

ARDSCOIL MHUIRE



S.P.H.E POLICY

Introductory Statement

Ardscoil Mhuire is an all-girls catholic voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST. The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy has been developed following consultation between staff, parents/guardians, students, Senior Management and the Board of Management.

Policy Context and Rationale

This policy is informed by:

1. The Mission Statement of Ardscoil Mhuire - *In this school we aim to provide a Christian environment, where each person is valued and assisted to reach full potential.*
2. The RSE Policy
3. The Code of Behaviour
4. The Anti-Bullying Policy
5. The Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement
6. The Acceptable Use Policy
7. The Substance Abuse Policy
8. The Special Educational Needs Policy
9. The Guidance Plan

Definitions of SPHE

SPHE is a subject that provides students with the unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and others, and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. The aims of the SPHE programme are:

1. To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
2. To promote students' self-esteem and self-confidence.
3. To enable 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.

SPHE: Relationship to Characteristic Spirit and Ethos of the School

SPHE provides young people with skills to evaluate critically the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today, in order that they will make positive, responsible choices about themselves and about the way they live their lives. While the school acknowledges that the home is the natural environment for the social, personal and health development of children, the Education Act of 1998 (Section 9, subsection d) requires all recognised schools to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of

students and provide health education for them. This will happen in consultation with their parents and in the context of the Catholic ethos of the school.

A summary of what the school currently provides for the general well-being of students, both formally and informally to support SPHE is included in Appendix 1. SPHE is seen to build on this existing commitment to the care and development of students within the school.

Our school's approach to SPHE

In Ardscoil Mhuire we aim to teach a comprehensive curriculum that will inform our student's actions and decisions, provide a basis for further development and prepare them for life. Our approach will be to provide the environment, teaching strategies and relevant learning experiences that will help the student, to understand and respect themselves, to relate to others and to establish and maintain healthy patterns of behaviour.

The S.P.H.E programme will complement and support work undertaken in other subject areas. Our vision is to develop a frame work of values, attitudes, understanding and skills, in order to enable our students to become active and responsible citizens in society. We hope to empower and enable our pupils, who come from all walks of life, to have a sense of belonging to our school and community.

Aims and Objectives

We aim:

1. To promote student's personal development and well-being.
2. To develop student's care and respect for themselves and others.
3. To promote awareness of healthy living.
4. To enable the student to make informed decisions and choices.
5. To enable the student to respect human diversity.
6. To develop student's understanding and knowledge of social skills.
7. To promote literacy and numeracy.
8. To encourage parental involvement

Our Objectives are to enable our student's to:

1. Have a positive sense of self-esteem, through encouragement/praise and differentiation of lessons.
2. Develop personal responsibility and understanding of growth and development, sexuality and reproduction.
3. Develop skills of communication, co-operation and conflict resolution.
4. Develop knowledge of creating and maintaining supportive relationships.
5. Develop knowledge of healthy living, how to implement and participate in activities that sustain health.
6. Develop knowledge and understanding of substance abuse.
7. Learn how to set goals, make decisions, solve problems and take appropriate actions.
8. Develop knowledge and understanding about learning styles and techniques for effective study.
9. Develop skills for life, by participating and working individually, in groups and as a class.

10. Become aware of and discerning about, the various influences on choices and decisions.
11. Continue to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
12. Discover the personal relevance of content and evaluate their own learning by completing their 'learning keepsake' and 'topic and module review'.
13. Be aware of the importance of consistent attendance, in order to maximise their learning and experiences of school.
14. Encourage their parents to meet SPHE teachers at parent-teacher meetings and write once a year, informing parents of the SPHE/RSE programme.

Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum

In the academic year 2019/20 the subject of SPHE has been allocated one class period a week in 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year. As a consequence the Social, Personal and Health Education Plan covers 70% of the Short Course Social, Personal and Health Education Specification for Junior Cycle. See Appendix 2.

One of the required modules in SPHE is Relationships and Sexuality (RSE). This is covered in Term 2 and/or Term 3 in 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year. It should also be noted that many of the general SPHE topics have links with the RSE programme. See RSE Policy.

Students with Special Needs/Sensitivities/Different Cultures

Our school has a variety of students with special needs, differing backgrounds and many with different cultural experiences. Therefore, to ensure the inclusion of all students, flexibility and sensitivity is always adopted.

SPHE lends itself to the participation and engagement of students with special needs due to the focus on experiential learning methodologies. Children with special needs, however, may require more assistance and guidance than others when learning to cope with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. Some students may also need a greater amount of support and guidance when they are attempting to understand the types of behaviours that are and are not acceptable. Additionally some student may be at risk of exposing themselves to abusive behaviour by others and hence require greater support in this area.

Teaching Methodologies

As SPHE is primarily skills-based, teaching methods are of an experiential nature with an emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods are child-centred and appropriate to the age, stage and development of the student. The class atmosphere is one of respect for the privacy of the individual and hallmarked by sensitivity and care. Traditional and Experiential, Activity-Based Teaching Methodologies are used to:

1. To engage and encourage participation.
2. Make lessons fun and relevant.
3. To be adaptable to varying needs and abilities.
4. To develop communication and discussion skills.

These include:

- Activity-based learning: Roleplay, quizzes, work sheets, poems, art work, games.
- Shared learning by brainstorming, discussion and class evaluations.
- Develop interpersonal skills by working individually, in groups and as a class.
- Collaborative art projects to create display work.
- Displaying students SPHE work in the classroom.
- Understanding of how the module is relevant and to self-evaluate, by completing their 'learning keepsake' and topic and module review'.
- Highlighting key words, modifying language and word banks.
- Differentiation of lessons.
- Completing a workbook or copy book of exercises, relevant information and collected pictures etc.
- To use the digital technology to access websites/ online videos/ online questionnaires/ DVD's.

Sensitive Issues / Confidentiality

Answering Questions

While it is important in SPHE/RSE classes to create an environment where students can discuss issues openly, teachers may not be able to answer all questions asked by students and can set appropriate limits. Students may ask questions about issues which are not included in the curriculum. On these, and on all other questions, teachers use their professional judgment, guided by the age of the students, the SPHE curriculum and the SPHE and RSE policy for the school. Students should be made aware at the beginning of the SPHE programme that asking personal questions of staff member and their peers is inappropriate and unacceptable. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised they should inform/seek advice from the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Confidentiality

While students will not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in SPHE classes, there may be times when they do talk about their own lives. While student confidentiality is respected in the school if the teacher, as a mandated person, feels that the child is at risk in any way he/she will take appropriate action. This may include following the procedures set down in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools 2017, notifying Designated Liaison Person/Deputy Designated Liaison Person without delay and/or referring to any of the schools policies such as Substance Abuse Policy and bringing these concerns to Senior Management. It is important that students are made aware of the limits of confidentiality and that teachers do not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality.

Using visiting speakers and others

It is school policy that most of the SPHE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. Visitors can, however, enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of

SPHE. The SPHE teacher will provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of the SPHE and RSE policy. After gaining approval from the Principal for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the SPHE programme. The presentations of guest speakers will be negotiated with the relevant SPHE teacher before delivery to the students.

Issues to consider are:

- a) The degree of explicitness of the content and presentation
- b) Will the teacher take an active role in the visitor's activities?
- c) How will the visitor be prepared for the visit?
- d) How will the visit be built upon and followed up?

It is school policy that teachers must remain in the room with the speaker and the class. Refer to Circular 0023/2010 – Visiting Speaker Best Practice. Visitors should be given advance notice of the composition of the class and an idea of how their contribution fits into the SPHE plan for teaching and learning.

Cross-curricular Activities

Every opportunity is used to engage in cross curricular links between SPHE and other subjects. Colleagues in other departments work formally, on whole school initiatives, and informally by listening and offering advice on sensitive issues [personal hygiene, bullying and friendships problems etc.]

In the year 2019/20 examples include:

- Links were made with the all subject department during the following whole school initiatives:
 1. Mental Health Awareness Week.
 2. Anti-Bullying Week
 3. Healthy Eating Week
 4. Internet Safety Awareness Week
 5. Active School Week
- Informal links were made subject teachers in relation to the Health Module i.e. Home Economics, Science and Physical Education.
- Numerous committees are also in existence in the school that have very strong links with the SPHE curriculum:
 1. Mental Health Committee
 2. Green Schools Committee
 3. Active Schools Committee
 4. Students Representative Council

Resources

- Short Course Social, Personal and Health Education Specification for Junior Cycle.
- Trust Pack for Relationships and Sexuality Education
- b4udecide.ie Relationships and Sexuality Education [Resource Materials For Teachers]
- Lockers: SPHE Resource around the sharing of explicit self-generated images

- Be in CTRL: Information and resources for schools addressing online sexual coercion and extortion (Webwise)
- Be Safe – Be Webwise: An internet safety lesson and resource pack for SPHE teachers
- #UP2US Anti-bullying Kit
- Wellbeing in Post Primary Schools
- Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion & Suicide Prevention
- Think. Feel. Act. Aware workbook
- Drink Aware Education Resource Box
- Don't lose the head – Drug and Alcohol programme
- The truth about drugs (www.drugfreeworld.org)
- Busy bodies – HSE
- Body Whys Folder – Responding to eating disorders and body image issues.
- Personal Wellbeing School's Programme.
- 'About You' [Puberty and Adolescent Health Issues]
- 'About You' [Personal wellbeing Teaching Guide 2011/12]
- 'On My Own Two Feet'
- My Wellbeing Journey 1, 2 & 3 Workbook and Teacher Book
- Minding Me 1,2 & 3 Workbook and Teacher Book
- Healthy Lifestyles 1, 2 & 3 and Teacher Book
- HSE and Interagency Leaflets on various topics
- DVD'S
- SPHE Teachers have a budget for paper/art supplies and other subject resources.

On line resources

www.staysafe.ie/www.webwise.ie/www.drugs.ie/www.classresources.ie
www.teachnet.ie/www.education.ie/b4udecide.ie

- A computer room is available with 30 computers/printers on a timetabled basis
- Chrome books are available on a timetabled basis
- Each classroom contains a computer and data projector with internet access.
- Some rooms have interactive white boards.

Record Keeping/Assessment/Homework Procedures

Teachers check student's class work and give feedback noting the work done and effort made. No homework is generally given but students occasionally are asked to research for a project. Project and display work is shown on the SPHE board in the classroom. Students evaluate what they have learned about the module and themselves, by completing the 'learning keepsake' and topic and module review.

Training and Staff Development

The value placed on SPHE by the school is evident by the commitment on the part of School Management to develop a team of trained SPHE teachers. Continuing professional

development is an integral part of this programme. School Management is committed to meeting the relevant training needs of SPHE teachers. As a consequence School Management encourages and facilitates continuing professional development for new and existing teachers of SPHE. School Management is also committed to the appointment of an SPHE Co-ordinator. Additionally as part of the core curriculum, SPHE has a budgetary allocation.

How Parents and Students will be informed

Present Junior and Senior Cycle students are informed of the policy through their SPHE / RSE Class. A full and complete syllabus, core resource materials and policy document will be available in the school if parents wish to review it. A copy of the schools SPHE policy is also available on the schools website at www.asmlimerick.ie. Parents will be informed of any substantial changes in the programme made by the Department of Education and Skills.

How Staff will be informed

The policy is available for all staff in the school by its inclusion with the Policy Documents which are kept on the staff shared folder on Google Drive. A copy of the policy is available on the school website at www.asmlimerick.ie.

Review / Assessment / Evaluation

The SPHE teachers and students will have the opportunity to engage in ongoing review of the policy and subject content both formally and informally. This will be done through students' feedback, in-class discussion, surveys and focus groups. The SPHE policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

How the Board of Management will be consulted and informed

The SPHE draft policy will be discussed at a meeting of the Board of Management. The Board of Management may make input on the policy and make whatever changes deemed appropriate before ratification of the SPHE policy.

Reviewed on: _____

Date of Review: _____

Signed: _____

Sr. Ena Quinlan
Chairperson
Board of Management

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Below is a summary of what our school currently provides for the general well-being of students, both formally and informally, to support SPHE. Policies, including the following: Admissions, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Substance Abuse, Health and Safety, AUP, Guidance, Child Protection / Child Safeguarding Statement, Guidance Plan.

1. Pastoral Care Team
2. Year Heads
3. Class Teachers
4. Parents' Council and Student Council
5. Student Leadership Teams including:
 - Head Girl
 - Deputy Head Girl
 - Prefects
 - Deputy Prefects
 - Student Mentors
6. Supervised Study
7. Sports and Games
8. Guidance and Counselling (Vocational, Educational and Personal Counselling)
9. Information Meetings for Parents
10. Outside Speakers
11. Study Skills
12. Special Education Team
13. Student Support (academic and organisational)
14. Learning Support
15. Induction Day for First Year
16. Bonding Trips
17. Sports Day
18. Meditation
19. MAP
20. Transition Year
21. LCVP
22. Open Night for Parents and Students
23. Parent-Teacher Meetings
24. Enterprises
25. Subject Fieldtrips
26. School Tours
27. Student Retreats
28. Green Schools
29. Webwise Youth Advisory Panel
30. LSP - Limerick Sports Partnership
31. Ceolchoirm
32. School Masses, including Mercy Day Mass, Class Ceremonies etc.
33. Year Group morning assemblies

34. Active School Week (as part of Wellbeing)
35. Mental Health Awareness Week (as part of Wellbeing)
36. Creative Schools Week
37. Anti-Bullying Week
38. Healthy Eating Week
39. Supporting Charities, including SVP, Shoe-box appeal, NOVAS etc.
40. Cross-Curricular links including Religious Education, Home Economics, Science, Health Education, CSPE, PE, ICT
41. Transition Year Activities
42. Young Social Innovators
43. Friends for Life Programme
44. VEIP - Vocabulary Enrichment Programme
45. JCSP Initiatives
46. Extra-curricular Activities – Debating, Drama, Performance Arts, Sport (Camogie, Soccer, Basketball, Rugby)