



# SPHE POLICY

## Coláiste Abbáin

**2020**

**Mission Statement**

***Coláiste Abbáin endeavours to provide quality education for all students in a caring, disciplined and respectful environment. We aim to prepare students for life and responsible citizenship and motivate them towards the achievement of their full potential.***

## **RATIONALE**

Coláiste Abbáin is a place of learning and personal growth. The school community includes students and their families, teachers, ancillary staff and The Board of Management. Our commitment is to learning in its broadest sense and our procedures and practices reflect this. Respect for the uniqueness of each person in our community commits us to maintaining a caring working environment in which all can achieve fulfilment. All aspects of the school, the range of subjects, classes, learning for life programmes, outdoor pursuits, sports, trips, and the organisational structure of the school reflect this commitment to learning and personal growth.

## **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 the dignity of 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.

## **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.

## **SPHE AND THE SCHOOL ETHOS**

The aims of the SPHE curriculum contribute to the overall mission of our school in preparing students for life and responsible citizenship and motivating them towards the achievement of their full potential.

## **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.

Circular 0037/2010

All second level schools must implement Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) as an element of Social Personal and Health Education at Junior Cycle, and as an RSE programme in Senior Cycle, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class.

Circular 0015/2017

The new area of learning entitled Wellbeing will be 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).

All Junior Cycle classes, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year have timetabled classes of SPHE a week. All Junior Cycle students will complete the short course in SPHE.

**1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year      1 class/ week**

**3<sup>rd</sup> year                      2 classes/week**

SPHE is not a timetabled class for Senior Cycle students, TY, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year. Fifth and sixth year students receive six classes of RSE a year during Wellbeing timetabled hours. Transition Year students receive RSE as part of their Squashy Couch Programme.

### **STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Children with Special 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 sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.

For learning activities to be made meaningful, relevant and achievable for all students, it is important that the teacher finds ways to respond to students' diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies. In consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator the following strategies will be adopted:

- Ensuring that objectives are realistic for the 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 used is pitched at the students' level of understanding and does not hinder understanding of the activity
- Using task analysis, outlining 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 every day, 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 learning experiences. These issues will be addressed in ten modules, 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 ten modules of Junior Cycle SPHE are:**

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-management
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendship
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use

- Personal Safety

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

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

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 centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student. The class atmosphere must be one of respect for the privacy of the individual teacher and student and hallmarked by sensitivity and care. A respectful code of conduct is expected from all participants. Every class establishes ground rules which are referred to throughout the lessons.

**Teaching Methodologies may include:**

- Group work
- Role play
- 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 the school's resources.

Coláiste Abbáin recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of children lies with their parents. The school has a long tradition of supporting parents in this role and SPHE is seen as building on this.

### **CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS**

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

- Physical Education c(Wellbeing hours)
- CSPE Short Course (Wellbeing hours)
- Guidance Related Learning (Wellbeing hours)
- Science
- Home Economics
- Tiered Student Leadership Programme (TY buddy system, Meitheal Leaders, Prefects etc)

### **RESOURCES AND ACCOMODATION**

Resources include:

- SPHE Junior Certificate Syllabus and Guidelines
- Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines
- SPHE Short Course
- Healthy Lifestyles 1, 2 and 3
- Healthy Living, Healthy Times and Healthy Choices

- On My Own Two Feet
- RSE Junior Cycle Materials
- RSE Senior Cycle Materials
- Before You Decide
- Trust
- HSE leaflets and DVDs
- Growing Up LGBT
- Belong To Stand Up Resources
- Mental Health Matters
- Emotional Health Materials
- Working Things Out
- Body Whys
- #Up To Us
- Marie Keating Cancer Awareness Pack
- JC Personal Safety Lessons
- SC Personal Safety Lessons

This list is not exhaustive.

### **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 co-ordinator. SPHE is enhanced when the appointment of teachers to the subject has been negotiated in advance of timetabling.

In-career development 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. The core SPHE teaching team includes Patricia O Connor and David Larkin.



## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND REFERRALS**

### **PARTICIPATION**

SPHE at Junior Cycle and RSE at Senior Cycle is a core curricular subject. Each parent has the right to withdraw their child from some or all RSE classes but parents are encouraged to provide alternative RSE at home. The school will respect this choice as their right. 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. Where students are withdrawn from RSE the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students. Parents must meet with the Principal in person to discuss their decision to withdraw their child from the RSE module.

### **SENSITIVE ISSUES**

Class discussion will be of a general nature, and will not be personally directed, in accordance with the previously agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered in class by a teacher, or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The SPHE teacher may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in deciding whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor, Student Support Team, and/or the Principal.

Teachers also do a Ground Rules Class Contract which is signed by the teacher and students. The classroom rules are discussed and then implemented into that contract. The classes focus on confidentiality/ listening to others and allowing others time to speak.

## **REFERRAL**

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility 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. The teacher may inform the class of external services relevant to the class material. SPHE teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are to discuss the issue with the Guidance Counsellor, Student Support Team, and/or the Principal.

## **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 Safeguarding Statement and the revised Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017.

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.

## **VISITORS**

Circular 0023/2010

National and international research has consistently shown that the qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional 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 school's planned programme for SPHE/RSE

Visiting speakers are seen as complimenting and supporting the SPHE programme. Teachers inviting these speakers must:

- Inform the Principal in advance
- Make the speaker aware of the 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**

The school accepts that it is in the interests of all parents that the child grows up in a healthy and mature fashion. The school will strive to keep parents informed of the contents of the SPHE programme and resources available for parents. An overview of SPHE, RSE information and any relevant updates are given to parents at Parent Teacher Meetings. The SPHE Policy is available on the school website and on request at the school. Notifications regarding reviews are also available on the school

website. Parents of incoming first years are informed of the availability of the SPHE Policy along with other relevant policies on the school website.

The involvement of parents 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 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 office. Copies will be given to each SPHE teacher by the SPHE co-ordinator.

### **ASSESSMENT, RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING**

Every student has a SPHE Portfolio folder. The folder contains work sheets, hand outs and a copy. At the end of a lesson students record a short reflection in their copy. The folders are given to students at the end of Junior Cycle.

As part of Junior Cycle Wellbeing students will be formally assessed in SPHE and their results will be recorded on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

SPHE teachers report progress in SPHE for Junior Cycle students on the Christmas and Summer reports. SPHE teachers also meet parents at Parent Teacher Meetings.

Minutes of all SPHE meetings are recorded and contained in the SPHE Subject Folder.

### **WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR SPHE**

While specific teachers are trained and charged with the responsibility of delivering the programme, we see every teacher as a teacher of SPHE in that he/she may from time to time see opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle 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. Wellbeing Week, Amber Flag Mental Health Initiatives and fundraising for organisations such as Pieta House and Raheen Family Resource Centre.

### **RELATED POLICIES**

- RSE Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy

### **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 programme and policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the SPHE team.

The opinions of students will be included and SPHE teachers will liaise with the Student Council. The opinions of parents will also be included and SPHE teachers will liaise with the Parents Association. The opinions of management will be included and the SPHE co-ordinator will liaise with the Principal and the Board of Management.

### **RATIFIED BY BOM:**

**28<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

## **APPENDIX A**

Summary of what Colaiste Abbáin provides both formally and informally to promote the holistic development of students:

### **COURSES**

Junior Certificate

Transition Year

Leaving Certificate

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

### **SUPPORTS**

Guidance Counsellor

Pastoral Care/Student Support Team

Library

Special Needs Assistants

Learning Support

Parents Association

Student Council

Tiered Leadership Programme – TY Buddy System, Meitheal, Prefects etc.

After School Study

Homework Club – SCP students

Tours

School Field Trips

School Activity Trips

Annual Awards including monthly Positive Affirmation Awards

## **SPORTS**

Gaelic Football

Hurling

Soccer

Basketball

Athletics

## **ACTIVITIES**

School Pantomime

Christmas Concert

Graduation Service

Green Schools Committee

Choir

Agriculture Club

## APPENDIX B

# Wellbeing 400 hours timetabled 2019/20

*6 class periods per week*

### 1<sup>st</sup> Year

- 1 SPHE
- 1 CSPE
- 2 PE
- 1 IT 1<sup>st</sup> year only
- 1 class with the following modules: (10 week learning units) (1<sup>st</sup> month in 1<sup>st</sup> year study skills - get set go booklet)

	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Study skills- transitioning and learning	Homework matters	Friends for life

*All courses have to be linked to appendices I.*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

- 1 SPHE
- 2 CSPE
- 2 PE
- 1 Class with the following modules: (11 week learning units)

2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Study skills – goal setting and learning	Careers	NCSE –social skills
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*All courses have to be linked to appendices I.*

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

- 2 SPHE
- 1 CSPE
- 2 PE
- 1 Class with the following modules: (11 week learning units)

3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Learning and assessment Preparation	Careers	Alert Programme
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*All courses have to be linked to appendices I.*



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