

SPHE POLICY

(updated December 2024)



CBS ROSCOMMON
Working Document

Introduction

Philosophy and context of this policy

This policy is written in the context of the school Mission Statement:

CBS Roscommon is a Catholic Boys' Voluntary Secondary School under the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). Our ethos is to promote the happiness, dignity and self-worth of each student, inspiring them to become transformational leaders within the community. The school is committed to the provision of a broadly-based education in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, balancing vision with realism, which in turn, facilitates personal growth and development among; students, staff and community.

The above statement alludes to the development of the full potential of the individual as central to the work of this school. This commitment to wellbeing permeates all the school's policies, plans and schemes in a commitment to promoting the development of each individual. *"Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community"* Wellbeing Guidelines (2015). The World Health Organisation suggests it is *"a state ...in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community"*. In CBS Roscommon, wellbeing includes a mental, physical, social and spiritual dimension. Therefore, as a school community we recognise and support the importance of wellbeing in all aspects of our everyday activities.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasises a child's right to achieve their full potential and participate in decisions that affect them, and the right to feel secure and happy. It leads to better educational outcomes and can influence young people's outcomes as adults, as children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social and school wellbeing subsequently have higher levels of academic achievement. The quality of relationships between teachers and students has a huge impact on a number of student outcomes including; socio-emotional wellbeing, engagement in schoolwork, feeling a sense of belonging in school, levels of disciplinary problems and academic achievement. Wellbeing matters not simply because it leads to better educational outcomes or can influence young people's outcomes as adults.; wellbeing matters in the here and now. It is important in its own right because all students have a right to feel cared for in school. Student welfare and pastoral care has always been central to life at CBS Roscommon and in SPHE class and will continue to be so

1.1 Scope:

The SPHE Policy applies to all school staff, the Board of Management (BOM), parents/guardians, students and others (including prospective or potential students and their parents/guardians and applicants for staff positions within the school) insofar as the measures under the plan relate to them.

While the Senior management has the overall responsibility for coordinating and compiling the policy all members of staff have a contribution to make.

The school educational team aims to provide students with the best possible service. Members of this team include, among others:

- School Management
- Year Heads
- Class Tutors
- Subject Teachers and Departments
- AEN Department
- Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)
- Programmes Co-ordinator
- Parents/Guardians

The interventions and supports of the policy apply particularly to junior, senior, minority, special educational or personal needs etc. of all students as they progress through their post-primary education.

This school policy on SPHE has been developed through consultation with parents/guardians, students, teachers and management.

It caters for students from different backgrounds and different abilities. Every student is valued and encouraged to achieve the highest level possible, in all they undertake.

1.2 Definitions

SPHE provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn and care about themselves and others. It also enables students to make informed decisions about their health, personal and social development.

Junior Cycle Wellbeing:

For students enrolled since September 2017, SPHE is part of Junior Cycle Wellbeing. Since Sept 2021 CBS Roscommon has allocated 100 hours to SPHE and Teachers follow the SPHE Short Course Specification. As of September (2023) incoming students will follow the new SPHE specification. Using 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.

Six Indicators of Wellbeing – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware have been identified as central to wellbeing. The Indicators of Wellbeing are used to plan teaching and learning within the SPHE programme and to scaffold conversations with students about their learning.

The following diagram shows the breakdown of SPHE hours at Junior Cycle in our school:

Wellbeing : Breakdown of Hours

SUBJECT	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	Total Hours (401)
PE (SC)	Double Class	Double Class	Double Class	134
CSPE (SC)	Double Class	Double Class	Single Class	111 *
SPHE (SC)	Double Class	Single Class	Single Class	89
UNITS OF LEARNING	Single Class	Single Class	Single Class	67

- 11 hours has to be given from CSPE to SPHE in 2nd Year to make up 100 hour SC (same Teacher must be timetabled for SPHE/CSPE in 2nd year to facilitate same)
- Units of Learning (1 x40 in 1st & 2nd = 45 hrs)
- Guidance (1 x40 in 3rd Yr =22 hrs)

CBS Roscommon: Jan 2022

** To make up the deficit for SPHE, in second year two classes will be allocated to SPHE and 1 to CSPE from Jan-May. From Aug-Dec Teachers will teach 1 x SPHE and 2 x CSPE as per printed Time Table.

1.3 Policy and Legislative Context

This policy is being developed in response to relevant legislation and resource documents.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of CBS Roscommon adopts the following SPHE Policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour and within the context of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) child protection guidelines.

Other requirements and guidelines include:

- **Circular 0056/2022** – School Self-Evaluation : Next Steps September 2022-June 2026
<https://assets.gov.ie/232751/54405353-26ba-4aad-ac7c-4b15c822a88b.pdf>
- **Circular 0043/2018** – SPHE and RSE Best Practice Guidelines
<https://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2018/43.pdf>
- **Circular 0045/2013** - Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools
https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0014_2019.pdf
- **Anti-Bullying Support Materials**, PDST, 2013 - <https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Anti-Bullying%20Support%20Materials.pdf>
- **Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018–2023**, DES, 2018.
<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf>
- **Wellbeing Guidelines for Junior Cycle (revised)**, NCCA, 2021.
https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf
- **Looking At Our School 2022** - A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools, Inspectorate of Department of Education and Skills, 2022. <https://assets.gov.ie/232730/4afcbel0-7c78-4b49-a36d-e0349a9f8fb7.pdf>
- **Framework for Junior Cycle**, NCCA, 2015. <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy->

[Reports/Framework-for-Junior- Cycle-2015.pdf](#)

- **Well-being in Post-Primary Schools. Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention**, NEPS, 2013. <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf>
- **Education (Welfare) Act 2000** – <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/22/enacted/en/html>
- **Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools**, Tús/NEWB, 2008 - https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf

Policy documents which impact on the formation and delivery of the SPHE Policy:
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- Acceptable Use ICT Policy
- Admissions Policy & Procedures
- Acceptable Use Policy for Network and Internet Child Protection Risk Assessment and Statement
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Critical Incident Management Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Data Protection Policy
- Educational Tours and Field Trips Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy
- Special Needs Education Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- ASD Policy

1.4 Rationale for the SPHE Policy

SPHE is a key element of healthy social and personal development in Irish schools. Young people are exposed to a mixed variety of messages about health and personal related information. Schools, in consultation with parents/guardians, need to reflect on how to provide for the needs of their students.

- The Education Act, 1998 requires that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The effectiveness of an SPHE programme is dependent on a collaborative policy process involving teachers, parents/guardians, members of the board of management and students.

Research has shown that students who actively participate in their learning by attending SPHE classes regularly are more likely to:

- enjoy a rewarding experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are identified, nurtured and appreciated.
- successfully complete their schooling.
- achieve better results.
- appreciate the importance of routine and links to overall Wellbeing.

1.5 Principles of the SPHE Policy

The principles that underpin the provisions of the SPHE Policy are:

- A caring, pastoral, restorative approach.
- A healthy and supportive learning environment.

- A whole school-approach to incorporating good habits and routines that underpin our core values

1.6 Aims and Objectives

Within the overall context of the school's mission statement the SPHE Policy aims to support students during their time in CBS Roscommon so that they can learn and grow to their full potential.

The SPHE Policy aims to:

- 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 wellbeing.

The objectives of this SPHE policy enable students achieve the following outcomes:

- To provide a safe, nurturing and positive environment in which all have the opportunity to develop socially, personally, emotionally and physically.
- To provide resources and support.

Policy Provision:

2.1 Whole School Overview: Management and Organisation of the Programme

There should be a collaborative, whole-school approach to the development and delivery of the SPHE programme. SPHE will be taught as a short course in JC. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is taught as part of the SPHE programme to JC students and as part of the RE programme in Senior Cycle. Transition Years also have SPHE once a week.

2.2 Content and Teaching Methods

****For content see schemes of work in Files on CBS Staff Teaching Team under Subject Planning**

The Four Strands as per the new 2023 SPHE Specification are as follows:

Strand 1: Understanding Myself and Others:

This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and self-esteem and building some of the foundational skills and dispositions needed for healthy relationships and to thrive in life, including communicating and negotiating, listening, showing empathy, respecting difference, and self-management/self-regulation.

Strand 2: Making Healthy Choices:

This strand offers opportunities for students to consider how they can make healthy choices to support their wellbeing. It explores what being healthy might look like for a teenager, what helps or gets in the way of making healthy choices and how to access reliable information to support good choices. Students will also practice the skills needed for making healthy decisions and come to understand contextual factors, such as family, peer, media and social pressures, that influence decisions.

Strand 3: Relationships and Sexuality :

This strand explores the cognitive, physical, emotional and social aspects of relationships and sexuality through a positive, inclusive, rights and responsibilities-based approach. The focus is on family relationships, friendships, romantic and potential sexual relationships in the future.

Strand 4: Emotional Wellbeing :

This strand primarily focuses on nurturing emotional wellbeing and promoting positive mental health. It helps students develop problem solving and coping skills for dealing with the emotional ups and downs of life, explores how they can support themselves and others in challenging times and discusses where/how to find support, if needed.

The four strands are underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in SPHE.

These are:

- Awareness
- Dialogue
- Reflection and Action.

Awareness: Awareness is the ability to understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour. It includes understanding how different factors influence our sense of self and how we live our lives, including the influence of family, peers, the internet, gender, culture and social norms. This element also includes an awareness that to be human is to be in relationships and that we all share a common humanity and dignity, have rights and responsibilities.

Dialogue: Through dialogical teaching and learning students are facilitated to engage with a diversity of viewpoints; discuss and reflect on their own perspectives, values, and behaviours and those of others; enlarge their understanding of topics of relevance to their lives; and come to informed, thoughtful decisions based on their personal values, with due regard to their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. Respectful dialogue is aided by presuming a diversity of backgrounds, identities, cultures and experiences in every classroom and seeing this as a resource for learning.

Reflection and Action: This cross-cutting element focuses on students reflecting on what they have learned and coming to their own personal insights and conclusions in response to their learning. It enables students to consider how the learning can inform their choices, behaviour and relationships, and discerning what it means for their lives now or for the future. Learning in SPHE is a 'praxis'; an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, nurtured by dialogue with others.

The **4 strands of SPHE** in the Junior Cycle as per 2016 specification are:

Strand 1: Who am I?

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

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.

A variety of teaching methods will be used, as appropriate. For example:

- group work
- project work
- role-play
- class visitors
- brainstorming
- case studies
- artwork
- debates
- multi-media

2.3. Training and Resources

All resources needed in terms of time, finance and personnel will be made available to develop and support the SPHE programme in the school, in so far as possible. All SPHE teachers are informed about relevant in-service provided by the JCT, PDST and HSE Health Promotion Unit and are encouraged to attend.

Teacher training is seen as an essential element in delivering the programme. The objectives of this training are to enhance the personal growth of teachers and to enable them to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to teach the programme.

At JC all students purchase My Wellbeing Journey and there are shared resource available in the prayer room for all to access for SPHE and RSE.

******A full list of recommended resources is found on the following website, and are available for all staff:

www.pdst.ie/post-primary/health-wellbeing/sphe

Links to resources are also available via the Wellbeing Team and RE Team. These are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

2.4. Cross-curricular Links

The teaching of SPHE in the school is the responsibility of a core group of staff. SPHE forms natural links with subjects such as; Science, Guidance, Physical Education (PE) and with Wellbeing Units of Learning. It is important that through regular communication between these departments a co-ordinated approach is taken to the teaching of SPHE. SPHE along with CSPE and PE forms the core provision of Wellbeing in the school.

2.5. Visitors

Visitors, in line with circular 45/2018, may occasionally be invited to speak to SPHE classes.

2.6. Consultation with Parents/Guardians

Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. Many of the issues dealt with in SPHE will have been discussed at home. It is important that there is good communication between parents/guardians and the Teacher of the subject. The parents/guardians will be informed about the subject at Open Night, at parent/teacher meetings (PTM) and on request with SPHE teachers.

2.7. Assessment, Record Keeping and Recording

Assessment:

You are not required to give SPHE tests. However, you are required to enter a comment on VSWARE when reports are being sent home in November/February & Summer and at the end of the year. The oral and written contributions (i.e. **reflections and work in the SPHE copy/book**) by the students can be used as evidence of assessment. There are some nice ideas for assessment on pages 19-21 of the Teacher's Resource Book (My Wellbeing Journey).

First-Third Years: The same copy can be used for SPHE/CSPE and for Wellbeing classes.

Personal Learning Diary (source: www.curriculumonline.ie)

"The nature of much of students' learning in SPHE is concerned with attitudes, values and feelings and is personal to the student. Students should be encouraged to keep a personal learning diary for the duration of the short course, where they can reflect privately on their learning in SPHE.

With the agreement of the student, some of the entries may be used to support different learning activities, but essentially the personal learning diary is private and for the student only.

Given the potentially sensitive nature of students' learning in SPHE, it is essential that students agree a contract with each other and their Teacher to ensure that the SPHE classroom is a respectful and safe environment for learning in SPHE".

- Look back on past learning
- Allow students opportunities for reflection
- Lower order and higher order questions should be used
- Use of different assessment strategies/methods
- Give feedback to students on how they are performing
- Check what students already know
- Think Pair Share
- KWL

SPHE Teachers fill in school reports for Nov/Feb & Christmas and Summer. Students can be assessed on class participation, co-operation, class work, progress etc. Teachers can also correspond with parents/guardians through the journal on any relevant matters. Students complete a **CBA** in term 3 of 2nd year and Teachers will record descriptor for same accordingly.

2.8. Inclusion

The SPHE department supports an inclusive environment for all students. In order to meet the needs of students with additional needs, SPHE teachers may engage with SNAs, SETs, or participate in co-teaching to:

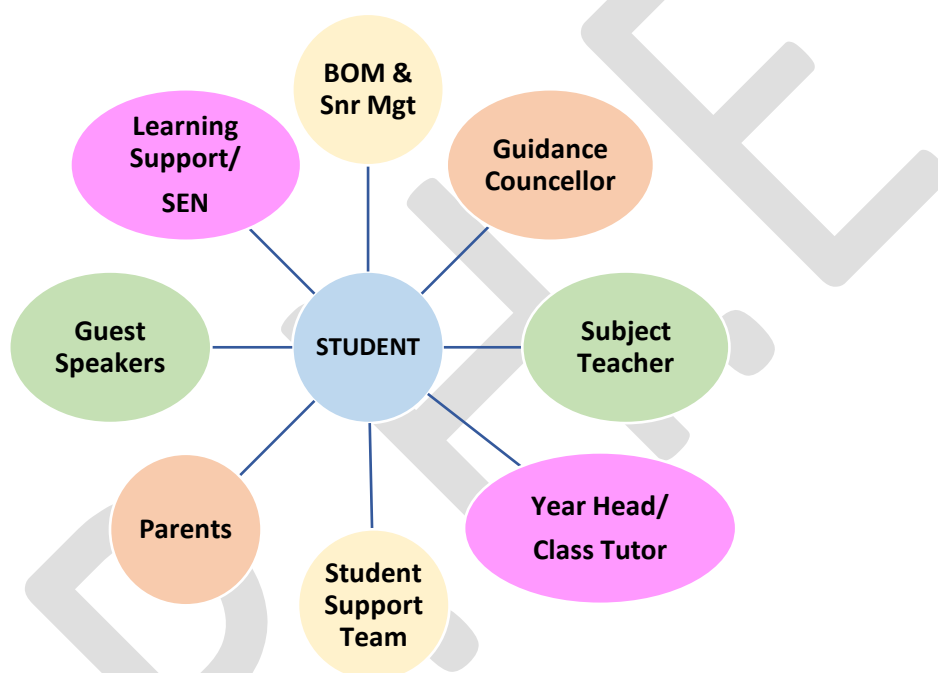
- Work with students with diagnosed disabilities
- Assess students' needs and progress
- Set targets for students which are SMART
- Coordinate student targets

S.P.H.E

3. Roles & Responsibilities:

The SPHE Policy is not provided exclusively by any one individual or group. It is a holistic process that benefits from the synergy of many working together with a shared vision towards a common.

A Whole School Approach thus ensures that our school maximises its resources through the identification of roles and responsibilities for school management and staff. The main roles and responsibilities within our School are:



a) Board of Management & Senior Management:

The BOM has a responsibility to ensure that the provision and practice of education in the school is of the highest possible standard. The BOM manages the school in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

The Principal controls the internal organisation and management of the school, and exercises supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff. The Deputy Principal is in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal. In the absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal is placed in charge of the school. The Senior Management team also have a responsibility to ensure that the SPHE Policy is implemented fully. This includes managing the process of planning in cooperation with the Guidance Counsellors, school staff and other school partners such as parents/guardians.

b) Guidance Counsellor

Guidance Counsellors because of their specialist training have a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational, and career. Within personal and social their role for example may involve publicising to the students and at parents' meetings

the work of the Guidance Counsellor and the Guidance Counsellor's availability to individual students for an appointment at any time (within the framework of guidance hours available).

c) Subject Teachers

Subject Teachers have full responsibility for the education of all students in their classes. The subject teacher is the key in helping students to achieve their full potential and assists in identifying students and giving support. Subject teachers have a key role in providing support to students and information and advice relating to their subject disciplines and related careers.

Some Teachers have additional formal responsibilities through management, pastoral care and coordination roles and through participation in programmes such as SPHE. Individual teachers may be sought out by students on an informal basis for advice and information.

All Teachers may consult with the Guidance Counsellor on the needs of an individual student and/or refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor/LS/AEN Coordinator when specialist competence is required with due regard to confidentiality.

d) Year Head & Class Tutor

The Year Head has general responsibility for the welfare of a year group. The Year Head oversees the student's attendance, punctuality, academic performance and behaviour and liaises with the parents/guardians of the year group. The Year Head works closely with the subject teachers, class teachers, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Coordinator, Deputy Principal and Principal. The Year Head also links with outside agencies in conjunction with the above.

In relation to the referral of students to the Guidance & Counselling department, Year Heads play a central role. Any teacher who has a concern in relation to a student forwards the details to the Year head who in turn will refer the student for counselling etc.

The class tutor takes a particular interest in the activities and progress of the students in a class group and helps the students to be positive in their behaviour and work. In addition, the class tutor serves as a special link between the school administration and the students and co-operates with the Year Head in ensuring the students observance of the school rules.

e) Student Support Team

The Student Support Team meets regularly to review the needs of students. The Team strives to provide a response to students needs and is a forum for sharing information and concerns in a safe and confidential setting. What is discussed at Student Support Team meetings relating to individual cases is confidential to the team and any follow up required is decided upon and assigned to a member of the team. Year Heads use the LEAN IN/LEAN OUT system to support student wellbeing. This is accessible via Teams.

f) Parents/Guardians

This policy adopts the legal definition of parent as set down in the Education Act, 1998. The policy recognises that parents/guardians play a pivotal role in developing, promoting and supporting the growth of their child both at home and within the school. Parents/guardians play a vital role in shaping their children's attitude to school. A supportive home environment shapes attitudes that promote the holistic development of the child. It is important that parents/guardians are aware of and support this policy together with other school policies and procedures. Parents/guardians are further encouraged to involve themselves in positive participation in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutual and beneficial links between school and home.

The Parents Council, too, in hosting seminars, meetings and information evenings with external agencies builds the personal capacity of parents/guardians. The National Parents' Council Association also facilitates regional development and information meetings.

g) Guest Speakers

Guest speakers are engaged by school personnel to support students' learning experiences. Guest speakers work in conjunction with the existing school programmes support existing provision and are in line with the circular 43/2018.

h) AEN Coordinator

The AEN Coordinator directs the provision and application of resources for students with additional needs and/or specific learning difficulties. They liaise with the Deputy Principal, Principal, staff, parents/guardians and outside agencies. They apply for resources including resource hours, SNAs and assistive technology. The AEN coordinator also oversees timetables for students requiring learning support and assistance.

i) Students

This policy seeks to attend to the welfare of every student and their right to participate in and benefit from education. It helps students to focus on their personal responsibility for their own behaviour and to experience the value of being a responsible and participatory member of the

school community. Students have an important part to play in creating and sustaining a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect that nurtures teaching and learning.

The Student Council affords students an opportunity to voice their opinion and become involved in the daily life of their School. Wellbeing, SPHE, RE and CSPE cover many aspects of Personal and Social Development. Here, students develop an awareness of their own needs and difficulties and come to know how to ask and who to ask for advice and help.

AS CBS Roscommon adopts a whole-school approach, students are free to approach any member of staff with their concerns. Accordingly, a student may talk to a subject teacher, class tutor, Year head, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal as they see fit. Fellow students also have a part to play in supporting their peers in difficulty.

4. Current Whole School provision & programmes:

4.1 Content

The content delivered will be in line with the NCCA SPHE specification at JC and the Draft SPHE Senior Cycle Framework. The school will aspire to follow new DES guidance as this develops.

4.2 Student Voice

Students will play a central role in the annual review of the provision of SPHE. The student body will evaluate the delivery of SPHE and the topics/content delivered. The content may change in line with this review.(Senior Cycle only)

4.3 Confidentiality

Students are assured of being treated in a just, fair and confidential manner when dealing with SPHE. Exceptions to confidentiality are where there is danger to the student or to someone else and/or where the law requires disclosure.

4.4 Child Protection

Teachers will be aware of the Child Protection Procedures (2017) revised in 2023 and will follow the schools Child Protection Procedures.

4.5 Continuous Professional Development

CPD will continue to be encouraged and facilitated where possible.

5. Monitoring, review & evaluation:

This SPHE policy has been made available to school personnel, the parent's association and members of the school community. The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the Principal and updates reported to the BOM when necessary.

The SPHE policy is a working document that will be evaluated, reviewed and updated accordingly.

SPHE

6. Appendices:

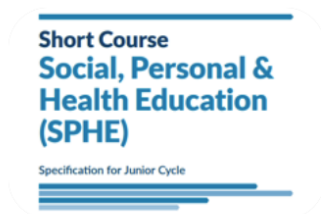
Appendix 1 – <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/junior-cycle/short-courses/sphe/>

The short course was first published in 2016 and was updated in 2023.

Note: Students starting first year in September 2023 will be studying the 2023 specification.



View the 2016
Specification PDF



View 2023
Specification PDF

Curriculum
Specification
2016

Curriculum
Specification
2023

Assessment
Guidelines (2016)

SPHE Toolkit

Appendix 2 – SPHE Senior Cycle Curriculum Framework

https://ncca.ie/media/2688/sphe_framework.pdf

Appendix 3: SPHE TOOLKIT <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/sphe/sphe-toolkit/>

Ratified:

Chairperson of BOM: