate knowledge	1/16/2019 1:15 PM
877	All incredibly important.	1/16/2019 1:14 PM
878	These points I've selected should help a child recognize inappropriate behavior	1/16/2019 1:14 PM
879	Currently there seems to be little emphasis on the fact that while this knowledge equips the child, the best use of teenage is career building and best time to explore and indulge in relationships is when financially independent. There is a time in life for everything and knowledge should not get equated to opportunity or ability which i feel is happening	1/16/2019 1:11 PM
880	All children of all ages should have knowledge of all aspects in the area by of their appropriate age's and understanding	1/16/2019 1:10 PM
881	I don't think there is a need to scare young children with impact of harmful content, abuse, alcohol, drugs and risky sexual behaviours. These are subject for secondary school. The opportunity to ask questions is more important for primary schools	1/16/2019 1:10 PM
882	Children need to be taught how to distinguish between a loving relationship and an abusive one. Also content online, too many paedophiles gaming online posing as kids to groom our children. Kids need to have a basic grasp of the signs to look out for. When they get older, in secondary school they can learn more of the above but in more context	1/16/2019 1:07 PM
883	Homosexuality should only be discussed briefly not in too much detail. The social impact of it should also be discussed, not ignored.	1/16/2019 1:07 PM
884	Its important knowledge all should know.	1/16/2019 1:05 PM
885	All kids have a right to this knowledge in an appropriate way, if it is given at home then its not an issue but if they dont get the info at home then at least they are all getting the info from a reliable source in school and not discussing second hand information	1/16/2019 1:02 PM
886	at primary school level i believe most of the topics are relevant, although pregnancy and role of alcohol and drugs should be taught at secondary level due to maturity -	1/16/2019 1:00 PM
887	Consent should be thought as young as possible at an age appropriate level. Eg. Someone not sharing at a particular time is ok and has to be respected. No means you can't have what you want even if you don't like it.	1/16/2019 12:59 PM
888	Children are online at an earlier age these days. I am very aware that my daughter is being exposed to bad and vulgar language and content on a class group chat. Its the old story of bad language being cool and children think they seem more adult. My daughter knows I check in from time to time. She doesn't comment or take part but does read it. She doesn't want to leave the group chat because thats uncool - but she is loosing her innocence. It has meant I have had to explain the meaning of certain words and phrases to her that I would rather not have at this age - mainly because I want her to understand why I don't agree with them and don't want her to repeat them. I have taught her how to behave online but I cant control what others write. Neither can she - that is why I'm not upset with her about what is written in this chat... but I think much more emphasis on the right language to use online, manners and respect needs to be taught (and revisited daily/weekly) in the older classes at primary level.	1/16/2019 12:59 PM
889	As long as the lessons are age appropriate I think you can not start early enough to teach them about respectful healthy relationships. The reason I left our the concepts of exploitation, grooming, abuse etc. is that I think that these subject will need a lot of supervision and coaching and as long as there isn't excellent communication between school and parents, you better discuss these subjects yourself and be able to give the necessary follow up than have them taught in school and not knowing what your child might thinking/ worrying about.	1/16/2019 12:55 PM

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890	I believe the better equipped our children are the better choices they will make going forward. Good age appropriate information is crucial.	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
891	Awareness is crucial in today's times especially with so many younger pupils ( 4th class +) having smart phones	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
892	As above cause my kid is 7 still small for the other subjects	1/16/2019 12:49 PM
893	All appropriate but also not all need to be discussed at every age - it should be at the child's developmental stage	1/16/2019 12:48 PM
894	I have only left out healthy one to one sexual relationships out of concern that it might tend towards gender and sexuality biases. It also discriminates against polyamorous cultures and people. No child should grow up feeling 'weird' because of their preferences.	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
895	Age appropriate discussions are important. If children feel they can talk and no topic is off limits then hopefully we'll keep the lines of communication open and hopefully as they age they will have the knowledge to make informed choices about their own bodies.	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
896	Children should be aware of these topics; the latter should be presented with tact and care by purposely trained teachers.	1/16/2019 12:45 PM
897	Children should be aware of these topics; the latter should be presented with tact and care by purposely trained teachers.	1/16/2019 12:45 PM
898	I think that discussion about pregnancy/ drug use/ sexual relationships would be more appropriate in first year than primary school when the children are mentally mature enough to take it in.	1/16/2019 12:43 PM
899	I ticked these on the assumption that they would be delivered to my child at an appropriate age	1/16/2019 12:43 PM
900	I feel these are appropriate for primary school aged children... discussion re pregnancy, alcohol ad. Drugs should be discussed in secondary school year 7 onwards	1/16/2019 12:38 PM
901	All topics at the appropriate age seem very important to provide full awareness and knowledge, allowing the child a greater chance of safety, self preservation and respect for themselves and others in all these areas	1/16/2019 12:34 PM
902	My children are in a small rural school and protected environment, controlled online use. I think hitting them with the abuse, alcohol and drugs level is creating worries for them before they need to know about them. Urban environment may be different	1/16/2019 12:33 PM
903	Happy for all the above as long as is dealt with in an age appropriate way.	1/16/2019 12:32 PM
904	Not all of the above are suitable for all ages but within primary age groups, I feel they are in the various stages. Perhaps discussing alcohol/drugs is appropriate to 5th/6th class but not before that age group.	1/16/2019 12:31 PM
905	All are needed to lead a healthy life	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
906	I have ticked all these topics but obviously that would need to be imparted in an age appropriate manner especially the particularly sensitive issues e.g. issues around consent, the role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour (this latter one might only be relevant to 5th/ 6th class students).	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
907	They are too young to learn about some of above .	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
908	These are all relevant to our lives; it is not enough for a parent to guide their own child- we need all the children educated.	1/16/2019 12:27 PM
909	Some children won't take it all in, those who are ready will. Children must be allowed give feedback though, be allowed to ask questions if they need to, anonymously if needs be. The more normalised this whole area is the better for everyone.	1/16/2019 12:25 PM
910	children should also learn about ageing	1/16/2019 12:21 PM
911	Think it's important that children are provided with the correct information. Knowledge is power, by using the correct terms if gives the children the power and let them know that it's important that they can speak with someone.	1/16/2019 12:20 PM
912	Preteen is too young to educate on sex and sexual relationships and definitely too young to talk about non-heterosexual relationships. Children of this age should not be online or in social media.	1/16/2019 12:19 PM
913	I think it's important that children retain their innocence as long as possible. Secondary school is time enough to teach about puberty and reproduction etc.	1/16/2019 12:16 PM
914	ChildrEn should be well informed	1/16/2019 12:15 PM

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915	I would like online safety, social media and its impact to be discussed, but I'm not sure that it should be specifically in the Relationships and Sexuality context. Its broader than that and, in my opinion, it should be discussed in the broader context and include the Relationships and Sexuality piece	1/16/2019 12:13 PM
916	knowledge is the key in all topics	1/16/2019 12:13 PM
917	There is such a huge volume of information available at the touch of a button online either by seeking it or by coming across it by accident.	1/16/2019 12:12 PM
918	Think it's important that children at primary school are provided with correct information regarding RSE using correct terms. Knowledge is power, not using the correct terms means giving the words power as opposed to the the children getting a clear understanding age appropriate what is deemed safe/clear/honest	1/16/2019 12:12 PM
919	I feel all these subjects are appropriate as they address respect in relationships, our views on sex, how we view it, what influences it, the effects on a person, the act of it, risks etc. It gives our children the knowledge needed to ask questions, think of things they may not have thought off. Its not a taboo subject to be embarrassed off and gives them a greater understanding.	1/16/2019 12:10 PM
920	The more you know the better. Everything from periods to ejaculation. Masturbation, same sex relationships, etc.. Taboos are bad.	1/16/2019 12:09 PM
921	We feel that discussing about human body and reproductive is too much for 9 year olds maybe when they reach 11 to 12 and pregnancy consent etc more appropriate for age 11 to 12 not 9/10.	1/16/2019 12:08 PM
922	The topics : How to recognise healthy one to one sexual relationships, Pregnancy & The role of alcohol and drugs in risky sexual behaviour I have not ticked as I believe they should be touched on but would be very school / class dependent & discretion of the local school. My niece is very very innocent at 12 & how this is handled would possibly overwhelm her whereas a friends 11 year old would be very advanced & well able for these topics. Essentially ALL are relevant & it would be the content in those three topics that would be key. Once into 1st year I believe that balance shifts completely & its essential	1/16/2019 12:07 PM
923	All of them are appropriate depending on the depth. For example, pregnancy and alcohol should be mentioned but not in too much depth on younger classes	1/16/2019 12:05 PM
924	Better informed children are enabled to make better choices.	1/16/2019 12:05 PM
925	Children will pick up misinformation if the proper facts are not given to them at a young age	1/16/2019 12:04 PM
926	The more informed children are the less likely they are to be misled and taken advantage of or even open to abuse	1/16/2019 11:48 AM
927	All topics should be discussed as age appropriately as possible.	1/16/2019 11:46 AM
928	Essential our children are aware of all topics in an age appropriate way.	1/16/2019 11:46 AM
929	I think all the topics are appropriate but some would be more relevant than others at primary level depending on the social context of the school. From a non-expert point of view, some of the topics seem more relevant to secondary education. I would also be a little bit weary of "characteristics of families" as no two families are the same nowadays.	1/16/2019 11:45 AM
930	I think that most of the topics are appropriate as long as they are conveyed in an age appropriate way. Some would be more suitable for the senior primary classes again conveyed in an age appropriate manner.	1/16/2019 11:44 AM
931	All these topics are important and should be taught at home and in school.	1/16/2019 11:43 AM
932	My opinion is based on the level of information my 2nd Class Child would be able to take in.	1/16/2019 11:40 AM
933	I would cover these issues at home as well but is better in school, sometimes the kids tend to "listen" better the teacher than the parent :)	1/16/2019 11:40 AM
934	I believe that children cannot make good and/or safe choices unless they understand the fundamentals and the consequences of these choices. We MUST be teaching these in the safe environment of the classroom. Many children will not have a safe home environment in which to learn about appropriate relationships and only through learning in school will they realise that their home situation is not safe or normal (maybe an abusive relationship at home or maybe a boyfriend/girlfriend looking for inappropriate activity).	1/16/2019 11:31 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

935	I strongly believe that all of these topics should be taught in an age appropriate way across the school experience. none should be deemed as too sensitive or inappropriate. They are all relevant and the younger we start respecting children's ability to understand and their desire to know and engaging them in discussion around these issues the more likely we will have a generation that has healthy and positive relationships with their own body, with their sexuality and with their peers and others. I also don't believe parents should be able to opt out their children from this. All kids should learn the same set of skills and knowledge in order to encourage that all children grow up with these skills and positive attitudes. MeToo has brought up nothing that we didn't know already but it certainly has given us an opportunity to more openly discuss these issues as adults and to ensure we do everything we can to improve how society and our young people relate to each other and their own selves.	1/16/2019 11:30 AM
936	I think we need to open with our children and give them a broad basis of knowledge in order to prepare them for relationships and friendships they develop/are exposed to.	1/16/2019 11:28 AM
937	I believe issues of consent and sexual relationships are too mature as topics for children under 12 yrs old. Respect for themselves and towards others in language and actions would be my priority.	1/16/2019 11:28 AM
938	Some topics would depend on age and parents consulted	1/16/2019 11:27 AM
939	All topics relating to online should be 5th and 6th class only. I think puberty conversation should be 10 - 12, 9 is very young ( in boys particularly) or perhaps puberty to be discussed with girls aged 9 but not boys??	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
940	Som depends on age of student	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
941	Parents need to play a role in online safety in the home & manners & respect for others	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
942	I do believe anything should be censored if it contributes to children being safer	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
943	All of the above & the role of pornography as children as young as 10/11 are voluntarily or accidentally exposed to explicit online content (NSPCC report, 2017), I think it's very important to include this topic.. so young people can contextualise porn, and learn the difference between fantasy & reality, and given the opportunity to be understand & be challenged on any negative sexual narratives that they may develop from viewing porn.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
944	If an external person is brought in it is vital that religion stays out of it.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
945	Most of these topics are appropriate but it depends on the age of the kids. While it is important that they are well informed they also need to be children and some of the above topics should not be discussed with young kids	1/16/2019 11:12 AM
946	I believe children need to be taught about these topics properly by an expert in the area rather than reading and watching something on social media that is not true. This is as long as it is done at an age appropriate level.	1/16/2019 11:06 AM
947	Kids need to be informed and if they're taught from young (age appropriate content) then they are less likely to be embarrassed and are more informed.	1/16/2019 11:05 AM
948	Some of these should be for 6th class only but all are appropriate..	1/16/2019 11:04 AM
949	Last year my child was taught about intercourse. I knew he was having an RSA talk but didn't know this was to be part of it. I had hoped to talk to him first about this before he heard it in school & I was upset about this. It was very early in the year also. I feel this info should be one of the last things taught before the finish in 6th class, at the earliest. Some children are younger than others in class & should be allowed to have a childhood! I do think every child should know about these matters before entering secondary school though .. but parents should be very clearly informed about the content of this class ..	1/16/2019 11:03 AM
950	When you say the characteristics of families and relationships, what do you exactly mean? Two mummies, two daddies? In that case I'd be strongly opposed to it. My husband and I are imparting traditional family values.	1/16/2019 11:03 AM
951	I believe it is very important to teach children as early as possible what is a NORMAL part of life. We all have bodies & we need to remove the shame & normalise the conversations in order to teach our children appropriate behaviour, consent etc.	1/16/2019 11:01 AM
952	I want my daughter to be knowledgeable and to feel comfortable with these subjects	1/16/2019 11:00 AM
953	Children should learn and understand what is healthy and safe from an early age so they can understand what is safe/unsafe when it comes to making personal choices and when its time to speak to a trusted adult if needed.	1/16/2019 11:00 AM
954	I feel that all of the above are appropriate as they are relevant topics throughout childhood and teenage years, and should be addressed accordingly.	1/16/2019 10:56 AM

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955	I think if we can age appropriately teach children about these things, we in turn are giving these children coping mechanisms for the future & ways of protecting themselves if they know the signs of danger in relationships etc.	1/16/2019 10:54 AM
956	Obviously to be taught at an age appropriate level but it is important that all children are taught these things	1/16/2019 10:53 AM
957	Same sex couples relationships	1/16/2019 10:17 AM
958	The more information a child has the better equipped they will be later on. No one knows what is going on behind closed doors, so the more they are taught the better.	1/16/2019 10:13 AM
959	Whether we want it or not more and more kids of primary school are using tablets and such, so should be made aware of the good use and risks of internet. But most of them only have a vague idea of what sexuality is, and these more specific topics would seem more appropriate for teenagers.	1/16/2019 10:10 AM
960	Those I left out I did so as I think they are too young n also healthy sex relationships follow when they fully understand and are aware of the meaning of a healthy and respectful relationship in the broader context	1/16/2019 9:41 AM
961	The characteristics of families and relationships must include single-sex partnerships.	1/16/2019 9:28 AM
962	Children can use what they are thought to rebel against parents, teachers ect. Again this needs to be taught at home not as school as some children are more/less mature than others. The cloth has to fit	1/16/2019 9:25 AM
963	While I think they are relevant, may be difficult to tailor some of the harsher aspects in a child appropriate manner.	1/16/2019 9:05 AM
964	I think the last 10 should be discussed with kids in 5th class ans up.	1/16/2019 8:57 AM
965	A lot of the above are just sexualised information that is too much for primary schools	1/16/2019 8:25 AM
966	Children are already exposed to these issues , so they should learn about them in a healthy way	1/16/2019 8:04 AM
967	All are important things for people to know and not all parents are equipped to impart this knowledge. And peer learning is very powerful. Not all the world is rosy. We need to prepare children for darker issues and teach resilience and how to seek help.	1/16/2019 7:38 AM
968	Unfortunately the world we live in, the kids need to be open minded and not embarrassed discussing any of these topics. The earlier it happens the better and more freely discussed it will be.	1/16/2019 7:26 AM
969	All of above are important for the child	1/16/2019 6:59 AM
970	They need to be aware of all aspects of life now, it may seem extreme to some parents, but I feel we need to give them the info and tools to help them become adults in a fast changing world.	1/16/2019 12:23 AM
971	Depending on the age	1/15/2019 11:04 PM
972	The 2 I have left blank are because of my child attending a catholic school, I'm not sure what way these 2 subjects are discussed, ie sexual relationships as in the different types of relationships there are. And also the different family dynamics that are now seen in homes.	1/15/2019 10:40 PM
973	All of my selections are important for primary school children however of varying ages. Some should be more aimed at the older kids pushing towards secondary.	1/15/2019 10:39 PM
974	Obviously some topics would be taught to order primary school children	1/15/2019 10:38 PM
975	I believe that the earlier we speak to our children the less of an issue of "taboo" the subjects will become. I try to answer the questions my children have about sexuality/relationships etc in an age appropriate way. I answer every question they have to the best of my abilities. I believe by speaking more openly to our children we are less likely to come up against mental health issues/bullying/sexual issues latermpnon life.	1/15/2019 10:32 PM
976	I think my child is too young to be learning about a lot of the above content.	1/15/2019 10:24 PM
977	Not topics but I think an rse programme needs to include all types of relationships - same sex etc..and inclusive of all genders/orientation etc	1/15/2019 10:21 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

978	I feel that certain things are ok to be covered in class but to be honest I wish to have the most input when it comes to teaching my kids about sexuality and relationships etc. My children are not allowed access to the internet and this will continue as it is far too dangerous for them and far too accessible for predators so its a no-go area in our house. They do not have phones or devices. My Husband and I stand by this rule. We want our children to be free of the spell of Social Media etc as it is so harmful to their health I am really not sure yet how much information I want them to be taught in school. I really feel that it will be necessary to have future meetings with the Principal etc about this	1/15/2019 10:11 PM
979	My eldest is only 6 so I'm unsure how relative the more advanced topics are for 12 year olds. I would presume the ones I didn't choose would be more relevant in secondary but perhaps early education would be better. I'm unsure	1/15/2019 10:09 PM
980	It needs to be age appropriate with parents consent	1/15/2019 9:56 PM
981	Allok for 5th 5th 6th not younger	1/15/2019 9:43 PM
982	I feel relationships, appropriate behavior and all sexual relationships are important. Alcohol, drugs, pornography and pregnancy is more suited to secondary school age.	1/15/2019 9:43 PM
983	I have only a 5yr old so I find it hard to picture them needing to know about some of those things at primary school. It's likely if I had experience with older kids I'd see some of these topics as necessary. I teach biology and at 14 they learn about pregnancy. I feel that's early enough.	1/15/2019 9:29 PM
984	Keeping safe online very important. Importance of speaking to an adult if they were worried about anything	1/15/2019 9:23 PM
985	I have already started using a book I have bought online which is age appropriate to start the conversation with my son. I believe if it's done using the correct language the earlier it's done the better, as it doesn't become a big embarrassing issue. My son already knew some of it, but it's no big deal and he just sees it as normal. This way he can ask me any questions he may have as they arise without being embarrassed.	1/15/2019 8:53 PM
986	My daughter attends brownies and they broach these subjects very well 're friendships, caring respect etc and personal safety my daughter has learned so much fro their program.	1/15/2019 8:53 PM
987	I think the topics of abuse, grooming, consent etc may be too difficult for younger primary school children. It depends how these are covered in class. I know my own 10 year old would be frightened and worried to learn about these topics. However, I trust the teachers and the school at large to teach any RSE topic taking into account the children's ages.	1/15/2019 8:50 PM
988	I believe that the subjects I have ticked are all appropriate for primary aged children, but the last 3 I have ticked should be taught to 4th - 6th class children, not the younger ones.	1/15/2019 8:49 PM
989	There are some topics that I hesitated over as I wonder if primary age might be too young for them, such as recognising health sexual relationships and pregnancy. However I also recognise that these things can be issues for very young children and, if dealt with in a sensitive manner, they could help to arm children with important tools as they grow older.	1/15/2019 8:48 PM
990	I omitted one which I think is more appropriate for secondary school age children	1/15/2019 8:43 PM
991	Some of these topics are more appropriate for secondary school children	1/15/2019 8:38 PM
992	I thinks it's important especially nowadays to educate kids about there own body and actions	1/15/2019 8:25 PM
993	Just choose the topics I felt appropriate for my child.	1/15/2019 8:20 PM
994	Children know more than we did from an early age now. My children ask me alot of questions that I answer honestly at a. Age appropriate level.	1/15/2019 7:57 PM
995	It is important to ensure children's safety while allowing them to enjoy their childhood without forcing them to grow up too quickly.	1/15/2019 7:56 PM
996	I think at primary school level the main focus should be on being able to recognise grooming, inappropriate touching/relationships either with adults or other children, and feeling empowered to speak up if anything like that is happening.	1/15/2019 7:54 PM
997	Sex is a natural, normal human behavior. Everyone has a sexuality. It should be taught as such. Also am concerned that young people are learning about sex from porn. Porn is not reality and consent is not explicit porn. Much better to have open, respectful conversations. I intend to do that with my children.	1/15/2019 7:46 PM
998	Very much needed children need to be aware especially now in this world we live in with internet and social media prevelent in our lives.	1/15/2019 7:46 PM
999	I believe that all of these topics are important because children now have access to so much information it's important to have the right information from a reliable reliable source..	1/15/2019 7:26 PM

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1000	My daughter is nine and she is very innocent and I know she would not be ready to hear or learn about pregnancy or sexual orientation etc. It's too much.	1/15/2019 7:10 PM
1001	The unticked topics should be taught in Secondary school as students develop and grow.	1/15/2019 7:01 PM
1002	That these topics are taught on an age appropriate level. It is important that children are taught these topics as some parents may not feel able to discuss some/all with their children. Regarding drugs and alcohol should this not be discussed with senior classes on its own with risky sexual behaviour forming a part of the topic?	1/15/2019 6:57 PM
1003	Assuming all would be in an age appropriate way and built up over the years	1/15/2019 6:57 PM
1004	Many parents would not be informed enough or have the confidence to discuss with children. Parents will always come from a personal as opposed to universal perspective	1/15/2019 6:56 PM
1005	Beginning to develop understanding without being over negative. A positive focus	1/15/2019 6:52 PM
1006	I believe stages of puberty and the human reproductive process to be essential in RSE classes however sexual relations, behavior etc are more appropriate to junior cycle of secondary school.	1/15/2019 6:47 PM
1007	The more the children know the better they are equipped and see it as the norm to talk about such topics	1/15/2019 6:44 PM
1008	I think all these topics are appropriate for primary school children to learn by the end of 6th class obviously some of the topics are only appropriate for the older classes in primary .	1/15/2019 6:38 PM
1009	important to be aware of the world around you and your friends and relationships	1/15/2019 6:36 PM
1010	Those I have not ticked are possibly more suitable to post primary. These topics mark a shift beyond the basics of relationships and reproduction and into areas more appropriate to teenage and young adult discussions.	1/15/2019 6:36 PM
1011	The should be age appropriate to each class.	1/15/2019 6:10 PM
1012	Pregnancy and drugs is more for secondary school I think	1/15/2019 6:10 PM
1013	Depending on their age in the class, subjects above which they would be at a suitable age to be informed about	1/15/2019 6:09 PM
1014	Our child is only 5 so the more advanced sexual relationship topics I'm guessing by the end of primary will be appropriate. There is certainly a lot of giggles about bums and some flashing to her younger brother of 3 at this stage so I can imagine where we'll be in a few years!	1/15/2019 5:57 PM
1015	I think most of the above is important but should be age appropriate. very important is consent and what it is, both sexual and in other ways.	1/15/2019 5:44 PM
1016	I believe that open communication with children is the way forward. I don't think any topic should be off limits, because they may learn misinformation from peers or internet instead of trusted adults.	1/15/2019 5:31 PM
1017	As long as taught in age appropriate way I don't believe any issue should be ignored	1/15/2019 5:23 PM
1018	Children need to be armed with the knowledge to make good decision. Understandi the why is very important as is a consistent method of teaching amongst their peers	1/15/2019 5:08 PM
1019	All of the above in an age appropriate manner.	1/15/2019 5:00 PM
1020	Characteristics of family and relationship should be driven by the family and culture that the child is raised in, these aspects should be dealt with within the family. In addition traditional family values should be promoted as opposed to liberal views.	1/15/2019 4:59 PM
1021	I think some of these topics are better discussed at secondary level, for my children anyway. I intend to discuss those topics with them myself at an age that I think is appropriate for them. I'm a firm believer in sexual education, but also in ensuring that it reaches them at an appropriate age and I believe that should be up to the parent who understands the child, not a state body.	1/15/2019 4:58 PM
1022	All of this should be taught to children in my opinion in an age appropriate way.	1/15/2019 4:55 PM
1023	Keeping the content scientific. As definitions of family and relationships have changed over the last decade, they have become very vague as has their true or hidden meaning.	1/15/2019 4:41 PM
1024	There are age appropriate ways to address all these issues	1/15/2019 4:32 PM
1025	for the ages of my children i think the above are appropriate	1/15/2019 4:28 PM
1026	The more information the children have the better. Some parents will not educate their children. Although it's not just the schools responsibility, it should be supported at home	1/15/2019 4:22 PM

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1027	I believe that primary school children are too young to discuss 1-to-1 sexual relationships and the role of alcohol or drugs in sexual behaviour. Otherwise I think it is important to speak to children, in an age appropriate way, about all aspects of respectful relationships/friendships and what is going on with their bodies.	1/15/2019 4:13 PM
1028	I would prefer if concepts of gay relationships etc were not presented to my child as an option at his young age.	1/15/2019 4:08 PM
1029	In many cases the latter 6 items are not appropriate until the child reaches 6th class only but not before.	1/15/2019 3:54 PM
1030	Children need to be made aware of the issues but not so much as to scare them, although some things are bad and some people are bad the majority of people are good and not everyone should be viewed as a danger	1/15/2019 3:37 PM
1031	The more informed they are the better their choices will be. There is no reason they should not know about sex!! It is a natural part of being human and there is nothing shameful about it. Knowing about it does not make them go out and do it! The HSE 'busy bodies' booklet is excellent but omite to tell children that there is any pleasure in sex (or masterbation) - so the whole thing must seem v confusing to kids!	1/15/2019 3:29 PM
1032	Children are exposed to all these topics through TV, radio, online, friends - it's better that they are given age appropriate, factual info.	1/15/2019 3:27 PM
1033	Basic scientific elements of reproduction. Relationships and appropriate behaviour. Not sure about alcohol and drugs in the context of sexuality, yes regarding the general dangers.	1/15/2019 3:26 PM
1034	Knowledge is empowerment, we need to educate our children not hide them from topics	1/15/2019 3:17 PM

## Q16 Are there any topics not listed above that you think should be covered in the teaching of Relationships Sexuality Education (RSE) to PRIMARY school children? Enter below or leave blank

Answered: 621 Skipped: 2,685

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	None	1/26/2019 9:45 PM
2	LGBTQ , Trans and more on call consent and feminisim.	1/26/2019 7:48 PM
3	The huge difference that some cultures have with regards to attitude and respect towards women	1/26/2019 10:13 AM
4	LGBT+ awareness	1/26/2019 7:26 AM
5	Rape needs to be discussed.	1/26/2019 7:01 AM
6	I think that through the RSE programme this important to normalize all types of relationships including all LGBTQI groups but again age appropriate.	1/25/2019 11:26 PM
7	Schools are for minorities as well, and when we say minorities means different religions different culture and point of view, some of them are taboo, you need really qualified people and sometimes teachers does not even know what is the religion of the kid and how they live! Did you think about this point, it s ireland of 2019 not ireland 1934!! People are from everywhere!	1/25/2019 11:08 PM
8	Trans gender and LGBT community, ensure kids know its ok to be who you are and not to discriminate, every person is a person with feelings regardless of sexual orientation	1/25/2019 11:03 PM
9	Same sex relationships should be discussed. The topic of gender also in an age appropriate manner	1/25/2019 8:51 PM
10	More emphasis on online content as it is such an important issue these days. Talking to strangers through various apps. Not giving out their real name. Not making or uploading videos of themselves without parents permission. Not sharing address or school details online. Also, contraception methods, STIs, different family setups (single parent, same sex parent, foster families etc) should be included as standard, over ruling any school ethos issues. School ethos should not be used to hide the exsistance of these issues which are common to all, regardless of religion.	1/25/2019 7:18 PM
11	.	1/25/2019 6:27 PM
12	LGBT	1/25/2019 5:37 PM
13	Sexual orientation	1/25/2019 5:24 PM
14	Stranger awareness	1/25/2019 3:25 PM
15	Toxic friendships. Girls - how to support each other, how important kindness and judgmental behaviour damages and not to put different girls down. Girl power not competitive at all costs.	1/25/2019 2:58 PM
16	Self and the world - being a good citizen (may well be implied/covered in all of the above); the risks of groups (the 'us' and 'them' phenomenon in particular);	1/25/2019 2:13 PM
17	No	1/25/2019 1:26 PM
18	At a high level children should be aware that there are different types of sexuality -LGBTQ+	1/25/2019 1:18 PM
19	yes all sexual preferences should be introduced example Gay lesbian and transgender	1/25/2019 1:11 PM
20	No	1/25/2019 12:49 PM
21	Teach children how to react to unfriendly strangers.	1/25/2019 12:45 PM
22	Respect of self and others	1/25/2019 11:39 AM
23	maybe some focus on healthy relationship with yourself eg self esteem and confidence. healthy body image maybe for 10-12 ys old4th-6th class	1/25/2019 10:15 AM
24	Catholic faith and ethos which recognizes the innate dignity of each person created and the unique plan God has for their lives as men and women of the future.	1/25/2019 9:08 AM

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25	I told my son whose in 6th class I was doing this survey and asked his view. In his own words 'Mam we are on the internet everyday it's really important we know what to look out for, it's like crossing the road when you are young you are told to be careful and look left and right but you also need to be told what could happen if you don't do those things. I'll definitely remember if I think there's a chance I could. E knocked down, end up in hospital and possibly miss soccer training for 8 weeks"	1/25/2019 8:32 AM
26	*Sexual transfer illnesses and how to avoid them *importance of the contraception	1/25/2019 8:04 AM
27	Different types of sexual orientations and acceptance towards them to prevent bullying and suicides. Generally about buying at schools and other places. Online etc. Give good training to teachers to spot signs of bullying and harassment and make them required and responsible to react.	1/25/2019 12:13 AM
28	Bullying, cyber-bullying, racism,	1/24/2019 10:57 PM
29	No	1/24/2019 10:56 PM
30	Masturbation	1/24/2019 10:33 PM
31	Transgender, LGBT relationship	1/24/2019 10:14 PM
32	How to talk to your parents about questions you may have. How to be open with your parents.	1/24/2019 9:47 PM
33	Contraception and STIs for kids approaching puberty, peer pressure and how to deal with it	1/24/2019 9:18 PM
34	Personal hygiene	1/24/2019 8:57 PM
35	Consent- not in a sexual context at this stage but as a life skill as as something that must be respected	1/24/2019 7:57 PM
36	The role of religion in relationships	1/24/2019 7:26 PM
37	Different types of relationships i.e gay, transgender etc	1/24/2019 6:32 PM
38	Thats more than enough	1/24/2019 6:04 PM
39	a mindful approach to gender recognition, with particular attention to the way this impact other aspects, as self-esteem and bullyism	1/24/2019 4:17 PM
40	I feel children should be educated more about being comfortable in their own skin and not to be comparing themselves to online influences. Also I would like to see more stress relief tools thought eg meditation, importance of exercise etc.	1/24/2019 4:10 PM
41	Discuss homosexuality, contraception and safe sex at an age appropriate level	1/24/2019 3:21 PM
42	Slang terminology should be explained	1/24/2019 3:05 PM
43	sometimes children may listen better to their teacher, or a external speaker than their parents. school is a very good place to discuss these issues.	1/24/2019 12:09 PM
44	What all schools seem to lack is how to stop bullying This is what you should be focusing on	1/24/2019 12:01 PM
45	There should be no emphasis on heterosexual relationships. It should be just considered normal that everyone is different and everyone loves the person / people they love	1/24/2019 11:49 AM
46	Encourage children to communicate and to understand ( by role play) what good communication is. More importantly understanding consent and appropriate versus inappropriate behaviours.	1/24/2019 11:18 AM
47	personal space	1/24/2019 10:56 AM
48	Sexual orientation and gender	1/24/2019 10:51 AM
49	Contraception and safe sex	1/24/2019 10:07 AM
50	No	1/24/2019 9:58 AM
51	Periods	1/24/2019 9:47 AM
52	Personal hygiene . Physical effects of hormonal changes.	1/24/2019 9:29 AM
53	Fertility, babies and breastfeeding. I don't like homework but this would be a good subject to bring home for discussion.	1/24/2019 9:12 AM
54	gender issues, homosexuality? They need to be educated because by the time the school talks about this they may have some ill formed opinions/conception in relation to these topics. Although, again, parents' input is vital. I sometimes feel that i can say something to my kids and they forget it, don't take it in. Then 2 weeks later they come home from school and tell me what the learned (same thing i told them about 2 week earlier that got ignored. So school's input is equally important, if nothing else, to reinforce what's taught at home)	1/24/2019 8:44 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

55	Instead of all this you should be teaching them at this age the important of family and how they should treat their parents and siblings. Do you know if you do that the hall Society will benefit including the school in the future when they grow up they will be more respectful towards their teachers. Try it	1/24/2019 8:24 AM
56	It's ok to talk to your teacher or parent or someone you trust! Don't be afraid to talk!	1/24/2019 2:23 AM
57	Why is the law being changed for this? Why are Parents being denied our Rights under the Constitution as it is now to be the Primary Educators of our children? Who's bright idea was it to take our Rights away and where will it stop? Who gave them the authority? We never voted or gave permission for any politician or government official or anyone else to do such a thing. We never would. Are you going to try to take other Rights away also? If for example a family that practices Islam say it's inappropriate for their child to attend these classes on religious grounds, are you going to deny their Right of religious freedom to practice their religion? Is that why the government pushed to get rid of the blasphemy law? So the State couldn't be held accountable? Do the Parents or Teachers have the Right of Conscientious Objection if it goes against their religious beliefs? Does the Board of Management have the Right to oppose it if it goes against the school ethos? It seems to me that somebody decided to work outside their remit and parameters on this one. We're lucky we're aware that the Law is being changed. Many Parents aren't; which should straight away make this action illegal. That's a topic not listed or mentioned anywhere above and should have been the first consideration before any of this was even conceived of. Yet no one seemed to cover that with Parents.	1/24/2019 1:47 AM
58	Use of breast for breastfeeding	1/23/2019 11:36 PM
59	Sexual bullying - what it is, what impact it can have on the victim etc.	1/23/2019 11:35 PM
60	Teach boys and girls in 4th class about puberty . While I think the class teacher is the right person at this level I do feel in 6th class someone external should come in to educate the children in sexual eduaction.	1/23/2019 11:26 PM
61	Contraception	1/23/2019 11:13 PM
62	Taking responsibility for the choices we make.	1/23/2019 11:09 PM
63	Movies and series running across the media are full of sexually evoking and Too violent, these will have a negative impact on the kids and the society as well. Would request you guys to device appropriate methods to curtail them from kids viewing	1/23/2019 11:09 PM
64	Sexuality	1/23/2019 11:07 PM
65	Sexual.consent should be listed on it's own in 15 above.	1/23/2019 11:06 PM
66	no	1/23/2019 10:35 PM
67	Possibly gender identity.	1/23/2019 10:26 PM
68	No	1/23/2019 10:18 PM
69	/	1/23/2019 10:06 PM
70	The legal aspects. The fact that the definition of a child is a person who is 0 to 17. The importance of having an adult they trust to confide in. The importance of an open culture where it is ok to question and seek answers - there is a notion that at a certain age one should know everything and it's embarrassing to ask. The meaning of slang terms. The negative issue of labeling people due to sexual orientation, experience etc. The range of sexual orientation. A frank discussion on puberty ... the fact that there is one side of the brain developing and advancing to a more adult phase while there is another part still in the child phase... the fact this has such confusing and surging moods in a child and can be so hard to deal with. They need advice on what would be good techniques to get through periods like this. Mindfulness, meditation, time out, breathing, exercise and the importance of finding their individual flow to try and keep them grounded.	1/23/2019 10:00 PM
71	LGBT	1/23/2019 9:58 PM
72	Reporting & dealing with bullying, how to recognise it etc. Mindfulness	1/23/2019 9:40 PM
73	Gender issues LGBTI issues Abortion in the older classes Gay marriage Adoption in same sex relationships Non religious union	1/23/2019 9:37 PM
74	No. It should not be taught in schools.	1/23/2019 9:27 PM
75	No	1/23/2019 9:09 PM
76	?	1/23/2019 9:01 PM
77	Consent should be tough at every level in various ways of physical and emotional content.	1/23/2019 8:47 PM
78	Teaching children in primary school about sexuality and sex is very bad and wrong.	1/23/2019 8:40 PM

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79	Respect for people with different sexual orientation.	1/23/2019 8:19 PM
80	Nohavi	1/23/2019 8:15 PM
81	Homosexuality, transgender and respect for all.	1/23/2019 7:52 PM
82	About the dangers of sending or receiving sexual pictures on mobiles or social media eg bullying ,blackmail etc	1/23/2019 7:22 PM
83	Same sex relationships	1/23/2019 7:08 PM
84	Sexual orientation	1/23/2019 6:36 PM
85	The different types of relationships - not just heterosexual, diverse families, gender issues,	1/23/2019 6:34 PM
86	I think you have covered most topics	1/23/2019 6:20 PM
87	STDs	1/23/2019 6:19 PM
88	Homosexuality and transgender	1/23/2019 6:19 PM
89	Being confident in one's body and not be intimidated by anyone	1/23/2019 6:10 PM
90	Reproduction	1/23/2019 5:33 PM
91	There are many issues highlighted in media at the moment and teachers may be asked about trans gender and other issues that might not be appropriate but in the end they need to speak to their parents about certain topics that the class teacher is not able to discuss	1/23/2019 5:02 PM
92	NO. I READ ENOUGH OF REDICOLOUS.	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
93	How to recognise caring friendships and how to recognise unhealthy friendships.	1/23/2019 4:47 PM
94	Emotional and mental health Resilience Mindfulness	1/23/2019 4:38 PM
95	online social media forums...assisting parents in containing access to explicit youtube material	1/23/2019 4:32 PM
96	Heterosexual and homosexual relationships. RSE should have no links to religious beliefs or teachings of any religion.	1/23/2019 4:23 PM
97	Effects of bullying	1/23/2019 4:19 PM
98	Joking about these topics not funny	1/23/2019 4:06 PM
99	How important it is to put your needs first	1/23/2019 4:00 PM
100	A few basics on contraception	1/23/2019 3:53 PM
101	Same as above	1/23/2019 3:53 PM
102	Aggressive, narcissistic behaviour.	1/23/2019 3:33 PM
103	age appropriate information on the dangers of pornography addition	1/23/2019 3:24 PM
104	Self respect and inner confidence over objectification of the body. The philosophy of the human form in society past and present.	1/23/2019 2:48 PM
105	Would like reassurance that all topics are included and covered properly in all schools despite the ethos, religious or otherwise.	1/23/2019 2:40 PM
106	no	1/23/2019 2:27 PM
107	For the older classes: contraception, STDs, menstruation, different forms of sexuality. All things that will come to their attention anyway. These topics do not need to be discussed in great detail but presented as normal phenomena to be aware of.	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
108	Online interaction between kids of a sexual nature. Kids could be tempted to say / do something online that they wouldn't face to face.	1/23/2019 1:49 PM
109	How to manage / recognise emotions. Building emotional intelligence gender Diversity	1/23/2019 1:47 PM
110	Porn on line (or general concept). It's an area that is always shied away from yet is having a devastating affect on kids these days as they are exposed earlier and earlier to it. It needs to be addressed properly and not ignored.	1/23/2019 1:44 PM
111	Personal hygiene that comes with our changing bodies.	1/23/2019 1:32 PM
112	The issue of consent needs to be taught very early on so when it comes to sexual consent it is not an embarrassing or misunderstood issue	1/23/2019 1:03 PM
113	Currently it is facts about puberty and that is it. Information about informed consent for when they are older is important.	1/23/2019 12:52 PM
114	nope - all covered	1/23/2019 12:51 PM

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115	Gender issues	1/23/2019 12:49 PM
116	Mental health	1/23/2019 12:41 PM
117	Children should be aware that Not engaging in sex before marriage or as a teen is perfectly acceptable and it is illegal before age 17. This gives those who do not want to be sexually active a reason/defense to give their peers. Encourage children to talk to their parents or teachers with concerns or questions and not turn to 'google'	1/23/2019 12:34 PM
118	Contraception. Abortion. gender identity. LgBT	1/23/2019 12:32 PM
119	No RSE for any child until 5th class and even then it should be done only with the consent of parents. Before giving consent, parents must be shown exactly what information is to be given to their child.	1/23/2019 12:29 PM
120	Contraception and stds	1/23/2019 12:17 PM
121	No	1/23/2019 12:08 PM
122	Having a good relationship with yourself first and foremost.	1/23/2019 12:05 PM
123	Positive communication Body language Emotional literacy Cyberbullying, online etiquette	1/23/2019 12:04 PM
124	All areas of consent	1/23/2019 11:59 AM
125	Anatomy. Children need to learn the actual names of body parts (penis, vulva, etc). Cultural context. To build an understanding of why some parents are not comfortable addressing these important topics. Maybe tools for the children to facilitate the conversation with their parents at home.	1/23/2019 11:57 AM
126	help children to avoid gender stereotypes. Boy can be nurses, girls can be engineers. Pink is a nice color, diversity.	1/23/2019 11:53 AM
127	The difference between sex and gender. Including gender identity, use of non binary pronouns, disphoria etc. Understanding enthusiastic consent and to know the warning signs of coercion and manipulation with regards to physical contact.	1/23/2019 11:49 AM
128	Gay relationships. Also the pejorative way children can say "you're gay", understanding it's meaning and using it as something akin to saying "you're stupid" but not understanding the hurt feelings it can cause to gay adults listening.	1/23/2019 11:37 AM
129	How disrespectful porn is. That "no" means "no" - liken it to other reasons people say no as the "metoo" campaign has. How sexuality is abused by the media and all forms of communication to sell and promote things. How women are depicted as objects and that society does not have to accept that. Men too to a lesser degree but debating this issue would be a good topic for 6th class.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
130	That all bodies are different. That penis/vulva doesn't necessarily map on directly to male/female and boy/girl. There are excellent resources out there for kids from 3+ that are fully inclusive, e.g. Cory Silverberg's books, and Brook Pessin-Whedbee's 'Who Are You? The Kid's Guide To Gender Identity'. These reflect current understanding of the relationship between body, sex, identity, expression, sexuality. Silverberg's books teach about joy, justice, respect, consent.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
131	I assume that all the above is not done merely from a hetrosexual perspective, that all preferences are treated equally.	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
132	How body image in advertising and social media is portrayed unrealistically would also be an important area to cover with kids.	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
133	Perhaps indicating that it's also perfectly acceptable to be an asexual individual.	1/23/2019 11:12 AM
134	LGBT (LGBTQI) , Contraception	1/23/2019 11:08 AM
135	I think there should be an open conversation about identity and sexual orientation. There is still bullying in our schools, I think specially trained people should be brought in to talk about their personal experience.	1/23/2019 11:05 AM
136	more detailed for 6th class-An emphasis on the diversity of relationships , sexuality and overall appearance of girls and boys (with the point leaning towards the normality of gender dysphoria)	1/23/2019 11:03 AM
137	Topics above seem to point to problems and 'the facts' - but don't seem to engage with body positive experience - what is appropriate contact - what feels good - how to be healthy and happy in ones body - how to deal with the emotional and affective side of bodies and relationships - why it can be good be be able to speak about those feelings.	1/23/2019 10:54 AM
138	masturbation, even just to let them know is it normal	1/23/2019 10:53 AM

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139	Bullying a person psychologically and trapping someone in a relationship rape not have the assertiveness to say no You dont need to get married or settle down when you are young	1/23/2019 10:51 AM
140	They need to know as much as possible including different perspectives on sexuality including homosexuality, transgender and challenges such as homophobia. Also imporant to look at equality between the sexes including portrayal of men and women in media.	1/23/2019 10:42 AM
141	Again, this should be the decision of the parent and the child.	1/23/2019 10:41 AM
142	LGBT+ Abortion Gender rights Toxic masculinity Consent	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
143	Acceptance of their own relationships or sexual choices.	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
144	homosexuality/bi sexuality and gender fluidity/trans gender	1/23/2019 10:37 AM
145	Gender pronouns	1/23/2019 10:36 AM
146	Gender, transgender, lgbtq relationships and families	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
147	I would like to know exactly what the teacher covered with the children on a particular day do that I can use this info during day to day scenarios with my child as it presents itself	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
148	Bullying	1/23/2019 10:32 AM
149	RSE should be taught at home by parents, unless some parents wish to wash their hands of it, and if so, it should be limited to the children of parents who request it for their children.	1/23/2019 10:27 AM
150	LGBT people as part of society	1/23/2019 10:23 AM
151	inter-age appropriate relationships (if one partner is more then a year or two older then the other)	1/23/2019 10:22 AM
152	Consent	1/23/2019 10:18 AM
153	gender diverity and acceptancy of non gender roles/colours ect	1/23/2019 10:12 AM
154	Different families and relationships ie. same-sex parents/partners	1/23/2019 10:11 AM
155	gender identity etc.	1/23/2019 10:02 AM
156	No	1/23/2019 10:00 AM
157	Same sex relationships	1/23/2019 10:00 AM
158	Where to find help with any of the issues arising from problems involving RSE topics, e.g. bullying, gender identity, sexual abuse etc	1/23/2019 9:59 AM
159	Homosexuality as many children in our primary school have learned bigotted behaviour from home.	1/23/2019 9:56 AM
160	Topical items like rape during Belfast trial, Abortion during referendum. Things that cannot be avoided with posters and news everywhere should be explained.	1/23/2019 9:55 AM
161	The importance and benefits of healthy sexual relationships in adult relationships.	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
162	The single most important aspect here that doesn't seem to be covered is the child knowing him/herself. Once the child has a grounding in who they really are, from the inside out, they have a foundation upon which to know the world and they also have the inner resource of how to navigate it - i.e, the internal guidance system to indicate to them on an intuitive level what is "right" and "wrong" behaviour when it comes to any relationship.	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
163	I feel that the boys and girls should be given seperate talks about some things.I feel the girls would be more comfortable to ask questions regarding periods if the boys were not there.The same goes for the boys and their body's.	1/23/2019 9:46 AM
164	The boys should be aware of the menstrual cycle (not sure what age is appropriate) - so when sisters/ female friends are affected, it isn't a taboo or embarrassing subject.	1/23/2019 9:33 AM
165	no	1/23/2019 9:26 AM
166	Sexually transmitted infection?	1/23/2019 9:07 AM
167	Bullying	1/23/2019 8:42 AM
168	How to report abuse	1/23/2019 7:55 AM
169	1 The different types of sexuality that exist 2 dispelling myths about relationships, sex, pregnancy, sexuality etc 3 not sure if this is the forum but training on how to use the internet for information but identifying reliable data sources not opinion or misinformation	1/23/2019 7:52 AM
170	Contraception,	1/23/2019 7:50 AM

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171	N/A	1/23/2019 7:46 AM
172	Lgtb and transgender.	1/23/2019 2:53 AM
173	Alcohol ridiculous!!	1/23/2019 12:59 AM
174	peer pressure regarding sexual acts sending nude images or passing nude images watching porn	1/23/2019 12:09 AM
175	Respecting oneself as well as others	1/22/2019 11:44 PM
176	Contraception and STD's	1/22/2019 11:29 PM
177	Emotional wellbeing in relation to sexuality. LGBT issues.	1/22/2019 11:27 PM
178	Age appropriate and non-judgemental discussions/explanations of issues which they hear about in current affairs, e.g. of late - same sex marriage, abortion	1/22/2019 11:24 PM
179	Homosexuality	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
180	How and who to report if they feel abused, uncomfortable or anxious about any of the topics list above.	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
181	Parents should be noted of the type of lesson is involved. I personally am not liberal when it comes to this topic by choice and experience and dont trust a lot of what goes on in our culture regarding sex. In England there are outside facilitators teaching about masterbation in primary schools which I am strongly against the idea. If such went on in this curricullum I would be taking my kid out of such lessons whether given the option or not. In many ways I'd prefer it left up to the parents.	1/22/2019 10:57 PM
182	The fact that heterosexual and homosexual relationships exist and are normal. Consent, in age appropriate way.	1/22/2019 10:46 PM
183	All should be taught without religious influence	1/22/2019 10:37 PM
184	To ensure that characteristics of families and relationships covers same sex couples and their parenting options	1/22/2019 10:36 PM
185	Included should be emotional well-being and it's interface with the issues above . Supports when needed should be explored	1/22/2019 10:28 PM
186	How to recognise bullying or one-sided friendships. How to develop self esteem and care for oneself. How to ignore / deal with unkind comments from friends.	1/22/2019 10:27 PM
187	No	1/22/2019 10:23 PM
188	Ensuring LGBT+ issues are included.	1/22/2019 10:21 PM
189	1) Sexual orientation and gender identity.	1/22/2019 10:13 PM
190	Explaining that on line content (porn) is not always realistic and the dangers of using this as an educational tool	1/22/2019 9:59 PM
191	LGBT info	1/22/2019 9:45 PM
192	No	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
193	Influence of religion on some attitudes towards sexuality.	1/22/2019 9:06 PM
194	Consent..what it means, how to give it or deny it how to accept it if it is not given. Abuse..definitions of and how to report abuse if recognised of themselves a family member ir a friend who gas confided in them. Who tgey xan speak to, help lines etc. Contraception..different types, how to protect themselves from disease not just pregnancy. Where to go to get advice.if course using age appropriate terms and language	1/22/2019 9:00 PM
195	As well as healthy relationships children need to know what an unhealthy relationship looks like.. see Womens Aid/ Wexford Womens Refuge 16 days of action work on Domestic violence.	1/22/2019 8:54 PM
196	Same-sex relationships. Alternative families. Different gender types. The importance of protection	1/22/2019 8:33 PM
197	no	1/22/2019 8:24 PM
198	Gender change maybe	1/22/2019 8:23 PM
199	Not knowing the full installation and outs of the entries programs covered it's difficult to say	1/22/2019 8:18 PM
200	Sexuality/ homosexuality	1/22/2019 8:16 PM
201	I believe everything has been covered above.	1/22/2019 8:02 PM

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202	- Basic biology. - There should also be a section to cover how to be a good ethical citizen (voting, taking care of your environment, etc) - relationships with all people (not just friends and family) - relationship of humans with planet earth in general - and an emphasis on how to have a healthy relationship with yourself (physically and mentally)	1/22/2019 8:01 PM
203	Helplines or suggest people who might help. Teacher, nurse, someone that could refer them	1/22/2019 7:48 PM
204	Same sex relationships, abortion, transgender.	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
205	Phone and safe social media internet usage Topic of not keeping Secrets in sensitive matters Numerous options about who children can safely talk to if they have questions. There should never just be one person who kids can talk to	1/22/2019 7:35 PM
206	No	1/22/2019 7:32 PM
207	Massive focus on consent is needed. Gender equality should be addressed.	1/22/2019 7:29 PM
208	Gender, same sex relationship	1/22/2019 7:15 PM
209	Could Cover Smart Phones - what can access / not real / to be aware / peer pressure / pics sexual content etc especially in 6th class before they enter Secondary School	1/22/2019 7:12 PM
210	no. I think that's enough and the rest can be picked up at secondary school level...although these days safe sex can possibly be approached in 6th class...condoms. Hiv. early pregnancy	1/22/2019 7:07 PM
211	Blended families and same sex relationships.	1/22/2019 6:24 PM
212	Homosexuality gay families and transgender	1/22/2019 6:24 PM
213	The various types of sexuality e.g. LGBTQ	1/22/2019 6:15 PM
214	Probably sexuality and gender confusion, as it is Paramount all children are aware of others feelings and they themselves may need clarity and confirmation of such issues	1/22/2019 6:13 PM
215	Homosexual relationships	1/22/2019 6:12 PM
216	I'm a pharmacist and I think sexually transmitted infections should be briefly outlined. Some people engage in sexual intercourse before secondary school and we are often not educated about the long term effects of some STI until it is too late	1/22/2019 6:04 PM
217	Identity, individual expression without been a gender based ideology . I think the the course should be considered ordinary and taught in the class as all other subjects are	1/22/2019 6:01 PM
218	I think there needs to be specific education around what is consent and what is not consent. This needs to be clearer.	1/22/2019 5:59 PM
219	Internet pornography needs to be raised with the older children (6th class) in an appropriate language to warn of its exploitation of the actors involved, it's addictive nature and it's far removal from real relationships.	1/22/2019 5:59 PM
220	In my experience children do not always believe the information shared during stay safe. They do not want to believe that the world can be a cruel place and people can do terrible things. I believe that some examples and even statistics, though scary would help children to better avoid potentially dangerous situations. Also for sexual diseases, pregnancy etc open discussions are required to emphasise that these situations really do occur and how they can alter your life forever.	1/22/2019 5:56 PM
221	Transgendered, gay lesbian issues	1/22/2019 5:53 PM
222	Different sexual orientation and respect for same.	1/22/2019 5:52 PM
223	Who or where to turn if there is a problem.	1/22/2019 5:45 PM
224	Dept of Ed forbids 4 areas. I understand the concerns on abortion information. But I believe contraception, maturation and homosexuality should be covered as part of RSE, even if only as acknowledgment and direction to appropriate online resources.	1/22/2019 5:21 PM
225	Sexuality	1/22/2019 5:14 PM
226	The role of Physical Education and the importance and benefits of their involvement in physical activity and sport in developing the children both physically and emotionally.	1/22/2019 5:02 PM
227	How a child can report an abuse	1/22/2019 4:59 PM
228	With regards to caring friendships, if not already considered, it works be beneficial to incorporate the use of social media and how to deal with exclusion, bullying on line etc. Unfortunately it appears to be a growing concerns, especially when a child starts secondary school, so they should be prepared/aware of it before they potentially receive a phone/device or before they are faced with such issues personally.	1/22/2019 4:57 PM

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229	Self care and happiness and choices	1/22/2019 4:56 PM
230	All sexual or gender preferences. Non binary, bi-sexuality, homosexuality, same sex marriage (that we fought for in such a small country). And how any or all of it is OK regardless of the Catholic teachings.	1/22/2019 4:55 PM
231	Bullying....	1/22/2019 4:42 PM
232	N/a	1/22/2019 4:25 PM
233	Encouragement and support to ensure girls do not drop out of sports due to periods.	1/22/2019 4:20 PM
234	Homosexuality and gender issues. To perhaps remove some of the stigma by including it.	1/22/2019 4:17 PM
235	Love is love not man and woman only.	1/22/2019 4:13 PM
236	no	1/22/2019 4:11 PM
237	LGBT	1/22/2019 4:10 PM
238	Consent in general, though I suppose that comes under manners, respect and courtesy towards others	1/22/2019 4:08 PM
239	risk taking behaviours and dangerous situations such as going into a public toilet on their own etc...	1/22/2019 4:04 PM
240	No	1/22/2019 3:35 PM
241	Transgender. Gay. Lesbian relationships and understanding	1/22/2019 2:58 PM
242	How to report mental, physical, domestic abuse of themselves or others.	1/22/2019 1:26 PM
243	Some of the topics are heavier than others. In cases where a child is affected by one of these topics, appropriate measures need to be put in place to help the child, this undoubtedly will fall under the role of the teacher but perhaps, this is not the best person. Perhaps a designated person to deal with any fall out would be more appropriate than the teacher. I think that it is very important that children accept responsibility for their part in mistreating other kids. This is very difficult to monitor, I've seen where behaviour is repeated either through unawareness that their actions are hurtful or annoying others but I've also seen where parents reassure children that their mistreatment of other children was right. So in some ways, parents contradict what schools are trying to deliver. Perhaps educating parents should be paramount.	1/22/2019 1:14 PM
244	What to do about bullying, Tom perspectives of being bullied, seeing it happen, and being the bully	1/22/2019 1:11 PM
245	Junior Infants should be made aware of inappropriate contact and privacy	1/22/2019 12:54 PM
246	Respect for themselves and confidence and strength to say no. Too many sexual acts take place because one person is not empowered. Age appropriateness - whether it's Santa or sex, children delight in educating younger children. This should be part of respect for others, if not already.	1/22/2019 12:43 PM
247	Gender	1/22/2019 12:38 PM
248	Consent is sort of covered in the above, but I do think this is a growing area of concern so needs special attention (and I've heard from a mother of a secondary school student saying at discos, the boys are grabbing girls' bottoms on the dancefloor so I think the sooner the better to have this talk); also, sexual health and safety (maybe in 6th class) sadly needs attention.	1/22/2019 12:21 PM
249	.	1/22/2019 11:31 AM
250	Consent on touch, hugs, kisses as soon as they start school.	1/22/2019 11:23 AM
251	Sexuality - gay, lesbian, bisexuality, transgender	1/22/2019 10:37 AM
252	Older children in primary school are aware of the term 'trans' but I don't know if teachers feel equipped to talk to children about sexuality.	1/22/2019 10:28 AM
253	Issues of gender and sexuality	1/22/2019 9:20 AM
254	I think online grooming and how to stay safe should online should be a huge focus also the salarizing safe on the streets with all the attempted child abductions	1/22/2019 8:08 AM
255	I think talking to children about how life is should be a key part of his education, I.e, it is a normal part of life that sometimes everything is fine and other times we face challenges and things that are difficult - This is how we all experience life. If this was accepted as how life is then there should be a lot more discussion about what it's like when we face difficult things And emotions and how we can deal with them. I think this is KEY in teaching children healthy relationships and sexuality as not doing this can be a significant contributory factor in us ending in unhealthy relationships. THIS IS SO IMPORTANT.	1/22/2019 8:06 AM

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256	Inclusion of all people. Lesbian gays bi and trans.	1/22/2019 6:50 AM
257	At 6th class to discuss pornography and sti's	1/21/2019 11:27 PM
258	I feel that the topic of Consent should be discussed as a stand alone topic.	1/21/2019 11:24 PM
259	LGBT	1/21/2019 11:13 PM
260	I think it's important to normalize lgbt in all schools, the more openly discussed or used as examples in different types of families etc the more normal it becomes in everyday life	1/21/2019 10:53 PM
261	LGBT relationships ncluding same sex families.	1/21/2019 10:45 PM
262	No	1/21/2019 10:28 PM
263	all variants of sexuality should be taught not just focused on male /female relationships	1/21/2019 10:22 PM
264	How to leave a situation where they don't feel comfortable and who to tell	1/21/2019 9:58 PM
265	LGBT education, transgender relationships, sex changes	1/21/2019 9:45 PM
266	Teaching respect for same sex relationships	1/21/2019 9:21 PM
267	When teaching about taking care of babies, there is a sever lack of content surrounding breastfeed. Any work my kids brought home has a bottle as an image as the primary source of how to keep a baby healthy. This is completely wrong & outdated. Breastfeeding is the most natural, nutritious & basic form of looking after a child and this needs to be thought from an early age at an age appropriate level	1/21/2019 9:17 PM
268	I think it is important to introduce the issue of sexual orientation at primary school level. Children are exposed to information through social media etc. I think presenting issues related to sexual orientation in a factual way would support those children who may identify as gay and help to prevent homophobic bullying. Also i think different family types should be discussed including families where parents are lesbian or gay.	1/21/2019 9:16 PM
269	'The characteristics of families and relationships' topic should include different types of family structures such as single parent families, step families, same sex families... 'The human reproductive process' topic could possibly include a little information on infertility and some of the alternative methods of conception.	1/21/2019 9:15 PM
270	.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
271	See above.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
272	Cover same sex relationships/families as equal Children who are struggling with gender identity issues	1/21/2019 8:55 PM
273	Same sex relationships as part of healthy relationships.	1/21/2019 8:54 PM
274	No	1/21/2019 8:45 PM
275	Same-sex relationships	1/21/2019 7:41 PM
276	Active consent (not just the absence of a "no" but the presence of a "yes")	1/21/2019 7:34 PM
277	Homosexuality	1/21/2019 7:07 PM
278	LGBT issues and transgender.	1/21/2019 6:53 PM
279	LGBTQ issues including gender dysphoria.	1/21/2019 5:45 PM
280	Influence or culture, religion, mental and physical health, belief system on personal health, values and well being	1/21/2019 5:38 PM
281	The different types of relationships, same sex couples, single parent family's etc. More than just your traditional family.	1/21/2019 5:30 PM
282	Trusting one's own self and feeling in real toon to others.	1/21/2019 4:18 PM
283	Acceptance of diversity. But maybe explaining diversity first as if understood then people just dont see differences as much. So many questions that children have with no answers given and we are not allowed to ask causes the issues in the first place.	1/21/2019 4:03 PM
284	Sex-ed should be best dealt with by parents with some input from teachers/school.	1/21/2019 3:57 PM
285	same sex reationships	1/21/2019 3:53 PM
286	There has been an increase in HIV children today are totally unaware of what it is. Even I am I was totally surprised to see a packet like a pregnancy test advertised in my local chemist it was a HIV testing kit on display in the chemist window.	1/21/2019 3:34 PM
287	No	1/21/2019 3:31 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

288	Contraception and STDs in 6th class is very important.	1/21/2019 2:59 PM
289	Contraception Homosexuality Trans gender issues	1/21/2019 2:48 PM
290	Peer pressure	1/21/2019 2:44 PM
291	all the above should be covered by the time the child reaches 6th class. Some topics introduced earlier while others when the child is a little older.	1/21/2019 2:27 PM
292	Sexually transmitted infection and contraception (if not already covered)	1/21/2019 2:09 PM
293	The importance of face to face contact, balancing time spent online with time off line	1/21/2019 2:07 PM
294	Same sex relationship	1/21/2019 2:02 PM
295	Actual scenarios of grooming should be explained to children, still today predators tell children their parents will be harmed or sisters taken if they do not comply to demands kids should be taught what type of intimidation is used to recognize this behavior	1/21/2019 1:58 PM
296	The importance of no and when someone says no it means no. The children should learn this from an early age and not be bribed, encouraged, bullied or manipulated to change their minds. Maybe strategies to help older children recognise some of these signs so they can be confident in saying no.	1/21/2019 1:57 PM
297	STIs. Very honest discussions about STIs need to happen. It's not all about pregnancy and gives wrong message that if in birth control pill then you're covered.	1/21/2019 1:54 PM
298	Education relating to sexual orientation.	1/21/2019 1:52 PM
299	Inclusiveness, i.e. including all kids in playground activities and kids teaching kids certain skills, rather than excluding them because they don't have those skills (e.g. ball play skills). Excluding kids from games can also be seen as bullying.	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
300	Gender identity	1/21/2019 1:38 PM
301	Body image and recognising everyone's differences.	1/21/2019 1:37 PM
302	Kindness, love and respect.	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
303	It might be helpful to teach kids about gender stereotypes & how it's ok for girls to not be 'girly' or boys to not be 'boy'y'. I'd hope all schools now are careful to not be gender stertyoical. As a tomboy in the early 80's it wasn't always easy not conforming to bring girly! I hope it's changed in schools now, I'm sure it has.	1/21/2019 1:28 PM
304	LGTBQ	1/21/2019 1:06 PM
305	Transgender / gender issues.	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
306	Contraception	1/21/2019 12:22 PM
307	Sexually Transmitted Infections	1/21/2019 12:13 PM
308	I think it is important to focus on the positive as well as the negative - to mention pleasure as a valid reason for sexual relationships	1/21/2019 12:09 PM
309	I think an introduction to LGBTQ would be essential.	1/21/2019 12:07 PM
310	I assume bullying is covered as part of one of these classes	1/21/2019 12:05 PM
311	Dynamics of a group and how this affects individuals.	1/21/2019 11:09 AM
312	no	1/21/2019 10:11 AM
313	Homosexuality - needs to be normalised. When you hear Junior Infants saying "you're so gay" as an insult, you know in some houses that things haven't changed much	1/21/2019 10:05 AM
314	Different relationships I.e gay relationships, etc	1/21/2019 9:50 AM
315	Needs to be connection to secondary school education so they learn about topics more suitable for an older age group: contraception, consent and sexually transmitted diseases but also the non-physical aspect of healthy romantic relationships.	1/21/2019 8:06 AM
316	RSE - should not be covered AT ALL in primary school!!!!!! These age children are so innocent and willing to play with everyone!They go to school to learn about maths, literature, geography etc.....In the family they should learn about friends, carrying, sharing, love etc.	1/21/2019 2:48 AM
317	Helping them to identify a safe adult to talk to if they do have concerns about themselves, or a friend or even another child.	1/20/2019 11:37 PM
318	No, but I heard talk on the radio recently that new areas might be added i.e. gender neutrality, what you identify as (boy/girl etc), boys can have periods too!! I would not be happy with my primary school child listening to this. Too confusing and not appropriate at this age.	1/20/2019 10:50 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

319	I think RSE should be taught differently and little by little from young years towards older years.	1/20/2019 9:07 PM
320	Empathy Programme	1/20/2019 6:39 PM
321	Consent, contraception, respect and porn, that boys learn about girls bodies and vice versa, sex education is often taught to boys and girls separately in school. It's great when there is a sheet to bring home to sign as that opens the conversation at home with parents	1/20/2019 6:18 PM
322	Is bullying within this field?	1/20/2019 12:57 PM
323	Gender equality	1/19/2019 9:56 PM
324	I believe some attention should be given to same sex relationships to ensure children understand that this is an acceptable and appropriate relationship type for some people.	1/19/2019 8:56 PM
325	Same sex relationships and gender recognition	1/19/2019 6:59 PM
326	Acceptance & Respect towards LGTB community	1/19/2019 4:31 PM
327	Addiction to digital devices how it impacts a persons life how to recognize and how to prevent or get rid of	1/19/2019 3:46 PM
328	Consent, pornography?	1/19/2019 3:09 PM
329	Families formed by adoption- Fostering and blending. LGBT context and issues plus consent.	1/19/2019 1:57 PM
330	Effect of drugs on mental health, ie cannabis inhibiting learning and memory, feeling paranoid and low self esteem. They are smoking so much younger now. Worried!	1/19/2019 12:35 PM
331	The dangers of drug addiction-My nephew was introduced to drugs in secondary school, it affects children with ADHD severely and will destroy their brain. The dangers of drugs and alcohol and their developing brain is a must have discussion topic.	1/19/2019 11:28 AM
332	Teach children how to be safe in an outdoor environment with strangers and the like.	1/19/2019 10:00 AM
333	Connect general respect and empathy with sexual consent. Teach children to say "no" in other aspects of life which will empower them to be true to themselves later in relationships and protect themselves from unwanted attention. I.e confidence.	1/18/2019 8:37 PM
334	Same sex relationships	1/18/2019 8:18 PM
335	Consent doesn't have to start as a conversation about sexual consent. It can be built into early relationship education from jnr infants onwards. There is nothing in here about varying sexual preferences which doesn't need to be explicit in primary school, but can be discussed in relation to preferences for same sex or opposite sex or both. I think sexuality also needs to be discussed in terms of pleasure not purely in a reproductive sense and this can be introduced at the end of primary school and masturbation can be talked about as well.	1/18/2019 7:57 PM
336	No	1/18/2019 7:29 PM
337	How to stay safe when meeting people you don't know (in the street or other public places)	1/18/2019 7:27 PM
338	This probably is not a relevant answer to this particular question but I firmly believe that external professionals should be brought into schools to teach the RSE curriculum.	1/18/2019 7:11 PM
339	The act of intercourse in age appropriate language	1/18/2019 6:55 PM
340	Adoption does not seem to ever be mentioned as an option for crisis pregnancy. It is very important in light of the recent referendum that ALL options be discussed with our young people not just abortion. All involved in sexual education must keep in mind that the current emphasis on abortion over other choices in relation to fatal fetal abnormalities and crisis pregnancies can be very difficult for children who are adopted or who have siblings who are adopted.	1/18/2019 6:26 PM
341	How to deal with feeling 'left out'.	1/18/2019 5:09 PM
342	Abortion services.	1/18/2019 4:56 PM
343	The list of very comprehensive. For some topics it might be advantageous to separate boys and girls as I have noticed that my daughter does not like to discuss certain issues (e.g. puberty) when boys are present.	1/18/2019 4:12 PM
344	Ni	1/18/2019 3:33 PM
345	Prevention and protection in regards to sex e.g contraception, condoms etc. Body image: accepting oneself and being confident in their own skin.	1/18/2019 2:46 PM
346	LGBT	1/18/2019 2:43 PM
347	Homosexuality should be included when teaching about sexuality	1/18/2019 2:15 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

348	I would like to see an age appropriate understanding of gender equality as jokes can often be misunderstood as 'normal'	1/18/2019 1:39 PM
349	I'm not a liberal and family value views should be respected also.	1/18/2019 1:30 PM
350	- If not included in "the characteristics of families & relationships" yet - different types of families such as same sex etc - For 6th class I would also like to see an initial introduction/overview to contraception as it is becoming more relevant to children in earlier ages - If not included in any of the above yet: Emphasis should be put on assuring children that everybody's sexual development is differently when it comes to timing and needs and children should be assured that this is very normal	1/18/2019 12:58 PM
351	Different sexual preferences. Different cultural teachings.	1/18/2019 12:55 PM
352	- The existence and normality of atypical one-to-one relationships same-sex, trans etc. - Attraction and appropriate behaviour, especially during puberty. - Appropriate behaviours, and how to handle break down in relationships, both sexual and non-sexual.	1/18/2019 12:33 PM
353	I think it would be an important opportunity to introduce the concept of checking the body parts for changes and not being embarrassed to bring a issue to the attention of a parent or trusting adult. Exposing children to this concept at a young age would take the taboo and embarrassment out of it. A great opportunity to set up a healthy habit for life thus leading to early detection in breast cancers and testicular cancers etc	1/18/2019 12:21 PM
354	No	1/18/2019 11:35 AM
355	Various types of family units now as result of divorce, same sex marriages etc.	1/18/2019 11:30 AM
356	No it seems complete	1/18/2019 11:01 AM
357	Respect for Same Sex Relationships. Use of appropriate terms to describe Same Sex Relationships.	1/18/2019 10:54 AM
358	Much more details regarding the sexual organs, including inner sexual organs, and details of reproduction. In addition, detailed information on menstruation should be taught to the boys as well.	1/18/2019 10:29 AM
359	Recognising dangers and keeping safe when not in school and with family - going to and from school and at activities and clubs.	1/18/2019 10:20 AM
360	Mental health	1/18/2019 10:16 AM
361	I think that same sex relationships should be portrayed as well as male/female relationships.	1/18/2019 10:05 AM
362	Peer pressure	1/18/2019 9:38 AM
363	sexuality types such as being gay	1/18/2019 9:33 AM
364	Keeping safe in the physical world, especially for girls. How to deal with unwanted attention. How to clearly say no.	1/18/2019 9:30 AM
365	Gender and sexuality are LGBTQ	1/18/2019 8:03 AM
366	Other relationships such as homosexual	1/18/2019 7:41 AM
367	No	1/18/2019 12:14 AM
368	I believe LGBTI+ relationships and gender identity should be covered in age appropriate ways.	1/17/2019 10:40 PM
369	Body image ( specially girls) Peer pressure on forming unhealthy boy/girl friend	1/17/2019 10:28 PM
370	Introduction to contraception	1/17/2019 10:20 PM
371	Internet and social media safety	1/17/2019 10:16 PM
372	Homosexuality should be spoken about in conjunction with other topics eg recognising one on one healthy sexual relationships	1/17/2019 10:10 PM
373	LBGT is important to explain with these topics being in the news. Children need to have it explained to them that relationships and families comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes	1/17/2019 10:03 PM
374	Also for olderr kids..respect for your bodies, consent & lgbti issues	1/17/2019 9:41 PM
375	LGBT ( to older pupils, 5th or 6th class)	1/17/2019 9:16 PM
376	Topics are all fine, but I think it is very important that RSE education have a sex-positive approach.	1/17/2019 9:11 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

377	I think the topic of mental abuse by partners should be covered. Having suffered at the age of 16 to 21 years from mental abuse from an ex boyfriend, the hardest thing I ever did was walk away. It took me close to a further 7 years to get over the emotional torture and mental abuse that I was put through by him. But it was first about building up enough self esteem and the confidence in myself to be able to leave him. So I believe that this is an area that needs to be addressed	1/17/2019 9:04 PM
378	Gay relationships	1/17/2019 8:52 PM
379	Different sexual preference/gender	1/17/2019 7:47 PM
380	It's vital that the range of sexuality is also explored, inclusivity and openness is key. It's clear from research that gay kids know they are gay by the end of primary school, let's make sure they feel represented.	1/17/2019 7:46 PM
381	LGBTQI Inclusive families Consent	1/17/2019 7:38 PM
382	No	1/17/2019 7:28 PM
383	Same sex relationships and marriages and that these couples can still have a family together through adoption surgercy or sperm donation .	1/17/2019 7:18 PM
384	Additional topics / concerns raised by children Possibility for children to ask questions in a way that doesn't embarrass them e.g. all children write down their question on a piece of paper and hand in at end of class, then questions are answered in an age-appropriate way during next session	1/17/2019 7:00 PM
385	Different type of family units, single/same sex..	1/17/2019 6:25 PM
386	Diversity of sexual orientation and gender with emphasis on how gender fluidity and sexual diversity is normal	1/17/2019 6:14 PM
387	Care, kindness	1/17/2019 6:01 PM
388	Authority figures and abuse. For example, how to deal with a priest or scout leader who behaves inappropriately. Also focus on recovery from trauma, and how someone who has been hurt can get help to live happily. This is important as kids who feel trauma and shame can self harm as they don't imagine they can recover. Building also on the friendship content, understanding informal support networks and recognising the people who can help us feel safe and resilient to stress is key. Communication is important i.e. knowing how to talk about difficult topics.	1/17/2019 4:40 PM
389	pornography in conjunction with healthy relationships, power over women, violence etc in 6th class	1/17/2019 4:36 PM
390	-	1/17/2019 4:27 PM
391	types of sexuality tolerance factual information about where danger lies (& in what groups) in terms of the different types of predators in society.	1/17/2019 4:17 PM
392	LGBT+ content should also be included	1/17/2019 4:02 PM
393	I'd like if we were informed about when issues to do with puberty are being done in school so I could talk to my daughter at the same time. That would be super. Wrong box but wanted to say this.	1/17/2019 3:54 PM
394	Contraception	1/17/2019 3:53 PM
395	Empathy and Kindness as a path to healthy relationships. Solution focussed rather than problem identification in the approach of relationships generally and in sexual relationships.	1/17/2019 3:40 PM
396	Yes, something about gender identification	1/17/2019 3:24 PM
397	ensure that LGBT families and sexuality is discussed in an open and positive way within the characteristics of families and relationships.	1/17/2019 3:21 PM
398	Stds	1/17/2019 3:07 PM
399	Respect for women	1/17/2019 3:03 PM
400	Bullying particularly when it arises in friendships/exclusion from friendships	1/17/2019 2:45 PM
401	The importance of recognising all types of family dynamics, consisting of: LGBTQ+ relationships. Families made up of seperated parents. IVF and surrogacy.	1/17/2019 2:26 PM
402	Teaching children to say No in particular sexual situations and also teaching them to respect when No is said.	1/17/2019 2:08 PM
403	Self esteem, things relating to positive mental health management in an age appropriate way	1/17/2019 1:59 PM

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404	All of them	1/17/2019 1:19 PM
405	All types of relationships gay lesbian bisexuals etc	1/17/2019 1:06 PM
406	N/a	1/17/2019 1:03 PM
407	Gender identities Alternative families/relationships	1/17/2019 12:52 PM
408	Consent is a huge issue in Ireland , should be told how to react to inappropriate behavior and how to notice red flags in a relationship	1/17/2019 12:51 PM
409	Really! Why do organisations feel the need to constantly butt into every aspect of our lives!	1/17/2019 12:38 PM
410	Respect between the boys and girls to each other as regards kissing, touching , asking personal questions about puberty etc. And that this respect needs to continue into secondary school. Individual respect for themselves as young girls/boys. also that its ok to make mistakes when dealing with your peers and they should not be made feel anxious/ashamed as a result. ( Healthy friendships but also in larger groups)	1/17/2019 12:29 PM
411	Sexual orientation should be addressed directly.	1/17/2019 12:19 PM
412	I think contraception & safe sex should be discussed.	1/17/2019 12:17 PM
413	no	1/17/2019 12:02 PM
414	Different kinds of relationships, gay and lesbian and transgender terms and their meaning. Support available for children to whom those may impact.	1/17/2019 11:55 AM
415	Only that the origin of family and marriage is between man and woman!!!Only man and woman can get children as it is natural!	1/17/2019 11:47 AM
416	same-sex relationships gender identity	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
417	• Masturbation - as a fact of life it needs as much recognition as any academic topics. • Homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality, etc. • Contraception • The importance of physical & mental health and the necessity to be able to speak about what's on one's mind	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
418	no	1/17/2019 11:39 AM
419	Self confidence, how to trust your instincts, how to stand up for yourself and/or others.	1/17/2019 11:38 AM
420	Positive mental and emotional health	1/17/2019 10:51 AM
421	Who to speak to. Safe adults. How your body tells you when you feel unsafe	1/17/2019 10:33 AM
422	Lots	1/17/2019 10:07 AM
423	Consent should be strengthened	1/17/2019 10:00 AM
424	Talking things out. The importance of tell others what's going on. Mindfulness It's ok not to be ok. Try understand that friends can have bad days and it's ok. (Within reason)	1/17/2019 9:14 AM
425	LBGT awareness	1/17/2019 9:14 AM
426	LGBT	1/17/2019 9:13 AM
427	Gender issues.which used to be homosexuality but now constitutes all manner of things.	1/17/2019 8:51 AM
428	Talk about how the definition of sex can change from couple to couple, (gay, straight, able bodies etc) Discuss masturbations in a positive light Introduce what an STD clinic is Bust some of the common garjon used and be clear for those who are perhaps on the ASD spectrum and need specifics Identify a couple of realistic web sites where non-pornographic sex is shown	1/17/2019 8:42 AM
429	should include content about suitable age to begin a sexual relationship, how the law views underage sex, and the religious beliefs IRT sex in schools where religion is taught..	1/17/2019 7:55 AM
430	Homosexual relationships	1/17/2019 7:39 AM
431	Same sex relationships, different types of family units	1/17/2019 7:16 AM
432	Bullying from school teachers	1/17/2019 2:49 AM
433	What to do if you have been upset by what you have learned or heard or perhaps even experienced. How to get help. What to do if you have a friend that needs help.	1/16/2019 11:27 PM
434	No	1/16/2019 11:08 PM
435	No	1/16/2019 10:47 PM
436	Use visual aids to show the how in some movies and games the behavior is completely disrespectful to emphasise the point.	1/16/2019 10:45 PM
437	Respect themselves and not allowing inappropriate behavior	1/16/2019 10:30 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

438	Factual none judgmental information delivered in a child friendly manner without any religious influences coming into the topics.	1/16/2019 10:23 PM
439	Awareness of responsible and legal use of image creation and sharing on mobile phones, and consequences of illegal use of same.	1/16/2019 10:18 PM
440	Should cover gay and straight relationships and families	1/16/2019 10:15 PM
441	STI ,s and how to seek help if they feel they have been a victim of sexual abuse or online abuse. Teach them that they should have love and respect for themselves.	1/16/2019 10:02 PM
442	use specific apps like snapchat and Instagram.	1/16/2019 10:01 PM
443	diversity of families. importance of care and respect.	1/16/2019 10:00 PM
444	Recognising what their expectations are? Are they realistic? How to recognise happiness and contentment.	1/16/2019 9:55 PM
445	1. Consent - this is a huge issue today and needs to be taught explicitly in an age appropriate way from junior infants. 2. Sexual orientation - LGBT relationships should be normalised in the curriculum.	1/16/2019 9:47 PM
446	Above covers it - in keeping safe online ensure fraud is covered.	1/16/2019 9:44 PM
447	Contraception. Protection against STDs	1/16/2019 9:42 PM
448	Hormones and how it can affect a child's mental wellbeing when they are confused about the changes taking place	1/16/2019 9:40 PM
449	Use of sexualized and inappropriate language-impact of it	1/16/2019 9:39 PM
450	Respect and dignity for all; awareness/acceptance of homosexuality etc - importance of not excluding/bullying those who may be identifying as such and importance of not tolerating negative language around homosexuality etc	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
451	Boundaries, what are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours between students, teachers, adults etc.	1/16/2019 9:19 PM
452	Respecting their own body comes first .	1/16/2019 9:10 PM
453	No	1/16/2019 9:04 PM
454	Religious rules about sex, relationships and families.	1/16/2019 8:59 PM
455	Consent That adults should never tell children to keep secrets from their parents	1/16/2019 8:55 PM
456	Parents should get more insights into the content so we can better answer if anything is missing.	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
457	No.	1/16/2019 8:43 PM
458	In the context of the 'reproductive process', I think it would be extremely important to mention that using a condom in ALL cases of sexual intercourse prevents not only pregnancies, but prevents potentially harmful STIs (obviously both for boy and girl). How to use and apply a condom could well be demonstrated in class!	1/16/2019 8:41 PM
459	The current course should be taught much earlier. Every kid should know correct body part names by age 6/7. Intercourse introduced earlier. From 5th class proper discussion on puberty, sex ( male/female and gay lesbian relationships), normalizing same sex relationships, safe sex ( prevention pregnancy & STDs) some info on contraception ( which would need to be explored more in 6th and secondary. Not being impulsive when having sexual relationships. Individuality, positive body image, letting kids express their individuality through dress, hair piercings without stripping self identity. The law and sex, how to keep safe in relationships and have positive relationships. Abuse in relationships, where to get help How others should treat you, when you should be wary of others, importance of not rushing relationships Every kid regardless of religion or parental views, should be given all information needed.	1/16/2019 8:15 PM
460	Emotional Intelligence	1/16/2019 8:04 PM
461	Perhaps, that some religious groups and families hold different views to what is being presented as 'normal' and acceptable in the senior classes.	1/16/2019 7:43 PM
462	Introduction of material around LGBTQ should also be considered.	1/16/2019 7:28 PM
463	Peer pressure Bullying Keeping up with the johnsons	1/16/2019 7:11 PM
464	LGBT	1/16/2019 6:58 PM
465	Contraception	1/16/2019 6:57 PM
466	Sexuality , LGBT understanding	1/16/2019 6:54 PM

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467	Diversity ie different cultures, races, varying abilities ie. Include disabilities....not all disabilities Are obvious eg high functioning autism, ADD, dyspraxia etc	1/16/2019 6:47 PM
468	Contraception - can be mentioned to older classes. It doesn't have to be detailed as it must be age appropriate but neither should we hide it's existence from children.	1/16/2019 6:41 PM
469	Society and culture, people from different countries with differences beliefs and customs. Explain people with disabilities and special needs	1/16/2019 5:56 PM
470	Diversity ie different cultures, races, varying abilities ie. Include disabilities....not all disabilities Are obvious eg high functioning autism, ADD, dyspraxia etc	1/16/2019 5:53 PM
471	Peer pressure to engage in sexual behavior including kissing, not believing everything you hear - to my disappointment 'meeting (kissing)' boys/girls is very prevalent in our 6th classes and rumors spread that children starting secondary will be bullied if they haven't met someone yet.	1/16/2019 5:30 PM
472	Bullying	1/16/2019 5:07 PM
473	Same sex relationships, and issues of gender identity	1/16/2019 5:06 PM
474	Consent	1/16/2019 4:58 PM
475	Boys in particular showing more respect for girls, not only sexually but in all areas of life. Respect for those students with special needs.	1/16/2019 4:56 PM
476	Sexual orientation and transgender awareness, STIs	1/16/2019 4:55 PM
477	None I can think of off hand.	1/16/2019 4:41 PM
478	Homophobia and how some people are different. LGBTI awareness. Divorce, Abortion and all things relevant in modern Ireland.	1/16/2019 4:39 PM
479	Recognising feelings / emotions of discomfort.	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
480	A section should cover consent	1/16/2019 4:33 PM
481	What is not appropriate to talk to strangers about	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
482	Mental health and relationships. Importance of physical activity for mental and physical health Relaxation techniques Basic elements of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, selfcare	1/16/2019 4:25 PM
483	Explained above	1/16/2019 4:23 PM
484	Same sex relationships/marriage Adoption in healthy families	1/16/2019 4:21 PM
485	Gender identity	1/16/2019 4:11 PM
486	transgender, gay, lesbian & gender fluid people, all type of sexual orientation. how religious beliefs impact sexual norms and morals	1/16/2019 4:08 PM
487	Don't know much about it.	1/16/2019 4:05 PM
488	The importance of breastfeeding babies...normalizing the concept.	1/16/2019 4:02 PM
489	Consent as a topic in itself which can be introduced in junior Infants in an age appropriate manner like don't hug someone unless they want you to and then built on as the children progress in maturity	1/16/2019 4:00 PM
490	History of Church and Institutional sexual abuse and cruelty towards children. Identify failures and lessons learnt for today. Bended families, dealing with different parental circumstances - seperated, divorced, remarried etc. etc. Sexuality spectrum - acknowledge difference is normal, advocate understanding and tolerance. Consent & peer pressure (s)	1/16/2019 3:58 PM
491	I would like more conversations about fostering and adoption being normal in today's society	1/16/2019 3:57 PM
492	I would hope at this point that same sex relationships and families, blended families and info on trans rights would be included.	1/16/2019 3:49 PM
493	Sexual slurs and the damage they cause	1/16/2019 3:46 PM
494	truth telling and not keeping secrets stranger danger	1/16/2019 3:41 PM
495	LGBT	1/16/2019 3:41 PM
496	It falls within some of the above, but not being gender specific about healthy sexual relationships, meaning heterosexual or homosexual. They should be non-descriptive.	1/16/2019 3:37 PM
497	Respect towards people with gender issues and more information for children about accepting the differences.	1/16/2019 3:31 PM
498	Concepts of gender, sex, sexual orientation and that all versions of this spectrum are good and equal.	1/16/2019 3:22 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

499	Ensure inclusivity of all family groups and not just traditional mum, dad and children model	1/16/2019 3:20 PM
500	How to handle the issues regarding sexual abuse or misconduct. Coz when they learn RSE in school they need to be taught and handle the situation when they come across	1/16/2019 3:10 PM
501	no	1/16/2019 3:10 PM
502	.	1/16/2019 2:47 PM
503	I am entering this stage where these topics are becoming necessary so no prior experience of what to expect or suggest. Thank you for any support here on in.	1/16/2019 2:46 PM
504	Legal consequences of inappropriate sexual behaviour both physical and online. This should include appropriate age relevant case studies of real cases to cover the full spectrum of scenarios and outcomes.	1/16/2019 2:45 PM
505	No Dual responsibility between parents and school. We had a form home from school yesterday re school programmers. My 8 year old asked me what sexual harassment is? I generically covered the answer.	1/16/2019 2:41 PM
506	no	1/16/2019 2:40 PM
507	In the characteristics of family and relationships section I think the different types of family and relationships eg. Same sex parents/relationships, could be covered in an age appropriate way	1/16/2019 2:37 PM
508	I am unaware of any.	1/16/2019 2:31 PM
509	Sexuality	1/16/2019 2:24 PM
510	Equality and women's right to be employed. My daughter has been subjected to derogatory remarks by male students over the fact that she attends an afterschool because her mother works.	1/16/2019 2:19 PM
511	Consent	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
512	Sexual Health	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
513	LGBTQ relationships. For students who identify as LGBTQ and also normalizing these relationships for other students.	1/16/2019 2:09 PM
514	All types of relationships (gay/straight), coming to terms with sexual orientation	1/16/2019 2:05 PM
515	Dependency on emotional crutches such as alcohol drugs and eating disorders and habits	1/16/2019 1:59 PM
516	Safety	1/16/2019 1:55 PM
517	Contraception	1/16/2019 1:42 PM
518	LGBTQ+ orientations, what is transgender, inclusivity.	1/16/2019 1:40 PM
519	How to say no and that no means no.	1/16/2019 1:39 PM
520	Consent - in an age appropriate way	1/16/2019 1:38 PM
521	The NCCA needs to take a common sense approach to the RSE curriculum - children are discussing these issues themselves, hearing about them on the news, are inquisitive and deserve to get the facts in their RSE Education. The NCCA should not avoid topics such as the act of sex, LGTBQI relationships, gender identity and contraception and these topics should be included in the teaching of RSE. The NCCA know what children of each age are talking about themselves and are inquisitive about - get on with teaching them the facts of it!	1/16/2019 1:34 PM
522	That abuse usually starts generally with a family member, again consent etc	1/16/2019 1:32 PM
523	I think consent should be taught not necessarily in the context of sexual relationships. It would be good to introduce consent as a concept so it can be built on later.	1/16/2019 1:31 PM
524	Bullying in relation to child's body and the changes it is going through. Importance of Personal hygiene at Puberty stage .	1/16/2019 1:17 PM
525	LGBT content	1/16/2019 1:16 PM
526	importance of communication, information on services available to young people if they wish to talk	1/16/2019 1:15 PM
527	Different sexual orientation. Transgender. Abortion.	1/16/2019 1:14 PM
528	Currently there seems to be little emphasis on the fact that while this knowledge equips the child, the best use of teenage is career building and best time to explore and indulge in relationships is when financially independent. There is a time in life for everything and knowledge should not get equated to opportunity or ability which i feel is happening	1/16/2019 1:11 PM
529	Assertive communication skills	1/16/2019 1:09 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

530	Personal hygiene	1/16/2019 1:07 PM
531	Relationships depend on healthy individuals, so being taught about mental health and strategy to cope needs to be taught in tandem	1/16/2019 1:05 PM
532	consent and what it means	1/16/2019 1:03 PM
533	masturbation - venereal diseases -pornography -	1/16/2019 1:00 PM
534	All relationships, and family setups. Not just male female	1/16/2019 12:59 PM
535	The existence of sexually transmitted diseases and the possibility to prevent them	1/16/2019 12:55 PM
536	Bereavement	1/16/2019 12:53 PM
537	An age appropriate introduction to queer (LGBTQ+)	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
538	Peer pressure - how to handle	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
539	No	1/16/2019 12:49 PM
540	No	1/16/2019 12:48 PM
541	Its not specified under 'main external body parts', but the full and correct terminology should be used, e.g. penis, vulva, vagina, etc. Not sure why it's limited to external either - why not mention ovaries or fallopian tubes, if you're talking about testicles?	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
542	All but at an appropriate time and age	1/16/2019 12:43 PM
543	Sexual identity, Gender identity	1/16/2019 12:42 PM
544	Accord delivered the RSE course in our Educate together school, they don't validate same sex relationships and are deeply conservative. There is no place for them in modern Ireland and certainly not in our schools and especially not in an Educate together school	1/16/2019 12:42 PM
545	Self care and self preservation	1/16/2019 12:34 PM
546	Consent but probably in the respect section I think we should talk about relationship but not be too specific about gender - ie say "when you like someone"...dont always refer to hetro relationship. ..same sex doesnt need to be mentioned as a lot of parents will get upset about this ( i dont have a problem with it) but don't have to refer to a boy if its a girl and vice versa can just say someone... that person etc .. it may be a bit tricky but as long as constantly saying hetro - they can learn more when older.	1/16/2019 12:32 PM
547	The importance of a child knowing it's OK to say no to physical contact, of any kind, if it makes a child feel uncomfortable, not like when we were kids and were basically told to hug/kiss relatives that we may not have wanted to. Trust is hugely important as a child. This can happen in the school yard if someone is pushing/shoving a child, trying to hug/kiss them to show affection, whatever the case may be. Kids should know it's OK to say 'no' and perhaps more importantly for all kids to know that if someone says 'no', they must respect that.	1/16/2019 12:31 PM
548	Family diversity needs to be covered - it is not clear from the list above that it is covered e.g. that families take different forms single parent, remarried parents, LGB parents. There is also a requirement that different family types are normalised generally throughout the curriculum to support specific teaching in RSE e.g. stories in books featuring LGB families, single parent families etc. There isn't much point 'teaching' about diversity if there is no reference to it outside of the RSE classes.	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
549	That intercourse is not just for conceiving a baby, that it is a natural part of a loving and sexual relationship.	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
550	No	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
551	The basic concept of homosexuality. Maybe discuss LGBQ community as an entity for children who are feeling they don't fit in?	1/16/2019 12:27 PM
552	hammering home the idea that it is not the sole role of males to chase and females to give in.	1/16/2019 12:21 PM
553	No	1/16/2019 12:19 PM
554	LGBT relationships & sexuality Dynamics of blended/non-traditional families	1/16/2019 12:18 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

555	Obviously this depends on the age group of children but sexual transmitted deceases. As a teenager in first and second year i had the opportunity of having a teacher who was a nurse for personal development. She thought me everything i needed to know and showed us images of deceases. i can honestly say it was the most infrmative class from learning about the importance of being safe to smear tests , to dealing with unexpected pregnancies etc she instilled so much value on repect and how precious virginity is etc. Ive always felt going forward that a nurse is the best person to do these talks and on an ongoing bases to normalise this area. Again this would have to be considered in relation to age group and most probably for secondary school ages but could be adapted to touch on this area with older groups in primary school	1/16/2019 12:10 PM
556	If it's cover mutual consent, love and tolerance that would be a lot.	1/16/2019 12:09 PM
557	Unhealthy relationships & how to recognise them specifically & how to deal with them. Self esteem body positive stories, examples & talks - huge issue from age 9/10 onwards bullying - how to deal with it when its happening to you or around you To be honest as I know so little I feel unable to anser properly. Can we please be informed what is taught & how & for some parents why !	1/16/2019 12:07 PM
558	No you are cover everything	1/16/2019 12:01 PM
559	LGBT relationships	1/16/2019 11:45 AM
560	The impact of screen time/mobile phone use on relationships, wellbeing, etc.	1/16/2019 11:44 AM
561	LGBQT	1/16/2019 11:43 AM
562	Yes. What to do if a child finds themselves in an abuse of power situation.	1/16/2019 11:40 AM
563	This topic is a joint education between the school and the home. Parents require training on the content. This needs to be included in the plan.	1/16/2019 11:37 AM
564	What about samesex relationships	1/16/2019 11:32 AM
565	Contraception Different kinds of families - hetrosexual and homosexual relationships Gender fluidity/transgender persons	1/16/2019 11:31 AM
566	Ensure there is a section on sexuality that covers LGBQI. Also that families are considered in all their diverse forms hetero/homosexuual, birth and adopted children etc	1/16/2019 11:28 AM
567	More consultation between schools and parents	1/16/2019 11:27 AM
568	Different sexual preferences, trans etc	1/16/2019 11:25 AM
569	Topic of sexual orientation	1/16/2019 11:20 AM
570	The Law and justice system within this area	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
571	As above	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
572	What a child can do or who they can talk to when faced with a situation	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
573	Same sex relationships.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
574	The terms above are broad and undefined, it would be useful to have a (similarly broad) list of things that parents would consider INAPPROPRIATE to teach to children in Primary school	1/16/2019 11:09 AM
575	Information on homosexuality, transgender etc.	1/16/2019 11:05 AM
576	Resilience, there is lots of talk about bullying but little help from a school when there is an incident, for example, the bully's feelings are given the same weight as the victim and that is not fair and so as parents we have to try to build resilience with our children when I feel the school could do far more to teach the skills.	1/16/2019 10:55 AM
577	All kinds of relationships should be discussed.. including homosexuality and also gender identity issues	1/16/2019 10:25 AM
578	Maybe something about gender identity, and homosexuality.	1/16/2019 10:10 AM
579	No	1/16/2019 9:56 AM
580	Reinforcement of the negative effects of age inappropriate computer games	1/16/2019 9:41 AM
581	Homophobic bullying, and referring to children as gay as an insult.	1/16/2019 9:28 AM
582	Religious views should be taught by each child's background. I did not baptise my daughter not to be brought up that way	1/16/2019 9:25 AM
583	Bullying.	1/16/2019 9:05 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

584	I'm also keen to have LGBTQ topics covered in an age appropriate way. I hope in future that such things will be generally accepted and programs like this help to carve out that future. I also think breastfeeding and vaccines are important topics though they are probably included in small ways already. These are important things for public health and should be taught about. Some topics may not be in agreement with a schools ethos or teachers personal beliefs. I think it is important that the lessons are not skewed by this.	1/16/2019 7:38 AM
585	Racism and dealing with people with disabilities both physical and mental.	1/16/2019 7:26 AM
586	With Pregnancy, senior girls should also be taught about the fact that they now have choices if they do become pregnant	1/16/2019 12:23 AM
587	Bullying Respect others and environment Value	1/15/2019 10:38 PM
588	Yes I do think it is important to cover Gender and how certain children may identify more as a boy but they are in a female body and vice versa. Why I feel this is so important is my son attended a preschool with a girl who very much identified as a male, her haircut, clothing etc. My son used to refer to her as a "he" so i think its important that they have an understanding and learn to be compassionate towards these kids as this is a very different world to when we grew up. Our children need to know about all types of kids. I teach my kids that if they chose to fall in love with the same sex as themselves than that is just fine. Our children need reassurance and information	1/15/2019 10:11 PM
589	How to recognise controlling behaviour within friendships as well as relationships	1/15/2019 10:09 PM
590	Broken relationships such as parents or themselves with a parent. Perhaps relationships with immediate people who have a mental illness - what to do if they don't feel safe with people they love.	1/15/2019 9:29 PM
591	Consent and rape. Such as a person saying yes to sex then changing their mind and saying no.	1/15/2019 9:27 PM
592	Importance of being able to speak to an adult if they were ever worried about anything	1/15/2019 9:23 PM
593	Nothing	1/15/2019 8:59 PM
594	LGBT information	1/15/2019 8:53 PM
595	Issues of gender identity and sexual orientation are important to include.	1/15/2019 8:48 PM
596	Parents should have the right to determine what they consider a 'healthy' sexual relationship to be. It's not for the school to determine.	1/15/2019 8:38 PM
597	I would like if it the fact that sex/relationships are one of the greatest sources of joy/fulfillment in life. Also no Shame and responsible sexual behavior is the responsibility of boys and girls equally	1/15/2019 7:46 PM
598	Family relationships what expected from family members	1/15/2019 7:46 PM
599	Families can come in all shapes and sizes, as long as their is love and respect, all varieties are valid.	1/15/2019 7:35 PM
600	I think it's also important to be open with regards to homosexuality and transgender issues. I believe it's important for an accepting and supportive society.	1/15/2019 7:26 PM
601	How to deal with sexual assault	1/15/2019 7:23 PM
602	Make sure that LGTBI relationships are covered	1/15/2019 7:23 PM
603	Tolerance, patience towards others. How to talk to someone if you are being bullied and what to do to stop it.	1/15/2019 7:10 PM
604	Sexual orientation	1/15/2019 6:56 PM
605	Different types of relationships (e.g. same sex couples) and gender characterisation	1/15/2019 6:52 PM
606	It could be covered in some of the above, but if not; periods and how to talk about them and understand it's normal and ok.	1/15/2019 6:44 PM
607	Gender and gender identity.	1/15/2019 6:36 PM
608	Confidence in own self and understanding what's on line isn't always true or realistic! From a body and relationship perspective	1/15/2019 6:18 PM
609	Understanding another persons perspective. Can you put yourself in their shoes and understand why they have done or said what they did and still disagree/agree with them?	1/15/2019 5:57 PM
610	No I don't think so	1/15/2019 5:48 PM
611	no	1/15/2019 4:59 PM
612	gender identity. Same sex relationships as being equally valid to heterosexual ones.	1/15/2019 4:48 PM

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613	homosexuality	1/15/2019 4:42 PM
614	The superior benefits and importance of breastfeeding.	1/15/2019 4:41 PM
615	LGBT issues	1/15/2019 4:22 PM
616	The harmful role of pornography	1/15/2019 4:18 PM
617	(1) Empowering children to say YES and NO in a variety of circumstances. Giving power to their voice. Teaching children the power of their voice, that they must speak out to protect themselves and others, and that they must respect another child's voice. This is the case even in playground games where unwanted physical contact can take place. I think this is the bedrock of building healthy relationships. (2) empowering children to talk about themselves, what they value, how they negotiate difficult situations, make decisions. Teach them to listen, to learn from others, to approach problems as groups, to be empathic, to understand that others will have different experiences and perspectives and that this is ok.	1/15/2019 3:54 PM
618	I don't believe sexual health should be taught in the out dated model of between married people only and I think that diversity should be recognised and acknowledged teaching respect and acceptance for all sexualities and genders.	1/15/2019 3:50 PM
619	Kids need to know that masturbation is OK. There is a lot of shame about this but it is normal and healthy and everyone does it - especially during puberty!	1/15/2019 3:29 PM
620	Under relationships - what bullying is and how to handle it.	1/15/2019 3:27 PM
621	I think that tolerance of those with different sexuality should be taught but not sure.	1/15/2019 3:26 PM

## Q17 Is there anything the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) should take into consideration in the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education to children with Special Educational Needs? Enter below or leave blank.

Answered: 477 Skipped: 2,829

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Yes the child's ability to understand.	1/26/2019 9:55 PM
2	The right to withdraw must be respected and no child should be vilified or bullied for withdrawing.	1/26/2019 9:45 PM
3	Differentiated resources	1/26/2019 8:31 PM
4	The time it can take for concepts to be understood. It is all good delivering the lessons in a safe way. But it would be great to have a healthy culture in schools so kids feel safe asking or opening up about something afterwards.	1/26/2019 7:48 PM
5	At risk pupils should receive additional one on one tailored education that would help keep them safe from predators	1/26/2019 10:43 AM
6	Children with special needs may not understand what is being thought and may need a social story to explain.	1/26/2019 10:17 AM
7	In order for kids to take this on board it must be visited on a regular basis. Older kids 11 upwards should have access to real life cases/incidents to re enforce the message. A lot of parents have their head in the sand about the dangers out there, especially online.	1/26/2019 10:13 AM
8	Different types of families, eg: one parent, same sex,	1/26/2019 9:58 AM
9	Rape needs to be discussed.	1/26/2019 7:01 AM
10	First and foremost it's the parents that should be spoken to about this, they know their child best and what they can process correctly and safely	1/26/2019 5:49 AM
11	They need to take the same considerations they take with all subjects. They also need to consider that the nature of some SEN's make those children more vulnerable & they may need additional classes to ensure we protect them.	1/25/2019 11:26 PM
12	Yes . Some content will have to be differentiated and might need to be addressed by the spec Ed teacher who knows the child best or perhaps bring parents on board and deliver the content in small chunks with plenty of visuals videos and worksheets	1/25/2019 11:20 PM
13	A families with religious beliefs should be respected	1/25/2019 9:42 PM
14	Everyone should be taught about relationships and sexuality. People with disabilities need the same information as everyone else on this topic. However it should be taught taking into consideration their needs and capacity, using creative methods if necessary to ensure understanding	1/25/2019 8:51 PM
15	More about personal space and the importance of consent for touching etc. We had a personal experience of a child with autism assaulting our child. That child didn't have boundaries or awareness of his personal space.	1/25/2019 7:18 PM
16	Consult with parents	1/25/2019 6:56 PM
17	The programme needs to be adjusted for children with special needs to grasp concepts at their pace. Definitely more parental involvement so there's no confusion. Perhaps more interactive role playing and discussion, longer lessons.	1/25/2019 6:55 PM
18	Consider the relevant age groups for these topics	1/25/2019 6:38 PM
19	.	1/25/2019 6:27 PM
20	Liase closely with the child's parents to discuss what procedure to take.	1/25/2019 6:11 PM
21	This should be done by specially trained staff, with content tailored to the needs of these pupils. If possible from within the pupils' school and in a setting that special needs pupils are familiar with	1/25/2019 5:52 PM
22	Discussion with parents of the child what's the teaching is about to make them fully aware	1/25/2019 5:29 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

23	The context needs to be appropriate to their educational ability and understanding.	1/25/2019 3:51 PM
24	Alerting parents in advance of when it will be taught in school is important. This should be a paired curriculum between parents & school.	1/25/2019 3:25 PM
25	Understanding the background of people from different cultures.	1/25/2019 3:09 PM
26	Just keep the information simple and easy to understand	1/25/2019 1:40 PM
27	The NCCA need to support and educate the parents in to covering these topics at home.	1/25/2019 1:26 PM
28	Children with SEN can be more vulnerable in relationships so they need to know the same information as all other children but in delivered in a way they can understand	1/25/2019 1:18 PM
29	yes probably would be a very good idea to have a person who is in a professional practice to help with children with special needs to help them understand the information	1/25/2019 1:11 PM
30	The children should feel safe at all times from getting on the school bus until they get off it and received by their parents.	1/25/2019 12:45 PM
31	Special needs children should get the same information as all children,	1/25/2019 12:13 PM
32	Don't know	1/25/2019 11:39 AM
33	A child's age needs to be taken into consideration. I believe sexual education should be taught from 5th to 6th class. Younger children should not be made sexually aware, a child's innocence should be protected at all times.	1/25/2019 11:13 AM
34	No at the right are they should be taught the same	1/25/2019 10:58 AM
35	Training for SEN teachers.	1/25/2019 10:35 AM
36	Need for experts in that field	1/25/2019 10:13 AM
37	Sending out the contents before kids learn so we know what it is they are learning and be able to answer questions that have	1/25/2019 9:32 AM
38	Think this education should be led firstly by parents of children	1/25/2019 9:08 AM
39	I heard a lot of bad reports from parents that NCCA teaching boys to try sex with boys, girls with girls. They encourage children to try sex before marriage. We teach about sex, but to try sex different position with your husband or wife. Otherwise other person is just using and abusing you. We teach children to wait for sex, not to go straight with the person they just met. They have to learn to control sexual desires for marriage.	1/25/2019 9:04 AM
40	Engage children in discussion about the topics	1/25/2019 8:32 AM
41	This should be a standard program that all pupils receive across the country and should be delivered in the same way in every classroom	1/25/2019 7:52 AM
42	I am very concerned about outside agencies with a Catholic ethos delivering RSE content. All content should be non biased and inclusive of LGBT issues and should reflect the laws of the country regarding contraception/abortion and equality. I think parents should always be made aware of who is delivering the content so they can decide on whether they would like to include their child.	1/25/2019 7:48 AM
43	Yes they should. My son is non verbal / autistic and I can see sign of puberty. I would like to know how to teach him appropriate behaviours and that he should refrain from touching his body parts in public's places.	1/25/2019 6:24 AM
44	While talking about friendship make them aware that is acceptable for women to have opposite sex friends even later on when people are married. It is very bad acceptable and trust here that pure friendship between opposite sex people is possible and allowed.b	1/25/2019 12:13 AM
45	-Not all children mature emotionally at the same age/class level Not all young adults desire to be sexually active and they need to be respected in their views and the way they are taught - Children and parents of all faiths and none should be equally respected in their views and methods of education they chose for this important subject -Children from fostering/adoption background need different approaches when discussing family, sexuality etc.	1/24/2019 10:57 PM
46	How to address the topics and deliver them as if it was math or language or any other subject in school. It should seem and look totally normal to kids if all ages	1/24/2019 9:18 PM
47	Religion	1/24/2019 9:01 PM
48	Depending on the level of sen the rse delivered should be tailored	1/24/2019 8:57 PM
49	Make it fun to keep interest and understanding.	1/24/2019 8:54 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

50	Parents should decide progress for each child individually	1/24/2019 7:38 PM
51	Accessing how much information is retained and understood	1/24/2019 7:26 PM
52	I think if any of the parents wants to take it this education for their kids they can.but don't mandatory for every one.leave for choice and informed the parents that class if any parents don't want it they can take out their kids from that class.	1/24/2019 7:00 PM
53	It should not be done in primary school duration except few important things like friendship, abusing, recognition of someone's behaviour or inclination towards you etc but must not be taught about sexuality, pregnancy or reproductive system.	1/24/2019 6:56 PM
54	Yes on a case by case basis	1/24/2019 6:32 PM
55	A female teacher should teach girls and a male teacher for boys. It will be more healthy and give them confidence	1/24/2019 6:04 PM
56	right to withdraw one's child	1/24/2019 6:03 PM
57	Assessment of the individual level of understanding and strong communication and good support for the parents.	1/24/2019 1:48 PM
58	Yes at all time their parents/guardians should be involved in the provelssnd it should be sensitively dealt with.	1/24/2019 11:18 AM
59	No,	1/24/2019 10:56 AM
60	appropriately pitched information to aid understanding depending on the level of the the child's understanding	1/24/2019 10:51 AM
61	Think about child's mentally helth not divert	1/24/2019 9:58 AM
62	Age appropriate. Family background. Environmental exposure.	1/24/2019 9:29 AM
63	not sure, don't know much about kids with special education needs (counting my lucky stars!!!)	1/24/2019 8:44 AM
64	You actually exposing the innocent kids to sex at age it doesn't mean any thing to them! Then when they grow you leaving them high and dry!! Plus openin their innocent eye on subject otherwise closed an till the age of puberty. Even God doesn't hold human responsible for their actions till they become an adult! Why do you think .	1/24/2019 8:24 AM
65	That the age appropriateness is changing rapidly and needs to be reviewed as children at 9 years of age are now discussing for example blow jobs or. people's sexual orientation.Some parents would not notice or be aware of these facts.	1/24/2019 7:37 AM
66	That should be decided by their Parents and not the State or school.	1/24/2019 1:47 AM
67	Very individual to each child . Discuss with their Parents	1/23/2019 11:36 PM
68	Teaching should take child's level of understanding into account; parental involvement should also be considered, at a minimum parents should be informed of the curriculum to be covered	1/23/2019 11:35 PM
69	Depending on the children's intellectual ability some children should probably learn separately from others. For example more visuals may be needed with certain children. Also, some special need children reach puberty younger and may be needed to be educated at a younger age to deal with their new feelings.	1/23/2019 11:26 PM
70	A child on the spectrums potential inability to read social cues and recognise personal safety in relation to inappropriate adults and respecting personal space and the issue of consent maybe extra emphasis could be put on such lessons.	1/23/2019 11:07 PM
71	Content will obviously need to be simplified where appropriate	1/23/2019 10:34 PM
72	Focus on non-sexual topics please. Thank you.	1/23/2019 10:18 PM
73	Age is very important	1/23/2019 10:18 PM
74	/	1/23/2019 10:06 PM
75	A easy read guide. Picture guide. The fact that a person with a disability has the same sexual, biological make up. The person with a disability has aright to sexual relationship and be involved in the discussion. The vulnerability they may face. Support in dealing the frustration and isolation they may feel.	1/23/2019 10:00 PM
76	Age appropriate	1/23/2019 9:37 PM
77	Make sure the parents are fully supported to opt their children out.	1/23/2019 9:28 PM
78	Yes. Parents are the primary educators.	1/23/2019 8:51 PM
79	don't know	1/23/2019 8:47 PM

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80	They are children, they are not supposed to be teaching about sexuality and sex at that primary school age.	1/23/2019 8:40 PM
81	Keep parents up to date	1/23/2019 8:19 PM
82	Having a child with special needs I do not think this topic could be approached in the same what, it is far too more complex	1/23/2019 8:15 PM
83	High school children should only need to teach some of these articles mentioned above	1/23/2019 8:09 PM
84	Their knowledge or appropriateness in the case of each child depending on their educational needs.	1/23/2019 7:49 PM
85	Make sure it is on their level and they have a clear understanding of teach topic been taught	1/23/2019 7:22 PM
86	Parents should be informed before the children have this school education. Just so parents can talk to the children beforehand and prepare them.	1/23/2019 7:16 PM
87	Religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds	1/23/2019 6:52 PM
88	I think it should be as informative as possible for different age groups especially around inappropriate behaviour, consent and online threats	1/23/2019 6:44 PM
89	I trust that the welfare of the child is core to the decision making process	1/23/2019 6:42 PM
90	Not sure	1/23/2019 6:36 PM
91	It is vital that not a one size fits all approach is taken here . Also that they have to opportunity to avail of all of the issues their peers are being educated in	1/23/2019 6:34 PM
92	The childs individual understanding	1/23/2019 6:19 PM
93	Some topics like menstruation would require special class for girls only	1/23/2019 6:10 PM
94	Parents should be consulted as to best approach.	1/23/2019 5:50 PM
95	The same principles apply	1/23/2019 5:33 PM
96	They can be very sheltered and innocent and sometimes their parents want to shield them from conversations that they are not mature enough for at that moment and therefore the parents might want to exclude them from that lesson and discuss the topic at a later stage	1/23/2019 5:02 PM
97	I THINK THAT PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ARE ACCTUALLY THOSE, WHO ARE CONSIDERING TO TEACH LITTLE GIRLS ABOUT SEX AND PENISES.	1/23/2019 4:55 PM
98	Stranger Danger signs	1/23/2019 4:47 PM
99	Age appropriateness may not be an issue and taken more on an individual basis	1/23/2019 4:32 PM
100	Keep it simple	1/23/2019 3:53 PM
101	That the topic is discussed in a way the child understand. This would obviously be different for each child, but each child's teacher and sna would be best equipped to identify the method of teaching needed.	1/23/2019 3:33 PM
102	cannot comment	1/23/2019 3:24 PM
103	A lot of teachers in the senior classes don't feel comfortable teaching RSE to their class, and I get why. External speakers and facilitators should be brought in to do this.	1/23/2019 3:02 PM
104	Yes - the curriculum needs to be adapted for children with intellectual disabilities. This is very very important. In addition these kids may be more vulnerable.	1/23/2019 2:32 PM
105	The teacher needs to know that the child understands what is being said child is not overwhelmeded.	1/23/2019 2:27 PM
106	Parents should be inform so they can talk to their own kids in the following days	1/23/2019 2:18 PM
107	Not qualified to say	1/23/2019 1:03 PM
108	I believe the classroom teacher who child has an ongoing relationship with is best placed to address these topics in the classroom, provided all necessary training and skill sets are provided to teacher to do so!	1/23/2019 12:50 PM
109	Religious beliefs should not be affecting information been given	1/23/2019 12:41 PM
110	Talk to parents and equip them to provide what they think is appropriate to their child or what information they are happy that the teacher provides.	1/23/2019 12:34 PM
111	They should no do it unless given specific permission by parents.	1/23/2019 12:29 PM
112	Full facts and information on options regardless of schools ethos	1/23/2019 12:17 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

113	Don't know	1/23/2019 12:08 PM
114	Always have the parent speak to the child first so the child has an idea of what to expect.	1/23/2019 12:05 PM
115	Consult their parents	1/23/2019 12:04 PM
116	Teacher needs to be highly informed and aware of the different perceptions and understandings of children	1/23/2019 11:59 AM
117	It is essential that the LGBTQIA community be represented and consulted.	1/23/2019 11:49 AM
118	The whole approach and at what level must be revised for that child. The parents MUST be part of the teaching of a special needs child.	1/23/2019 11:40 AM
119	All information must be appropriate to the listener and at a pace that does not overwhelm.	1/23/2019 11:37 AM
120	My son in 3rd class in a mainstream school has a chromosome syndrome and is not at the same maturity level as his peers but is on par academically. I independently found out the content for the 3rd & 4th class programme and I don't feel that the content (especially stories about sexual assault/ inappropriate touching which go in to too much detail) is something I want my son exposed to at this age. He has extreme anxiety & worries about what others are going through & I feel this could be a major issue for him & is as a family. We do not have the psychological supports available to us to deal with the emotional consequences from some of the material. I would prefer something like the 'My underpants rule' by Kate & Rod Power to be taught to the children from a young age. I believe the parents can go in to more detail in a way that is appropriate to their child.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
121	Silverberg also has a book on RSE and disabilities.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
122	I assume that all the above is not done merely from a heterosexual perspective, that all preferences are treated equally.	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
123	I think the concept of sexual consent and manners needs to be absorbed from an early age.	1/23/2019 11:14 AM
124	I'd like to know more about the RSE in order to respond more effectively.	1/23/2019 11:12 AM
125	Can't comment.	1/23/2019 11:08 AM
126	people with special educational needs are the most vulnerable to sexual assault and the most lightly to have outside influence dictate/prevent their personal choices, so yes, this should include parents/guardians of those children.	1/23/2019 11:05 AM
127	If the stats for 1 in 4 are correct - that is, 1 in 4 children suffer sexual abuse - then every class room will have children who have had traumatic experiences - how will that be managed? How will teachers know how to support this and how to still have positive healthy sense of body/contact/touch (rather than fear driven) in this context?	1/23/2019 10:54 AM
128	should be age appropriate	1/23/2019 10:53 AM
129	Explain things different ways dvds, drawings songs so they can remember better and simply with a little information at a time dont rush it	1/23/2019 10:51 AM
130	This subject should simply not be thought to primary school children.	1/23/2019 10:41 AM
131	Separation of rse from religion Parental information	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
132	Perhaps tailored role playing may benefit some. SNA to receive training on how to adjust content to individuals.	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
133	consultation with parents as to what the child is capable of processing and ready for.	1/23/2019 10:37 AM
134	It's a lot for a child to take on board perhaps doing it in segments and allowing the children to discuss it would help to make it easier.	1/23/2019 10:34 AM
135	Differing Maturity levels of children in the same class room	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
136	I do not have close relationships with sen children so do not want to speculate their needs	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
137	Think this is a question to ask teachers they're the ones who are in the classroom and no the children	1/23/2019 10:32 AM
138	That is a tough question as each child with a special need has different level of understanding and they have the right to be informed as much as every child if not more so because of possible vulnerability. But it should be managed in line with the personal needs.	1/23/2019 10:16 AM
139	with special ed i belive children should be taught 121 on a need to know question basis..	1/23/2019 10:12 AM
140	Check each child and make sure they are able to deal with it.	1/23/2019 10:08 AM
141	Think the current programme is good	1/23/2019 10:01 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

142	Very important to give special attention to students with additional needs, e.g. they may have more vulnerability to abuse	1/23/2019 9:59 AM
143	No lore so than in all other aspects of communication	1/23/2019 9:55 AM
144	Be mindful of there back ground and have maybe parents /guarding /sna present at the talk.	1/23/2019 9:53 AM
145	As above, I feel topics need to be considered on a class but also on an individual level and this is why parents input is important each parent will know their own childs progress and ability to understand what is being discussed.	1/23/2019 9:50 AM
146	Mabey parents with special needs children should have a say in how much their child needs to know.I still feel that they would need some education in this area.	1/23/2019 9:46 AM
147	no	1/23/2019 9:26 AM
148	Alternate ways to communicate.	1/23/2019 8:42 AM
149	I'm sure they take into consideration that each child is very different and at different levels of emotional and physical maturity.	1/23/2019 7:55 AM
150	N/A	1/23/2019 7:46 AM
151	Yes it should be taught with all sexes present to hear all the information not just about their own. As believe it or not the boys could have daughters one day and the girls could have sons.	1/23/2019 12:59 AM
152	All of the children in our 5th class have been discussing sex and body changes amongst themselves since 4th class. Their knowledge is pretty advanced but they are not covering sex until 6th class.	1/22/2019 11:11 PM
153	Children with SEN need specially adapted resource materials.	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
154	Psicologists and specialists should be who decided that question, there are many different special educational needs an so different ways of teaching it should be taken in count.	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
155	Teach kids facts - keep religion out of it	1/22/2019 10:37 PM
156	Keep it simple and not too complicated No grey areas . Black and white facts	1/22/2019 10:29 PM
157	Needs assessment to identify what educational or emotional issues may be required to ensure an effective programme	1/22/2019 10:28 PM
158	No	1/22/2019 10:23 PM
159	Special facilitator	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
160	More input from Parents	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
161	Dangers of viewing porn online and how it distorts reality. Mobile phone issues - do not allow other children to take photos of you on mobile devices as they they lose Control of their image/self. Dangers of online access damaging confidence.	1/22/2019 9:22 PM
162	Emerging Gender Issues Differentiation of information delivery - visual supports. Not assuming that students with SEN may not require the full programme - content should be differentiated and perhaps delivered over different sessions. Will require revisiting.	1/22/2019 9:21 PM
163	Everything taught should be age appropriate to Inform & educate.. Some kids will not be streetwise.	1/22/2019 8:59 PM
164	No experiance on this..	1/22/2019 8:54 PM
165	The individuals learning requirements	1/22/2019 8:50 PM
166	Emotional understanding and physical changes aren't always in tandem for children with special educational needs. A more specific plan may be needed to address changes as they occur or in the run up to it.	1/22/2019 8:38 PM
167	Their developmental age	1/22/2019 8:37 PM
168	One to one or smaller group may need to be considered to adapt to individual needs	1/22/2019 8:26 PM
169	SEN students are more vulnerable, parent engagement is key here. Parents to be familiarised with what the child covers in RSE.	1/22/2019 8:24 PM
170	Revised Stay Safe does not have SEN specific programme anymore. This was very useful.	1/22/2019 8:16 PM
171	I think it could be dangerous to bring in external people to teach RSE.	1/22/2019 8:03 PM
172	All children have a right to better informed and I believe a curriculum for children with special needs should also be developed so that no child is left out. Children first!	1/22/2019 8:02 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

173	That not all 'special needs' children are the same. They have different needs, abilities and levels of understanding. It should not be a 'one size fits all' approach. On that basis, it should maybe be done on a one to one, including parental input.	1/22/2019 8:01 PM
174	Absolutely under no circumstance are any religious bodies to be involved in these courses.	1/22/2019 8:00 PM
175	Reinforce helpline numbers or people they could ask for help. Teachers nurses neighbours.	1/22/2019 7:48 PM
176	All lessons should be adapted to specific learning needs, no child should be omitted from this basic lifeskills education anymire then they would be from English, maths etc, there are plenty of educational resources available for special educational needs in this area	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
177	Same principles but delivered in age appropriate way	1/22/2019 7:35 PM
178	NCCA should take into consideration the child's age and the content being taught to the child as i feel too much information too young could be overwhelming.	1/22/2019 7:34 PM
179	Children with different needs may be more vulnerable to abuse/coercion/expoitation/bullying than their peers, they may require more time/support than their peers on these topics, just as they may with other subjects.	1/22/2019 7:33 PM
180	Easy to read and picture format. Teach about private parts and consent.	1/22/2019 7:29 PM
181	The influence of religious patrons should be removed.	1/22/2019 7:29 PM
182	To teach it appropriate to understanding and to have parents involved	1/22/2019 7:15 PM
183	Schools need to communicate with parents	1/22/2019 7:10 PM
184	I don't think so as if they are in a mainstream school the content should be the same for them	1/22/2019 7:07 PM
185	Where possible that the child can be brought out with a smaller group so that they fully comprehend the topic discussed	1/22/2019 7:04 PM
186	Parents shld have the option to withdraw their children from classes with content they deem inappropriate.	1/22/2019 6:50 PM
187	There needs to be consideration for varying age groups and varying knowledge and or understanding of sexuality and relationships along with the various family situations etc so class group knowledge would be where the teacher or principal has child specific information	1/22/2019 6:43 PM
188	Issues of gender identity and sexual orientation should be left to parents and families to discuss with the pupils	1/22/2019 6:32 PM
189	Religious ethos of schools should not influence the curriculum. Denominational organizations like Accord should not be delivering this subject. They have a strong catholic bias (teach abstinence before marriage, make no reference to same sex relationships etc). If we want a more tolerant society all schools should teach an open minded accepting and real world approach.	1/22/2019 6:29 PM
190	Please encourage all teachers to teach all aspects of the curriculum but by the same token please trust that teachers do an excellent job with this topic.	1/22/2019 6:24 PM
191	This curriculum needs to be individualized when dealing with children of special needs	1/22/2019 6:24 PM
192	Remember that research shows children with moderate to severe disabilities are 3 to 4 times more likely to suffer abuse. I do not know how current programme is delivered so cannot comment further but simply that good emphasis should be on sexual consent and staying safe.	1/22/2019 5:52 PM
193	Appropriate adaptation for the special needs involved, so as to ensure comprehension. Possibly giving a class where the facility to ask questions without peer pressure.	1/22/2019 5:21 PM
194	That's up to the professional's and research based discussions to decide what appropriate.	1/22/2019 5:14 PM
195	Communication with parents and trying to get all parents to support the teaching at home	1/22/2019 4:56 PM
196	To teach or talk about them in an appropriate way for them. ASD kids are very literal and can get scared depending how you talk about them.	1/22/2019 4:56 PM
197	All sexual or gender preferences. Non binary, bi-sexuality, homosexuality, same sex marriage (that we fought for in such a small country). And how any or all.of it is OK regardless of the Catholic teachings.	1/22/2019 4:55 PM
198	N/a	1/22/2019 4:25 PM
199	All parents should be consulted at a minimum of 6 weeks prior to any and all RSE talks	1/22/2019 4:19 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

200	I think a conversation with parents of the child with Special Educational needs in advance of the programme being thought would be beneficial and also the programme may need to be tailored to the needs of the individual child. I think that specialist trained facilitators would be a good idea.	1/22/2019 4:08 PM
201	consultaion with parents and relevant agencies to tailor the programme appropriately. involving parents/carers in the lessons as messages can be misinterpreted etc.	1/22/2019 4:04 PM
202	No	1/22/2019 3:35 PM
203	For special needs students, information should always be related to emotional maturity and not just age based.	1/22/2019 1:26 PM
204	Yes of course, it should be appropriate for its audience, so will likely need to be tailored appropriately, NEPS should help with this	1/22/2019 1:11 PM
205	The age group a 9 year olds brain is totally different to a 12 year old so should be age appropriate.	1/22/2019 1:05 PM
206	Junior Infants should be more aware and not the senior classes	1/22/2019 12:54 PM
207	Yes, again consent, boundaries, how you treat people and vice versa ... ie when to speak to adults that someone tried to touch you, for instance, as I think children with special needs are even more vulnerable in this area.	1/22/2019 12:21 PM
208	.	1/22/2019 11:31 AM
209	Children with Special Needs can be very vulnerable and need RSE more than anyone, but it must be accessible to them, so that they can understand what's important.	1/22/2019 10:28 AM
210	Not all children with special needs can cope with the concepts or deal with heading about the terminology being used particularly by non parental role models so consultations with parents and possible co-teaching if content should be considered	1/22/2019 8:08 AM
211	Teachers should have very clear guidelines and standards about what they teach - should not be influenced by school's ethos etc. In Finland at age 12 we had a game that older trained pupils came into the class to do with us that in a fun way raised all the issues and gave a good level of information and the same standard for all children- a version of something like that??	1/22/2019 8:06 AM
212	Somehow talk about the vulnerability of those with a diagnosis of autism etc	1/22/2019 6:32 AM
213	To discuss with parents what is age appropriate for each child's understanding	1/21/2019 11:27 PM
214	Yes, as I mentioned above, the topic of consent needs it's own given time and maybe an age appropriate tweaked version of the tea video discription, used by DCU could be investigated.	1/21/2019 11:24 PM
215	It is important that children with special needs receive similar content. Research indicates they are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.	1/21/2019 9:27 PM
216	I think that the parents, teachers and SNAs of children with special educational needs would be best placed to determine how much of the curriculum is appropriate for each child.	1/21/2019 9:15 PM
217	I don't think children learn enough about children with special needs and how important relationships are in their lives.	1/21/2019 9:10 PM
218	Level of understanding.	1/21/2019 9:02 PM
219	.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
220	No	1/21/2019 8:45 PM
221	Despite issues of understanding and receptive language difficulties, children with special needs need RSE and should not be left out, once their parents are fully aware fo the content.	1/21/2019 7:07 PM
222	In the case of children with autism - they take most of the things VERY literal. So whichever way it's being taught this has to be taken into consideration.	1/21/2019 5:44 PM
223	How children will behave in the yard etc after the talk from teacher	1/21/2019 4:44 PM
224	Let parents take the lead	1/21/2019 3:57 PM
225	more parent engagement	1/21/2019 3:53 PM
226	I don't k ow	1/21/2019 3:31 PM
227	I think it would help for parents to be given copies of what will be covered in advance so they are 100 percent aware of what's covered. Also prior discussion with teacher/principal so necessary supports can be put in place prior to the talks taking place.	1/21/2019 3:01 PM
228	The language used to ensure that it doesn't instill fear	1/21/2019 2:45 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

229	Make their peers aware of their vulnerability to allow them be supported by the peers	1/21/2019 2:09 PM
230	I	1/21/2019 2:02 PM
231	parents of children with sen know their child best consult with them and see what is suitable for their child to learn and know. How to make it more appropriate for them to understand. Perhaps a survey or further research can be done to help this area	1/21/2019 1:57 PM
232	Parents of children with special needs should be consulted about all the subjects to be covered in case they feel it might upset their child	1/21/2019 1:46 PM
233	Always inform the parents and ensure they are in agreement on a lesson by lesson basis.	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
234	The course should be structured in such a way that individual children's maturity and understanding can be considered in a classroom setting.	1/21/2019 1:38 PM
235	Not sure	1/21/2019 1:37 PM
236	I think it is important that this topic is taught in a way that allows a non-judgmental allowance of people having different views.	1/21/2019 1:31 PM
237	Not all children are ready at the same time, it should be a parents choice if a child sits this class or not.	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
238	No	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
239	As a parent of a child with ASD I feel he needs one to one or small group tuition on an ongoing basis for this topic to sink in.	1/21/2019 1:06 PM
240	I think that the person who delivers this content needs to be fully trained / comfortable in delivering the programme and dealing with children's queries and getting conversations going.	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
241	The content of RSE should not be simplistically rooted in contemporary/popular ideological biases. It should avoid being blinded by the notion of 'compassion' to promote the idea that if consent is obtained, all relationships/sexual practices are permissible and without consequences. Rather, RSE should acknowledge evolutionary biology, psychology, and sociology in the establishment of differences between men and women, along with how this complementary-based system has great value and importance in guiding and shaping healthy social, familial and personal relationships. The teaching of RSE should also strongly reflect the ethos and faith tradition of the school, which is congruent with the parent's decision to send their children to that institution.	1/21/2019 12:18 PM
242	The special needs kids may not be mentally ready/prepared for the content when the typical kids are ready	1/21/2019 12:13 PM
243	.Language. Pace of lesson. Emotional age V chronological age	1/21/2019 12:11 PM
244	Be aware that some houses don't discuss topics at all	1/21/2019 10:05 AM
245	How to deal with puberty.	1/21/2019 8:54 AM
246	Yes. Need to be understandable and appropriate for levels of ability.	1/21/2019 8:06 AM
247	NCCA should leave these people alone, to let them discover the world around them with their own eye. Not to put 'wrong glasses' on them!	1/21/2019 2:48 AM
248	I'm sure that the information should be tailored to the needs of special needs children	1/19/2019 10:04 PM
249	No different from mainstream children - ensure the education given is appropriate to their level of understanding.	1/19/2019 8:56 PM
250	Yes so much I don't know where to even start , the categorization of children with special needs as one group of individuals with a very broad range of special needs is a huge problem with trying to teach RSE, the levels of comprehension and receptive language are so varied and complex , that it's impossible to write an all encompassing RSE curriculum for children with special needs . The core values and fundamentals need to be established and then prioritized before teaching can begin then each programme needs to be individual to the learner to gain maximum exposure and learning opportunity, and give the child the best chance of understanding the curriculum .	1/19/2019 8:50 PM
251	That they are reflected in the literature and video content. There should be a separate module for teaching children with SEN in a user friendly language and manner	1/19/2019 6:59 PM
252	We should be equipping kids for the world that they are growing up in so it should not be just a biological, factual discussion, but one that is much more nuanced and practical	1/19/2019 6:12 PM
253	As a parent of a child with asbergers, it would have really helped my son if his classmates were helped to understand what it means to be on the spectrum. His problems at school often come down to a lack of understanding.	1/19/2019 3:09 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

254	Absolutely- critical that materials and resources are made available to teach the same messages in a way that ensures they are fully understood by the child. Regardless of special need. Consent messages so so important here.	1/19/2019 1:57 PM
255	The importance of consent and appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.	1/19/2019 11:28 AM
256	Its my opinion that self-esteem/self-love and own image should all be dealt with too in conjunction to these teachings	1/19/2019 8:22 AM
257	The religious ethos of the school	1/18/2019 10:23 PM
258	Is the lesson appropriate to the age and maturity and intellectual ability of the child. Stay Safe shpuld have a specific handbook for teachers with extra tips, resources etc for these more vulnerable children.	1/18/2019 8:37 PM
259	Not qualified to comment on this but I do think that by consulting with experts in this area, it definitely needs to be addressed	1/18/2019 7:57 PM
260	Special needs children may need extra tuition so that they are equipped as well as others	1/18/2019 6:55 PM
261	Adoption does not seem to ever be mentioned as an option for crisis pregnancy. It is very important in light of the recent referendum that ALL options be discussed with our young people not just abortion. All involved in sexual education must keep in mind that the current emphasis on abortion over other choices in relation to fatal fetal abnormalities and crisis pregnancies can be very difficult for children who have additional needs or who have siblings with additional needs.	1/18/2019 6:26 PM
262	Again it would have to be adapted to their needs and level of intellectual understanding. With children with special needs it may be advisable to discuss with parents or inform all patents of tge curriculum content and they can withdraw their children if they wish	1/18/2019 5:06 PM
263	I wouldn't have enough knowledge on teaching methods for special needs but the teachers need to be highly trained.	1/18/2019 3:52 PM
264	background and different cultures and beliefs. take time to explain and be patient as these students are more likely and easily persuaded.	1/18/2019 2:46 PM
265	LGBT, a confusing time for gay children in primary school. Education on the subject & their rights should be added to the curriculum, & the normalising of gay relations & gay youths be encouraged.	1/18/2019 2:43 PM
266	Age appropriate learning, and Sen children might have learning delays so learning in respect of their true ability	1/18/2019 2:02 PM
267	Keep language simple. Explain clearly without colloquialisms or jargon. Use the correct names for body parts. Provide a leaflet or visual aid more than a chat as some kids wont take in the main points in auditory instruction. Slow down the pace of the teaching session and understand that kids with Autism, ADD, ADHD or sensory needs may need more time to process each section before moving onto another topic.	1/18/2019 1:39 PM
268	The content and delivery of it should promote equality and respect for all.	1/18/2019 1:32 PM
269	Children shouldn't be sexualised too early and innocent and pure childhood should be respected.	1/18/2019 1:30 PM
270	NA	1/18/2019 12:58 PM
271	The current Accord teaching is totally inappropriate as being taught in my childrens' school currently.	1/18/2019 12:55 PM
272	I think the curriculum should be the same, but for there to be built-in individual education plan involving parents and teachers.	1/18/2019 12:33 PM
273	The juniors are far too young,it should be senior classes only	1/18/2019 11:35 AM
274	Absolutely, I think all RSE classes should be run by independent specialised educators, who can recognise and adapt to childrens needs.	1/18/2019 10:20 AM
275	Trying to avoid the influence of groups attempting to use school education to inculcate values undesired by parents / families, in an effort to achieve accelerated societal change.	1/18/2019 8:59 AM
276	Gender and sexuality are LGBTQ	1/18/2019 8:03 AM
277	I think if external facilitator is used there is a risk that day to day real time opportunities to discuss issues as they arise will be missed making it seem like an abstract topic when it is something we have to make sure our kids deal with everyday as a parent it is through our responses to daily events that these issues are explored.	1/18/2019 7:41 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

278	Ensure parents have a copy of the teaching to avoid any gaps/ambiguity between what they learn in school vs home	1/18/2019 12:14 AM
279	Taught by Non catholic organisations	1/18/2019 12:12 AM
280	Understanding of concepts Confusion around wording	1/17/2019 11:51 PM
281	Parents should not be able to opt out. It is either on the curriculum or not.	1/17/2019 11:37 PM
282	I think that there could be a section about LGBT groups and how everyone is different and that's ok too.	1/17/2019 11:35 PM
283	Continual consultation with parents	1/17/2019 10:49 PM
284	Possible dangers of internet and social media marketing safety	1/17/2019 10:16 PM
285	I don't know	1/17/2019 10:03 PM
286	Not all teachers would be suitable to teach these topics, I think most of these topics are extremely sensitive so a qualified external person would be better & maybe a social worker on site in case a child got upset or needed to talk to someone	1/17/2019 9:41 PM
287	Rape crisis counsellors should be able to come in and speak with the children over the age of 11 years. Different cultures and different values of the cultures that are worldwide. Every country has their own beliefs and what we think in Ireland is not believed in other cultures.	1/17/2019 9:04 PM
288	Family consultation and reinforcement is important	1/17/2019 8:52 PM
289	Specialised teachers	1/17/2019 8:25 PM
290	Training the teachers to be able to teach these topics which can be somewhat emotive.	1/17/2019 8:04 PM
291	They may need additional support / developmental appropriate material and perhaps teaching / support for parents as to how to best support their child (I am a parent of children with SENs)	1/17/2019 7:51 PM
292	Absolutely. Each child is different, some perhaps emotionally scarred by incidents unknown to schools. Treading carefully and the right amount of detail per subject and duty of care to having an open door policy with someone in authority to whom they can confide.	1/17/2019 7:15 PM
293	Delivered by someone with experience in Special Education. An option for parents to be part of the classes.	1/17/2019 6:48 PM
294	Normalise views of our bodies and sexual needs and healthy relationships	1/17/2019 6:19 PM
295	- Age-appropriate contents	1/17/2019 4:27 PM
296	If you send your child to one of the few secular schools available you do not expect the RSE curriculum to be delivered by a Catholic Conservative group like Accord. It is in my view completely dissonant with the ethos of an Educate Together School. Further if parents have problems with the choice of provider their children should not be made the scapegoat by insisting they do not attend on the RSE days.	1/17/2019 4:17 PM
297	Children are children and should be allowed to remain children. They will be grown up soon enough. In this day and age kids need to be safe, but they also need to be happy. I don't want my children stressed out or having nightmares due to the content they are shown	1/17/2019 3:53 PM
298	Yes, parents consent, differentiation of content etc	1/17/2019 3:24 PM
299	That special classes have appropriate resources to teach RSE to children with SEN, that in some cases an external facilitator with indepth knowledge and experience into RSE for people with SEN could be available. Given that children and adults with SEN are more likely to suffer from abuse and be more vulnerable it is really important that the most amount of RSE work is being done in school for them.	1/17/2019 3:21 PM
300	Appropriate resources for SEN children e.g. story boards, picture based resources, better online resources to help explain and discuss RSE issues.	1/17/2019 2:44 PM
301	The content of the course should be tailored to be absolutely child specific in this case.	1/17/2019 2:26 PM
302	Evidence informed age appropriate material Appropriately trained facilitator/teacher in order that a meaningful discussion with children can occur. Given the sensitivity of some of the topics some children may not feel comfortable with their own class teacher. RSE should be taught/facilitated factually and not under the doctrine of any religious/faith formation	1/17/2019 1:59 PM
303	More information to parents about the content of the Stay Safe programme. I attended my 1st information evening recently on this- I had a daughter who had gone through the entire primary system and had never been invited to one. My second daughter is in 6th Class and again no meeting until recently. I can use the information gleaned to be more aware of content with my youngest child now. I am heavily involved with the School so i would have know if it had been available before.	1/17/2019 1:44 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

304	No the should also be thought everything	1/17/2019 1:19 PM
305	Our girl has special educaiton needs. I believe she should have access to RSE as other children, however, their level of understanding should be taken into consideration. Perhaps using small group with single sex present to explain the concepts and what is and what is not not appropriate. We were shocked last year when our girl (aged 8) kissed a boy whom she didn't know in a playground following RSE classes in school. Her explanation was she wanted to be liked. When RSE is taught, great emphasis must be placed that children with additional needs have fully understood the content and are absolutely aware of appropriatness of behaviour.	1/17/2019 1:10 PM
306	With a child with special needs i feel it sud b done more jn a social story	1/17/2019 1:04 PM
307	N/a	1/17/2019 1:03 PM
308	Age appropriate, and appropriate to their level of understanding	1/17/2019 12:51 PM
309	Really! Why do organisations feel the need to constantly butt into every aspect of our lives!	1/17/2019 12:38 PM
310	The anxiety that is caused to children thinking the have to decide on their sexuality identity and that the have to always be "politically correct". They are only learning how to fit into the world so they don't need to feel ashamed if they get things wrong every now and then.	1/17/2019 12:29 PM
311	Keep the religious groups a million miles away from it!	1/17/2019 12:19 PM
312	Do not push them uder pressure!!j!!!!!!!	1/17/2019 11:47 AM
313	It should be delivered by the class teacher as another subject so as not to differentiate it from others. It should never follow any religious beliefs	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
314	Contraception.	1/17/2019 11:39 AM
315	I am not qualified to comment on this as my children do not have Special Educational Needs and therefore I would not be aware of special considerations in this regard.	1/17/2019 11:38 AM
316	To be mindful that some children might already be victims of abuse and to make them aware of the supports available and how to access them.	1/17/2019 10:51 AM
317	Relarionship with the informatiom givwr is important. Existing trust base is Important	1/17/2019 10:49 AM
318	Depending on the special needs, they may need to adapt the presentation eg more graphics than words as some children understand a story by video easier than someone standing in front of them reading a script.	1/17/2019 10:26 AM
319	Yes ask a special needs educator for advice	1/17/2019 10:24 AM
320	It must be delivered externally otherwise you can loose teachers . It can be delivered by older teachers whom would not be up to date with the enormous changes that are afoot in Ireland of today	1/17/2019 10:07 AM
321	Picture books and visual aids	1/17/2019 9:17 AM
322	supporting teachers to do it and making sure it is being done	1/17/2019 9:17 AM
323	Differentiated program possibly involving parents and SNAs in a structured way	1/17/2019 9:14 AM
324	Yes. I'm not sure what, but special care should be taken in these situations to ensure that the content is understood. A big concern is that these kids may be more at risk from abuse, even during thier adulthood so thier need for full awareness is almost more important.	1/17/2019 8:51 AM
325	I think one training night a year for parents on how to approach this subject with their children	1/17/2019 8:46 AM
326	I think we need to consider the considerations of different religions, I also think we need to normalize different body shapes, big, small, droopy, older,	1/17/2019 8:42 AM
327	I work with special needs children and from past experience it is very important not to overload them with too much information at once	1/17/2019 7:24 AM
328	The individual circumstances of students in the class. How the children react to what they've heard and discuss among themselves afterwards.	1/17/2019 7:16 AM
329	The age of the children should be considered and the content of the lesson should be age appropriate.	1/17/2019 6:40 AM
330	For children to not be afraid that school will take every thing they say to tulsa. To not be afraid to be open and honest with no judgements	1/17/2019 2:49 AM
331	I have no experience to comment here, sorry.	1/16/2019 11:27 PM
332	Probably applicable to all, how to respect yourself and recognise if you are not being treated with respect	1/16/2019 10:45 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

333	Parents should be consulted in advance and their input taken on board.	1/16/2019 10:23 PM
334	Bodily integrity of themselves and others - as some special education needs may also mean they are vulnerable. This has been true in the past.	1/16/2019 10:18 PM
335	Be spoken to about same on a one to one basis	1/16/2019 10:16 PM
336	This is not an area I know very well. It often needs to be Bespoke, adapted to the individual, always mindful of the child's abilities.	1/16/2019 9:55 PM
337	They should be taught so as to know what's right and wrong and to know when to speak up if something happens. It should be the same for all kids.	1/16/2019 9:40 PM
338	Yes mental health	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
339	Individual Capacity ability appropriate level of information should be provided Consultation with parents should be undertaken in respect of children with additional educational needs - possibly through the IEP process	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
340	Social stories. Books & resource materials to support parents when discussing with their children	1/16/2019 9:30 PM
341	Perhaps some students with more challenging educational needs should be taught separately from others as they may not understand the language/ concepts being taught.	1/16/2019 9:19 PM
342	what child already knows, how mature they are for age	1/16/2019 9:04 PM
343	Some way of conveying all that information so that they can understand it as they could be more vulnerable to abuse.	1/16/2019 8:59 PM
344	The same as everyone else.	1/16/2019 8:54 PM
345	Depends on the type of disability ... Special needs is a wide range of people with different levels of comprehension and communication skills. The question you asked is somewhere between vague leaning towards ignorant	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
346	Depending on the specific SENs, I think SNAs, I individual parents and teachers would be in the best position to tell if something needs to be highlighted in particular or perhaps left out...	1/16/2019 8:41 PM
347	I think topics regarding sexuality such as gay bi trans etc is too complex for primary school children and would be more appropriate for secondary school teenagers.	1/16/2019 8:14 PM
348	The Family religion	1/16/2019 8:02 PM
349	Definitely to speak to parents and understanding the child educational learning style to make it beneficial for them to learn	1/16/2019 7:59 PM
350	Mandated consultation with parents as part of the curriculum so parent knows what and when child is learning and can elaborate on this at home	1/16/2019 7:39 PM
351	who is teaching these things and what their agenda is. Many people in this field can have an extremely unbalanced view of the world and some of the decisions being made are very unhealthy for our future society.	1/16/2019 7:36 PM
352	Take into account that students may have been abused and may get upset	1/16/2019 7:31 PM
353	They should receive the same information adapted to their learning needs all children are equal and should have the same access to information.	1/16/2019 7:28 PM
354	schools and parents will need to work closely together to support children's learning. Individual needs will have to be taken into account in terms of ability to understand and access the curriculum	1/16/2019 7:23 PM
355	Consult with smdianility organisations as there are lots of available materials e. Modules in cygnet for children with autism, parents plus for teens.	1/16/2019 7:09 PM
356	Higher risk at times so more stay safe input	1/16/2019 6:54 PM
357	It needs to be covered by all. I work with adults with varying disabilities and teach them a little Gaeilge - "tá mé go breá". And some get all giggly about the last word thinking of bra in English. Similarly when anyone mentions kissing or girl/boy friends. Can't watch lovey dovey bits in G films.	1/16/2019 6:48 PM
358	Need to take into account possible developmental delay, ? Need to be taught in a different group.	1/16/2019 6:47 PM
359	They should take other pupils religions/beliefs in considerations while teaching those topics to respect their thought about this ...!	1/16/2019 6:34 PM
360	Possibly need to include special need parents before any briefing	1/16/2019 6:14 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

361	Need for visuals, practical class, video, clear simplified explanation and conversation to ensure content is understood	1/16/2019 6:11 PM
362	Diffident religious beliefs	1/16/2019 5:57 PM
363	Need to take into account possible developmental delay, ? Need to be taught in a different group.	1/16/2019 5:53 PM
364	Yes children with autism can take things literally and not fully understand unless VERY CLEAR and easy to understand language is used. They may be worried if they don't understand so care needs to be taken in the delivery of this information	1/16/2019 5:23 PM
365	Different religions have different values and there should be an awareness and tolerance of differing views	1/16/2019 5:21 PM
366	The parents and teachers should take into consideration the child's readiness to process such information.	1/16/2019 5:04 PM
367	Smaller group sizes or one to one	1/16/2019 4:58 PM
368	'Respect' should be the biggest word children are taught in school. - Respect for oneself, for each other, feelings, sexuality, special needs and so on.	1/16/2019 4:56 PM
369	The child's ability to grasp and process the topics	1/16/2019 4:53 PM
370	I strongly believe that there should be an age appropriate talk regarding all these topics every school year! Consent especially should be taught from 1st class on. My daughter in 5th class seems nervous regarding this talk coming up and I believe it was held from an expert every year in every class it would take the strong emphasis down a notch!!!	1/16/2019 4:51 PM
371	The material should be age appropriate and where possible use pictures	1/16/2019 4:41 PM
372	Consider the special needs when prepared to teach these children.	1/16/2019 4:39 PM
373	Working in this area, it's a hugely neglected area, and given the increased likelihood of sexual abuse in this population, and likelihood that they will have their personhood compromised more frequently (e.g. if requiring changing or intimate care), there is also needs to be as much of an emphasis on teaching all school staff ways to do this safely (e.g. not talking over children, dehumanising the process, asking permission before approaching even if the child is non-verbal, etc.). This is a huge gap in the current RSE in special schools.	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
374	These should be taught by teachers who have completed a course specifically tailored towards teaching RSE to children with special educational needs. Primarily to ensure the content is presented to them at a level they can understand rather than at the whole class level	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
375	Age appropriate	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
376	Yes not enough coverage of sTD's and sexual health for older kids	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
377	Right person with appropriate training to teach. And adjust the content to the different ages within Primary school	1/16/2019 4:23 PM
378	A very vulnerable group with a wide range of needs. Specialized training or facilitators should be available to parents of you g people with disabilities or special needs. Sexuality a huge part of everybody's own identity and they also deserve appropriate information to understand their own thoughts, feeling etc as well as learning how to stay safe.	1/16/2019 4:11 PM
379	Kids that come from same sex relationships	1/16/2019 4:09 PM
380	close co-operation with parents. maybe include parents in the class so they can see what is being taught and how. make it a family event	1/16/2019 4:08 PM
381	Don't know much about it.	1/16/2019 4:05 PM
382	Please consult with parents	1/16/2019 3:59 PM
383	Many / most schools are hang strung by the Catholic Church and it's intolerance. The Catholic Church shouldn't have a veto on curriculum.	1/16/2019 3:58 PM
384	Yes. That unfortunately not all children have parents/guardians who can or will teach them RSE so it is vitally important that schools take on this role.	1/16/2019 3:49 PM
385	Gender identity	1/16/2019 3:46 PM
386	Age	1/16/2019 3:36 PM
387	I strongly believe that children at early stage on their life should not be expose at all to talks about sexual relations	1/16/2019 3:33 PM
388	As with all children, age and ability appropriate info.	1/16/2019 3:31 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

389	Religious beliefs should be removed from this area. Good morality and kindness can be taught in a humanistic scientific approach with no shame. Intimacy and enjoyment are important to learn too, historically sex education has focused on safety and fear. Understanding that in a trusted, caring relationship age appropriate intimacy is good is important to learn early. Understanding of consent is hugely important too and I feel can't be fully understood without understanding that both parties in an intimate relationship can and should be enjoying themselves.	1/16/2019 3:22 PM
390	I think external specialised trainers are needed to ensure consistent and appropriate teaching.	1/16/2019 3:21 PM
391	Yes, on the individual basis and perhaps with the use of story boards (if needed) or whatever method needed for the particular disability.	1/16/2019 3:13 PM
392	Train staff effectively	1/16/2019 3:10 PM
393	Yes they also should learn sexual education	1/16/2019 3:10 PM
394	That proper training is provided to the teacher who gives a RSE course.	1/16/2019 2:58 PM
395	Religion	1/16/2019 2:47 PM
396	Keeping parents informed	1/16/2019 2:46 PM
397	Content appropriate per child. May need individual assessments as needs are so varied.	1/16/2019 2:41 PM
398	LGBTI issues	1/16/2019 2:40 PM
399	I am neither qualified nor experienced to answer this.	1/16/2019 2:31 PM
400	RSE should not be taught by religious groups either directly or indirectly	1/16/2019 2:23 PM
401	Educating parents on the best ways to talk about this topic and age appropriate info	1/16/2019 2:23 PM
402	Be age appropriate and sensitive to the individual... Consult with parents individually.	1/16/2019 2:22 PM
403	1. RSE should be treated like every other subject and every effort should be made to normalise it as much as possible. The stigma of naming body parts should be removed at an early age. 2. Dealing with questions outside the curriculum.	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
404	to continue to monitor, likely this is an ongoing process, children seem to be more advanced / knowledgeable these days that they were in our days with online access / social media so the age parameters could change year by year.	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
405	Train teachers realise that some learn visually and need extra time to process	1/16/2019 1:59 PM
406	This would have to be discussed with their parents. Each child is different!	1/16/2019 1:57 PM
407	The use of social stories	1/16/2019 1:55 PM
408	Just that it needs to be delivered in an appropriate manner to the special needs in question.	1/16/2019 1:40 PM
409	Age appropriate	1/16/2019 1:32 PM
410	These kids can often be the most vulnerable so would need extra supports in terms of understanding and/or reporting	1/16/2019 1:15 PM
411	Remove religious ideology from the programme and teach facts backed up by evidence.	1/16/2019 1:14 PM
412	Currently there seems to be little emphasis on the fact that while this knowledge equips the child, the best use of teenage is career building and best time to explore and indulge in relationships is when financially independent. There is a time in life for everything and knowledge should not get equated to opportunity or ability which i feel is happening	1/16/2019 1:11 PM
413	To make sure that they can do courses regarding the same material that the schools have to allow parents to be on the same page as well as the teachers so there is no confusion for the said child	1/16/2019 1:10 PM
414	They should hear the same things.	1/16/2019 1:05 PM
415	information on sexuality ed should be based on the maturity of the child and his/her ability to understand the subject	1/16/2019 1:03 PM
416	No. If suitable for main stream education teach the same and add additional support were needed. Child's ssa will know what's needed	1/16/2019 12:59 PM
417	Just using age/mental appropriate language. Sometime taking the fear out of it helps.	1/16/2019 12:58 PM
418	Yes, this is really important, the teaching should be appropriate to the child and their ability to understand. Children with special educational needs may be particularly vulnerable to abuse so it is essential that they understand this issue.	1/16/2019 12:57 PM

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419	Please create a framework to inform parents what has taught in school that day. Children will be curious, and might want to talk about things, would like to look up more information and if parents don't know this they can't give the appropriate follow up/ after care. It might have been totally new, if might worry them, I might create further questions and we as parents could help our kids to further process all the information if we are made aware of has been discussed. My daughter came home after a lecture on drink driving and alcohol and risky sexual behaviour and we didn't know that. She was curious and looked up things on line and came across some age inappropriate information. That probably wouldn't have happened if I knew what they had been discussing and I would have helped her find an age appropriate web page. Luckily she told me and we were still be able to that and we ordered an interesting age appropriate book, but she had seen those other webpages too, which were harmful for her.	1/16/2019 12:55 PM
420	The content for Special educational needs children to be appreprise to their mental/emotional age not their cronological one.	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
421	An emphasis on reporting, and maybe extra information on grooming and how to spot and counter it, as unfortunately these children are frequently targeted and manipulated.	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
422	Change legislation to stop religious groups teaching it	1/16/2019 12:42 PM
423	Children with SEN are particularly vulnerable and there needs to be a program available to ensure they are helped ot understand what's happening	1/16/2019 12:40 PM
424	It must be done with parental input, same as others, but perhaps is more important where a child cannot use their own voice/input and needs other skills to identify if they feel scared/intimidated or under threat etc.	1/16/2019 12:31 PM
425	Their capacity to understand	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
426	Make sure the parent knows every time there is a session so they can talk it through	1/16/2019 12:27 PM
427	Keep it appropriate to level of age/development	1/16/2019 12:25 PM
428	speak with Ro Mc Dermott	1/16/2019 12:21 PM
429	They should be provided with the same RSE, it is extremely important that theyou are provided with the same correct information. It may be the case that the classes may need to be at a slower pace and also possible role play	1/16/2019 12:20 PM
430	No	1/16/2019 12:19 PM
431	Children with Special Needs should be provided with the same information- maybe at a slower pace (if required) but using the correct terms and words May be a good idea to consider role play in certain instances where it is deemed that this approach would assist in the understanding for the child	1/16/2019 12:12 PM
432	I think a group parenting evening/Talk to go through some of the content would be beneficial for older classes to ensure discussions regarding the content continue to be discussed and developed and to encourage positive relations regarding the subject	1/16/2019 12:10 PM
433	Unfortunately I would not be educated to answer	1/16/2019 12:07 PM
434	I'd	1/16/2019 12:05 PM
435	Careful consideration must be given to how certain information is delivered. Some kids are particularly squeamish regarding blood etc	1/16/2019 11:48 AM
436	Cultural differences. Codes can differ, for example on how physically affectionate or tactile people are with eath other. It would be important for children to be aware that codes that apply to Irish society are not necessarily true in other countries, it does not mean they're "wrong".	1/16/2019 11:45 AM
437	Yes, children with SEN may need extra classes, may need one-to-one to understand these lessons. Provision for this must be made. Parents of children with SEN should have back-up documents - eg videos that they can use to understand how it is taught and what is taught so they can reinforce at home. It should be taught in a small group setting. Language for telling needs to be explicitly taught to some children with SEN every year. Some children with SEN may need a visual support for telling.	1/16/2019 11:31 AM
438	School and parents consultation	1/16/2019 11:27 AM
439	The pregnancy & sexual consent just for the older classes, no age appropriate before 9 or 10	1/16/2019 11:22 AM
440	Yes these children are more vulnerable and their needs need to be especially considered	1/16/2019 11:21 AM
441	It should be completely independent of the religious doctrine of particular schools.	1/16/2019 11:20 AM
442	This is why I suggested a teacher that has a special interest in the RSE program, so they are trained to facilitate for all children, and also has the knowledge & expertise to deliver & tailor the program to a child's cognitive ability.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

443	Just being very clear and precise	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
444	Yes. The parents must be very involved. Having worked with sen children it's no use the school or parent educatest the child without the involvemebt of the other party as it gases great confusion.	1/16/2019 10:57 AM
445	It would depend on their current curriculum and process, I do think that children with special educational needs should be involved in this process, along with their parentsa and carer.	1/16/2019 10:56 AM
446	Family Religious beliefs	1/16/2019 10:41 AM
447	Extra important	1/16/2019 10:25 AM
448	The tutor must be a person respected by the child i.e their Teacher	1/16/2019 9:56 AM
449	I don't know	1/16/2019 9:41 AM
450	Children with SEN are as entitled to future healthy sexual relationships as any other children.	1/16/2019 9:28 AM
451	Discuss with parents in advance. Make them aware of the contents of the programme. Tailor specific to the child.	1/16/2019 9:05 AM
452	No religious or "moral" agenda please, just facts plain and simple. Thank you.	1/16/2019 8:04 AM
453	It is important that those with special needs are taught to suit their understanding level. Also that they are made feel included, that the content applies to them too, in good ways and bad.	1/16/2019 7:38 AM
454	Personal history of the child if applicable so appropriate one to one follow up sessions could be conducted or relevant observations made.	1/16/2019 7:26 AM
455	The parents right to withdraw their child from the class	1/16/2019 12:20 AM
456	Ask for parental consent. Outline exactly what will be discussed. Stick to the topic plan.	1/15/2019 10:24 PM
457	I have a younger brother with Special Needs and there was nothing like this in place when he attended school. I feel if this support was there then it would have saved alot of heartache for both my brother and Mother. It is so important for every child to have information regarding the above. Children with Special Needs should not be excluded as they very much can form relationships just like any other person. Its important that our children are equipped with the proper info	1/15/2019 10:11 PM
458	Yes, they would need to consult with parents as to how appropriate is the language used. My son is autistic and everything is taken very literally. Telling him he was learning about the birds and bees would make him think this was only about the birds and the bees. There are some pieces of information that may cause anxiety so I would hope that teachers would consult parents of SEN children to make sure the communication and processing of information is clear and suitable for their child	1/15/2019 10:09 PM
459	Yes it is a bit detailed and graphic for kids with anxiety etc I think it would upset my children .	1/15/2019 9:43 PM
460	RSE should be geared toward the SN childs developmental age. The SN child may need a different method of teaching as they may have a different method of learning.	1/15/2019 9:43 PM
461	Appropriate books appropriate to the learning need. Parental involvement on a bigger scale.	1/15/2019 9:27 PM
462	Nothing	1/15/2019 8:59 PM
463	Have a presentation printed in lamh or sign language.	1/15/2019 8:53 PM
464	I don't think this is applicable and would only be issue if child is disruptive, I believe these already vulnerable kids should be equipped just as much if not more so maybe hve sna where possible up to speed to explain further where necessary	1/15/2019 8:25 PM
465	The value of an external expert or a specific teacher within the school who has a special interest in this area. I don't think it should be left to individual class teachers, there is a lack of objectivity and consistency in this approach.	1/15/2019 7:35 PM
466	consent	1/15/2019 7:23 PM
467	Additional training for interested teachers. Link in with other support services the child may be accessing.	1/15/2019 6:57 PM
468	Don't know but expect so based on type of special need	1/15/2019 6:52 PM
469	In my limited experience the biological drive of SNs is often at least as developed as anyone else, if not more so, although the emotional maturity or opportunities can be limited and often frustrating. This can be a difficult challenge for everyone and well worth any supports available.	1/15/2019 5:57 PM
470	As long as it's age appropriate it wouldn't be an issue	1/15/2019 5:34 PM
471	Age appropriate content, layering as they proceed through the education system.	1/15/2019 5:18 PM

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472	Parents must retain their right to remain the primary educators of their own children and must not be made to have their children attend compulsory RSE classes.	1/15/2019 5:04 PM
473	no	1/15/2019 4:59 PM
474	Subtitles on any videos produced.	1/15/2019 4:58 PM
475	what is meant by special educational needs?? is it for children with say a handicap? then no. Is it for children from dysfunctional families? then, yes, don't do drugs.	1/15/2019 4:41 PM
476	Different levels of confidence and competence of teachers	1/15/2019 4:32 PM
477	I think all of the above at the childs level	1/15/2019 4:18 PM

## Q18 What more if anything, should the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) do to take parents' views into consideration in the development of RSE course content? Enter below or leave blank.

Answered: 520 Skipped: 2,786

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	None	1/26/2019 9:45 PM
2	Encourage schools to communicate the curriculum with parents so parents are aware of what to teach their children at what age	1/26/2019 10:43 AM
3	Speak to parents and listen. Also consider children with special needs	1/26/2019 10:17 AM
4	Do not expose kids to immoral acts of sexual intercourse and homosexuality at young age!	1/26/2019 9:46 AM
5	Parents need more involvement in this, as I only know what my child speaks to me about I have never had access to course content	1/26/2019 5:49 AM
6	Better consultation with parents. Often the process means focus groups are not very diverse so do not represent the full school population.	1/25/2019 11:26 PM
7	Upskilling ALL teachers in the RSE content and ensuring that all schools are teaching the programme .	1/25/2019 11:20 PM
8	Parent should have been given the book beginning of the year at list to have an idea about what you are going to teach them, getting ready for this type of things just less than 2weeks before is a bit of a rush! We should be aware about what our kids are learning in school as we are still responsible for them, therefore the pet to upload online about the course is not enough time to read it and to focus on it!	1/25/2019 11:08 PM
9	Every parent is different so some might not want kids exposed to sexual content. Some kids are bullies and see it from their parents so unfortunately there will be no reasoning with the kids or adults and this is a very sad reality.	1/25/2019 11:03 PM
10	consider the religious beliefs of the parents.	1/25/2019 10:44 PM
11	To give parents the choice if their children have to take these lessons	1/25/2019 9:42 PM
12	Different parents have different views and different children are raised to different levels. A child should not be forced into sex education plenty of time for that in secondary school.	1/25/2019 9:41 PM
13	You should publish your proposed curriculum for public consultation	1/25/2019 8:51 PM
14	Get edback on work sheets sent home or maybe more detailed outline of different courses so parents can give some input. Also, I believe class teachers should deliver this just like they do any subject but they can't gloss over areas they personally may be uncomfortable with or disagree with. The course should be equally available to all pupils, regardless or teacher views or school ethos.	1/25/2019 7:18 PM
15	Listen to parents and give parents all the information and the right to decide for our children. I have not been consulted in any of this	1/25/2019 6:56 PM
16	Parental involvement is key. I'd be devastated if my daughter & sons learnt about sex or periods in school before id had the chance to tell them myself, so we need to be informed of when these lessons and discussions are happening so we can be prepared to help on the home side first and during. Perhaps some individual teacher student follow up chats can be planned too,	1/25/2019 6:55 PM
17	I'm not in favor of RSE for children below the age of 10-12, and I would give this responsibility to parents mainly	1/25/2019 6:38 PM
18	.	1/25/2019 6:27 PM
19	Be more communicative and provide correct precise information on what and when items are being discussed.	1/25/2019 6:11 PM
20	Ensure parents are consulted and informed by channels other than school's PTA	1/25/2019 5:37 PM
21	Relate to the child religion believe into consideration	1/25/2019 5:29 PM
22	Ensure this survey is sent to all parents not just NPC	1/25/2019 5:21 PM
23	Commit to continue improvement. Incorporate feedback from parents.	1/25/2019 3:25 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

24	No religion involved just good moral ground and kindness to fellow pupils. For kids to be streetwise too	1/25/2019 2:58 PM
25	Send out a pack up the home containing an explanation of what will be taught to children, then if parents have an issue they can contact the school	1/25/2019 2:53 PM
26	Is there a parents' working group that works with the NCCA on this? (I don't know!)	1/25/2019 2:13 PM
27	Always uphold the right of the parents to consent on certain aspects of the curriculum and taking always in to consideration the values or characteristic spirit of the school. The provision of the sex education bill 2018 Proposes to legislate . This removes the fundamental right and freedom of a parent to choose a school based on a characteristic spirit as it will no longer value this when it comes to newly protested ammended 3rd stage RSE SPHE programme parental consent will no longer be afforded . Gender Norms will no longer be accepted these are gender based ideologies that are being tabled in the houses of the oireachtas this is serious and grave. The relationship of a parent to a child as the primary educators is irreplaceable and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated. The NCCA must uphold these principles.	1/25/2019 1:26 PM
28	There should be no religious aspect to the course content	1/25/2019 1:18 PM
29	surveys .....	1/25/2019 1:11 PM
30	Good luck	1/25/2019 12:45 PM
31	As above, same sex families shouldnt be taught as normal,	1/25/2019 12:13 PM
32	yes they should take parents view	1/25/2019 12:08 PM
33	A website for parents to outline the course content, explain the reasoning behind the content and provide a feedback facility for parents.	1/25/2019 11:54 AM
34	Parents should take the lead and appreciate RSE as a backup. Thank you.	1/25/2019 11:39 AM
35	Ask..	1/25/2019 10:58 AM
36	More communication	1/25/2019 10:37 AM
37	occasional surveys like this one maybe every year assessing parents views and asking for new suggestions for any improvements	1/25/2019 10:15 AM
38	Maybe a questionnaire to parents asking them about how the child understand certain issues such as consent. Just to make sure they are picking up the information correctly.	1/25/2019 9:47 AM
39	Feedback	1/25/2019 9:32 AM
40	Parents have the best interests of their children at heart and must remain the decision maker in any material shared by NCCA.	1/25/2019 9:08 AM
41	Allow class teacher to teach and speak about those topics. They are very good teacher parents can trust. We dont want strangers to teach or touch or children	1/25/2019 9:04 AM
42	This is great more of these surveys please. You'll fill out an online survey but you might not have time to attend a meeting.	1/25/2019 8:32 AM
43	They should ask for their feedback.	1/25/2019 6:24 AM
44	Respect towards different nationalities. and girls empowerment that they can achieve anything they want in life as that is very weak subject in Ireland.	1/25/2019 12:13 AM
45	Please make it more age appropriate	1/24/2019 11:43 PM
46	Is not right time to bring these matter forward to that ages they are	1/24/2019 11:23 PM
47	- Take into consideration that age/class level is not an indicator that all children are ready for the programme -Respect the emotional needs of young adults who do not desire to be sexually active and not create a programme that assumes they all are at a certain age or isolate them as "different" Appreciate that children belong to different families with different faiths, views, ethos and they should all be respected and entitled to manage their own education in this area and opt out of the State driven programme Consider that children from fostering/adoption backgrounds need a different, more sensitive programme when discussing family, sex etc.	1/24/2019 10:57 PM
48	I think primary school children are too young to be told about the sexual relationship. I think it should be aimed at age not the class the child is in.	1/24/2019 10:38 PM
49	Train parents to talk to their children using the language used in school rse program	1/24/2019 8:57 PM
50	Ask parents if they want their child to be thought this. Permission a must.	1/24/2019 8:45 PM
51	Regular contact between teacher and parent so parent can reiterate what the child has learned at school	1/24/2019 7:38 PM

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52	Ensure the ethos of a school i.e catholic, muslim cannot dictate the course content. All children should receive the same important education.	1/24/2019 6:32 PM
53	Teachers should discuss with parents and communicate the contents face to face	1/24/2019 6:04 PM
54	Try to encourage more parents to become involved in teaching their children the course content as parents have such a big influence on children's attitudes and behaviour.	1/24/2019 4:10 PM
55	People's religions choices be respected	1/24/2019 3:37 PM
56	I think the RSE education should be evidence based and not based on the rules or morals of any given faith system. I also think that parents should be allowed to opt their children out of any or all classes that may go against these beliefs but that others who do not share them should be allowed to continue. I also think that faith based groups or churches should not be allowed to have an input on RSE, even if they are patrons of the school.	1/24/2019 3:37 PM
57	This is appreciated. Thank You.	1/24/2019 3:09 PM
58	The religious background or personal beliefs of people should be strongly taken into consideration. Work together with parents and or religious institutes to create a learning community that supports a healthy mental and physical self image of our children.	1/24/2019 1:48 PM
59	More advice to parents on how to follow up at home the conversations had in school.	1/24/2019 1:17 PM
60	Keep Religion separate to Relationships and Sexuality Education	1/24/2019 12:17 PM
61	The privacy and the tradition of each nation.	1/24/2019 12:10 PM
62	Bullying should be your main focus as it's causing huge damage to children's lives daily	1/24/2019 12:01 PM
63	Teach parents that they should be the ones educating their children first and foremost	1/24/2019 11:25 AM
64	The course content should be open to change and relevant for the time we live in. Taking into consideration people's preferences/ respecting their culture ( educating others to their cultures ) being mindful of children's mental health and safety in the classroom environment in which the RSE is presented. Closely working with the class teacher to ensure all children are catered for and made feel normal.	1/24/2019 11:18 AM
65	Surveys like this to begin with, speak with PTAs	1/24/2019 10:56 AM
66	They should meet the parents once a year do conferences and give them awareness	1/24/2019 9:58 AM
67	Annual reviews	1/24/2019 9:16 AM
68	Do Not include transgender content. It's difficult enough for adults to understand how mad the world has gone let alone children to understand it	1/24/2019 8:59 AM
69	Consult them and hear their concern	1/24/2019 8:24 AM
70	If they. are updating these programs that parents are involved and invited for opinions and suggestions prior to any changes.	1/24/2019 7:37 AM
71	To consider involvement of parents in RSE and sessions to update them with information and if there is a problem should be addressed to the parents not as email or messages direct open debates and discussions because the parents always with child 24/7	1/24/2019 7:25 AM
72	I think surveys like this or an opportunity for parents to put their view forward is the best way to get feedback on this and many other issues	1/24/2019 6:50 AM
73	A simple booklet . Guidnes is a key factor. Step by step ..	1/24/2019 1:51 AM
74	Don't change the Law and facilitate the taking away of our Rights. If you do allow it, then you're NOT and further WON'T take our views into consideration. For all we know, you're just covering yourselves by saying you did online surveys and will do what you want anyway. I wouldn't put anything past people who change such a significant law like that without people's knowledge or consent. You should respect, uphold and honour the Right of a Parent to raise their child according to their religious or secular beliefs and not enforce something that goes against those beliefs ergo the Parent has the Right to withdraw their children from these classes if they so wish and further have the Right to homeschool if the education system and/or government is failing in the maintaining of Parental, Religious or Secular Rights.	1/24/2019 1:47 AM
75	Give the parents information/briefs and what kind of information we should be giving them and at what stages.	1/23/2019 11:40 PM
76	Do online parental survey	1/23/2019 11:36 PM
77	Surveys like this are a good start	1/23/2019 11:35 PM

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78	I think regarding RSE the school has to educate all children and should not give parents much voice my experience over the years is that parents do not what their children educated in RSE but i believe this is wrong as we now live in a society where children must be educated	1/23/2019 11:26 PM
79	Send out surveys/questionnaire	1/23/2019 10:34 PM
80	The content should allow our children to be safe, aware and confident, but not afraid or ashamed.	1/23/2019 10:26 PM
81	/	1/23/2019 10:06 PM
82	Educate the parent. Advances in sexual discussions, sexual curiosities, sexual advances are above parents thinking and parents are not realizing that this is the reality. A discussion on puberty and techniques that may help the whole family.	1/23/2019 10:00 PM
83	Homosexual intercourse should never be taught to children.	1/23/2019 9:54 PM
84	Listen, listen, listen. Recognise Ireland as a potential secular country in the near future. I believe too many decisions are based on the fact that the majority of our schools are religious based and in the main catholic, unfortunately.	1/23/2019 9:37 PM
85	I feel it is extremely inappropriate topics being take by school. It is the parents job.	1/23/2019 9:28 PM
86	It would be great if we were advised of the outcome of this and other types of surveys.	1/23/2019 9:17 PM
87	More emphasis on how boys behave and treat girls. We need to start from a very young age Talking about consent.....ie if someone says stop tickling me you stop and work your way up To asking about a kiss and accepting no	1/23/2019 9:16 PM
88	A survey every year for suggestions and to evaluate how the program is going.	1/23/2019 9:13 PM
89	Yes- parents are the primary educators.	1/23/2019 8:51 PM
90	That the content is inclusive and equality prevails through out the education (eg. women sexuality, plesure....as well as women reproductive function	1/23/2019 8:47 PM
91	Pleasen do not force the lgbt agenda on our children in their formative years. This could cause undue stress, confusion and damage to their lives through the normalisation of these lifestyle choices. Most religions in this country would not agree with that and forcing these veivs on our children is certainly not respectful or inclusive. It is quite the opposite.	1/23/2019 8:41 PM
92	They shouldn't be taught at primary school.	1/23/2019 8:40 PM
93	Children should be allowed you opt out of these classes.	1/23/2019 8:39 PM
94	One point the Council should consider is the multidimensional Ireland and that social media, film and entertainment industries are mainly the source of "trustworthy" or easily accessible sources of information out their for kids	1/23/2019 8:15 PM
95	Keep consulting parents through surveys such as this etc.	1/23/2019 7:52 PM
96	I can not imagine what kind of views could possibly be against getting your children educated. But if it means that all children don't get educated because a few parents are against the contents of what is being taught, those few parents should have the option to not have their children educated in the above subjects.	1/23/2019 7:51 PM
97	I think this subject is extremely important for all students in national school. (Obviously age appropriate) I know policies are in place but as regards permission from parents, I don't think it's necessary. Every classroom teacher knows his/her students well and can gauge the lesson as it progresses.	1/23/2019 7:49 PM
98	Listen to parental feedback and engage with those uncomfortable with their children attending. Religion and culture of families should be considered and not a universal liberal view promoted	1/23/2019 7:33 PM
99	perhaps send a questionnaire to parents on their thoughts and what they would like included or added to the programme	1/23/2019 7:22 PM
100	I think this type of consultation is useful	1/23/2019 6:44 PM
101	Keep communicating and improve the system together as a team for the betterment of the kids	1/23/2019 6:42 PM
102	I think before I can give an opinion on something I would prefer to know what the baseline is.. I have no idea of current course content. what are other countries doing.?? . best practice issues, outcome indicators... progression routes/timeframes.	1/23/2019 6:34 PM
103	Develop a survey similar to this both in the development process and when they've decided on the new curriculum	1/23/2019 6:20 PM

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104	We should receive weekly updates by text or email to inform us exactly what they are learning each week so we can also be aware and speak to them and answer any questions they may have	1/23/2019 6:20 PM
105	Should be in accordance with ethos of school and parental OK.	1/23/2019 5:50 PM
106	Parents are very different and what one parent discusses with their child another parents could refuse to discuss that topic. It is very hard to please everyone and then you have children with very different levels of understanding and this leads to misinterpretation. Teachers discuss the curriculum content but parents are the first port of call	1/23/2019 5:02 PM
107	Recognize that this is an imperative issue that is now superseding many other subjects as an area of importance.	1/23/2019 4:38 PM
108	Focus groups in schools, online surveys	1/23/2019 4:33 PM
109	consultation and cooperation...more involvement.	1/23/2019 4:32 PM
110	These are all a part of life. However, I know it is not relevant here but I strongly believe that bullying policies in schools are just that...policies and bullying is our main problem that is not being properly addressed.	1/23/2019 4:19 PM
111	Inform parents by showing us what our kids are told/ shown.	1/23/2019 3:33 PM
112	a) Media campaign across all platforms b) Work with employment bodies (Unions and IBEC) to develop parental support programmes that could be cascaded through employee Wellbeing programmes	1/23/2019 3:24 PM
113	Provide feedback on decisions made through the school	1/23/2019 3:19 PM
114	parents who has different nationalities and religious may have different opinions on RSE course content.	1/23/2019 3:02 PM
115	Some children will not discuss the RSE education received. Instead they may explore topics themselves online afterwards. It's important for parents to check in on their children's online activity to see if the child is asking Google about various topics, which may expose them to explicit information.	1/23/2019 2:56 PM
116	Parents will have defined views of their own so perhaps they should be taught the same as their children are being taught so they can move and evolve with their children rather than get stuck in the groove not knowing what's been taught. Online resources for this would be good.	1/23/2019 2:48 PM
117	Issue the full RSE content in hard copy or online to relevant parents well in advance of programme commencement. Perhaps seek some confirmation from parents that they have reviewed the content also.	1/23/2019 2:39 PM
118	Any changes proposed should be discussed with parents on a national level, schools, media etc.	1/23/2019 2:27 PM
119	The constitution enshrines that the family is the primary educator. This should be respected fully.	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
120	It is such an important topic that we hope a truly representative view is incorporated into the curriculum rather than the views of pressure groups that have traditionally dominated this type of discussion.	1/23/2019 2:17 PM
121	Make sure that the curriculum takes into account the recent changes in legislation, such as Marriage equality and the repeal of the 8th amendment.	1/23/2019 1:49 PM
122	A covering letter to all parents perhaps at start of each year - indicating what aspect of the course being covered in given year.	1/23/2019 1:49 PM
123	<a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/education-39096100">https://www.bbc.com/news/education-39096100</a>	1/23/2019 1:44 PM
124	Recognition that teaching on same sex relationships and transgender issues, if it happens, should be done only with parental agreement of the content	1/23/2019 1:33 PM
125	A online survey for all parents would be helpful. Also consult with particular groups e.g. representative of SEN or adoption or fostering or Abuse.	1/23/2019 12:52 PM
126	All children should receive the same information and then parents can discuss their religious beliefs that what they believe privately	1/23/2019 12:41 PM
127	Definitely a programme of chastity or a pledge not to have sex before 18 should be looked into. The children regularly do this in relation to smoking, drugs and alcohol so this is no different as risky and early sexual activity has immediate and long term impacts on children. Primary teaching should stick to the basics and not be over influenced by minority lobby groups with an agenda to promote. Parents should be given a link to read what RSE covers and how teachers are being taught to deliver it.	1/23/2019 12:34 PM

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128	Always consult parents. The NCCA do not have the right to introduce sexual education to any child below 5th class. Introducing such concepts/information is an affront and intrusion on family values.	1/23/2019 12:29 PM
129	Secular RSE course not taught by any outside agencies with religious backgrounds	1/23/2019 12:17 PM
130	I think this survey was very good,because it's easy to forget it's not just the basics like maths English etc,maybe a leaflet at start of school year on the run down of course to the parents,so as I know what topic will be taught to my children through out the year.	1/23/2019 12:15 PM
131	Outline the role of ACCORD in teaching these topics to schools that are not based in the Catholic faith. Transparency of the values/ideals that are being communicated. Stick to science and the facts where appropriate.	1/23/2019 11:59 AM
132	Parents should be made aware of content so If child had questions they are equipped to answer appropriately and comfortably	1/23/2019 11:59 AM
133	It is important to consider parents' inputs. It is more important to structthe curriculum in an evidence-based fashion that considers best practices from academia and from other countries.	1/23/2019 11:57 AM
134	RSE should be secular and catholic schools should be consistent with what RSE is teaching	1/23/2019 11:53 AM
135	My main worry is that our school does not teach any RSE as it is entirely teacher dependent	1/23/2019 11:51 AM
136	All parents should be written to asking them most of these questions as I know a lot of parents who are not computer aware and others that won't bother to look at this link.	1/23/2019 11:40 AM
137	More surveys like this as our society is evolving very fast sexually - annual perhaps.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
138	Parents should receive the content of such sensitive material before it is taught to their children so they are aware of what they have been told & can build on it if necessary.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
139	I think NCCA should train sex educators to be genuinely inclusive in their teaching, so that all children regardless of anatomy, identity, expression, orientation, disability are included. And I think parents need opportunities to receive this training too. We need RSE for our times, which are ones of marriage equality, full reproductive healthcare, trans* acceptance and inclusivity. Or should be.	1/23/2019 11:31 AM
140	RSE is an extremely important subject and more emphasis should be placed in the teaching of the different areas. Those properly trained in the area are the best equipped to teach it. Many teachers don't have the appropriate skills or are embarrassed by the some of the subjects. We need to start teaching kids earlier in appropriate ways to become equipped with the skills to deal with relationships, puberty, advertising influences, social media, pornography etc. Inadequate information is failing our children. It is a hugely influential part of their world and unfortunately the lack of education in this area is leading to mental health problems.	1/23/2019 11:26 AM
141	Bullying, drug abuse & explain what drugs are along with names, porn. Kids throw these words around but don't fully understand them.	1/23/2019 11:10 AM
142	When delivering the content to the students it should be done in a natural way. All of this is part of our life there's nothing to be ashamed about it or be embarrassed by it. Make it fun but educational.	1/23/2019 11:08 AM
143	I think parents need to be educated, there should be an open evening to discuss what is being taught and how they can supplement this course at home. Schools are reluctant so an outside body should come in probably every second year. Parent groups should be broken up x3 Junior/mid/senior	1/23/2019 11:05 AM
144	Have talks at parent association or GAA clubs around the country to get number of parents on board	1/23/2019 10:51 AM
145	Engage a market research company to conduct a formal online survey rather than relying on Survey monkey. This survey is very limited, allows for multi-codes, comment boxes for no reason which will render the findings less clear.	1/23/2019 10:42 AM
146	This subject should be left to the parents to deal with when individual children are ready and interested in it. Resources should be made available for the parents who might need support. In the scenario in which the subjects is introduced in the national curriculum, parents and their children should have the democratic right to choose if they are interested or not in the subject. If the class is scheduled towards the end of the school day, the children who opt not to attend could simply go home. This would place no constraints in terms of resources for the school.	1/23/2019 10:41 AM
147	Online survey Online training Face to face approachability	1/23/2019 10:39 AM
148	A booklet at the start of every school year for the parents at home outlining the RSE complete content been taught with a feedback form or link to address any issues.	1/23/2019 10:39 AM

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149	worry about it less! its a responsibility a lot of parents are uncomfortable with - this means it even more important the NCCA does what in the best interest of the children.	1/23/2019 10:37 AM
150	More partnership with parents 're working together in using rse content at home	1/23/2019 10:33 AM
151	An information booklet sent home to parents which is age appropriate for each class what would be taught in the classroom and parents can follow up at home	1/23/2019 10:32 AM
152	Whilst parents views are very important - in most cases, parents are not experts in this area.	1/23/2019 10:28 AM
153	They should accept as a core principle that RSE should be optional at school, and any parent has a right to withdraw their children from such classes. Also, a clear distinction needs to be made in ANY RSE curriculum between elements such as 'stay safe' (eg 'stranger danger') and sexual elements, which are much more controversial. Parents should also be supplied with whatever materials / texts / audio-visuals that are to be used to teach RSE so they can decide for themselves if these materials are suitable for their own children and make an informed choice as to whether they want them in any RSE class.	1/23/2019 10:27 AM
154	The age of which certain topics are discussed. A brief outline of timing and classes for parents to know In advance so they can decide if their child age is mature to hear certain information as age is just a number and all children develope mentally at different ages . It's not a one rule fits all , maybe children taken out in smaller groups to discuss topics and teachers knowledge of child would decide on dept of information shared .	1/23/2019 10:25 AM
155	I think that the use of age inappropriate and names of body parts such as penis and vagina should be avoided, especially when they are incorrect! A child has a pain in their tummy, we do not teach them to say that they have discomfort in their abdominal viscera. By using inappropriate anatomical terms, we are teaching them discomfort about their sexuality. it would be interesting to consider the Swedish example as outlined in this paper: Milles, Karin. (2011). Snippa: A success story of feminist language planning. Gender and Language. 5. 10.1558/genl.v5i1.89.	1/23/2019 10:23 AM
156	Ongoing flexibility in the issues being covered - different things come up at different times for parents. We talk about those things at home, but would appreciate a line into school to have broad topics covered in class	1/23/2019 10:17 AM
157	More contact on the ground. Maybe email surveys set out via the schools from NCCA	1/23/2019 10:16 AM
158	Keep parents informed	1/23/2019 10:07 AM
159	NCCA should look for best practise/good research in developing course content rather than consider parents' views.	1/23/2019 10:04 AM
160	focus groups with parents - ensure religion is not part of the considerations particularly the church's view on homosexuality etc.	1/23/2019 10:02 AM
161	Don't need to be consulted on everything. Just communicate the expert/professionals' decisions.	1/23/2019 9:55 AM
162	'Seek first to understand, then to be understood'. Get details of the issues faced by children and then develop the content to address those issues. Look forward to helping them deal with first year in secondary school so kids are equipped and aware to deal with a new set of pressures..	1/23/2019 9:52 AM
163	It needs to begin in primary school and continue up into secondary school	1/23/2019 9:46 AM
164	Would be very helpful for parents to get a summary of what was covered in each particular week, so that it could be re-enforced/revised at home. At present it varies so much between teachers, that the general letter at the beginning of the year is meaningless.	1/23/2019 9:38 AM
165	Kids to be prepared for the world without being afraid of it.	1/23/2019 9:27 AM
166	none	1/23/2019 9:26 AM
167	There is very little feedback to parents re what they are learning. We are very involved in our childrens' education but have little or no knowledge of that they are covering / learning in relation to RSE.	1/23/2019 8:42 AM
168	I'm not sure if this happens but children should be polled also to find out what they need to know about. With the availability of the internet they can find out anyway, I'd prefer that it was from a reliable source	1/23/2019 7:52 AM
169	N/A	1/23/2019 7:46 AM
170	Leave all religious connotations out of sex education. And keep it age appropriate	1/23/2019 12:59 AM

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171	I feel that if my child is not coping and is distraught by the teaching of all of the above, I feel it is up to the parents to educate their children as our own child is starting to feel distraught and embarrassed and not only that, there are some children that are miles ahead of other children in being ok with the school education but if not, I really think maybe the child shouldn't be in the class and leave it up to the parents to educate their child when they feel that they are ready. My own child suffers terribly with anxiety and has been asking me questions lately. Little did I know it's been thought in class. I'd rather sit my child down when I feel it's right for him.	1/23/2019 12:38 AM
172	Consultation between the school and the parents should be mandatory.	1/22/2019 11:27 PM
173	Surveys and show us statistics of incidents, leaflets for us to learn to teach it to our children, in the same way as school so children don't get mixed up with different approaches to the same subject	1/22/2019 11:10 PM
174	Notification of the content of the material and what is being thought.	1/22/2019 10:57 PM
175	RSE should be taught in a way that reflects society at large. The religious patron of a school should not have a say in the content of RSE.	1/22/2019 10:46 PM
176	Stop letting religion dictate what and how children are taught	1/22/2019 10:37 PM
177	More engagement with parents teachers and relevant professionals. There are many international examples of evidence based best practice but these are not widespread in Ireland. I am thinking Scandinavia as well as some Canadian examples. I have a problem with your q 13 as I consider it a flawed question (with respect!) You only give the person in the school the option of being trained or skilled in RSE but surely that option should have been available for all responses. A skilled person who can engage young people in a positive way to provide skills for life is surely the panacea.	1/22/2019 10:28 PM
178	Have the school liaise with parents and inform us of what is being taught and when	1/22/2019 10:27 PM
179	No	1/22/2019 10:23 PM
180	I do not believe this is a curriculum that should be introduced to such young children. When I consider the innocence of my own young children I am outraged that someone else feels it's their right as to what my child needs to know about sexuality! At the age of 5 it's never even crossed their minds, why raise an alarm in their heads that isn't there to begin with. I am absolutely disappointed in the system if they require my young children to learn about these things and strip away my right as a parent to decide how this is taught to my children! As a parent I am capable to do so!	1/22/2019 10:18 PM
181	At primary level, the emphasis should be on how the body changes during puberty - (periods, voice breaking, growth of body hair etc) as this is more relevant primary school children. Less emphasis should be on sexual relationships. Childhood is short enough.	1/22/2019 10:14 PM
182	This survey could be circulated to all parents.	1/22/2019 10:12 PM
183	Workshops with parents especially ages 9-12	1/22/2019 9:59 PM
184	Is that possible for parents to have access to the content of the RSE curriculum? When and what is exactly covered?	1/22/2019 9:37 PM
185	Ask questions, inform parents of content before showing to children.	1/22/2019 9:30 PM
186	Ensure no one with a religious ethos be allowed to facilitate. A facilitator with suitable training be used for the more serious topics.	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
187	Consult directly with parents	1/22/2019 9:27 PM
188	Would like webwise to attend and teach all kids realities/dangers of web.	1/22/2019 9:22 PM
189	Consultation with surveys such as these or face to face group meetings	1/22/2019 9:19 PM
190	Just let the parents make the decision on what their children should be taught on the subject.	1/22/2019 9:06 PM
191	Mandatory for schools to inform families of content and when (timeframe) this content will be covered in	1/22/2019 8:59 PM
192	Consider the religious input to date & how RSE needs to ensure it is more representative & open in its approach in all schools.	1/22/2019 8:47 PM
193	I think age appropriate information is very important, but to remember they are of primary school level. Certain topics listed above in my opinion are secondary school level. Giving enough information is very important, however there is the risk of opening a level of information that could incite curiosity too young.	1/22/2019 8:39 PM
194	Provide guidelines for parents to use. It is our job to teach our children such important information. The role of the school is important especially for children who are not in a healthy relationship to help them recognize it.	1/22/2019 8:38 PM

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195	No need to focus on only sex after marriage it is not the reality. But about consent respect and choice.	1/22/2019 8:33 PM
196	Ensure schools have info to communicate with parents the content and as a joint approach what has been covered and what could be covered at home	1/22/2019 8:26 PM
197	As with any Subject reviews, formalise parental opportunities to submit views and engage with the review process.	1/22/2019 8:24 PM
198	Keep any religious morality out of it.	1/22/2019 8:07 PM
199	We should be notified of changes to the topics being covered. While acknowledging different family circumstances I hope the traditional view of family would be promoted.	1/22/2019 8:06 PM
200	They need to be cautious and not introduce too much confusion in young children	1/22/2019 8:03 PM
201	Not to allow use of any religion backed organisation with a vested interest or a likelihood of omitting or avoiding topics outside their belief system.	1/22/2019 8:03 PM
202	Ask us to complete an online survey with some sample key questions maybe or invite us to participate in a day or evening event.	1/22/2019 8:02 PM
203	Patrons MUST NOT be allowed to override the national curriculum. Religion cannot affect what teachers will teach or how.	1/22/2019 8:01 PM
204	I think there should be an optional course for parents, so they are aware of the content that will be taught to their children, and advise on how to handle any questions the child has.	1/22/2019 7:50 PM
205	This survey is a good idea	1/22/2019 7:48 PM
206	More communication between schools and parents and then responsibility of each school to feed back to NCCA	1/22/2019 7:46 PM
207	Continue to communicate	1/22/2019 7:35 PM
208	questionnaire from NCCA	1/22/2019 7:15 PM
209	Keep Parents Association updated	1/22/2019 7:12 PM
210	Advise school to communicate with parents	1/22/2019 7:10 PM
211	I would trust them to put together an appropriate curriculum for the children's maturity and level of understanding...same as I trust them for PE, maths and English or should we be able to be consulted of this as well? should I be able to take my child out for Maths or PE?	1/22/2019 7:07 PM
212	Parents should be consulted regarding the content of these talks.	1/22/2019 7:00 PM
213	More online surveying. It's easier to express views.	1/22/2019 6:56 PM
214	Surveys and perhaps the schools should run through the course and content either via meeting or online so parents are prepared in advance for questions and age appropriate answers	1/22/2019 6:43 PM
215	Religious teachings outside of school hours. Teach all a sensible core curriculum	1/22/2019 6:29 PM
216	The right of the child to this information should supersede the parent's right to withdraw the child. Provision of correct and unbiased information on relationships and sexuality is fundamental to the child's healthy development. If the parent has alternative religious or other beliefs, the child should still be able to access the age appropriate information as provided by the school.	1/22/2019 6:26 PM
217	If there is talk of curriculum change focus groups with parents of children of all ages would be useful	1/22/2019 6:24 PM
218	Parents should receive a full copy of the proposed RSE curriculum and the NCCA should enforce the schools transparency relating to the RSE subject. a list of teachers that are teaching RSE should be made public, and additional background checks and Garda vetting done.	1/22/2019 6:10 PM
219	As above I think it's the role of the parents as well as the school to assist with this and a more involved programme would be really beneficial. There were questions my daughter had in relation to a topic discussed in school and which she didn't feel comfortable with raising in a class setting. We have openly discussed the topic so she was able to raise this with me but not all children may be in that position.	1/22/2019 5:59 PM
220	Surveys such as these are most useful. The children should also be surveyed to establish what they have actually learned from same.	1/22/2019 5:56 PM
221	Strongly advise they consult with children and teenagers through facilitated workshops on what they would like to learn. It would be a missed opportunity if they only consult with parents as the insight from children may be hugely helpful.	1/22/2019 5:52 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

222	maybe email or send home same information kids get in school so parents can be confident in discussing topics.	1/22/2019 5:45 PM
223	I think special interest groups should be involved in Dev of course. E.g. if approx 10% of children may be non CIS, then appropriate info from LGBT age appropriate groups could be sourced. Equally, as every child in the room will masterbate, it should at least be demystified.	1/22/2019 5:21 PM
224	Feedback on what type/level of discussion for each age range. Unfortunately kids are growing up too quickly, but parents need to be ready for those questions and how best to answer them.	1/22/2019 4:57 PM
225	This is a good start :)	1/22/2019 4:56 PM
226	Have a parents evening pre the commencement of any program to allow parents to ask questions on the content and delivery of same Reading leaflets or worksheets after the fact is not that informative.	1/22/2019 4:55 PM
227	PAC facilitated workshops for parents (not limited to PAC members)	1/22/2019 4:44 PM
228	Dual system so parents are on the same page at the same time as the schools	1/22/2019 4:42 PM
229	N/a	1/22/2019 4:25 PM
230	I think given the current climate that there should be big emphasis on consent from both a male and female perspective	1/22/2019 4:23 PM
231	Ask parents via email/survey	1/22/2019 3:26 PM
232	Online surveys. Unfortunately many parents won't engage.	1/22/2019 3:19 PM
233	Parents should always be informed and provided with guidelines pre school teachers embarking on these discussions in the classroom so that parents can introduce and have topics prepared with their own children pre these discussions.	1/22/2019 3:11 PM
234	Regular surveys	1/22/2019 1:26 PM
235	More surveys, and give us feedback on these surveys	1/22/2019 1:11 PM
236	Consult on the actual details of the topics and not just the headings	1/22/2019 12:53 PM
237	Write to all parents, not presume that the school will or that parents will turn up yo information evenings - they just don't. It could be sent by DEASP to all parents receiving child benefit. If NCCA gave pamphlets/books to DEASP to issue then there would be no breach of GDPR.	1/22/2019 12:43 PM
238	I think open evenings in the school (once a year) are really helpful. If the parents don't show up, that's their problem, but if it's an issue they care about, they'll turn up and it's a chance to raise questions or concerns.	1/22/2019 12:21 PM
239	.	1/22/2019 11:31 AM
240	Advise parents of full content every time discussed in school so parents know exactly what child has been told and can then discuss at home.	1/22/2019 11:23 AM
241	Clear guidance on what the child is being told at school including terminology.	1/22/2019 11:23 AM
242	Provide more talks in schools for parents BEFORE topics are discussed with children.	1/22/2019 10:37 AM
243	Update the RSE Curriculum, to be more in tune with today's culture and society.	1/22/2019 10:28 AM
244	Recommended reading material for parents.	1/22/2019 10:11 AM
245	A group meeting in school. More detailed info to be sent to parents. A specially trained teacher.	1/22/2019 9:35 AM
246	Don't educate primary school children about sexuality, LGB and/or transgender. This is not appropriate to primary schools children. Should be in secondary school if at all.	1/22/2019 8:12 AM
247	Consult parents prior to delivering content to ensure they are comfortable with the content and also that the child is not left traumatised by the content	1/22/2019 8:08 AM
248	You could ask the parents of 9-11 year olds what level of information the children should be given, though I worry that some conservative parents would have overdue influence.. you would have to ask all parents as opposed to a focus group and go with majority rules.	1/22/2019 8:06 AM
249	Just keep doing these surveys! Personally I think parents need to be very involved especially at this earl age. Thanks for sending this out!	1/21/2019 11:24 PM
250	Parents should be contacted in advance to give views on what should be discussed so as a group we can agree on what's appropriate alongside guidelines set by ncca	1/21/2019 10:53 PM
251	Not become over pc. It's ok that people and relationships are different. Different is ok but it does not have to become the norm or the default for a definition.	1/21/2019 10:50 PM

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252	Supply parents with information on what is age appropriate and the best vocabulary to use in discussions with their children	1/21/2019 10:44 PM
253	It would be helpful if parents could also access the content of what is being taught in their child's class. This way as parents you can help the teachers to reinforce the learning at home. As a parent I would want to know what language to use (age appropriate) for each of my children as they are both in different years.	1/21/2019 9:36 PM
254	Workshops	1/21/2019 9:02 PM
255	Make us aware of content and what age it will be taught so that we can be prepared for specific conversations.	1/21/2019 8:59 PM
256	.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
257	I think the course content shouldn't be taught with any particular religion's morals in mind. eg that students would be taught about LGBTQ in a way that would encourage those LGBTQ students to be treated no differently than heterosexual students.	1/21/2019 8:57 PM
258	Consult with parents through the class teacher	1/21/2019 8:48 PM
259	Keep any organisation with a Religious ethos out of the classroom when it comes to teaching RSE to children.	1/21/2019 8:13 PM
260	Do they have a dedicated site with good advise and dealing with challenges / issues that children and parents are faced and how best to deal with them along with a hotline number.	1/21/2019 8:05 PM
261	Teach about the disappearance of a child, recklessness	1/21/2019 6:12 PM
262	Some parents will avoid these conversations at all costs (old school Ireland mentality) school is the only guaranteed environment children will learn about these topics.	1/21/2019 6:03 PM
263	Send a preview to parents of what it will teach in the year ahead so parents are prepared at home for questions or concerns.	1/21/2019 5:44 PM
264	Opportunity for parents to attend a sample RSE talk like the one that is given to primary school children with a discussion and Q&A	1/21/2019 5:38 PM
265	I hear nothing from the school about it! Also I want access to resources as gaeilge.	1/21/2019 5:35 PM
266	More surveys and courses	1/21/2019 4:03 PM
267	Let parents take the lead	1/21/2019 3:57 PM
268	more parent engagement	1/21/2019 3:53 PM
269	My daughter is 9 and started to bud last summer when 8years old. I think it should be taught and touched upon much earlier than 6th class.	1/21/2019 3:31 PM
270	Online surveys or group discussions in school with facilitators, educators and other parents.	1/21/2019 2:27 PM
271	Have somewhere that parents can access to see what is covered currently and where they can submit suggestions on things to cover as they emerge eg new tech, new online game etc..maybe this exists but I am not aware of it.	1/21/2019 2:07 PM
272	Yes	1/21/2019 1:59 PM
273	All parties has to be informed of the curriculum	1/21/2019 1:58 PM
274	Surveys. Perhaps handbooks of what exactly will be discussed with their child, so if something is unclear for the child the parent has the information to help them	1/21/2019 1:57 PM
275	maybe include some same sex relationships as this is something they come across in school more and more	1/21/2019 1:46 PM
276	Be aware that children have different levels of emotional maturity and exposing all kids to all topics of RSE just because they are in a certain class could not be beneficial to all. So be careful that the topics are not too graphic or shocking. ALWAYS inform parents of the full content of the topics to be discussed. Maybe parents could be invited to attend the lessons. It could be "embarrassing" to teachers to discuss certain topics with children, so maybe bringing an outside person to assist with lessons might not be a bad idea. Be careful with "group discussions" for parents - as with kids, there are also strong minded and strong willed parents who can enforce their opinion on others. There is not a clear right and wrong as to how children should be educated, each kid is different.	1/21/2019 1:43 PM
277	Teacher training on this is vital... some teachers are naturally better than others at teaching this and it has to be someone who can role model maturity and wisdom in its delivery. Quality delivery is more important than an exact curriculum.	1/21/2019 1:37 PM

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278	Take the children's views. My eleven year old self couldn't think of anything worse than sitting in a class talking about sexuality and relationships.	1/21/2019 1:29 PM
279	Once there's clear communication with parents. It could be included in their homework a look at what's going to be discussed & then parents & children will know the content & have an option to opt out if they wish.	1/21/2019 1:28 PM
280	The schools should have to implement the course in its entirety in an impartial manner	1/21/2019 12:56 PM
281	Initiate a public consultation process (as sometimes parents may not wish to engage with their local school on such a topic).	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
282	Id like to be better informed of the program and what is appropriate at what age to learn, so even in junior infants, know what the program will be in the coming years ahead	1/21/2019 12:34 PM
283	To ask parents if they agree to such a course to take place	1/21/2019 12:13 PM
284	They should always look to protect the child first regardless of parents views.	1/21/2019 12:08 PM
285	RSE should not be introduced AT ALL in primary school! Children are there to learn numbers, letters, words, phrases etc....I will teach my children about life, relationships, kindness and I will help them to see in them acts of kindness, carrying.....we are doing together acts of kindness! School should NOT GET involved in RSE in primary school age. signed here: a mother who's a doctor ( involved to care for community and special needs children)	1/21/2019 2:48 AM
286	Make sure you don't add new content without advising parents first so they have the option to allow their child stay in the class or not.	1/20/2019 10:50 PM
287	Children should know that they are protected and can talk to the teacher about anything	1/20/2019 9:07 PM
288	I really appreciate the chance to interact with the process through this survey and hope that the NCCA will continue to engage with parents in this way.	1/20/2019 8:52 PM
289	Do not leave this topic to "external specialists/consultant" and treat this subject in accordance with the school's guiding principles	1/20/2019 8:42 PM
290	It's great having the chance of filling this survey to ask parents' views. I think the parents should be always informed about the content of the RSE course and always have the chance to withdraw their child from lessons when they consider it inappropriate. Knowing in advance the RSE lessons content is also a way for the parents to talk about those topics with their children.	1/20/2019 8:03 PM
291	Carry out research with parents in a few different areas of the country to obtain their views and find out about their experiences of their children receiving RSE in school, e.g. focus groups?	1/20/2019 11:23 AM
292	Allow for opting out of RSE or split the curriculum to allow parents to look after the sexual education of their children while still allowing them to take part in classes where topics such as what bullying is, how to respect others etc are being taught.	1/20/2019 9:39 AM
293	let parents know what will be covered beforehand so they can decide if they think it is appropriate for their child's age and given choice if they want their child to be involved in the discussion	1/20/2019 9:17 AM
294	Increase awareness of the proposed changes by holding information meetings countrywide, hosted by each school.	1/19/2019 8:56 PM
295	More regular surveys or feedback from schools .	1/19/2019 8:50 PM
296	Highlight that the current content is wholly outdated and does not reflect children of different cultures, SEN, sexuality and family relationships. I was very upset to see this all excluded from Accords current programmer	1/19/2019 6:59 PM
297	Great to be doing this survey!	1/19/2019 6:12 PM
298	Give details of what they plan to teach and allow parents to give suggestions or feedback before the course start.	1/19/2019 5:44 PM
299	Having meetings within the schools the curriculum is been taught for parents and guardians.	1/19/2019 2:56 PM
300	Email information or links, and online surveys is the best way to contact people so they can access when they have time.	1/19/2019 2:39 PM
301	No comment.	1/19/2019 1:57 PM
302	Parents views are important if supportive and constructive, this form of education must be encouraged and expanded.	1/19/2019 12:35 PM
303	This survey is a great tool to offer suggestions	1/19/2019 11:28 AM
304	Provide parents with existing course content so they aware of current content and what is taught at each class level.	1/19/2019 10:46 AM

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305	Give more written information to parents in advance and as the programme goes along. I would hate to think my son was exposed to new information at school that I was unaware of. It is important for parents to be able to discuss it at home with their child and make their own of the topic together.	1/18/2019 8:37 PM
306	As a parent who is open to having these discussions with my own children, I do understand that sometimes the school curriculum may be the only time that this information will be discussed. Therefore I wonder if there is any remit for more engagement with parents around this information? Our school is great but there is little told to us about what is actually being discussed in school. Perhaps if parents were brought into the discussions and supported additionally by the schools to be co-communicators of RSE, these conversations would be easier for those parents who don't talk to their children about such things? Hope that helps!	1/18/2019 7:57 PM
307	Meeting parents's associations	1/18/2019 7:27 PM
308	I dont think an outside body is suitable as how would we be sure of whst they were saying could be very individual dependent. I think teachers have s lot to be doing this could be an online module maybe	1/18/2019 6:18 PM
309	The NCCA should prioritise the education of the children ahead of any concerns raised by parents.	1/18/2019 4:12 PM
310	Just keep us informed all the time.	1/18/2019 3:52 PM
311	There would seem to be pressure on children to identify their gender status as soon as they enter secondary level, and perhaps even in primary level. I think the RSE should help children to be comfortable with themselves without having to feel or explore their sexual orientation before they are emotionally ready for it.	1/18/2019 3:33 PM
312	post the curriculum online for parents to view.	1/18/2019 3:31 PM
313	Provide training for parents about how best discuss it with their children so that they don't learn the distorted version from their peers or online. I don't think that the RSE curriculum in primary schools needs changing.	1/18/2019 3:27 PM
314	Have more open discussions with parents and even do workshops so the message passed across to our child is consistent from both the teachers and parents.	1/18/2019 2:46 PM
315	Schools should inform all parents when surveys are being carried out & give info on how to take part in them	1/18/2019 2:15 PM
316	A follow up to this survey to explain what if any feedback has been taken on board and what impact it will have on future teaching.	1/18/2019 1:39 PM
317	Listen but also support them in their role st home - create a partnership	1/18/2019 1:32 PM
318	Parents are primary carers and parents views and beliefs should be respected as I don't believe that children belong to teachers and their views and beliefs only.	1/18/2019 1:30 PM
319	Continue to send surveys so those interested in shaping new ideas are given a platform to do so.	1/18/2019 12:55 PM
320	More communication...I have a 15 year old in TY and 3 younger kids in primary one starting next year...this is the FIRST time I have been asked for my views as a parent.	1/18/2019 12:21 PM
321	Nothing	1/18/2019 11:35 AM
322	More meetings with parents and explain what is being taught and when so we can further discuss this with our children at home	1/18/2019 11:32 AM
323	Annual online surveys	1/18/2019 11:30 AM
324	My primary concerns would be any effort that reduces the amount of education we provide them. Increases in subject matter are fine, in my view, but reductions not so much.	1/18/2019 10:26 AM
325	Publish summary of this survey, and actions points to be taken based on it, if any.	1/18/2019 9:30 AM
326	Ensure schools inform parents of when a certain topic is being taught so parents can discuss with children at home	1/18/2019 8:44 AM
327	That the parents need info also. 5th class teachings brought home so many questions I hadn't yet covered. It would've been more beneficial if I was prepared through a group session or at least a booklet.	1/18/2019 8:03 AM
328	I think that they should empower the teachers that the kids are with everyday to be able to deliver the teaching in this area, an external facilitator to lead meetings for parents to attend would be very valuable as the primary and best persons to model behaviour / expectations/ explanations are the child's own parents, and next best would be the child's own teacher who can relate to the kids better than outside persons	1/18/2019 7:41 AM

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329	Church should not be involved, i.e, the likes of Accord	1/18/2019 12:12 AM
330	Seek views, concerns and opinions through surveys, meetings, representative bodies etc	1/17/2019 11:51 PM
331	Continual consultation with parents	1/17/2019 10:49 PM
332	make/ or make aware of online resources available for parents	1/17/2019 10:28 PM
333	Religious differences	1/17/2019 10:16 PM
334	I think everything is covered here	1/17/2019 10:03 PM
335	I'd prefer to allow parents the option to teach it themselves instead of or before the school does it and if they didn't then ask the school for kids to opt in.	1/17/2019 9:49 PM
336	Survey is a good way to get an average idea of parents views.	1/17/2019 9:37 PM
337	Parents have no say on other subjects like English maths and Irish so a Common sense approach needed for RSE. A damn good curriculum needed and this subject should be as important as the above subjects listed. No Religions influence just practical advice and a mature adult to deliver it. All teachers should have no problem doing this if trained correctly. I'm 37 and only accepting my body now. Children are so educated now that it's a disgrace we can't have a proper chat about sex in schools.	1/17/2019 9:15 PM
338	I think the curriculum needs to be reevaluated every 2 years as our society is changing and it is changing very fast.	1/17/2019 9:04 PM
339	Keep the parents in the know about curriculum dates of class and all learnings. It's up to parents to back up the classes/ teachers and take on the responsibility of ensuring their child understands the complexities of such classes.	1/17/2019 7:15 PM
340	There is only one question above on course content. The questions above relate more to the delivery of the course. A more detailed survey on the content to be delivered by class group.	1/17/2019 6:48 PM
341	Publish to parents the content of the RSE course and force the school to have the parents opt in or out.	1/17/2019 5:30 PM
342	Parent's worry that their children won't share feelings of worry or shame so anything that helps kids feel supported and trusted will also help parents.	1/17/2019 4:40 PM
343	Surveys like this one are very helpful	1/17/2019 4:36 PM
344	More F2F meetings with parents to sensitise them and to help them to acquire the right skills to deal with their children questions.	1/17/2019 4:27 PM
345	There should be information days where parent s can be consulted and parents should be invited to participate in the RSE policy reviews that should take place regularly ( as this is a ever evolving subject) in primary & secondary schools.	1/17/2019 4:17 PM
346	Keep informing us of stages in this review. It is great to be talking about it since I've 2 girls, aged 9 and 11.	1/17/2019 3:54 PM
347	We need urgent action to ensure children are informed much earlier than is now happening. There is a lack of consistency across schools and to be honest given our cultural heritage and the rapidly changing environment it is likely that parents are unequipped in how to positively explain relationships and particularly sexuality to children.	1/17/2019 3:40 PM
348	Just to ensure that religion isn't brought into any discussion around relationships and sexuality.	1/17/2019 1:45 PM
349	Good to see that parents have the opportunity to fill in this questionnaire. thank you.	1/17/2019 1:10 PM
350	Use professionals or educate within the teaching profession individuals to teach RSE. Do NOT use any groups affiliated with any religious faith irrespective of religious ethos of the school. Both should be separated. G	1/17/2019 1:06 PM
351	N/a	1/17/2019 1:03 PM
352	you doing it now	1/17/2019 12:51 PM
353	Ensure schools inform parents on what is being taught and how	1/17/2019 12:43 PM
354	Really! Why do organisations feel the need to constantly butt into every aspect of our lives!	1/17/2019 12:38 PM
355	Encourage parental involvement and contribution - give them some ownership in how their children will learn about issues that will form the basis of their understanding of relationships and sexuality into adult life.	1/17/2019 12:17 PM
356	Stop pushing young kids under pressure wigh all these things and all LGBT rights.School is not the olace where to learn about sexual relationship it must be done at home and i say that parents are responsible for that!	1/17/2019 11:47 AM

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357	More surveys like this. Deliver the subject to parents in advance as we have not been equipped with the skills to deal with these issues due to the lack of education we received. The education children will receive in school must be backed up at home, as will all other school subjects.	1/17/2019 11:45 AM
358	If it's carried and I haven't been made aware, and not some crumpled note in a bag that I'll never get, then I'll sue until you can't say the word penis out loud without paying me money.	1/17/2019 11:40 AM
359	One of my children is in sixth class - and this is the first time I recall completing such a survey. More frequent communication would be good. Circulating parents with the content of the RSE curriculum would also be helpful to establish if it is being covered in school - and in what depth.	1/17/2019 11:38 AM
360	I think regardless of nationality and religion all children need to be aware and protected	1/17/2019 10:51 AM
361	Make sure the parents are aware of the content and this can be done through email to the Parents Association as some schools are not very good at informing their parents of what's going on.	1/17/2019 10:26 AM
362	Asses ongoing the development rse and don't let I be another fruitless exercise	1/17/2019 10:07 AM
363	Don't deliver it to early, ie after 11 yes of age	1/17/2019 10:00 AM
364	I think this survey is great. While we have an opinion, you are the experts in pedagogy.	1/17/2019 9:14 AM
365	Teach parents how to talk to their children generally. Sex, Anxiety, suicide, masturbation, body image, depression, hormones, it is quite hard to know how best to guide children on this stuff. I know this is anonymous but my name is Sharon Goff and I am a mum who would be happy to act as a sounding board if the NCCA need someone external to work with. Information is so powerful and thank you for your efforts to keep our children safe, seen and secure.	1/17/2019 8:42 AM
366	my child is in 5th clas and this is the first opportunity I have had to comment on this curriculum. surveys such as this should be more frequent or targeted at classes when children begin RSE	1/17/2019 7:55 AM
367	Just to make sure it's age appropriate	1/17/2019 7:24 AM
368	Be honest and talk to parents if any child has a problem	1/17/2019 2:49 AM
369	I think that it is dangerous for parents to be able to remove their children from this class and perhaps before the parents do that...they should first complete a course on why that exclusion might be exposing their children to risk. None of us like the risks. But our fear should not allow us to fail our precious children.	1/16/2019 11:27 PM
370	Surveys through NPC with a link from their website. Encourage parents from pre school to access a parents section on their website	1/16/2019 10:45 PM
371	Hold meetings with parents and principals.	1/16/2019 9:47 PM
372	That kids are engaging in sexual activity at an earlier stage and that parents need to know what if anything their kids are being taught at school so as to know to expect questions and be able to answer them in a knowledgeable way	1/16/2019 9:40 PM
373	Surveys such as this are a good idea once they are listened to	1/16/2019 9:36 PM
374	Parents should be fully aware of what content is and what are it's being taught to & have the option of withdrawing children from certain areas of they don't agree with the way it's being taught.	1/16/2019 9:35 PM
375	I do feel the classroom teacher needs to be very well trained and supported in the delivery of the RSE curriculum. Not all teachers are comfortable teaching this so it may suit better to bring in outside facilitators to deliver this programme.	1/16/2019 9:19 PM
376	parent groups	1/16/2019 9:04 PM
377	More surveys like this I suppose. Or a nationwide day forum where experts meet with select parents and discuss what the needs are in this area.	1/16/2019 8:59 PM
378	Inform parents of the content so they can be prepared for questions & support the education given in schools	1/16/2019 8:55 PM
379	Please email results of survey and keep us up to date re development	1/16/2019 8:54 PM
380	I don't think the schools are fit to teach this topic, neither is the NCCA ... I think it's too little too late and too vague . Stop worrying about upsetting someone and start focusing on the educational needs of the kids.	1/16/2019 8:45 PM
381	I think parents would like to be consulted about any changes that are made to the current programme. I have no problem with the current programme but would not be happy for my primary age children to learn about LGBT issues, same sex marriage and some of the other non traditional types of relationships/issues.	1/16/2019 8:43 PM
382	I think a survey is a very good and appropriate way to get parents' views, thank you!	1/16/2019 8:41 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

383	Although I think it's important I do feel I'd like more information in what's being taught so I can back it up at home	1/16/2019 8:10 PM
384	If a sample rse course content be given perhaps may give their views on this. Whether more needs to be added or taken away, age appropriate, more for parents to do at home. The more open we are with children about the rights and wrongs it will help them to become educated confident, aware and able to ask for help.	1/16/2019 7:59 PM
385	Constant communication and discussion with parents to get their views on content etc. Parents should have input into what is being taught to their children in regards to RSE	1/16/2019 7:53 PM
386	Make sure religion and RSE are not mixed together	1/16/2019 7:48 PM
387	Probably have the balls to not be carried away & influenced by this current wave of extreme PC behaviour. At the moment men are nearly apologetic for being men and that is not correct.	1/16/2019 7:36 PM
388	Express concerns to schools	1/16/2019 7:31 PM
389	Have face to face meetings to encourage discussion and get parents more involved in the process.	1/16/2019 7:28 PM
390	Information for parents on RSE should take into account the needs of parents who do not speak English as a first language. As a teacher in a Deis school with a high number of parents who do not speak English fluently, we find the information sheets far too difficult. Many parents are apprehensive and stop reading when they see the word "sex" and do not have an understanding of the rest of the programme. This leads to a high level of opting out.	1/16/2019 7:23 PM
391	Compulsory for school to send home the home links pages to expand discussion at home at the same time asschools input	1/16/2019 6:54 PM
392	Advise parents of option to not expose their children to adult programmes, that the soap operas are not good educational material!	1/16/2019 6:48 PM
393	Review content as often as is possible perhaps every 5 years	1/16/2019 6:47 PM
394	Talk to parents and teachers and keep the priests & ethos out of it.	1/16/2019 6:41 PM
395	Respect everyone believes and don't push all pupils to have this topics	1/16/2019 6:34 PM
396	Meet with parents	1/16/2019 6:11 PM
397	Consult parents on draft documents	1/16/2019 5:57 PM
398	Gather a steering group of parents and teachers to review content before curriculum is finalized	1/16/2019 5:56 PM
399	Have a meeting at the school before it's delivered	1/16/2019 5:23 PM
400	Have parents involved with teaching staff who may be trained in ways to deliver content such as therapists OTs social workers etc	1/16/2019 4:58 PM
401	The detailed informations taught to the children should be available to be viewed by the parents. Online or as brochures. Then we know as parents what our children were taught and can address issues or questions that might arise from these talks.	1/16/2019 4:51 PM
402	Promote acceptance of different people and their identities	1/16/2019 4:39 PM
403	Impressed with this consultation to date - thank you!	1/16/2019 4:36 PM
404	Keep us informed of what the kids are learning	1/16/2019 4:32 PM
405	Just a fluent communication of what the plan is and what is delivered.	1/16/2019 4:23 PM
406	Any amendments or changes to the course taken after this survey should be re communicated to the schools and parents	1/16/2019 4:21 PM
407	keeping evolving and reminding parents to get engaged	1/16/2019 4:08 PM
408	General consultation of the content to be delivered to children, parents are often not fully aware of material being delivered prior to its use	1/16/2019 4:07 PM
409	Not yet.	1/16/2019 4:05 PM
410	Keep website and content regularly updated	1/16/2019 3:58 PM
411	Get some child input	1/16/2019 3:46 PM
412	The talks about puberty should be enough.	1/16/2019 3:33 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

413	I want my child to be aware, I believe this will help him to be responsible. I would reply on the school to help me teach him these social things just as I reply on the school to teach him the academic things. I also think it's vital this is school lead so that children are being taught in a consistent manner. All children need awareness in this area and all parents can not be relied on to have the interest, will, or expertise to do this.	1/16/2019 3:21 PM
414	Maybe parents should receive information on what will be taught to children in schools on this topic.	1/16/2019 3:12 PM
415	Train teachers	1/16/2019 3:10 PM
416	I think it is important that a class of children are screened to ensure that children receive RSE when they are emotionally able for it.	1/16/2019 2:58 PM
417	Give us access to what will be taught so we can run through it first with our kids if we wish	1/16/2019 2:54 PM
418	Any new subjects should be discussed first with parents before being included in the programme	1/16/2019 2:53 PM
419	.	1/16/2019 2:47 PM
420	Religious perspectives and sexuality	1/16/2019 2:44 PM
421	Groups with links to religious groups should not be involved at all in the teaching or shaping of this content.	1/16/2019 2:31 PM
422	More online surveys	1/16/2019 2:23 PM
423	Stress the importance of consent. Discuss consent at all times.	1/16/2019 2:22 PM
424	More frequent updates on course content being delivered, so I will know what they have been taught that week. This will allow for discussion at home. Otherwise I may not hear about it from my child, or will only hear my child's take on the information provided. Many thanks for the opportunity to have a say!	1/16/2019 2:17 PM
425	Make smart phones and social media a blanket ban on all primary students	1/16/2019 2:14 PM
426	Courses for parents, communication is most important.	1/16/2019 2:11 PM
427	take on board all feedback as constructive but ensure you have the children's development and well being at the centre of any changes (as I am sure you do anyway).	1/16/2019 2:08 PM
428	Parents should be more involved in RSE education either by attending a course to know what contents the children might have questions on.	1/16/2019 2:04 PM
429	The course should be purely factual and scientific, any religious view shouldn't be included in the course	1/16/2019 2:00 PM
430	Training send booklets and curriculum to parents	1/16/2019 1:59 PM
431	Proper notification on same, put it on the section where you are issue booklist and curriculum for the year so parents are aware and a time frame as to when it will be done for example covered in the month of February	1/16/2019 1:56 PM
432	Follow up on surveys if more detail needs to be teased out, organise a conference on this area specifically.	1/16/2019 1:40 PM
433	External speakers on RSE issues should be avoided, especially those linked to any religious groups eg. ACCORD, and also in order that the school has an in-house teacher with special skills and training in RSE that the pupils may feel they can ask questions of as they occur to them through their schooling.	1/16/2019 1:34 PM
434	not sexual related but teaching about autism and hidden disabilities would be good.	1/16/2019 1:30 PM
435	Surveys like these	1/16/2019 1:17 PM
436	I don't believe NY child in 6th class has received any sexual education in school	1/16/2019 1:15 PM
437	Consultation day with parents after information has been shared on RSE programme	1/16/2019 1:15 PM
438	The vast majority of us understand the importance of good sexual education to prevent unwanted pregnancy, STIs and to protect mental health in our LGBTQ children. Keep reaching out to the parents as you are. Please don't be swayed by people who are against it. They can opt their children out. This is so important for the health of the next generation.	1/16/2019 1:14 PM
439	Variations in children	1/16/2019 1:11 PM
440	Parents are the main educators of their child but learning about changing bodies, being safe, reproduction, abuse and grooming should be a compulsory part of children's curriculum in school.	1/16/2019 1:10 PM

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441	Run an open talk day in schools and invite parents in to listen to the information you provide and at the end take suggestions from parents that could possibly be added to the curriculum	1/16/2019 1:10 PM
442	The Catholic or otherwise ethos of the school should not affect what is taught as RSE	1/16/2019 1:09 PM
443	Homosexuality should not be described as an usual type of family relationship in the curriculum. It should be stated that it is a special type of relationship.	1/16/2019 1:07 PM
444	Im not sure all parents should have input in this. Professionals in sexual and mental health are more important.	1/16/2019 1:05 PM
445	The training should take into account that there are many different types of relationships/families in our society (heterosexual, homosexual etc) and that people may feel attracted to same sex people and not to the opposite sex people in all cases. Children should be reassured that this is ok. The course should be delivered by non religious organisations and teachers should be trained to deliver the course. The course should also be delivered to parents because in my view it is not only the responsibility of the school to inform children around sexual ed. The parents play a very important role in this.	1/16/2019 1:03 PM
446	The curriculum should be as broad as possible and accurate. No group should have too much influence over education, be that religion or LGBT's. Education shouldn't be steered by vested interests and should be adaptable so it can change quickly with society and technology	1/16/2019 12:59 PM
447	more focus on online content and safety online. Also have a dedicated teacher in the school who is available for children to discreetly visit if they need to ask or check up on something.	1/16/2019 12:59 PM
448	Send a letter to all parents. Letters still will be read by more people than emails -in the country anyway	1/16/2019 12:55 PM
449	I think there should be consultation but there must be so many different views out there that it might curtail what's experts think is appropriate	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
450	Smart Phones - a real concern for children . Causes anxiety, worry bullying which must impact daily in the classroom. Give advice to parents , pupils , teachers .	1/16/2019 12:51 PM
451	Take note of social progress in this country, and ensure a scientific, caring, and non-religious environment in all RSE teaching. Again, no child should be made to feel wrong or weird, and even omitting their gender or sexuality from the conversation speaks volumes to them.	1/16/2019 12:46 PM
452	Give parents a copy of the course content so they can keep on top of it and informed weekly what will be discussed in class	1/16/2019 12:45 PM
453	They should not give too much credit to prudish points of view that would leave kids ignorant and open to be misguided about these very important issues.	1/16/2019 12:45 PM
454	They should not give too much credit to prudish points of view that would leave kids ignorant and open to be misguided about these very important issues.	1/16/2019 12:45 PM
455	Clear channels of Communication. A way for parents to voice concerns and clear up any concerns they might have regarding content.	1/16/2019 12:43 PM
456	Stop the use of religious organisations giving the course or at least monitor it closely to check they are following the curriculum	1/16/2019 12:32 PM
457	Share as much information as possible with parents. Don't assume the school/teachers are doing so just because they have the information. Some schools will say/feel they are giving such information but yet parents feel otherwise.	1/16/2019 12:31 PM
458	Have regular communication with parents. To the best of my recollection, this is the first time I have been asked my opinion on development of RSE course content.	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
459	From my understanding, it varies greatly about when parents feel is the right time to discuss that how a child is conceived.	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
460	Involve parents more with what is been thought in the classroom so we as parents can continue these conversations at home	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
461	Ask parents what they feel, need children to hear	1/16/2019 12:30 PM
462	I don't think religion should be a barrier to RSE , respectfully.	1/16/2019 12:27 PM
463	No.	1/16/2019 12:19 PM
464	Each parent should have their say in what their child is exposed to. I want my son taught according to the Catholic faith.	1/16/2019 12:16 PM
465	Email the class plan to parents weekly	1/16/2019 12:15 PM
466	Parents need to know course content full stop, not every child develops at the same rate some children are more advanced mentally for these sorts of conversations, some are not.	1/16/2019 12:08 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

467	COMMUNICATION !!!!!	1/16/2019 12:07 PM
468	National consultation is good to get a wide variety of views	1/16/2019 12:05 PM
469	RSE content should not be influenced by religious beliefs	1/16/2019 11:59 AM
470	Would be helpful to use social media to share these discussions and surveys with parents - would make it easier to share and engage more parents	1/16/2019 11:44 AM
471	Follow up on cases	1/16/2019 11:40 AM
472	Draft content papers(by year) should be issued to NPC Discussion & consultation should be held country wide to inform parents and get their views..	1/16/2019 11:37 AM
473	Not to base decisions on what might offend certain religions/the ethos of some schools. RSE is something that should transcend this or overrule it.	1/16/2019 11:31 AM
474	Same as above	1/16/2019 11:27 AM
475	What you're doing is already very helpful. Thank you.	1/16/2019 11:21 AM
476	I am an undergraduate psychology student & I currently preparing my thesis around this topic. I volunteered in my local school to observe the rollout of the RSE program & the pupils did ask a question about pornography and as it wasn't covered in the program it was left unanswered & the pupil said don't worry Sir.. I'll google it, I was horrified, I went home and googled it myself, and was shocked..	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
477	Just that religion shouldn't come into it.	1/16/2019 11:17 AM
478	Consult parents in survey form using more defined terms so parents can be properly informed if it's appropriate or inappropriate for their children	1/16/2019 11:09 AM
479	Assumptions as to what schools tell parents should not be made - it should be made clear to schools that parents should be informed each school year which aspects will be covered which will ensure that parents can discuss at home	1/16/2019 11:05 AM
480	Explain why some parents feel the need to withdraw their children. At the end of the day fear comes from lack of understanding and can develop to hate. If my child has a full education and his peers don't it may cause animosity on both sides if either child speaks inappropriately to each other	1/16/2019 10:57 AM
481	Parent and child dynamics and relationships need to be more open. Children should be more comfortable to discuss concerns with their parents without feeling that there would be a repercussions or create a tense atmosphere. Parents should also be made aware that their kids will be sexually active on some level before the age of 18, and should be more educated in on possible grooming or manipulation of their kids also, in order to recognise warning signals.	1/16/2019 10:56 AM
482	A feedback form when the classes have begun	1/16/2019 10:55 AM
483	Look at other countries eg finland, netherlands	1/16/2019 10:25 AM
484	Open communication see suggestions regarding meetings above	1/16/2019 9:41 AM
485	From my perspective, I would appeal to the NCCA to aim to broaden children's perspectives gently and appropriately, even if parents object. We wouldn't avoid teaching history in order to protect parents who teach children racist views. We shouldn't avoid normalising homosexuality to protect a conservative minority, however vocal.	1/16/2019 9:28 AM
486	Consider a co-running programme that could be taught simultaneously by parents at home.	1/16/2019 9:05 AM
487	Try not to get into explosive and skewed arguments in media. The media will choose those of extreme views to make a point and the truth of public opinion lies somewhere in the middle. But the more it is picked over by media and the more air time given to those who'd fight it, it may change opinion out of favour for RSE. This would be a bad thing. Don't let narrow minded people halt the progress you are making.	1/16/2019 7:38 AM
488	Speed up the changes!	1/16/2019 7:26 AM
489	Seek feedback but once the curriculum is agreed, I don't think it is appropriate for individual parents to influence what is provided by the school curriculum. Once the consultation process is complete and the curriculum agreed, parents need to be informed but not consulted on an ongoing basis.	1/16/2019 12:20 AM
490	My daughter is in 2nd class and this is the first time I have been given the opportunity to express my opinion. Definitely more contact with parents.	1/15/2019 10:39 PM

## Review of RSE Curriculum

491	Just be open and listen to everyone. None of us know how our children will turn out. We have to be honest when educating our children especially when it comes to this subject. Try and be as sensitive as possible when it comes to the course content. I really feel there should be different levels of content per class. For instance I don't want my 8 soon to be 9 year old daughter being taught about "pregnancy" and "contraception". She is far too young for that kind of information. I would rather approach these subjects myself as I do not want her getting a version of it that I do not agree with. Its very important that our kids are made aware of things but also that they remain innocent. Too much info sometimes can be a bad thing i think Thank you	1/15/2019 10:11 PM
492	Asking parents permission , we just got an email saying it's happening that's final really !.	1/15/2019 9:43 PM
493	I would bypass parents and deal with qualified child psychologist in relation to information that is appropriate for the children. Some parents can be a hindrance.	1/15/2019 9:15 PM
494	Nothing	1/15/2019 8:59 PM
495	Nothing	1/15/2019 8:53 PM
496	Maybe look at the brownies program it is very interactive and well taught.	1/15/2019 8:53 PM
497	Make sure the schools are involving the parents in what is being taught to the children at which ages... if the parents do not know (as I don't) what is being taught when, it is very difficult to have the corresponding suitable conversations with the children at home.	1/15/2019 8:49 PM
498	Encourage teachers/principals to be more communicative with parents about what is being taught as part of RSE for each class.	1/15/2019 8:48 PM
499	Maybe issue a booklet to inform us of what exactly is being taught under each heading. The school could inform us of what day it will be addressed so we are ready for any further questions.	1/15/2019 7:57 PM
500	I don't necessarily think parents views should be taken into consideration (the whole process would then become far too complex). A curriculum should be decided and then keep the parents informed.	1/15/2019 7:35 PM
501	It would be good to have a RSE officer in the school who the parents could contact for information or with any concerns that they may have regarding RSE. Whether it's a representative from the parents association or a teacher who are trained in the content of RSE course.	1/15/2019 7:26 PM
502	consent	1/15/2019 7:23 PM
503	All parents should be issued a copy of the agreed curriculum so as they know what their children are discussing in school, this would help both parents and children continue the discussion at home. It would also be of benefit to parents if the school could give an outline as to when and what topics are being taught/discussed on a weekly basis for all classes. This would give parents the opportunity to discuss the topic with the child at home prior to discussions in class. This may give the child a better understanding of the topic and it's importance in life.	1/15/2019 6:57 PM
504	Publicise when draft syllabus is available & seek consultation via several platforms to ensure a wide response	1/15/2019 6:57 PM
505	Engage a nationwide team of parents for input/ feedback	1/15/2019 6:56 PM
506	Consult with parents on current practice and proposed developments or changes	1/15/2019 6:52 PM
507	Transgender and LGBT	1/15/2019 6:44 PM
508	It is key that all children irrespective of the particular ethos of a school receive the same basic information and teaching in this area. I would want to know that my children will grow up in a society with a shared foundation level of instruction across that society in relation to relationships and sexuality.	1/15/2019 6:36 PM
509	If parents where given the information.	1/15/2019 6:10 PM
510	End of term(s) feedback survey and/or meeting. May even be good to have a specialist in to support a teacher parent meeting and ensure everything going ok. Alternatively a summary in school newsletter of how teachers felt the subjects went and if any queries came in then the offer to have an open meeting or one to one.	1/15/2019 5:57 PM
511	more involvement from parents	1/15/2019 5:44 PM
512	Leaflet on how to complement what is being done in school from home. Content depth of treatment for that year group/ cohort .	1/15/2019 5:18 PM
513	The need to ensure that parents retain the right to educate their own children within their own moral belief system.	1/15/2019 5:04 PM

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514	Our culture and traditions should be respected and cultivated and this includes sexuality, family and relationships.	1/15/2019 4:59 PM
515	I think the parents should be informed of exactly what is to be taught beforehand and when, so we can discuss with the child ourselves first and/or withdraw the child that day if we don't feel they are ready for that sort of information yet. Also consider whether discussion of things like this in public could be traumatic to abused children.	1/15/2019 4:58 PM
516	Religious ethos of a school should not influence the teaching of curriculum.	1/15/2019 4:48 PM
517	Indoctrinating children is much more harmful than teaching them facts of life. Please turn your attention how to protect children from RE, not from RSE.	1/15/2019 4:42 PM
518	Consult them, via direct contact and through their parents councils rather than consulting lobby groups and Quangos with certain and particular agendas!	1/15/2019 4:41 PM
519	Be informed in advance of it being taught in school and to give us a little advance warning of when so we can be prepared for any questions or can ensure that we ask questions to prompt a response.	1/15/2019 4:08 PM
520	Rse should be taught by someone who is qualified to do so specifically and all children are entitled to equal access to a full education regardless of the religious ethos of the school. It's a child's right to a full education.	1/15/2019 3:50 PM

