



Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Meitheal (Support) Misneach (Courage) Bród (Pride)

SPHE Policy Document Approved by BOM 12/5/26

College Mission Statement:

Our College is a vibrant, friendly, learning community where students, parents and teachers are encouraged, supported and challenged in pursuit of the highest standards of achievement and academic excellence.

We foster equality, respect and integrity in our College. We embrace diversity and recognise that everyone is unique and has a positive contribution to make.

Rationale

SPHE is an essential part of the curriculum as it helps our students develop the knowledge, skills and values needed to navigate everyday life with confidence. During adolescence, students face important social, emotional and personal challenges including relationships, mental health, decision making, self-management and wellbeing. SPHE provides a safe and supportive space to explore these issues, build self-awareness and learn how to make responsible choices. It also promotes respect, resilience and communication skills, helping our students to become healthy, informed and active members of our society.

Syllabus Aims and Objectives

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in community and for leisure.

SPHE aims

- Develop self-awareness, self-esteem and empathy in students.
- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Equip students with decision-making skills to make healthy and informed life choices.
- Foster respectful relationships and understanding of diversity.



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- Encourage active and responsible citizenship and an awareness of social responsibilities.
- Encourage students to develop resilience and skills to overcome barriers, to allow them reach their full potential
- Provide students with a safe environment to explore personal, social, and health-related issues

Our Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and to care for themselves and others.

Our programme helps students to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development.

Our students are enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and the values and dignity of others.

Our students are encouraged to develop their sense of self-worth by playing a positive role in contributing to school life and the wider community.

Our students recognise that there is a diversity of life choices and life styles that they can consider. Each choice offers unique opportunities.

Our Whole School Approach

The processes of all teaching and learning have implications for personal and social development.

The ways in which members of the staff relate to one another, in this college and to the students, and the quality of relationships between the students themselves, form the foundation for personal and social development in our College. Therefore, every teacher and staff member, every class and extra-curricular activity continues to offer opportunities for enhancing the personal and social development of the student.

A supportive school environment is essential if SPHE is to be effective. In our College:

- people feel valued
- self-esteem is fostered
- respect, tolerance and fairness are evident



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- high expectations and standards are promoted
- there is support for those with difficulties
- open communication is the norm
- effort is recognised and rewarded
- uniqueness and difference are valued
- conflict is handled constructively
- initiative and creativity are encouraged
- social, moral and civic values are promoted.

The principles of pride, courage, teamwork, respect, tolerance and reward for effort permeates our whole College. These are important values of our College that encompasses the aims and objectives of SPHE.

Socio-economic background of our students as well as their physical and cultural environment can have a significant impact on the range of choices and options that they may face. This college gives due regard to these contextual factors in planning our social, personal and health programme.

Teachers

- Teachers assigned to SPHE must have an understanding of and a familiarity with the methodologies associated with education in this area.
- Teachers assigned to teach SPHE will be afforded the relevant CPD in so far as it is possible.
- All teaching is challenging, but teaching an SPHE programme is a particular challenge, demanding a range of skills and a high degree of sensitivity.
- Those involved in the SPHE programme in a school will need continuing support from their colleagues, from the principal and Board of Management, and from a range of other agencies that are in a position to offer in-career support.
- Meetings between the SPHE team, the Guidance Department, Learning Support Department and Language Support Department will be planned for. The Guidance Department will help with the Study Skills Seminars for the SPHE Programme.



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SPHE Team

The SPHE Team consists of:

- Teachers of the programme
- The SPHE Co-ordinators
- A guidance counsellor
- A member of School Leadership Team
- Learning Support Department and Language Support Department

The team will meet regularly during Subject Department Meeting times.

Commented [SS1]: Needs to be stressed with staff who fall under these headings that they need to attend subject department meetings for SPHE. This hasn't happened this year despite HOD requesting staff attend meetings.

Parents:

The school recognises parents and guardians as the primary educators of their children. The role of the school is to support and complement that work through a planned educational programme.

The school will seek to maintain open communication with parents and guardians about the aims and broad content of the SPHE programme. Parents and guardians may contact the school if they wish to discuss any aspect of the programme.

RSE

Please consult separate RSE Policy document for information on this programme

Student Assessment

Assessment needs to value and recognise what students have done or completed successfully, thereby raising their self-esteem. A variety of approaches to the assessment of individual achievement will therefore need to be practiced by teachers. Teachers need to exercise caution in judging the individual performance of pupils, in terms of attitudes, values and behaviours apparent, as their own attitudes, values and behaviours will undoubtedly have an influence on this process.



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At Senior Cycle, assessment involves gathering, interpreting, using and reporting information about the processes and outcomes of learning. Varied assessment strategies will support student learning and provide information to teachers and students that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be adapted to best suit individual learners.

At Junior Cycle assessment may take the form of:

- Homework
- A reflective piece in their SPHE OneNote
- Questionnaires
- A Classroom Based Assessment that is reported on their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement
- Self-Assessment during Pause and Reflect Week

At Senior Cycle assessment will take the form of a series of Key Assignments decided on by the teacher in collaboration with the students. The Key Assignments are varied in the topics they address and in the kinds of learning they enable our students to demonstrate. They will be chosen to allow students to show evidence of their learning.

Achievements of pupils in SPHE are reported to parents at the end of each Term.

Teaching and learning styles

SPHE will be taught by teachers who are supported in delivering SPHE using appropriate methodologies and approved resources. Teaching approaches will be student-centred, respectful and suited to the maturity of the students, and may include discussion, reflection, scenarios, group work, active methodologies, agreed classroom procedures and teacher-led explanation.

All teaching will be delivered in a factual, balanced and sensitive manner. Teachers will use professional judgement in responding to questions and will maintain clear boundaries so that classroom discussion remains safe, respectful and educational.

External speakers or programmes may occasionally supplement aspects of the school's SPHE provision where this is considered educationally beneficial. Such input must support, not replace, the role of the teacher and the planned SPHE programme.



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Any external provider used by the school must be consistent with Department guidance, the ethos of the college's safeguarding responsibilities. Teachers remain present and retain responsibility for class management and follow-up learning.

Teaching SPHE to students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN)

Coláiste Pobail Setanta highlights its commitment to inclusion and to meeting the diverse needs of students, including through dedicated supports. SPHE should therefore be accessible to students with additional educational needs, with content and methodologies adapted as necessary to support participation and understanding.

Teachers will use appropriate differentiation, in consultation where necessary with relevant support staff, to ensure that all students can engage meaningfully with the programme.

Resources

www.SPHE.ie

www.curriculum.ie

www.PDST.ie

www.JCT.ie/wellbeing

Text books

1st Year: You've Got This! Year 1

2nd Year: You've Got This! Year 2

3rd Year: You've Got This! Year 3

4th Year : You've Got This! Year 4

5th Year: You've Got This! Year 5

6th Year: You've Got This! Year 6



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Additional Resources

DES SPHE Syllabus

NCCA Guidelines for Teachers

HSE

Lockers Pack: Sharing of Explicit Images

Belong To Resources

Before You Decide

Oide Padlet Resources for Teachers

www.sphe.ie

www.tes.co.uk

www.scoilnet.ie

www.healthyschools.org

www.reachout.com

www.spunout.ie

www.letsomeoneknow.ie

www.healthypromotion.ie

www.tacklebullying.ie

www.B4udecide.ie

Monitoring and review

The SPHE team is responsible for monitoring the standards of students' work and the quality of teaching and learning. This will happen during the Subject Department Meetings. Like other departments in the College, the SPHE Department encourages peer observation and team teaching. The monitoring and reporting of SPHE is to be done through formative assessment.



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Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator will be elected by the SPHE Team.

The co-ordinator will:

- support colleagues in the teaching of SPHE
- distribute information about current developments in the subject, inform the staff of any relevant in-service courses or any progress or issues in the area of curriculum development
- ensure that the SPHE Department Plan, including the schemes of works, be reviewed and amended as necessary to be in line with the Department of Education and Science's curricula as well as to the College's policies.

Time Allocation, Timetabling

The students of SPHE have 1 period a week for 58 minutes across all year groups in line with the new Department of Education guidelines.

Confidentiality and Referrals

Sensitive Issues

Group discussion will be of a general nature, and will not be personally directed at any person, in accordance with the agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by the class teacher, or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The facilitators may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in checking whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. Should a teacher be concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal without identifying the student.

The teacher has the responsibility to set clear boundaries to ensure the classroom is a safe place for everyone, including themselves. While there are no definitive guidelines, the teacher should bear the following in mind when making decisions about where to set limits:

Age of student

School ethos

Schools RSE policy

RSE Curriculum Guidelines.



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Referral

While it is acknowledged that the teachers have a professional obligation to impart course content, the needs of students will be addressed in a caring and supportive manner. Where it is appropriate, the teacher may refer students to other supportive links within the College. As far as possible this should be done in negotiation with the student. Teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal without identifying the student.

Confidentiality

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to students in SPHE classes where a child protection, welfare or safety concern arises. Any disclosure or concern will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child safeguarding procedures and relevant statutory requirements.

Students will be treated with care and sensitivity, but the welfare of the student will always take priority. This policy operates in conjunction with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and relevant reporting procedures.

Any disclosure will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in compliance with the Child Protection Policy.

The Designated Liaison Person in Colaiste Pobail Setanta is the Principal; Mr. Liam Walsh and the Deputy Liaison Person in Colaiste Pobail Setanta is Mr Peter Whitty.

Teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year, remind them at necessary points throughout the year and where possible before making a disclosure.

Cross-Curricular Planning

SPHE is the concern of the whole staff of the College and as a staff we need to model behaviour and respect in all our relationships. SPHE should be vital through the cross-curricular introduction of the importance of Wellbeing being introduced to schools. This should be kept in mind when allocating the appointed 400 wellbeing hours in 2019.

Curriculum Content

SPHE is a core pillar of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme. The six indicators of wellbeing – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware – describe what is important for young people and their wellbeing. The SPHE course helps young people to develop all six indicators of wellbeing.



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This Junior Cycle course in SPHE is designed to support students in developing a positive sense of self and a capacity to care for themselves and others. It is designed around four interconnected strands – 1. Understanding Myself and Others; 2. Making Healthy Choices; 3. Relationships and Sexuality and 4. Emotional Wellbeing – and three cross-cutting elements: , dialogue, and reflection and action.

By building on the learning in Junior Cycle SPHE, learning in Senior Cycle SPHE enables students to deepen the core skills of self-awareness, self-management, self-regulation, responsible decision-making, social awareness and relationship skills. Senior Cycle SPHE also provides an opportunity for students to extend their health literacy skills, as they learn how to access, understand, appraise and use information and services related to health and wellbeing and build their confidence to communicate and act upon this information.

It is designed around three strands – 1. Health and Wellbeing; 2. Relationships and Sexuality and 3. Into Adulthood – and three cross-cutting elements: Thinking critically and empathetically, Exercising rights, responsibilities and inclusivity and Being health literate.

The SPHE curriculum will follow the **Department of Education's guidelines**, covering:

Personal Health and Wellbeing: Mental health, self-management, and emotional awareness.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE): Healthy relationships, consent, and sexual health.

Substance Use and Addiction: Alcohol, drugs, and smoking education.

Online Safety: Responsible use of technology and dealing with cyberbullying.

Active Citizenship: Respect for diversity, equality, and human rights.

Life Skills: Stress management, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

Subject Planning for a Culturally Diverse Society

In developing our planning in this area we extensively consulted with the NCCA's document entitled *"Intercultural Education in Post-Primary School"*.

Our resources and our teaching approaches consider the idea of a culturally diverse society for the students. In each of the modules of SPHE, the teacher needs to be aware of the approaches of different cultures to sensitive areas. Here are some examples:

Belonging and Integrating - It is important to understand that students may come to learning experiences with different cultural perspectives which may affect how they participate. E.g.



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different experiences of family, a Muslim background may have a different outlook on alcohol to students brought up in the Christian tradition.

Differences and similarities – It is important that students are made aware that difference does not mean different and that we all have similarities.

Physical Health – There are a number of culturally sensitive areas that arise in this module, for example, different perceptions of modesty and different practices at puberty. The focus of these lessons is to facilitate a positive experience for each student.

Emotional Health – Different cultures adopt different approaches to emotional development. Appropriate expressions of anger, affection, or grief, for example, can be particular to a culture. What is important here is that students consider the extent to which expressions of emotion are respectful of the person themselves and others.

Friendships – Each class group will represent a wide range of values, attitudes and beliefs about what friendship means and what is appropriate in friendships between same sex and opposite sex. These lessons should help students to understand and respect differences.

Relationships and Sexuality Education – The teacher needs to be aware of cultural differences and attitudes to relationships and sexuality. A letter will be sent to all parents, of a year group, prior to the relationships and sexuality module reminding them that this module is being taught.



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