



KILKENNY CITY
VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
KCVS SPHE POLICY



kcetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board



Mission Statement

We Aim:

To provide all our students with the best possible education in a caring, disciplined and affirming environment.

To develop the personal, academic and spiritual potential of each student.

To foster a sense of self-esteem, honesty and respect among all the members of our school community.

To create on-going opportunities for staff and parents which will enable them to understand their role as educators.

To provide a welcoming environment for parents where they are partners in the education of their children.

Introductory Statement

This SPHE policy was developed in accordance with:

- The school mission statement
- Guidelines as set out in Circular C0037/2010, C0028/2023, C0043/2018, C0027/2008, C0012/2025
- Junior Cycle SPHE Specification (2023)
- PLU Personal Care Level 1
- PLU Personal Care Level 2
- Senior Cycle SPHE Specification (2024)
- Transition Year Programme Statement
- Student Voice in Planning TY SPHE
- Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme: Personal Care
- Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme: Personal Care
- NCCA SPHE Toolkits (JC < TY and Senior Cycle)
- Social and Personal Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education-Best Practice Guidelines for Post Primary Schools, C37/2010 and C43/2018.
- KCVS SPHE Policy
- Guidance from SPHE Department
- Consultation with the Student Support Team
- All members of the Kilkenny City Vocational School community
- Child Protection Procedures 2017

Scope

This policy governs all aspects of teaching and learning pertaining to Social, Personal and Health Education and Relationships and Sexual Education. It applies to all staff, students, parents, visiting speakers and external facilitators.

Definition of SPHE.

SPHE. is a programme which provides students with the unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, social development as well as delving into the topic areas of Relationships and Sexual Education.

Rationale

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a central part of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme and plays a vital role in the holistic education of students in this school. Adolescence is a period of significant physical, emotional, social and cognitive development, during which young people are faced with a wide range of challenges and influences. SPHE provides a structured and supportive framework to help students navigate these changes in a positive and informed way. SPHE supports the development of students' self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence, enabling them to build resilience and cope effectively with the demands of everyday life. It promotes the values of respect, inclusion and responsibility, and encourages students to develop healthy relationships with themselves and others.

The programme recognises that students' wellbeing is influenced by a variety of factors, including family, peers, school, community, and the wider media and online environment. SPHE equips students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to make informed decisions, manage relationships, and respond critically to influences they encounter.

SPHE also provides the context within which Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is delivered, ensuring that students receive age-appropriate, factual and values-based education in a safe and respectful environment.

Policy Context: Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education

The Education Act (1998) emphasises that schools are obliged to promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. As part of the SPHE programme students are encouraged to develop their own self confidence and build relationships with others. The aim of the SPHE programme is to promote physical, mental, spiritual, social and emotional health and wellbeing. It also encourages the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality. Arising from the 2018-19 review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in primary and post-primary schools, the need to update the curriculum was identified as a key priority. The updated (2023) Junior Cycle SPHE Specification provides 100 hours of learning over the three years of Junior Cycle of which RSE is an integral part. The PLU Personal Care SPHE and RSE integrates for Level 1 and 2. Circular 0037/2010 reminds schools of obligations to develop an RSE policy and implement RSE from 1st-6th Year. SPHE is a component of the TY Student Dimension "Personal Growth" since September 2025. The Senior Cycle SPHE Specification (2024) along with Circular 0012/2025 provides for Leaving Cert Established (LCE) and Leaving Cert Applied (LCA) to engage with the same learning in SPHE. For students following Senior Cycle Level 1 or Level 2 programmes SPHE is integrated into Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme: Personal Care and Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme Personal Care which both meet also meet RSE requirements.

Aims of SPHE.

Junior Cycle

This course aims to build students' self-awareness and positive self-worth; to develop knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives; empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others; and enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society.

- To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence
- To enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

These aims are consistent with the mission statement of Kilkenny City Vocational School in that they foster the personal development of the individual by preparing the student for a meaningful and fulfilled life within the community.

Senior Cycle

This course aims to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will empower students to be healthy, resilient, confident, responsible and empathetic young adults; nurture respectful, loving and caring relationships; and prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life now and beyond school.

Outcomes for students:

As outlined in the SPHE curriculum guidelines, a supportive school environment is important, in which,

- People feel valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- Respect, fairness and tolerance are evident
- Those experiencing difficulty are supported
- Communication is open
- 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

Junior and Senior Cycle SPHE Programmes

Junior Cycle

The curriculum for SPHE is designed to enable students to develop a positive sense of themselves and a commitment to caring for themselves and others.

SPHE is designed around 4 interconnected strands and three cross-cutting elements.



(DE, 2023, p.13)

Interconnected strands

Strand 1: Understanding myself and others

This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and self-esteem and building some of the foundational skills and dispositions needed for healthy relationships and to thrive in life,

including communicating and negotiating, listening, showing empathy, respecting difference, and self-management/self-regulation

Cross cutting elements

Strand 2: Making Healthy Choices

This strand offers opportunities for students to consider how they can make healthy choices to support their wellbeing. It explores what being healthy might look like for a teenager, what helps or gets in the way of making healthy choices and how to access reliable information to support good choices. Students will also practice the skills needed for making healthy decisions and come to understand contextual factors, such as family, peer, media and social pressures, that influence decisions.

Strand 3: Relationship and Sexuality

This strand explores the cognitive, physical, emotional and social aspects of relationships and sexuality through a positive, inclusive, rights and responsibilities-based approach. The focus is on family relationships, friendships, romantic and potential sexual relationships in the future.

Strand 4: Emotional Wellbeing

This strand primarily focuses on nurturing emotional wellbeing and promoting positive mental health. It helps students develop problem solving and coping skills for dealing with the emotional ups and downs of life, explores how they can support themselves and others in challenging times and discusses where/how to find support, if needed.

The four strands are underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in SPHE. These are:

1. Awareness
2. Reflection and Action
3. Dialogue

Awareness

Awareness is the ability to understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour. It includes understanding how different factors influence our sense of self and how we live our lives, including the influence of family, peers, the internet, gender, culture and social norms. This element also includes an awareness that to be human is to be in relationships and that we all share a common humanity and dignity, have rights and responsibilities.

Dialogue

Through dialogical teaching and learning students are facilitated to engage with a diversity of viewpoints; discuss and reflect on their own perspectives, values, and behaviours and those of others; enlarge their understanding of topics of relevance to their lives; and come to informed, thoughtful decisions based on their personal values, with due regard to their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. Respectful dialogue is aided by presuming a diversity of backgrounds, identities, cultures and experiences in every classroom and seeing this as a resource for learning.

Reflection and Action

This cross-cutting element focuses on students reflecting on what they have learned and coming to their own personal insights and conclusions in response to their learning. It enables students to consider how the learning can inform their choices, behaviour and relationships, and discerning what it means for their lives now or for the future. Learning in SPHE is a 'praxis'; an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, nurtured by dialogue with others.

Progression of Learning

This spiral approach allows students to revisit important themes over the three years. In revisiting learning outcomes, it is important to ensure that there is a progression of learning. Consult regularly with students to ascertain how to plan teaching and learning using the learning outcomes so that the learning is responsive to students' particular needs, questions and concerns

All the above areas are taught in an integrated approach i.e. modules are not taught in isolation.

A First Year Induction Programme is also incorporated into the First Year SPHE Programme.

Junior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 – PLU: Personal Care

JCL1LP PLU 3 Personal Care and Wellbeing

In undertaking this PLU, students become aware of their own bodies, develop an understanding of routine bodily functions and take as much control as possible of their personal care and wellbeing. Care is something that is done with students, not to them, thus every care routine is an opportunity for learning, for involvement, and ultimately, where possible, for independence on the part of the student. They learn that they are valued for who they are. They are offered the chance of empowerment (making choices), increased self-esteem and as much autonomy as possible. Emotional and physical wellbeing are also enhanced through learning about food and nutrition as well as how to express feelings and stay safe in a range of contexts. Students identify and value their own skills and talents and learn to celebrate them.

This unit is broken down into six elements:

- Self-awareness
- Personal care and hygiene
- Food and nutrition
- Emotional wellbeing
- Physical wellbeing
- Personal safety

JCL2LP PLU Personal Care

This unit is concerned with the personal development of the students. It deals with their health and wellbeing covering areas such as healthy eating habits and healthy lifestyles. It is concerned with enabling students to be as independent as possible in catering for their personal care needs.

This includes becoming aware of their sexuality, managing stress, and knowing how to stay safe in a range of contexts.

The elements in this PLU are:

- Developing good daily personal care
- Developing healthy eating habits
- Developing a healthy lifestyle
- Being able to manage stress
- Knowing how to stay safe
- Becoming aware of one's sexuality
- Recognising emotions
- Making personal decisions.

Senior Cycle

The Senior Cycle SPHE specification is designed for a minimum of 60 hours of class contact time over the final two years of senior cycle education.

Senior Cycle SPHE is designed around broad learning outcomes that, with careful planning, can enable all students to engage and achieve relative to their individual aptitudes and abilities. Senior Cycle SPHE is designed over 3 strands which is underpinned by three cross cutting elements.



Strand 1: Health and Wellbeing

Within this strand students will explore the factors that influence their physical, social, spiritual,² emotional and mental wellbeing and the relationships between these. They will learn ways to take care of themselves and stay as healthy as possible, with a particular focus on gaining awareness, skills, techniques and information to protect their mental health.

Strand 2: Relationships and Sexuality

Within this strand students will explore the wide range of relationships that are important for their lives with a particular focus on gaining the awareness, knowledge and skills to support them in creating and nurturing respectful, caring and healthy relationships. This strand also supports students to recognise and be empowered to respond to instances of abuse or violence in relationships.

Strand 3: Into Adulthood

Within this strand students will gain specific knowledge and skills to support them as they make the transition to adulthood and learn how to take greater responsibility for themselves. This includes being enabled to manage choices, develop the skills that are needed to plan for the future, establish and stick to good habits, and achieve goals. It also supports students in learning how to take care of themselves in times of change or challenge, understanding their rights and responsibilities before the law, and building the skills needed to advocate for and express solidarity with those experiencing discrimination or inequality.

The 3 strands are underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in Senior Cycle SPHE. These are:

Thinking critically and empathetically

This element focuses on supporting young people to critically consider their own and societal attitudes, values, norms and behaviours. The purpose is to promote awareness of the influences that shape their decisions and behaviours so that they can make informed choices and act as responsible agents of their own lives. It also creates awareness that how we relate to others has both personal and societal impacts. Thinking empathetically and being able to demonstrate empathy underpins positive interpersonal relationships. It involves being open to different perspectives, seeking to understand the feelings and experiences of others, and showing compassion. Thinking empathetically is a key feature of critical thinking as it stems from a capacity to seek out alternative ways of seeing our world.

Exercising rights, responsibilities and inclusivity

This element seeks to highlight the importance of adopting a rights-based, inclusive approach as part of learning and teaching in SPHE. This means encouraging young people to recognise their own rights and responsibilities in relation to their health, self-care and relationships; affirming their right to comprehensive health education and health services; and raising awareness of how their interactions and behaviours impact on the lives and rights of others. Hence with rights come personal and social responsibilities. A rights-based approach also supports inclusivity, ensuring that learning and teaching across the strands are reflective of all sexualities, genders, ethnicities, religious beliefs/ worldviews, social classes and abilities/disabilities.

Being health literate

This element involves building young people's knowledge, confidence and comfort to access, understand, appraise and use information about health and services and make decisions for the health and wellbeing of themselves and those around them. Hence, being health literate means more than knowing how and where to access reliable and relevant information. It also involves being able to communicate, assert and act upon that information, including knowing when/how/ where to seek out relevant help and services. These skills become even more important as young people move into adulthood.

Senior Cycle Level 1 and 2 – Personal Care

Personal Care develops the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and dispositions needed to support students' physical, social, emotional and spiritual¹ wellbeing, now and in their future lives.

Through Personal Care, students fulfil their requirement for learning in SPHE.

Level 1- Modules

3 modules over 2 years – 60 hours each approx.

Module: Self-awareness and self-care

Module: Connecting with myself and others

Module: Minding myself

Level 2 – Module

1 Module over 2 years – 60 hours approx..

Module: Personal Care

Students with Additional Educational Needs

Provision will be made for students with additional needs. It will be necessary for the class teacher to consult with the special needs co-ordinator, prior to the programme, to discuss any students with additional needs and to ascertain how they can be supported throughout the programme. In the case of students with additional needs it may be necessary to "pre teach" or "post teach" some elements of the SPHE programme, some lessons may be delivered outside of the scheduled SPHE time. This would be done in collaboration with the Learning Support Department or Coordinator SUAS/Suamhneas.

Whole school commitment to the holistic development of students.

Kilkenny City Vocational School recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of children lies with their parents. However, this school has a long tradition of supporting parents in this role.

A summary of what the school provides both formally and informally to promote the holistic development of our students is included in our Provision Map.

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our students receive the support that is needed in every area of school.

Teaching Methodologies

Through participation in the SPHE Programme the student will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of learning experiences. These issues will be addressed in each year of the six year cycle. The emphasis will be on building skills, understanding, attitudes and values important in all these areas and preparing students for adult life.

SPHE and Wellbeing

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 supports young people to develop all six indicators of wellbeing.

Relationship of RSE to SPHE

- Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of the SPHE programme in the school.
- The SPHE programme is formally timetabled for one class period per week throughout all 6 year groups.
- SPHE deals with other issues such as: self-esteem, assertiveness, communication decision making skills, healthy eating, alcohol, drugs, safety and social responsibility which complement the RSE programme.

Indicators of Wellbeing

ACTIVE

- Am I a confident and skilled participant in physical activity?
- How physically active am I?

RESPONSIBLE

- Do I take action to protect and promote my wellbeing and that of others?
- Do I make healthy eating choices?
- Do I know where my safety is at risk and do I make right choices?

CONNECTED

- Do I feel connected to my school, my friends, my community and the wider world?
- Do I appreciate that my actions and interactions impact on my own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts?

RESILIENT

- Do I believe that I have the coping skills to deal with life's challenges?
- Do I know where I can go for help?
- Do I believe that with effort I can achieve?

RESPECTED

- Do I feel that I am listened to and valued?
- Do I have positive relationships with my friends, my peers and my teachers?
- Do I show care and respect for others?

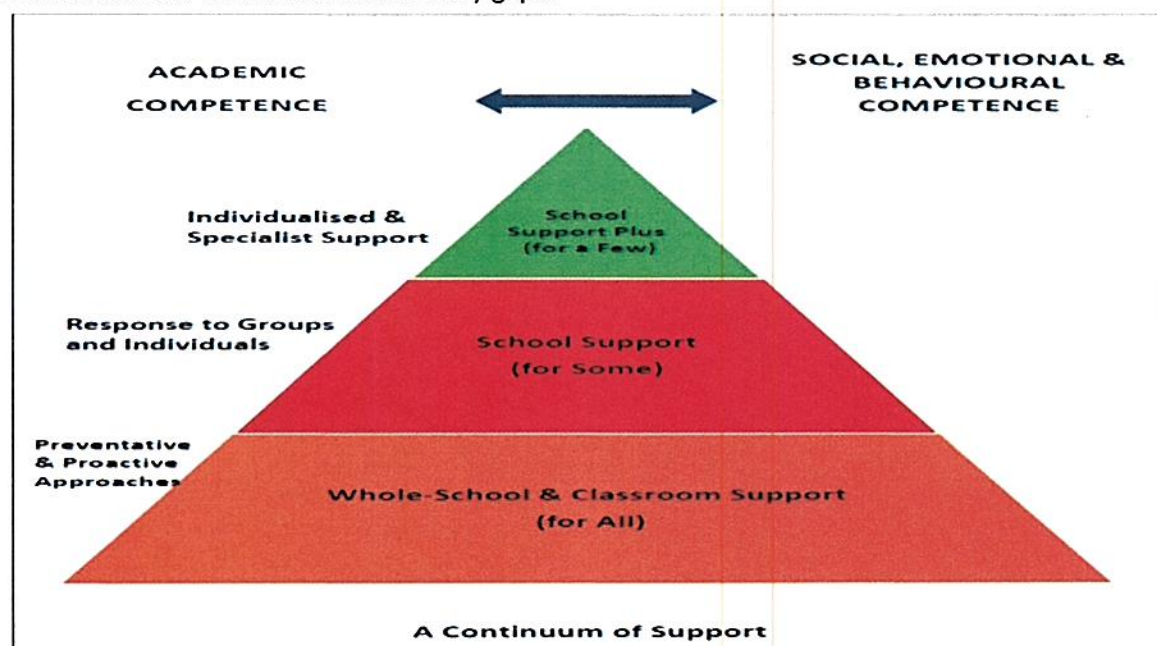
AWARE

- Am I aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviours and can I make sense of them?
- Am I aware of what my personal values are and do I think through my decisions?
- Do I understand what helps me to learn and how I can improve?

Student Support Team

The Kilkenny City Vocational School (KCVS) Student Support Team (SST) is the coordinating team for all KCVS Student Support Services and the promotion of whole school wellbeing. The KCVS Student Support Team organises, and coordinates supports for students in a structured and collaborative manner. (The Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools: A Guide to Establishing a Team or Reviewing an Existing Team – 2021).

The SST uses a multicomponent and preventative whole school approach in line with the DES continuum of support that includes both universal and targeted interventions for the educational, social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs of all, some and few students to ensure their ongoing wellbeing. The Continuum of Support enables provision mapping of wellbeing supports and services and the identification of any gaps.



Support for All

At this level we adopt a whole school approach. We have a series of policies and procedures that promote wellbeing for all members of the school community. Processes on this level aim at (i) the establishment of a safe environment that is conducive to wellbeing and which supports the prevention of factors that negatively impact on wellbeing, (2) promotion of an understanding of and commitment to wellbeing (3) early identification and intervention in the cases of challenge. These steps are reflected in various school policies such as Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy etc. Additionally, supported by our commitment to quality teaching and learning, broad provision of programmes and a comprehensive curriculum, study skills, homework and assessment policies.

Support For Some

There is a more focused approach adopted with several identifiable groups of young people who are at risk of developing unhealthy patterns of behaviour. These structures seek to provide a more targeted support structure to promote and scaffold wellbeing for these identified groups. A proactive Student Support Team and engaging interventions, SEN teamwork, Guidance counselling and Year head -tracking-report and reward systems

Support for a Few

This support focuses on putting in place interventions for young people with more complex and enduring needs. Work with this group of students is structured under the development of a Care Plan and/or IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan). In some cases, students under the care of the student support team will also have a student support file.

The remit of the team includes:

- The coordination of the support available for students in the school. These supports are facilitated by Year Heads, Class Tutors, our Guidance Counsellor, our Wellbeing Coordinator, our Attendance Coordinator, our AENCO, our HSCLO, our DEIS coordinator, our BFL teacher, our SCP worker and our Senior Management Team.
- To act as an overarching team concerned with the progressing of actions for the welfare and wellbeing of all students.
- Coordination of support from NEPS and AENO.
- Facilitate links to community organisations and statutory support services such as EWO and JLO, Ossory Youth, CAMHS, TUSLA and Family Agencies.
- Enable all students with support needs to continue to access a full education by putting the requisite Student Support Plans in place. Examples of these include Check and Connect, Lean In / Lean Out, Wellbeing programmes, one to one counselling, attendance initiatives, home visits, AEN supports, BFL supports.
- Assist staff to manage those students effectively by managing referrals and clearly communicating progress reports and updates.
- To ensure the Lean in/Lean Out process is understood and available to all staff.
- To ensure that all new staff are briefed about policies and procedures relating to student support and wellbeing.
- To ensure that Student Support Team Policy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and is accessible to all staff and management.
- To support the implementation of the Bí Cinéalta Policy.
- Overall, the KCVS SST is designed to foster inclusive, student-centred environments where KCVS supports are proactive, coordinated, and responsive to evolving needs.

Our Student Support Team is central to all aspects of school life at Kilkenny City Vocational School.

Management and Organisation of Resources

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal in consultation with the SPHE Department.

SPHE Coordinator: The following are the main points applicable in the provision of an SPHE co-ordinator and areas of responsibility in the provision of RSE. This role is currently fulfilled in a voluntary capacity and is discussed further in the SPHE Policy.

- Programme Planning – The SPHE curriculum as outlined offers a flexible framework within which schools can design the SPHE programme most suitable for the students and the school. It is recommended that RSE planning take place at the start of the school year and at regular intervals
- Evaluation – Co-ordination is necessary to establish procedures to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of RSE within a particular school. It will also facilitate the recording of work done each year and organising a developmental sequence of work throughout the years of the programme.
- Training – Identifying and accessing training on ongoing basis for RSE teachers.
- Advising the Principal of the needs and requirements of the RSE programme
- Linking with parents
- Liaising with relevant others in the school such as Year Heads and the Student Support Team
- Liaising with community groups and outside groups
- Finance – Co-ordination will ensure the ongoing provision of the resources necessary for effective teaching of SPHE and RSE.

Timetabling

All students from 1st-6th year will receive 1 hour of SPHE per week.

How parents and students will be informed

Present Junior and Senior Cycle students will be informed of the policy through their SPHE classes. RSE will be embedded within the SPHE classroom throughout the year for all year groups.

Parents will be notified at the beginning of each school year of the SPHE / RSE Policy

A full and complete syllabus, core resource materials and policy document will be available in the school if parents wish to review it.

Parents will be informed of any substantial changes in the programme made by the Department of Education and Skills.

Details of SPHE and RSE can be found on <https://ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/wellbeing/social-personal-and-health-education-sphe-relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse/>

Withdrawal

The Education Act 1998 section 30, subsection (2)(e) provides that a student is not required to "attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18, the student."

Hence, parents have a right to opt their child out of the sensitive issues in RSE if they wish to do so. Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, however, this request must be confirmed in writing. Once a parent's/guardian's request to withdraw is received in writing, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.

Withdrawn students may be accommodated in another teacher's classroom where possible. If resources do not allow this, parents will be informed in person to arrange to withdraw their child for the duration of the lesson.

What we do if a request for withdrawal from the RSE programme is made by a parent:

- The Year Head and SPHE teacher will discuss the nature of the concerns with the student's parent and if appropriate attempt to inform and reassure them.
- Consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents - care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the RSE programme and the entitlement of the other pupils.
- Make parents aware that pupils may receive inaccurate information as a result of being withdrawn from an RSE programme.
- Offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.
- The withdrawal request must be put in writing and kept in the student file by the Year Head.
- This request must be followed until revoked by the parent.
- The school may be able to provide supervision if this is not possible the parent must supervise the student for the hour class of SPHE.

It is important for parents and guardians to be aware that the school cannot be responsible for information subsequently passed on by participating students.

Training

Teachers delivering the SPHE programme will attend the training provided by Oide for SPHE.

All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. The skills acquired in general teaching apply also to SPHE.

The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field, bearing in mind the need the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the school to continue with as little disturbance possible.

Resources

The school will purchase appropriate SPHE teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school resources allow. The SPHE department uses resources as provided by the Department of Education, the Health Service Executive, the NCSE and OIDE. This will be supplemented with material from other state agencies or organisations with a proven educational track record in the area of SPHE eg, HSE, Webwise, Belong To, ISPCC etc

Resources that are gained from Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in SPHE/RSE by individual teachers are shared within the SPHE department. Resources are embedded within the SPHE/RSE subject plan. Students' learning is also supported by the use of their SPHE textbook and workbook.

Safe Learning Environment

For students to participate in SPHE it is imperative that a safe learning environment is cultivated from the outset. Ground rules are negotiated, understood and respected by all. This is to ensure that students do not feel vulnerable or reluctant to participate. Ground rules will be revisited throughout the year when necessary.

Sensitive Issues

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the SPHE course content, the needs of the students will be addressed in a caring and supportive manner. Where it is appropriate, the school will refer students to other supportive links or services, internal or external to the school community e.g. Student Support Team, Guidance Counsellor, etc. Class discussion will be of a general nature in accordance with the previously agreed ground rules and will not be personally directed. If any questions asked by students are deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the student to their parents or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, he/she should seek advice from the Principal. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the SPHE programme content, the ethos of the school, the SPHE/RSE policy and use their professional judgment.

Confidentiality

The normal limits of confidentiality will apply to any information coming to the attention of the teacher. However, every effort should be made to ensure that this information is dealt with in a sensitive and discreet manner. It is important that students are made aware of the limits of confidentiality and that teachers do not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality. Confidentiality should be respected unless the teacher feels that the child is at risk or where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a law may be broken. In such a case, the appropriate action should be taken in accordance with the procedures set down in the Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools, the school's Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement and the Children First legislation (2017). i.e. the teacher must inform immediately the Designated Liaison Person DLP/DDLP or report the matter directly to Tusla.

Visiting Speakers or Other

It is school policy that the SPHE programme is best delivered by teachers who are known and trusted by the students. However, visitors can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of SPHE/RSE.

The SPHE Co-ordinator will provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of this RSE policy. After gaining approval from the Principal for the visit, the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the SPHE/RSE programme.

All programmes and events delivered by visitors and external agencies must use appropriate, evidence based methodologies with clear educational outcomes. Such programmes are best delivered by those specifically qualified to work with the young people for whom the programmes are designed.

Classroom teachers must remain in the classroom with the students. All programmes, talks, interventions and events should be evaluated by students and teachers in terms of the subject matter, messages, structure, methodology and proposed learning outcomes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with circular 0043/2018 regarding best practice guidance for post primary schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department of Education and Skills Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.

Assessment/Homework

Written homework is not encouraged in SPHE to avoid academic links. Instead, 'reflection' and 'research' are encouraged.

In Senior Cycle SPHE students must complete 8 key assignments over the two-year cycle. These key assignments will be securely stored by the SPHE teacher and will be reported on in school reports.

Cross-Curricular Planning

Opportunities arise for cross-curricular planning in a number of areas including:

CSPE	Social studies apply to both subjects
PE	Health and exercise are an integral part of both curriculums
Wellbeing	Mental health and wellbeing relate to both subjects
Guidance	Goal setting, study skills and future pathways relate to the concepts of social and personal topics.
IMBV	Ethics, social and personal issues and topics are discussed in both subjects and complement each other.
Home Economics	Key concepts of Social & Health studies and Food & Nutrition interlinks the two subjects.
Science	Link between science and the biology element of SPHE

Links to Other Policies

This policy is informed by and should be read in conjunction with the following school policies

- Whole School Guidance Plan
- Wellbeing Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Student Support Team Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Bí Cinealta Anti-Bullying Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Child Safe Guarding Statement
- DEIS Plan
- IT Acceptable Usage Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

Roles and Responsibilities in implementing policy

All partners, including the Board of Management, parents/guardians, school management and teaching staff, have roles and responsibilities in ensuring the implementation of SPHE Policy in our school. Given the sensitive nature of the work involved, training of staff is paramount. Accordingly, teachers delivering the SPHE programme will attend the training provided by Oide for SPHE and RSE.

Monitoring and Evaluating

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this Programme on an ongoing basis. Specifically important to the SPHE Programme are:

- a) pupil feedback;
- b) staff review and feedback;
- c) parental feedback.

The SPHE policy will be reviewed in line with the school's programme of School Development Planning and as part of the School Self-Evaluation process.

Review

- There will be an annual evaluation of this policy by members of the SPHE team.
- The policy will be amended in line with new directives and developments.
- There will be a major review of the policy five years after it has been implemented.
- This policy was drafted by the SPHE team and the principal in consultation with the other members of the school community.

How the Board of Management will be consulted and informed

The SPHE draft policy will be discussed at a meeting of the Board of Management. The Board of Management may make input on the policy and make whatever changes deemed appropriate before ratification of the SPHE policy.

Gairm Scoil na Cathrach

Sráid Nua
Cill Chainnigh

Priomhoide: Cáit Nic Somhairle
Leas-Priomhoide: Deirdre Ní Coisteagáin

Kilkenny City Vocational School

New Street
Kilkenny

Principal: Cathy Mc Sorley
Deputy Principal: Deirdre Costigan



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Ratification: KCVS SPHE Policy

This Policy was ratified by B.O.M Kilkenny City Vocational School on 28.05.26

Signed: Cathy Mc Sorley

Date: 28/05/26

BOM 28.05.26

KCVS SPHE Policy

Signed:

Principal

Cathy Mc Sorley

Chairperson BOM

Deirdre Costigan



kcetb

For Education, Sport and
the Community
Kilkenny City Vocational School
Kilkenny, Ireland

KCVS Registered Charity Number: 20087434