

## **Whole School Policy on Social, Personal and Health Education**

**(Adopted by the BOM on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2009)**

### **Definition of Social, Personal and Health Education**

SPHE provides students with an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves, society and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development.

SPHE provides learning opportunities and experiences which help students' social, moral, cultural and personal development. It helps students grow and develop as individual people, and in their relationship to others as a family member, friend or citizen.

### **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-fulfillment 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 School Ethos/Mission/Vision/Aims**

St. Mary's School is a community which is committed to developing each person's full potential in positive, supportive and Christian environment.

The SPHE Programme has developed out of a vision for holistic education of the individual, providing a myriad of valuable life skills which is entirely compatible with the Ethos of St Mary's and its commitment to education of the whole student in a Christian, caring and supportive environment.

This policy is rooted in our fundamental aim to develop each member of the school community. Through the implementation of this policy we strive to enact the stated Mission, Vision and Aims of St. Mary's Secondary School

## **Rationale for Policy**

St Mary's understands that the home is the natural and primary place where students grow, develop and mature into adults.

However, as educators we have a duty *"to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school,"*

(Paragraph 9 (d) sub section of the Education Act 1998)

## **Goals of the Policy**

That student members of the school community will:

1. Be afforded an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves, society and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development.
2. Be provided with learning opportunities and experiences which help students' social, moral, cultural and personal development.
3. Be enabled to grow and develop as individual people, and in their relationship to others as a family member, friend or citizen.
4. Experience a consistent and coherent programme of SPHE during each academic year.

## **Roles & Responsibilities in developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating this policy**

### **1. Board of Management**

The Board will ensure that the ethos and values of the Trustees are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

### **2. Principal and Deputy Principal**

The Principal and Deputy Principal are committed to supporting all those involved in delivering the SPHE Programme in St. Mary's Secondary School.

The management will facilitate in-house staff development and encourage participation in external programmes and courses particularly when these programmes/ courses have a direct influence on student learning within the SPHE Programme.

3. **SPHE Coordinator**

The Coordinator will work with the SPHE Teachers to ensure a coherent and consistent delivery of the programme during each year of school and maintains records of meetings and updates.

The Coordinator will work with the various partners in developing the programme to meet the emerging needs of students.

4. **Teachers of SPHE**

Teachers conduct classes in a structured and ordered environment. The relationship fostered in the classroom is based on mutual respect. Teachers will avail of opportunities to participate in external programmes/ courses that have a direct influence on student learning within the SPHE Programme.

## **Policy Content**

### **Outline of the Programme and Teaching Methods:**

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 Ten Modules throughout the three year Junior Cycle are:**

- Belonging and Integrating.
- Self-management: a sense of purpose.
- Communication skills.
- Physical health.
- Friendship
- Relationships and sexuality education (RSE)
- Emotional health.
- Influences and decisions.
- Substance use
- Personal safety.

## **Success Criteria**

1. The student members of the school community will :

- Experience a consistent and coherent programme of SPHE during each academic year.
  - Be afforded an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves, society and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development.
  - Be provided with learning opportunities and experiences which help students' social, moral, cultural and personal development.
- Be enabled to grow and develop as individual people, and in their relationship to others as a family member, friend or citizen.

2. The SPHE Coordinator and teachers will have access to in-house staff development and be encouraged to participate in external programmes and courses particularly when these programmes/ courses have a direct influence on student learning within the SPHE Programme.

## **Implementation**

### **Timetabling**

SPHE is timetabled for one period a week for each of the 1st, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year class groups. Provision for SPHE in Transition year is subject to the TY Programme. In 5<sup>th</sup> year the provision for SPHE/RSE is either one double class each week opposite LCVP Enterprise Education for non-LCVP students, or for LCVP students SPHE is incorporated into the non-examination Religious Education and Guidance programmes. Other RSE components are delivered as part of the PE programme (3 double lessons). In 6<sup>th</sup> year SPHE is also incorporated into the Religious Education, Guidance and PE programmes.

### **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. Incorporating assessment for learning into SPHE teaching methods, can inform the teacher of the personal response and understanding of pupils to particular topics.

Creating a safe learning environment is vital, which can be achieved for example through distancing techniques such as the use of drama or non personalized debate. The class atmosphere needs to be one of respect for the privacy of each individual student and of sensitivity and care.

### **Staff development, training, and resource issues:**

The Board of Management will endeavor to provide the necessary human and material resources to support the programme on an ongoing basis. School management will encourage and facilitate teachers to attend relevant in-service training for the continued development of the SPHE Programme. All teachers involved in the delivery of the SPHE programme in a given year together with the deputy principal are involved in the co-ordination of the programme.

### **Participation:**

While SPHE is part of the core curriculum for Junior Certificate students, parents may withdraw their child from the RSE module. In this event, suitable supervision must be agreed with the school management.

### **Publishing the Policy:**

An outline of the SPHE programme will be available in the school and on the school website. Further information may contact the Principal.

### **The Role of Visitors:**

It is the duty of the teacher who organises the visit to ensure the suitability of the visit to the programme and the school. Teachers will remain with the class for the duration of the visit. Principal must be informed in advance of all visiting speakers and the content of their presentation.

### **Sensitive Issues:**

Class discussion will be of a general nature and not be personally directed. The SPHE teacher will act as a facilitator and not a counsellor. Teachers advise students to keep parents updated when dealing with sensitive issues. If individual issues emerge they will be referred on by the teacher to the appropriate person(s). All teachers are aware of their responsibilities under Children First.

## **Review and Evaluation**

The policy will be reviewed after three years. The review team will comprise of representatives from:

the Board of Management, Students Council, Parents Council and SPHE teachers.

The evaluation of the SPHE programme will take place annually and will include teachers, students and the principal/deputy principal.

### **Appendix 1 :Examples of activities and support structures in the school:**

Year Heads	Class Tutor system	Pastoral Care Committee
Students Council	Prefects	Meitheal Leaders
Parents Council	Student Counselling	Career Guidance
Learning Support	Religious Education	Chaplain
Breakfast Club	Book Rental Scheme	L.C.V.P. Programme
Transition Year Programme	1 <sup>st</sup> year Induction Programme	Enterprise Education
Supervised Study	Peer Reading	School Trips
Retreats	Gaisce Award	Friendship Week
unchtime activities	Games/Sport	

*This is not a definitive list.*