Mr/Ms Xxxxx Xxxxx, Principal &

Board of Management of

XXXXXX National School

XXXXXX

Co XXXXXX

11 June 2021

Dear Mx Xxxxx and Board of Management of XXXXXX National School,

**Parental Opposition to Flourish RSE Programme**

We are writing to you as a group of XX parents to express our objection to the use of the Flourish Programme as a curriculum to teach RSE to our children. We have each signed a copy of the enclosed letter highlighting the issues and serious concerns we have around its use. We want to take this opportunity to convey that we *do not* want the Flourish Programme to be used as a supplementary resource to the current RSE programme. It is our preference that the Flourish Programme *not* be used as a resource to teach our children sex education in any shape or form.

The signatories attached do not represent all concerned parents and are merely a snapshot. In order to ascertain the full extent of parental sentiment towards the Flourish programme, it would be useful to see a consultation process take place with the parents and guardians of all children in the school. However, if you do not intend to use this programme we would kindly ask that you clarify this with parents and rule out its use.

Consultation with parents is not only good practice, it is actually recommended under the Education Act 1998, Section 9.d[[1]](#footnote-1): ‘*A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall use its available resources to ... (d) promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school...’.*

Furthermore, under the SPHE Guidelines for Teachers for Junior Cycle[[2]](#footnote-2), p5: ‘*Support from the Board of Management, from the wider community and in particular from parents, will be necessary for the successful implementation of a school’s programme of SPHE. With such support, students can be enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions which respect their own dignity and the dignity of others.’*

Signatories to this letter want to work with the school, to support the school and to be consulted where significant changes are proposed to how RSE is taught to our children. In particular p. 41 from the SPHE Guidelines for Teachers states[[3]](#footnote-3) that: *‘The work of RSE in the school is designed to be supportive of the efforts of parents and their concerns for the health, safety, security, and wellbeing of their children. Parents are aware of the contemporary cultural context in which adolescents must grow to adulthood. They are aware of the religious traditions, civic, moral, spiritual, familial and personal values and priorities which they hold to be important and which they endeavour to hand on to their children. A school programme of relationships and sexuality education, planned in consultation with parents, should reflect these values. While the whole school community works in partnership with parents, particular efforts to promote such partnership should be made in the context of RSE.’*

The Minister for Education, Ms Norma Foley was asked about this in the Dáil recently and reiterated *that*: *‘…all schools are required to have an RSE policy. That policy, we must acknowledge, is developed in consultation with the entire school community including school management, parents, teachers and students, as appropriate. A school’s programme for RSE is developed and taught…in the context of the school’s RSE policy. It is a shared policy and one that has been achieved through collaboration and engagement with all of the partners within the school forum. Equally, it is important to say that the ethos of the school should never preclude learners from acquiring knowledge about the issues or from following the curriculum as outlined by the NCCA.’*

As parents, we agree with the National Parents Council’s[[4]](#footnote-4) Primary’s core values that: ‘when parents and schools work together, children do better’ and, in that spirit, we look forward to engaging with you on any changes to how the RSE curriculum will be taught.

Please accept this signed letter as an expression of our support for our children’s education about relationships and sexuality, with the utmost respect and appreciation for all that you have done, and continue to do, for our children during these extraordinarily challenging times,

We look forward to receiving a written response to our rejection of the Flourish RSE Programme.

Yours sincerely,

The Signatories

Parents and Guardians of children in XXXXXX National School

1. <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/51/section/9/enacted/en/html#sec9> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://sphe.ie/downloads/RESOURCES/SPHE%20TEACHER%20GUIDELINES.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://sphe.ie/downloads/RESOURCES/SPHE%20TEACHER%20GUIDELINES.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.npc.ie/about/npc-vision-mission-and-values [↑](#footnote-ref-4)