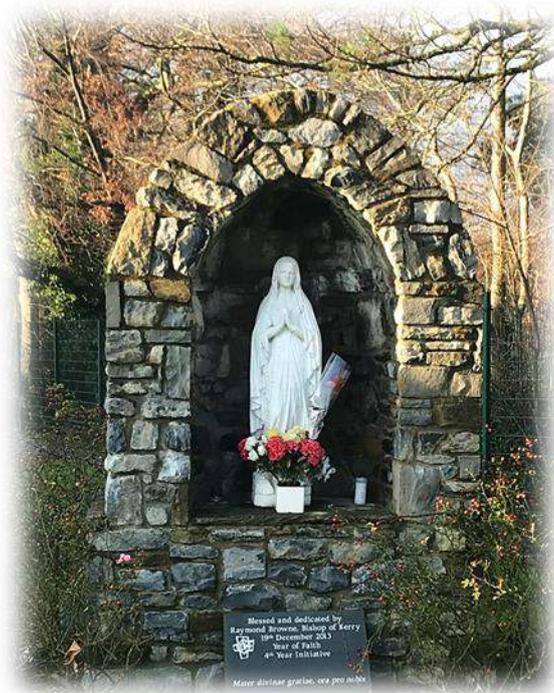




**PRESENTATION**  
SECONDARY SCHOOL TRALEE

COURTESY FRIENDLINESS CO-OPERATION

# Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy



Reviewed	Ratified by the Board of Management	Review Date
March 2021	May 2021	April 2023

## **Presentation Secondary School, Mission Statement**

Presentation Secondary School, Tralee is a community of staff, students, parents and management pursuing excellence in all its educational undertakings. The school offers each student the opportunity to develop her abilities and talents and so reach her full potential in a caring and happy environment. Faithful to the Catholic ethos and distinctive mission of the Presentation Congregation we encourage:

- A deepening of Christian faith and moral values
- Personal and emotional development in an atmosphere of appropriate freedom
- A deep respect for academic excellence, intellectual pursuits, and independent thought
- Social ease, self-discipline and social skills to deal with the responsibilities of adulthood
- A spirit of equality and justice prompting an awareness of one's duties towards others, towards society and towards the natural world
- A lively interest in diverse artistic, creative, cultural, and sporting activities
- A continual in-service training and education towards staff development and support, thus preserving the traditional professional standards within the school
- A fostering of links between home, school, and the wider community.

Presentation education is centred on the formation of the whole person. Our curriculum is designed so that each student is a valued member of our school and later becomes a confident, well-adjusted, and fulfilled member of the wider community. All our aims are achieved in a spirit of cooperation, shared responsibility, respect and goodwill.

### **Relationship of SPHE to the school's mission statement:**

SPHE provides students with an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves and others. It also allows them to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development. It helps students grow and develop as individuals and in their relationship to others.

### **The Aims of SPHE:**

Building on the aims of SPHE in the primary school, at post-primary level SPHE aims:

- To develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence.
- 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.

## **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit and Ethos of the School**

SPHE will provide young people with skills to evaluate critically the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes, and values offered today, in order that they will make positive, responsible choices about themselves and about the way they live their lives. While the school acknowledges that the home is the natural environment for the social, personal and health development of children, the Education Act of 1998 (Section 9, subsection d) requires all recognised schools to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. This will happen in consultation with their parents and in the context of the Catholic ethos of the 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

## **Rationale and Importance of our SPHE Policy:**

Early adolescence is a time of significant change for young people, physically, emotionally, and socially. Through the use of experiential methodologies and group work, students have the dedicated space and time in this short course to develop their understanding and skills to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing in a rapidly changing world.

In SPHE, students have opportunities to revisit different themes which focus on developing self-awareness and respect for others, and the skills of self-management, communication, coping, decision-making and relating to others. This spiral approach of revisiting key ideas and topics is familiar from existing approaches to SPHE. This new course builds on this approach but also emphasises the importance of student agency and engagement in the learning process as key to learning in the affective domain. The

skills involved are vital for self-fulfilment, for living in communities and for full engagement in learning beyond SPHE. Personal reflection, resilience and empathy are also promoted through SPHE.

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is important for young people at this stage of their lives. They are exposed to a lot of information about relationships and sex from informal sources, the media and online. SPHE provides the context within which young people can learn about important physical, social, emotional, and moral issues around relationships, sexual health, sexuality, and gender identity, including where to get reliable information from trusted sources.

It is important to build on students' learning in SPHE in primary education also. Learning in SPHE is essentially supported by a positive, empowering whole school environment and relevant school policies/guidelines including RSE, anti-bullying and substance-use policies, and child protection guidelines. This broader context for learning in SPHE helps to ensure that students learn to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. These decisions are further supported and encouraged by school, community and national policies and guidelines.

In junior cycle, six indicators are identified as being central to students' wellbeing –Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware. SPHE provides learning opportunities designed to enhance each of these indicators thereby contributing significantly to the school's Wellbeing programme in junior cycle.

### **The Safe Learning Environment.**

For students to participate well in SPHE it is essential that a safe learning environment is established at the outset, and that ground rules are negotiated, understood, and respected by all. Unless this is done, students will feel vulnerable and may be reluctant to participate. From time to time throughout the year, when sensitive topics arise, teachers should revisit the ground rules.

### **Participation.**

SPHE is a core curricular subject on the Junior Cycle curriculum, and it plays a central role in educating students in Wellbeing. Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) is one module of the subject. Each parent has the right to withdraw their child from RSE (see Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy). If a student is withdrawn from the lessons pertaining to the sensitive elements of the RSE programme, parents must give a notice in writing to the school that they are withdrawing their child. The student may be accommodated in another teacher's classroom in the school. However, it will be necessary for parents of any student opting out of RSE to make suitable arrangements with School Management for the welfare of their child at these

times. It is important to be aware that in these circumstances the school cannot be responsible for information subsequently passed on by participating students.

### **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. Pastoral Care 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 / RSE programme content, the ethos of the school, the 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) or the school's Substance Use Policy, i.e., the teacher must inform the Designated Liaison Person and ensure that that all reporting procedures are complied with.

### **Staff Development, Training and Resources**

The value placed on SPHE by the school will be evident by the commitment on the part of School Management to develop a core team of SPHE teachers. Continuing professional development is an integral part of this programme. School Management is responsible for the relevant training needs of SPHE teachers. As part of the core curriculum, SPHE will have a budgetary allocation in line with its stage of development and its teaching methodologies and timetabled allocation. School Management is committed to the appointment of an SPHE Co-ordinator. School Management encourages and facilitates continuing professional development for new and existing teachers of SPHE.

## **Implementation**

### Teaching & Learning Methods

As the SPHE programme is mainly skills based, teaching and learning styles will be of an active, experiential nature with an emphasis on discussion, reflection, and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student. Creating a safe learning environment is vital. The class atmosphere needs to be one of respect for the privacy of each individual student and of sensitivity and care.

### **Co-ordinator and Subject Teachers:**

In as much as is possible, the SPHE teachers at Junior Cycle will be the Year Head of that particular year group. The co-ordinator will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> yr SPHE teacher.

### **Student Access and Class groupings:**

#### Junior Cycle

S.P.H.E. is timetabled for one class period a week for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> years. All classes are of mixed ability and a common level.

### **SPHE and RSE**

The delivery of RSE at Junior Cycle, occurs within the SPHE class. See our RSE policy for Senior Cycle delivery.

### **Resources:**

#### General

- <https://www.pdst.ie/pp/healthwellbeing/sphe> (this is the SPHE portal for all resources)
- On My Own Two Feet – educational resource materials for substance abuse prevention & workcards
- Cancer Awareness Programme (CAP): a resource pack for SPHE teachers and students
- Working Things Out Through SPHE
- Relationships and Sexuality education: resource materials for teachers
- Teenspace: national recreation policy for young people
- Mental Health matters: a mental health resource pack
- Bodywise: responding to eating disorders and body image issues
- Think: teenage Health In Kerry booklet

## Textbooks

- My Wellbeing Journey by Gill Education

## **The Role of Visitors**

The SPHE teacher will consult with the Principal in relation to the suitability of guest speakers prior to their invitation to the school. All guest speakers will be made aware of and requested to comply with the school SPHE policy and Visitor Policy. The presentations of guest speakers will be negotiated with the relevant SPHE teacher before delivery to the students. It is normal practice for teachers to remain in the classroom while visitors are there. Preparatory and follow-up work, where possible, should be undertaken by the class.

## **How Parents and Students will be informed**

A full and complete syllabus, core resource materials and policy document will be available on the school website 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.

## **Professional Development**

A number of staff members have attended training in SPHE and RSE and management will continue to support staff training in this area.

## **Outline of the Programme**

The S.P.H.E. curriculum is delivered in ten modules at Junior Certificate. The Department of Education and Science recognises that each school has flexibility within this syllabus to plan and order the delivery of the SPHE Programme according to school or class needs and circumstances.

## **The Four Strands throughout the three year Junior Cycle are:**

- Strand 1 – Who am I?
- Strand 2 – Minding Myself and Others
- Strand 3 – Team Up
- Strand 4 – My Mental Health

## **Cross-curricular links**

The SPHE team is conscious of the potential for cross-curricular links in particular with RE, RSE, Science, CSPE, and Home Economics.

## **Health and Safety**

Refer to shared drive for the school health and safety policy which are followed by each subject teacher.

## **Cultural Diversity**

The understanding of cultural diversity is integrated across a range of modules in the S.P.H.E. programme, such as, belonging and integration, differences and similarities and friendship.

## **Additional Educational Needs (AEN) / Health Issues**

At the beginning of the academic year teachers are orally informed of the additional need requirements of new entrants, most especially first years. All teachers have access to the AEN file on the shared drive and the Health Issues folder. It is each teacher's responsibility to review the file of the relevant students that they will be teaching for the up-coming year. Teachers are to keep this information in mind in the classroom so as to be sensitive when the need arises. Students with additional educational needs, may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what behaviour is and is not acceptable: NCCA – Document for students with mild learning disability ([http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/PP\\_SPHE.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/PP_SPHE.pdf)).

## **Assessment/homework**

Written homework is not encouraged in SPHE so as to avoid an academic link. Instead 'reflection' and 'research' is encouraged that will be linked to the class that day or the next day.

## **Links to other policies:**

The following policies have been considered in the drafting of the SPHE policy:

- The Mission Statement of Presentation Secondary School
- The RSE Policy
- The Code of Positive Behaviour
- The Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement
- The Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- The Special Educational Needs Policy
- The Guidance Plan