

Scoil Chormaic
COMMUNITY NATIONAL SCHOOL
SCOIL NÁISIÚNTA POBAIL



Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin
Baile Stiofán, Baile Brigín, Co. BÁC

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

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Introductory and Ethos Statement

Scoil Chormaic Community National School opened in September 2010 with Junior Infant classes. Until June 2011 the school was located in Castlelands and shared a building with Ardgillan Community College. From September 2011 to June 2012 Scoil Chormaic CNS shared a building with Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín. From September 2012 Scoil Chormaic CNS was located in Castlemill on a shared campus with Balbriggan Educate Together and Flemington Community Centre. In January 2018 Scoil Chormaic CNS moved to its permanent home in Stephenstown, Balbriggan on a shared campus with Bremore Educate Together Secondary School. Scoil Chormaic CNS caters for the full range of primary classes, from Junior Infants to Sixth class, and four Autism Special Classes.

Scoil Chormaic CNS is a co-educational, multi-belief primary school which is under the patronage of Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board. It is the policy and ethos of Scoil Chormaic CNS to respect, celebrate and recognise diversity in all areas of human life. Children attending Scoil Chormaic CNS will be taught and encouraged to view diversity as something which reflects the community from which the children are drawn. The school will endeavour to encourage the children committed to its care to have a pride in what makes them different and a belief in that difference, when respected and valued, gives strength and vibrancy to the total school community and the wider community in which they live.

As part of its ethos, Scoil Chormaic CNS welcomes children from all beliefs, cultures, and ethnicities. We believe that respect and cooperation between all the partners of staff, pupils and parents / guardians are essential for the holistic development of all children in our care. In common with the other Community National Schools under DDLETB patronage, Scoil Chormaic CNS implements the Goodness Me! Goodness You! Multi-belief programme under the NCCA. The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual. Scoil Chormaic CNS seeks to provide a

high standard of education where each child is encouraged to reach their personal potential. The school is committed to a spirit of inclusion, equality and harmony where each child and member of the school community is valued and treated with respect.

Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board was established in 2013 from the merging of the two previously existing Vocational and Education Committees (VECs) County Dublin VEC and Dun Laoghaire VEC. They have been providing education and training for all ages and are part of 16 ETBs in Ireland. DDLETB provides community based, inclusive, innovative, excellence, care and respectful educational experience. Under DDLETB patronage, a management board was established in October 2017. The board of management will be committed to the successful implementation of recent legislation, in particular the Education Act, 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000. The Board of Management will fully subscribe to the principles of partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion and respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

Scoil Chormaic CNS will operate within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and will follow the Primary School Curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). The on-going internal monitoring by principal and staff will be supported by external evaluation by the Department of Education Inspectorate.

*Ethos= beliefs, values and practices underpinning the life of the school (ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos 2022). Scoil Chormaic CNS is a DDLETB school. The ETB ethos is articulated in the ETB Ethos Statement which affirms that ETB schools are state run, co-educational and multi-denominational schools underpinned by the core values of: Excellence in Education; Care; Equality; Community and Respect.

Rationale

Scoil Chormaic Community National School has a responsibility to implement a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy as part of the wider Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) strand of the curriculum. Our school aims to develop an RSE policy that reflects our ethos of respect for diversity, inclusion and partnership in education, as well as our school vision. Parental involvement is considered integral to the effective implementation of RSE, as Scoil Chormaic CNS believes that RSE is a shared responsibility. This policy will be available to parents to inform them of the RSE programme. Parents are also welcome to serve as committee members on the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy. This policy is in accordance with the 'National Curriculum and Guidelines for RSE' as prepared by the 'National Council for Curriculum and Assessment' (NCCA).

Context

This Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy is developed within the context of a Community National School under the patronage of the Education and Training Board (ETB) and informed by ETBI guidance and the core CNS values of equality, respect, inclusion and care. Our school serves a diverse community, encompassing a wide range of cultures, beliefs, family structures and life experiences. In keeping with the ETBI model, RSE is delivered in an inclusive, child-centered and respectful manner that supports pupils in developing a positive sense of self, wellbeing and healthy relationships. The programme is implemented in line with the Primary School Curriculum (1999), the Department of Education RSE Policy and Guidelines, and relevant legislation, and is taught in a developmentally appropriate and sensitive way. Parents/guardians are recognised as the primary educators of their children and are supported through open communication and partnership in delivering the RSE programme.

Aims

Definition of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in an age-appropriate manner and in ways that help them think and act morally, with care and responsibility. This work will be based on developing a positive self-image, promoting respect for themselves and others, and providing age-appropriate information.

Aims of RSE

- Enhance the child's personal development, self-esteem and well-being.
- Help the child develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- Foster understanding of and a healthy attitude towards human sexuality and relationships within a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- Enable the child to acquire understanding of and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction.
- Develop in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.
- Develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- Enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

Definition of Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE)

SPHE encompasses the all-round personal development of each child; its aim is to equip children with the skills to deal with the changing and challenging world in which they live. SPHE is the process that enables pupils to develop an understanding of themselves. It helps them choose and follow a healthy lifestyle and to play responsible roles as individuals and as members of society.

Aims of the SPHE Curriculum

- Promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- Foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others, and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
- Promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- Enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life, both now and in the future.
- Develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- Enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and

understand the interdependent nature of the world.

(Curriculum Statement, pg. 9)

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

Throughout the school year, SPHE is taught as a subject from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. The programme covers a wide range of topics at age-appropriate levels. RSE forms part of this programme. RSE is a spiral curriculum that ensures topics are taught in a developmental manner throughout a child's primary school years. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

Myself:

- Self-Identity
- Taking care of my body
- Growing and Changing
- Safety and Protection
- Making decisions (3rd Class onwards)

Myself and Others:

- Myself and my family
- My friends and other people
- Relating to others

Guidelines for the Management and Organisation of RSE

Informing and Involving Parents

Scoil Chormaic Community National School recognises that parents are the primary educators of their children and that the home is the natural environment in which RSE should take place. The role of the school is therefore one of support. A copy of this policy will be made available at our school website (<http://www.scoilchormaicns.ie/>) and to any parent on request from the school office.

Content

One half-hour period per week is timetabled in each class for SPHE; RSE will be included within the content taught during this time. The approach to teaching RSE will be kept as normal as possible and delivered within the child's class by the class teacher. The class teacher, and in some cases a guest speaker, will teach the sensitive issues of the RSE programme to pupils in fifth and sixth classes. Parents will be notified of the dates and times of any guest speaker visits to the school. Parents will be notified in writing before the RSE programme commences.

RSE in the Classroom

When implementing the programme, Scoil Chormaic Community National School will endeavour to show respect for and sensitivity towards the children's diverse cultural family backgrounds.

- The curriculum will be taught in an age-appropriate manner at all times.
- The curriculum will be taught from Junior Infants to 6th class. It will be taught through a spiral curriculum (key topics will be revisited in a developmental manner at regular intervals).
- The materials taught will reflect the children's needs.
- It is intended that most themes will be revisited every second year.
- The RSE curriculum will be taught through;
 - Stories and poems
 - Classroom discussion
 - Group work
 - Games
 - Art activities
 - Reflection
 - Circle time
 - Guest speaker (if required)

Delivery of the RSE Programme

The programme is divided into two main parts;

1. The **general programme**, which contains content such as;
 - Friendship
 - Self-identity
 - Family
 - Self-esteem
 - Growing up
2. The second section will deal with any **sensitive and sexual content**.

This section of the programme will be delivered by the class teacher. A guest speaker may be invited to address fifth- and sixth-class students. If so, parents will be notified in writing before the guest speaker visits the school.

A Developmental Approach

Teaching on relationships and sexuality will be delivered within SPHE. All content objectives will be taught in a developmentally appropriate way by the time children leave 6th class. All issues will be discussed with sensitivity, professionalism and awareness of the varying levels of development within a class. Possible sensitive issues, such as naming body parts and sexual intercourse, will be covered within the strand units “Taking care of my body”, “Growing and changing” and “Safety and Protection”.

Language

The acquisition of appropriate language in RSE is crucial to enable children to communicate confidently about themselves, their sexuality and their relationships. Not being familiar with the biological terms of the body can put children at a disadvantage. We will provide children with the correct and appropriate language outlined in the RSE materials.

Class Level	Language
Junior and Senior Infants	Womb Breast Breast-feeding Penis Vagina Vulva
First and Second Class	Revise above Urethra Navel
Third and Fourth Class	Revise above Developing foetus

	Changes in puberty (4th Class only): Hormones, menstruation, menstrual cycle, period, ovaries, egg (ova), fallopian tube, ovulation, uterus, nipples, pubic hair.
Fifth and Sixth Class	Revise above Puberty (see RSE Manual and Busy Bodies for additional language), testicles/testes, scrotum, cervix, wet dreams, reproduction (see RSE Manual and Busy Bodies for additional language)

Explicit Questions

Questions about the programme's sensitive content will be answered by the class teacher, depending on the nature of the question and whether it relates to topics covered in the RSE programme, in line with our school ethos and this policy. When deciding whether to answer questions, the teacher should consider the students' age, the RSE programme content, the school ethos, and the RSE policy. If topics arise that are not covered in the curriculum, children will be asked to address these questions to their parents, and, where needed, parents' involvement and cooperation may be sought.

Confidentiality and Child Protection

Where there is a disclosure or a teacher has any concerns about a child, they will report these concerns to the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person. The school refers to the Child Protection Policy, which complies with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' (2017). The Designated Liaison Person is Deirdre Corcoran (Principal). The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Alan Weston. (See the Child Protection Policy and the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for further

information.) These policies are available on the school website.
(<http://www.scoilchormaicns.ie/>) and on request from the school office.

Guest Speaker: Fifth and Sixth Class

As with all subjects, guest speakers may be invited to the school to speak to the children. Guest speakers will be familiar with the RSE programme, our school community, and our RSE policy. The guest speaker may address pupils in the fifth and sixth classes. Parents/guardians will be notified of the relevant dates and times.

Scoil Chormaic Community National School respects parents' and guardians' wishes as the primary educators of their children. We believe that teaching about sexuality is a deeply personal matter and should be in accordance with parents' cultural and religious norms.

Scoil Chormaic Community National School will notify parents in writing in advance of a talk by a guest speaker. Care will be taken to ensure that the guest speaker covers only the content agreed by the school. A copy of this policy will be provided to the guest speaker, outlining the appropriate content. The guest speaker will be made aware of the school's ethos and the manner in which the RSE programme should be delivered. The Principal is responsible for checking the credentials of all guest speakers and ensuring that they are Garda vetted. The class teacher will remain with the class throughout the day while the guest speaker is present. On the day when the guest speaker/class teacher covers the sensitive topics, the children will be: 1. Taught together initially, 2. Divided by gender into two groups, male and female, and 3. Brought together again for consolidation. All children will receive RSE Education on both genders, but will receive more specific education on their own gender when divided by gender.

Topics to be Covered in Fifth and Sixth Class

- Naming of the male and the female body parts using appropriate anatomical terms. (5th and 6th Class)
- Discussing the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth. (5th and 6th Class)
- Identifying and discussing the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty. (5th and 6th Class)
- Understanding the reproductive system of both male and female adults. (5th and 6th Class)

- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship. **(6th Class only)**
- Discussing and exploring the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent. **(6th Class only)**
- Exploring and discussing how relationships between boys and girls can change as they grow and develop. **(6th Class only)**

Withdrawing Pupils from the Sensitive Topics of the RSE Programme

Our RSE programme is inclusive, so we actively discourage withdrawal. A parent's right to withdraw their child from themes pertaining to sensitive issues, as outlined above, in 5th and 6th Class, will be honoured on the understanding that the parent takes full responsibility for this aspect of education. Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child is responsible for arranging supervision for their child on the days/times when the sensitive topics will be covered.

Parents who opt to withdraw their children from these sensitive areas of the RSE lessons should also be aware that material taught during the RSE programme may be discussed by children outside class time, and that staff will have no control over which aspects of the information are shared. Furthermore, television, videos, advertising, magazines, computers and friends may be informal sources of information that influence children's attitudes to relationships and sexuality. Parents may not even be aware of, or indeed may not like, the messages their children receive from these informal sources.

Pupils With Special Educational Needs

Adaptations to content delivery will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. Consultation with parents/guardians in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.

Children may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole-class work. Children may work in smaller groups or 1:1 on adapted and suitable material. Any specific or different objectives related to the pupils' own learning needs should be detailed in their Continuum of Support File, in consultation with parents/guardians.

RSE and Spraoi

RSE in our Spraoi classes is delivered in a developmentally appropriate, inclusive and needs-based way that recognises the learning profiles of pupils with autism. RSE is part of the core SPHE programme and supports pupils in developing knowledge, attitudes and skills to build healthy relationships, understand personal boundaries, and develop self-awareness and safety strategies. Teachers use adapted language, visual supports and differentiated approaches to ensure access and understanding, with individual needs reviewed through the school's continuum of support. The following resources are used: RSE Curriculum, Vanderbilt Programme, Sexuality and Relationship Education for Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Parents/guardians, as the primary educators in RSE, are engaged in planning, informed about the content, particularly its sensitive aspects, and work in partnership with teachers and relevant professionals to ensure that each pupil's rights, dignity and wellbeing are respected throughout the delivery of RSE.

Resources

We use the RSE, Busy Bodies and Stay Safe programme, along with other resources, such as books, photocopiable materials and PowerPoint presentations, that are deemed suitable by the principal/SPHE Curricular Team in consultation with a parent representative.

We may also invite other visitors, such as a mother, a father, and a new baby, when teaching curriculum topics. These adults may be invited to speak with the pupils about relevant experiences.

Monitoring, Review and Update

The Board of Management of Scoil Chormaic Community National School supports and fosters the development of this RSE policy. This policy will be reviewed informally at planning meetings and formally every two years. As with all our policies, parents have access to this policy on our school website and, on request, from the school office.

The successful implementation of this policy requires the full support and active co-operation of all staff, parents and pupils in the school.

Success Criteria

The RSE policy will be considered successfully implemented when:

- RSE is taught **consistently at all class levels** in line with the Primary School Curriculum and DES guidelines.
- Teachers use **age-appropriate, accurate and respectful language**, including correct anatomical terminology.
- A **safe, inclusive learning environment** is evident, where pupils feel comfortable engaging with RSE content.
- Parents/guardians are **informed and supported**, and clear communication procedures are in place.
- The delivery of RSE is **reviewed regularly** and reflects the school's ethos and commitment to child wellbeing.

Roles and Responsibilities

It will be necessary to review this policy regularly to ensure the optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school. A designated post holder, in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum team, is responsible for coordinating this review, and in their absence, Deirdre Corcoran. Those involved in the review will include:

- Teachers
- Pupils
- Parents
- Post holders/plan coordinator
- SPHE Curricular Team
- Management/DES/Others

Implementation and Timeframe for Review

This policy was reviewed during the 2025-2026 school year. It will be implemented immediately in its entirety once agreed by the Board of Management. The policy will be reviewed as necessary.

All members of the school community will be informed of the full contents.

Ratification and communication

This policy has been communicated directly to staff and will also be made available electronically. A hard copy will be available alongside other school policies.

Signed by

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Principal of Scoil Chormaic CNS



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TIPS FOR PARENTS

WHAT IS RSE?

Relationships & Sexuality education (RSE) is a key component of the Social Personal & Health Education (S.P.H.E.) curriculum in primary school. This also forms part of the new Wellbeing curriculum as per the NCCA Primary Curriculum Framework (2023). RSE provides children with opportunities to develop knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practical skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships with self and others. In addition to learning about relationships, RSE invites children to explore concepts such as physical development and human sexuality. Topics are explored with children in a developmentally appropriate, spiral nature throughout their primary education. Topics addressed in RSE include exploration of feelings, friendships, inclusive families, puberty, pregnancy and conception. If you would like to view the RSE curriculum, teaching documents and resources, please do so on the following link by Oide Primary Wellbeing: <https://oide.ie/primary/home/wellbeing/sphe/resources/>



WHY TEACH RSE?

As a parent, you are the primary educator of your child. Just as you help your child to grow and develop in other ways, consciously supporting the development of your child's sexuality education will help them achieve the skills, attitudes and values they need in order to have healthy relationships with themselves and others now and in the future. Research tells us that sexuality education has a positive impact on young people's sexual health knowledge and their related behaviours (UNESCO, 2018). Irish research would suggest that in general parents feel that RSE is an important topic to discuss with their children at home. However, many parents feel ill equipped to do this effectively (Conlon, 2018). Having accurate and age appropriate conversations with your child can help them develop healthy behaviours in relation to sexuality and sex. This article highlights tips and resources you can use to aid you in this instance.



TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT RSE

Start early and use correct anatomical language

Open communication is the cornerstone of high quality RSE. As with other topics, it is best to use naturally occurring 'teachable moments' to talk to your child about sexuality. It could be as simple as using correct anatomical language (penis & vulva) when labelling genitals in the bathtub instead of alternative, informal names. By teaching your child correct terminology early, you are creating an environment for open, healthy and positive communication about the body. In Irish primary schools, the anatomically correct language is covered in the Junior/ Senior Infant SPHE and Science curricula. Many infant teachers teach this language through the following activity which you can try at home too!

Give a doll a bath

You will need to use anatomically correct dolls (available online and in toy shops), a toy bath and bath time items such as shampoo and sponges. Name all the body parts as you wash them. Encourage your child to do the same.

You could follow up this activity by reading 'Tom's Power Flower' developed for parents by the HSE. This is a story to be read by parents to their children, and explains where babies come from in a developmentally appropriate way.



Keep it simple and honest

Keep your answers simple and to the point. Avoid over-explaining. After all, if your child wants to hear more, they will generally ask. The following link gives developmentally appropriate responses to some of the questions you could be asked:

<https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/for-parents/sample-questions-and-answers/>

Dealing with the 'tricky' questions

When answering 'tricky' questions, ask your child clarifying questions first to see what they already know before giving them additional information. If you're not sure how to answer straight away, tell them you will get back to them later with the answer. It's really important that you then answer their question as soon as you can afterwards.

Talking about puberty and sexual intercourse

Busy Bodies is a free, online resource developed by the HSE to support you when talking to your older child about puberty, sexual intercourse and growing up. It consists of a series of videos with an accompanying booklet and it can be accessed on the following link:

<https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/for-parents/busy-bodies-english-language.pdf>

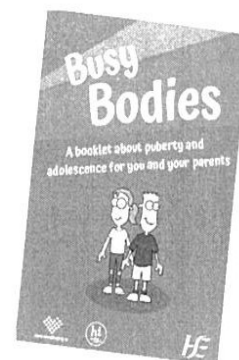
Teach your child body ownership

It is important to teach your child that their body belongs to them and that they don't have to let anybody touch them in a way that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable. This is the very beginning of teaching your child about consent. In school, we use the Stay Safe Programme to teach this message and you can access this programme on the following link:

www.staysafe.ie

Teach facts

Talk to your child about your own beliefs and opinions on sexuality matters, including what makes a healthy relationship.



Listen to your child. Be a 'tellable' parent.

The key to good communication is listening. Your child will know if you're not fully tuned into what they are saying. Take time to sit or walk with them and listen to what they have to say, particularly when they are discussing their worries, concerns or fears.

You are not alone! Reach out and seek support

Connect with family members or friends who have children of a similar age or older, they may have useful tips to share with you. Then decide on the advice you deem most appropriate for you and your child. Connect with your child's school for support. You may be able to view your school's RSE policy on the school website or you can ask to see it. Talk to your child's teacher if you have any particular concerns. They will be able to offer you support and signpost you to other useful resources that may support you.



Making the 'Big Talk' Many Small Talks - HSE Resources for Parents

Making the 'Big Talk' many small talks: video collection

The HSE have created a set of animated videos to support talking through common questions your child might ask about relationships and sexuality. You can access them on the **HSE Health and Wellbeing YouTube channel**.



Making the 'Big Talk' many small talks - Parent Booklets

These booklets give information to parents wishing to talk to their children about relationships and healthy sexuality development. They can be ordered free of charge from the HSE and accessed on the healthpromotion.ie website.

Parents of children ages 4 - 7:

www.healthpromotion.ie/media/documents/HCP01151_LPZYp79.pdf

Parents of children ages 8 - 12:

www.healthpromotion.ie/media/documents/HCP01380_XT7509C.pdf

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS:

- www.sexualwellbeing.ie - This is the HSE's sexual health website. It has a section to help parents talk with their children about relationships, sexuality and growing up.
- www.staysafe.ie - This is the link to the mandatory child abuse prevention and anti-bullying programme called 'Stay Safe'. You will find all the teaching materials here.
- www2.hse.ie/my-child - This HSE site provides information on all aspects of pregnancy, baby and toddler health including healthy sexuality development.
- www.webwise.ie - This website is part-funded by the Department of Education and offers advice and information for parents and schools to help them promote online safety to their children and students.
- www.curriculumonline.ie/primary/curriculum-areas/social-personal-and-health-education - This is the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment website for SPHE.

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS:

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule> - NSPCC: Pants (The Underpants Rule) is a simple, inclusive resource for teaching young children about personal safety. This website contains adapted resources for children with additional needs including videos for children who are deaf.
- <https://vkc.vumc.org/healthybodies/> - The Vanderbilt Kennedy Centre have created the Healthy Bodies Toolkit for Boys and the Healthy Bodies Toolkit for Girls. The resources in the appendices are similar to PECS and can be used to make social stories and sorting activities. They have been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish and Thai.
- <https://www.middletownautism.com/training/parents> - Middletown Centre for Autism facilitate training for parents on RSE. Keep an eye on the training section of their website to see when the next free course is running.

