

Ashbourne Community School



Social Personal Health Education Policy

Contents

- **Ashbourne Community School Mission Statement**
- **School Ethos**
- **SPHE Rationale**
- **Aims of SPHE**
- **The SPHE ethos of Ashbourne Community School**
- **Class organisation and Timetabling**
- **Outline of the programme**

- Junior Cycle**
- Senior Cycle**
- **Relationships and Sexuality Education**

- Definition of RSE**
- The aims of our RSE programme**
- **Guidelines for the Use of External Agencies**
- **Sensitive Issues**
- **Planning for students with special educational needs**
- **Teaching Methodologies**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Resources and accommodation for SPHE**
- **Cross-curricular links**
- **Staff development and subject development**
- **Role of the SPHE Coordinator**
- **Assessment, record keeping and reporting**
- **Evaluation & Review**
- **Appendix 1**

Chairperson's initials _____

Ashbourne Community School Mission Statement

- Ashbourne Community School is a place where we foster such values as respect, inclusion and care as evident in our school policy and practice.
- Our school is a partnership of students, staff, parents and guardians, Board of Management and our local and global communities. We value the on-going input of all these partners in the life of the school.
- We pursue academic excellence while recognising the diversity of our student body. Through a relevant curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all, we endeavour to help all students realise their potential.
- Through positive staff and student relationships and a broad extracurricular programme, we aim to develop in each student a confident, healthy self-image and a sense of personal, local and global responsibility.
- We recognise that each student's personal and spiritual growth is important. We endeavour to co-operate with parents and guardians and religious leaders of all faiths to encourage the development of religious and spiritual values in each student.

School Ethos

The Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School has regard to the principles of a democratic society and respects and promotes respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society while it also upholds and is responsible for upholding the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school. The ethos of the school is outlined in the mission statement of the school.

The Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School is supportive of the principle of inclusiveness in particular in regard to students with a disability or another Special Educational Need in so far as is reasonably practicable and subject to the resources provided by the Department of Education and Science. The range of classes taught includes support programmes for students with a disability or other special educational needs. Parents/Guardians are invited to look at our SEN model of provision as outlined in our SEN policy.

Ashbourne Community School has a policy of having a maximum of 30 students per class with a maximum of 24 students per practical class. The Board of Management reserves the right to maintain reduced numbers in some Junior Cycle classes for the benefit of special needs students in mixed ability classes. Likewise, the Board reserves the right to maintain reduced numbers in some senior cycle programmes.

SPHE Rationale

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.

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

Aims of SPHE

Social Personal and Health Education provides opportunities for teaching and learning to take place that are directly related to health and wellbeing. 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 capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships, as well as contributing towards the spiritual, moral, mental, physical wellbeing and development of our students.

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

The SPHE programme reflects Ashbourne Community Schools ethos. The attitudes, skills and values fostered in the SPHE classroom can only truly flourish in a school where all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity.

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The SPHE ethos of Ashbourne Community School

Ashbourne Community School recognises that the world in which we live presents young people with many opportunities and challenges that affect their health and well-being. A student who has a high self-esteem and a sense of security will be better able to meet these challenges and opportunities. Social Personal and Health Education supports the personal development, health and well-being of young people. It provides them with opportunities to develop 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 development.

Ashbourne Community School recognises that the home is the natural environment in which children grow, develop and mature into adults. In line with the Education Act (1998) Ashbourne Community School supports parents and guardians in this work by promoting the social and personal development of students and by providing health education for them. Our school's approach to health education is in line with its Mission Statement and supported by all teachers across the curriculum.

Class organisation and Timetabling

In organising the learning environment, the teacher will be careful to create an atmosphere which respects the privacy of each individual student and treats each student with sensitivity and care. Active learning methods are used to ensure that students actively participate in their own learning. Each student has an SPHE file in which all classwork and homework is kept. Junior Cycle students have one 40-minute period for SPHE each week. TY, fifth and sixth year students will have one 40-minute period.

Classes are organised in mixed ability groupings. The SPHE programme at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle is delivered by a SPHE core team of teachers, where viable, depending on timetabling issues. This will be reviewed on an annual basis. The SPHE programme is delivered by tutors in transition year.

In each year group, five/six timetabled periods of SPHE will be assigned to RSE. It is spiral in nature and age appropriate in content. It is envisaged that the services of suitably qualified outside professionals will be availed of for the more technical aspects of the RSE course.

Outline of the programme

Junior Cycle

The SPHE curriculum is presented in four strands, each of which may be addressed in each of the three years of the Junior Cycle. The curriculum is an enabling one, its purpose is to offer a flexible framework around which the school can build an SPHE programme. This junior cycle SPHE programme is designed to enable students to develop a positive sense of themselves and a commitment to caring for themselves and others. Strand Teachers of SPHE follow the DES guidelines for each year. The order in which the modules are covered may vary depending on the needs of individual classes, as indicated by regular review and the circumstances and issues which may prevail at the time.

The four strands are:

➤ **Strand 1: Who am I?**

This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and building self-esteem.

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➤ **Strand 2: Minding myself and others**

This strand provides opportunities for students to reflect on how they can best take care of themselves and others.

➤ **Strand 3: Team up**

This strand focuses on students learning about important relationships in their lives and building relationship skills.

➤ **Strand 4: My mental health**

This strand focuses on building positive mental health, examining young people's experience of mental ill health and learning how to support themselves and others in challenging times.

Senior Cycle

The aim of senior cycle SPHE is to support learners in making choices for health and wellbeing now and in the future. The curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle is an enabling curriculum. The framework is built around five areas of learning. These areas of learning focus on what is important for learners in senior cycle to know, understand and be able to do in order to make and maintain healthy lifestyle decisions. The five areas of learning are:

- Mental health
- Gender studies
- Substance use
- Relationships and sexuality education
- Physical activity and nutrition

Contemporary topics and issues which emerge in this class are dealt with at a level appropriate to the age of the student and within a moral framework, in keeping with the school ethos.

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Ashbourne Community School respects the individual; valuing, understanding and empowering the gifts and differences of each person. It recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators and home is the natural environment in which Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) should take place. We as a school believe that no young person in our care should feel excluded or marginalised for being who they are.

Therefore, our RSE programme will seek to:

1. Support the understanding that RSE is about the sexuality, relationships and sexual health of all young people.
2. Support the understanding that questioning of one's sexual identity is a normal and valued part of adolescence.
3. Address the myths, prejudices and stereotypes that may exist in relation to sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Definition of RSE

Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female and is subject to change and development throughout life. Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs, values and skills about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. This knowledge is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, teachers, peers, adults and the media. Sexuality education seeks to provide young people with formal opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of human

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sexuality, through processes, which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

The Aims of our RSE Programme

- To help young people 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 young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Guidelines for the Use of External Agencies

The SPHE teacher is the primary educator in SPHE. An outside speaker is a resource and does not replace the teacher. When engaging the services of an outside agency suitably qualified and experienced personnel will be sourced. The needs of the target group will be identified. The SPHE teacher will normally be present and boundaries of confidentiality will be agreed beforehand. Any concerns/issues arising will be followed up in SPHE classes, with referrals to appropriate authorities where necessary.

The school is informed in this regard by Circular 0023/2010, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools, Child Safeguarding statement 2019/2020. We recognise that visiting speakers/facilitators play a valuable role in supplementing, complementing and supporting our programme.

Visitors/visiting groups are required to adhere to the following guidelines of good practice:

With reference to our child safe guarding assessment 2019/2020, the following guidelines for all external speakers to the school in incorporated in our SPHE policy:

1. All facilitators/speakers must report to the general office in the White Area where they must sign the visitor's book (by order of the Board of Management) when entering and exiting the school.
2. All facilitators/speakers are required to wear a visitor's badge while on school premises.
3. All facilitator's speakers invited to ACS must be accompanied while on the school premises by a mandate person, if they are not Garda Vetted by an organisation/official agency/ school
4. All materials which will be delivered to students must be in accordance with the curriculum.
5. All PowerPoints/resource material must be forward to the teacher before presentation occurs where relevant.
6. The school CCTV may record images of the public visiting the school premises.
7. All visitors are expected to cooperate with the school in carrying out the Health and Safety statement and ensuring they work and behave without risk to themselves and others.
8. All visitors should be informed of these guidelines prior to visit.
9. Feedback from students where possible on the workshop /event they attended in school, facilitated by an external speaker.

Sensitive Issues

Chairperson's initials _____

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the SPHE course content, they will respond flexibly to the needs of the students as they arise. Where it is appropriate the school will refer students to other supportive links, internal and external to the school community in line with Child Protection Guidelines for secondary schools. Class discussion will be of a general nature in accordance with previously agreed ground rules and will not be personally directed. Questions not directly related to the lesson content will be addressed appropriately by the SPHE teacher. The SPHE teacher will act as a facilitator and not a counsellor.

Planning for students with special educational needs

Links are made with SEN department in connection with the SPHE programme at the discretion of the teacher/SEN department. (See Appendix 1)

Teaching Methodologies

A variety of experiential teaching methods are used to teach the SPHE programme. These methods are student-centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student and reflect the aims and ethos of the school. The class atmosphere must be one of respect for the privacy of each individual student and marked by sensitivity and care. The schemes of work are a guideline for each department member to cover the four strands over the school year. As a department we aim to teach at least six lessons of RSE to each year group for all students in each year group to engage with the RSE module at the same time (March - April), where possible.

Some methodologies employed will include:

- Group Discussions, Debates
- Case Studies
- Brainstorming
- Role Play
- Narrative Expression
- Games – Icebreakers, Simulation
- Project Work
- Assignments

Confidentiality

At the beginning of each academic year, students are informed that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Information may have to be passed on at the discretion of the SPHE teacher to the Designated Liaison Person (Principal), the Deputy Designated Liaison Person or to the Student Support Team (including Tutors, Year heads, Chaplains, Guidance Councillors, Care team and/or any member of teaching staff).

Resources and accommodation for SPHE

A wide range of resources are available to the SPHE team. Junior Cycle classes use 'Health and Wellbeing' books 1-3 (the first-year book for the next academic year will be reviewed by the JC Core team May 2019). To complement these textbooks teachers also use from a range of suitable resources such as 'B4 U Decide', 'Working things Out Through SPHE' and '#Up2US'. Senior Cycle classes use 'It's your life' (although this will be reviewed by the SPHE core team) as well as resources such as 'Trust', 'Mental Health Matters' and 'Growing Up LGBT'.

An appropriate budget is made available by school management each year to cover the cost of the department's requirements. Our 'Anti Bullying', 'Wellbeing' and 'LGBT awareness' weeks are accommodated into the school calendar annually.

Cross-curricular links

Chairperson's initials _____

For the teaching of SPHE to be effective, a whole school support is critical. It is important that the teaching of SPHE is not seen solely as the work of the SPHE teacher. All teachers are SPHE teachers either directly or indirectly. A supportive school environment ensures that the values of SPHE are lived out in the whole school community.

Staff development and subject development

SPHE staff members engage in professional development on an ongoing basis. The SPHE team avails of continuous professional development on offer by the SPHE support service. A record of courses attended is held by our Deputy Principal. These training courses ensures that the teachers become familiar and comfortable with all aspects of the syllabus. All teachers teaching SPHE will have access to in-service for the programme. Provision will also be made for the SPHE teachers directly involved to meet during the school year during staff days.

Role of the SPHE Coordinator

The role of the SPHE co-ordinator is seen as vital to a meaningful SPHE Programme. The school recognises that teachers directly involved in delivering SPHE will need training and development in delivering the SPHE programme. The SPHE Coordinator manages:

- Programme planning
- Resources
- Finances
- Visiting speakers/workshops
- Communication
- Record keeping
- CPD

Assessment, record keeping and reporting

All student work is kept in individual student files/copies. Written work and general class participation is used by the teacher to assess student engagement within the programme. Students use learning logs at the end of each module in their copies to reflect on their learning. Department meetings take place and a record is kept of each meeting. Discussion and consultation will take place with school management when appropriate.

Evaluation & Review

The SPHE policy will be reviewed as required. The evaluation of the SPHE programme will take place annually and will include teachers, students and senior management.

Chairperson's initials _____

Appendix 1

Policy for Students with Intimate Care Needs

(Part of the SEN Policy)

This is a general policy which underpins the specific details relevant to the intimate care needs of an individual student who requires support in the bathroom. Be matter-of-fact about bathroom use; place the student at his/her ease and at all times ensure dignity and respect.

Bathroom Protocol:

- The student will alert the SNA with him/her should he/she need to use the bathroom.
- The SNA with the student will alert, via silent text, a second SNA (as per the rota) that she requires support in the bathroom with a student.
- Exit the classroom, there is no need to inform teachers; s/he will just assume that you are going to the bathroom.
- Once in the bathroom please wear latex gloves provided.
- Where needed hoist student onto the changing bed, prepare their clothing as directed by parents/guardians/OTs and then hoist student onto the toilet or onto the toilet chair.
- Where the use of a urinal is requested please follow the instructions as given by parents/guardians/OTs and use a towel to ensure dignity and respect.
- At all times maintain the dignity of the student.
- Be mindful of appropriate eye-contact and maintain an appropriate and relaxing discourse with the student to place him/her at ease.
- Where instructed students may require support with wiping and if necessary with showering. Please ensure that all guidelines re hoisting students into shower chairs are adhered to.
- Once showering a student please use the disposable aprons and shoe covers provided.
- Hoist students from shower chair to changing bed. Redress student, fix clothes allowing students to maintain as much independence as he/she can.
- Where students do not require the use of the shower, hoist him/her back to the changing bed and follow the steps outlined above.
- Hoist student back into wheelchair and adjust the sink to allow the student to wash his/hands. Provide the required support here depending on the student's level of need.
- Where students require the use of the changing table for changing disposable sanitary wear, please dispose of sanitary wear in the appropriate bins.
- SNAs to dispose of gloves and wash hands.
- Record time and duration of bathroom visits, these may be required by health professionals and the NCSE to monitor continued access to SNA support.

Rest Breaks Protocol:

- Students in wheelchairs may require rest breaks to relieve pain and/or discomfort on pressure points.
- The student will alert the SNA with him/her should he/she need to take a rest break.
- The SNA with the student will alert, via silent text, a second SNA (as per the rota) that she requires support in the bathroom with the student.
- Exit the classroom, there is no need to inform teachers; s/he will just assume that you are going to the bathroom.
- Follow instructions as given by parents/guardians/OTs. Students may simply require an adjustment to the chair which allows him/her to stretch or change position.

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Policy for Students with Support Care Needs requiring Specialist Equipment

(Part of the SEN Policy)

Use of Specialist Equipment:

For some students with particular disabilities it is necessary to use specialist pieces of equipment throughout the school day as directed by Community or CRC (Central Remedial Clinic) Occupational Therapy. Currently there are students who require the use of a K Walker, a Crocodile Walker and a Stander.

- SNAs do ensure that students are using the walkers appropriately and correctly. If not the matter is referred to the SEN Coordinator. It is essential that equipment is used correctly and safely.
- Where students require a break from a powered wheelchair to a Walker for a break in the classroom only the transfer from the chair to the walker must be supervised.
- The return transfer from the walker to the wheelchair is also supervised.
- Where a student is required to use a stander **two SNAs working together** supervise the transfer from powered-wheelchair / walker to the Stander. The SNA with the student will alert the second SNA, by silent text, as per the rota, that assistance is required to place the student in the Stander. It is imperative to ensure that all straps are appropriately in place before the student is left for the agreed time of 30-40 minutes in the Stander.
- The Stander is part of the classroom equipment for the student's use and the student can be left to continue with normal classroom activity.
- The second SNA must return to the classroom, at the agreed time, to assist with the transfer of the student from the Stander back to the powered wheelchair or to the walker.
- A record should be kept of the day, date and duration of time that the student has been placed in the stander, should it need to be checked by parents, HSE staff, CRC staff or NCSE personnel to monitor continued access to SNA support.

Please note the required procedures will change over time depending on the need of the individual student. All necessary changes will be notified to the DLP/DDLP. The above protocols are the basis for the individual intimate care needs of individual students and are referenced in their Pupil Profile Plan. The use of Specialist Equipment is also referenced in Pupil Profile Plans.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School at its meeting on Tuesday, 28th May, 2019 (Ref. Meeting Nr. 241).

 Chairperson
 Board of Management
 Ashbourne Community School

Date: _____

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