



Holy Child Community School

S.P.H.E Policy

2019-2020

Mission Statement

Holy Child Community School welcomes students with diverse abilities and talents. In keeping with our Christian ethos, we seek to recognise and develop these varied gifts and to promote in our students a sense of self-confidence, tolerance and respect for others. We foster learning within a secure and happy environment, so that our students may mature to their fullest potential in personal, social, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and academic skills. We see parents/guardians as being essential partners in this process and look to them for support and reinforcement. Our school structures, curriculum and special events are all designed to reinforce these values and this vision.

DEFINITION OF SPHE

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 and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

SPHE Aims:

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities
- To promote self-esteem and self confidence
- To enable the 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

With such support, students may be 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 others. There is a growing recognition the social, personal and health education offered to our students is as important as any other area of the curriculum.

SPHE and the School Ethos

The aims of SPHE curriculum contribute to the overall ethos of Holy Child Community School in promoting the holistic development of our students. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in junior cycle provides a unique opportunity where students can develop the skills and competences to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their overall health and wellbeing. SPHE also provides the context within which students can learn about the important moral, physical, social and emotional issues around relationships, sex and sexuality including where to get reliable information from trusted sources.

JUNIOR CYCLE WELLBEING

SPHE is now part of Junior Cycle Wellbeing. SPHE provides opportunities for teaching and learning directly related to health and wellbeing. Through the use of experiential methodologies, including group work, SPHE aims to develop students' positive sense of themselves and their physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing. It also aims to build the student's capacity to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Through studying aspects of SPHE, students have time to focus on developing personal and social skills including self-management, communication, coping and problem-solving.

CLASS ORGANISATION AND TIMETABLING

Circular M11/03

"All second level schools must timetable Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of the Junior Cycle Core Curriculum from September 2003. The time allocation recommended is the equivalent of one class period per week. "

- All junior cycle classes, 1st, 2nd and 3rd years are timetabled one class per week.

Circular 0037/2010

"All second level schools must implement Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) as an element of SPHE at junior cycle and as an RSE programme in senior cycle, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class. "

- TY, 5th and 6th Year Leaving Certificate classes have 1 x 40minute period of RSE timetabled weekly.
- 5th and 6th Year Leaving Certificate Applied do not have a timetabled period however they do cover RSE issues in their Social Education classes.
- SPHE/RSE is not a timetabled class in TY, but these students receive at least six classes of RSE a year during Religious Education classes (please see RE department plans/schemes of work)

Students receive SPHE classes in their dedicated class tutor groups. Teachers who are allocated SPHE classes in their timetable teach the class from 1st year until 6th year where possible. All SPHE teachers where possible have the SPHE class for another subject due to the importance of the teacher-student relationship.

Circular 0079/2018

“The new area of learning entitled Wellbeing was introduced for First Years from September 2017. A key component of this area of learning is Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), including Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). Students receive SPHE classes in their dedicated class tutor groups. All Junior Cycle classes, 1st, 2nd and 3rd year, are timetabled one class of SPHE a week.”

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- For learning activities to be meaningful, relevant and achievable for all students, it is important that the teacher finds ways to respond to student’s diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies. In consultation with the JCSP Coordinator and the SEN Coordinator the following strategies will be used:
- Ensuring that the objectives are realistic for students and ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups
- Spending more time on tasks and organising the learning task into small stages
- Ensuring that language is pitched at the student’s level of understanding and does not hinder understanding of the activity
- Using task analysis, outline the steps to be learned/completed in any given task
- Posing key questions to guide students through the different stages/processes and to assist in self direction and correction
- Using graphic symbols as reminders to assist students in understanding the sequence/steps in any given task/problem
- Modelling task analysis by talking through the steps of a task as it is being done
- Having short and varied tasks
- Creating a learning environment through the use of concrete and where possible everyday materials
- Displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.

CONTENT AND TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Through participation in the SPHE Programme the student will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of experiences. These issues will be addressed through four strands, each of which appears in each year of the three year cycle. The emphasis will be on building skills, understanding, attitudes and values important in all these areas.

The four strands of the **Junior Cycle SPHE** Short Course are:

- Who am I?
- Minding myself and others
- Team Up
- My Mental Health

Several topics will be discussed through these four strands such as:

- Belonging and integrating
- Self-Management
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendship
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety

SPHE is primarily skills based and so teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with the emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be student centered and appropriate to the age and development of the student. The class atmosphere must be one of respect and privacy of the individual teacher and student hallmarked by sensitivity and care.

TEACHING METHODOLOGIES MAY INCLUDE:

- Group work
- Roleplay
- Brainstorming
- Icebreakers
- Simulation
- Narrative expression
- Debating
- Project work
- Art work
- Multi-media materials
- Case studies
- Visiting speakers

The Department of Education and Skills recognises that each school has flexibility to plan the SPHE Programme in harmony with the students' needs and schools' resources. Holy Child Community School recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of the children lie with their parents/guardians.

CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

The following subject areas form the cross curricular links with the SPHE

Programme:

- P.E.
- Wellbeing
- Science
- R.E.
- CSPE
- I.T.

Resources include:

- DES Syllabus and Guidelines
- My Life textbook
- My Wellbeing Journey 2 and 3 textbook
- Healthy Living/Healthy Times/Healthy Choices workbooks
- FRIENDS for Life
- Before You Decide
- Trust
- HSE leaflets and DVDs
- Growing Up LGBT
- Belong to Stand Up
- Mental Health Matters
- Working Things Out
- Body Whys
- Up to Us
- Marie Keating Cancer Awareness Pack
- Belonging Plus - A transition and Transfer Programme

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT

The value placed on SPHE by the school will be evident by the commitment on the part of management to developing a core of trained SPHE teachers preferably gender balanced and to appointing an SPHE coordinator. SPHE is enhanced when the appointment of teachers to the subject has been negotiated in advance of timetabling.

CPD is an integral part of this programme. Management is responsible for responding to the relevant expressed and perceived training needs of SPHE teachers and whole staff.

It is the aim that all SPHE teachers will have undertaken introduction to SPHE and Junior Cycle RSE in-service training. The school has requested support from the PDST and the Health and Well-being team supports the SPHE teachers throughout the year during school visits.

SPHE AND RSE

RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education

The Draft Guidelines for RSE (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that Social Personal and Health Education is “spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology”. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one’s relationship with others. SPHE deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision-making skills - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

AIMS OF OUR RSE PROGRAMME:

Relationships and sexuality education which is located in the overall framework of Social, Personal and Health Education, has as its specific aims:

- To help students understand and develop friendships and relationships
- To promote an understanding of sexuality
- To promote a positive attitude to one’s own sexuality and in one’s relationship with others
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- To enable students to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework in keeping with the policy of the school
- To provide opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

It is acknowledged that in a course of limited duration these aims are aspirational.

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF RSE IN OUR SCHOOL

Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the Principal.

INFORMING AND INVOLVING PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

Parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important. Relevant sections of this RSE policy will be included in the school's Information for Parents booklet, published annually in August. This policy has been designed in consultation with Parents' Association representatives and the views expressed by parents/guardians will be considered when reviewing the policy. A copy of this policy will be made available to any parent on request to the school Office.

OFFERING ADVICE:

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. Teachers may provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. their doctor or other suitable agency. Advice offered should not be directive and should be appropriate to the age of the student.

EXPLICIT QUESTIONS:

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. 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 SPHE co-ordinator or the Principal. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

While an atmosphere of trust is a pre-requisite of SPHE class, the following limits of confidentiality must be observed. These limits are:

- Child abuse-physical, emotional, sexual, neglect
- Intention to harm self or others
- Substance misuse
- Underage sexual intercourse

Any disclosure will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in compliance with the Child Protection Procedures 2017.

The **Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary** schools state in 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.2.4.

5.2.2 Where a registered teacher receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused or neglected, is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect he or she shall, without delay, report the matter to the DLP.

5.2.3 Firstly, the DLP and the registered teacher must consider whether there are reasonable grounds for concern about the welfare and protection of the child.

5.2.4 If the DLP and the registered teacher both agree that there are reasonable grounds for concern they shall then jointly consider whether the concern in question is at or above the defined threshold of harm at which a report must be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla.

It is also school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Principal. The Principal will decide whether to inform the parents/guardians and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling.

The following is also school policy:

- teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality;
- pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal and possibly to parents/guardians if the Principal decides that it is in the best interests of the pupil to notify parents/guardians;
- teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information;
- teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.

SPHE 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.

REFERRAL

While it is acknowledged that the teachers have a professional duty to impart the SPHE 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 school. As far as possible this should be done in negotiation with the student. SPHE 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.

THE DIVISION BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL AND NON-BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SEX EDUCATION:

The school policy is that the Science Department deals primarily with the biological aspects of reproduction.

PARTICIPATION

SPHE at Junior Cycle and RSE at Senior Cycle is a core curricular subject. The school will respect this choice as their right. It will be necessary for parents/guardians opting out of RSE

to make suitable arrangements with the school management for the welfare of their child at these times.

WITHDRAWING PUPILS FROM THE RSE PROGRAMME:

Where students are withdrawn for RSE the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students. Parents/Guardians must meet with the Principal in person to discuss their decision to withdraw their child from the RSE module. A text message will be sent to parents/guardians prior to the RSE module to inform them that the course will take place over the coming days.

VISITORS

Circular 0043/2018

National and international research has consistently shown that the qualified classroom teacher are the best placed professionals to work sensitively and consistently with students and that he/she can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education. Research findings indicate that the following teaching approaches have limited effect and are counterproductive to the effective implementation of SPHE:

- Scare tactics and sensationalist interventions
- Testimonials
- Information only interventions
- Short term/once off interventions
- Outside speakers can be a resource when used as part of a schools planned programme for SPHE/RSE

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 RSE. Teachers inviting these speakers must:

- Inform the Principal in advance
- Make the speaker aware of the ethos and SPHE Policy of the school
- Agree the content of the presentation
- Do preparatory and follow up work where possible
- Remain with the class group during the visit.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The school accepts that it is in the interests of all parents/guardians that the child grows up in a healthy and mature fashion. The school will strive to keep parents/guardians informed of the contents of the SPHE Programme. The SPHE Policy will be available online and notifications regarding reviews are also published online. Parents/guardians of incoming first years are directed to the SPHE Policy along with other relevant policies.

The involvement of parents and guardians at the core of every aspect of SPHE gives it extra impetus, depth and validity and from time to time training and/or input and development opportunities will be offered to parents/guardians in certain aspects of SPHE.

WHOLE STAFF

This policy will be available for all staff in the school by its inclusion with the Policy Documents, which are kept in the Principal's office. Copies will be given to each SPHE teacher by the SPHE Coordinator. The school aims to apply for support from the PDST and the Health and Well-being Team supports the whole staff throughout the year during Croke Park hours.

ASSESSMENT, RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

Every student, both Junior and in time Senior Cycle has a SPHE folder that is kept by the SPHE teachers in the staff room. The folder contains worksheets, handouts, work books and a journal. At the end of every lesson every student records a short reflection in their journal. At the end of every module every student completes a review or evaluation. The folders are given to students at the end of Junior Cycle and at the end of Senior Cycle.

SPHE teachers report progress in SPHE for every student on the Christmas and Summer reports. SPHE teachers meet parents/guardians at Parent Teacher meetings. At the end of every year students are awarded certificates for participating in the SPHE class. The SPHE team meet at least once a term to review, plan and evaluate SPHE in the school. Minutes of all meetings are recorded and contained in the SPHE Subject Planning Folder.

WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR SPHE

While specific teachers are trained and charged with the responsibility of delivering the programme, we see each other as a teacher of SPHE in that he/she may from time to time see opportunities to promote healthy lifestyles and encourage responsible and mature decision making. There is generally a whole school approach to key areas of SPHE and the school year has times earmarked when certain topics or issues are covered e.g. Friendship Week, Healthy Eating Week and Mental Health Week.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The SPHE course is never static and must be examined and evaluated regularly and adapted to the needs of the students. The SPHE programmes and policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the SPHE team.

The opinions of students will be included and SPHE teachers will communicate with the Student Council. The opinions of parents/guardians will also be included and SPHE teachers will communicate with the Parents Association. SPHE coordinator will communicate with the Principal and the Board of Management.

The current SPHE Coordinator: Vacant

The core teaching team includes:

Helen Kirwan

Sarah Jane Collins

Deirdre Piper

Neil Byrne

Jayne Holmes

Christina Norton

RATIFIED BY BOM ON:

POLICY EFFECTIVE FROM:

SIGNED _____(Principal)

APPENDIX A

Summary of what Holy Child Community School provides both formally and informally to promote the holistic development of students.

COURSES

Junior Certificate JC

Leaving Certificate LC

(LCA)

(TY)

SUPPORTS

Pastoral Care Team

Guidance Counsellor

School Chaplain

SET team

BfL teacher

Special Needs Assistant

Parents Association

Student Council

Class Prefects

Mentors

Awards

Supports not currently available to us:

HSLO

Attendance Officer