

S.P.H.E. Policy: (Passed by Bom 9-9-15)

Social Personal and Health Education provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and to care for themselves and others. It helps them to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

AIMS OF S.P.H.E:

- To enable the students to develop personal and social skills
- 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

School Ethos:

Our school mission statement aims for the holistic development of all students with a working motto of Achieve, Respect and Develop (ARD). The aims of the S.P.H.E programme coincide with our school ethos and students are provided with a good education in a caring environment which encourages the development of self-esteem, mutual respect and a sense of justice and care for others.

Whole school approach:

- The social personal and health education of our students is the responsibility of the whole school community which is specifically supported by the S.P.H.E. team.
- Overall the atmosphere in this school is a caring one, the students show genuine care towards each other and in particular to the most vulnerable members of our school. It is recommended that students go to a member of staff if they or one of their fellow students are in difficulty.
- S.P.H.E. has cross curricular links with all classes and with all communication and relationships in the school. Particular syllabus content links occur with Home Economics, Science, Religion, Art, English and Physical Education.

S.P.H.E. class organisation and timetabling:

In Ard Scoil Rath Iomgháin S.P.H.E. is delivered to Junior certificate students for one period per week as per recommendations.

All teachers will receive the induction training for new S.P.H.E teachers as soon as possible in that school year. S.P.H.E. should not be assigned to teachers without consultation.

Ideally a core of well trained teachers should be maintained for teaching S.P.H.E., due to timetabling restrictions this is not always possible. Where possible the teacher should also teach their class for another subject to facilitate a better relationship in the S.P.H.E. class. Each class will have the same teacher from 1st to 3rd year (except in the case of illness, maternity leave, career break or change of jobs).

The ten modules are:

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-management: A sense of purpose
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendships
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety

Resources for S.P.H.E:

Resources are available in the S.P.H.E. section in the teachers study. Health Promotion leaflets are available in Room 35. (If additional leaflets are needed please give plenty of notice so they can be ordered.)

1st, 2nd and 3rd years are using the **I Belong** workbook from Folens. All teachers will be given a copy of the Folens **I Belong** Teachers book and need to register with Folens online for the accompanying resources. The structure of the lessons in the **I**

Belong books is based on an Assessment For Learning (AFL) approach which is recommended for S.P.H.E. classes.

The book sets out learning objectives at the start of each lesson and follows the process of **Experiencing, Processing, Generalising and Applying**. At the end of each section is a Dear Diary which students should complete for homework, this allows for reflecting on what was learned and encourages students to discuss these topics with their Parents/Guardians who are the primary educators. It also includes a section which allows for comments from parents or teachers.

Teaching and learning in S.P.H.E:

Teaching methods in SPHE are concerned with the acquisition of: **knowledge, attitudes and skills** that have implications for behaviour. An open and facilitative teaching style and participate and experiential methodologies are essential.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

In organising the learning environment, it is important to create an atmosphere, which respects the privacy of each individual student and treats all students with due sensitivity and care. Some considerations might be:

- the degree of trust, respect and positive regard for students
- the relationships between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves
- the needs of the students
- the protection of the teacher
- the need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives
- the referral procedures within the school and the students' awareness of these.

It is important that ground rules and codes of behaviour should be discussed and agreed with the class and regularly revisited.

- **Teachers should not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality. It should be explained to students that in some circumstances the teacher may need to seek advice on an issue raised in class or to tell someone what has been revealed in class.**
- THE CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES must be adhered to.
- Any issues arising in class which are of concern to the teacher will be referred through our Pastoral Care System. (See Appendix 1)

Teacher Training:

Siobhán Kavanagh (Co-Ordinator)

Suicide awareness

Drugs and alcohol

2 day introduction to SPHE

February 2003

RSE

Experienced SPHE co-ordinators (co-ordinating SPHE and school development planning)

September 2006

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers”

Body wise talk

April 2010

Emotional and Mental Health – “Working things out through SPHE”. November 2010

ASSIST training

October 2012

Lead facilitator Mental Health Awareness Initiative.

2013-2015

Jackie O'Reilly

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers

Fiona Searing

2 day introduction to SPHE

September 2006

Emma Butler

2 day introduction to SPHE

September 2007

Dance in SPHE

September 2009

Bodywise talk

April 2010

ASSIST training

October 2012

Gemma farrelly

2 day introduction to SPHE

September 2007

Bodywise talk

April 2010

Mark Kennedy

2 day introduction to SPHE

September 2008

Bodywise talk

April 2010

Sinead Commons

2 day introduction to SPHE

Breda Greaney

2 day introduction to SPHE

Bodywise talk

April 2010

Nuala Connolly

2 day introduction to SPHE

February

Ed Keyes

2 day introduction to SPHE

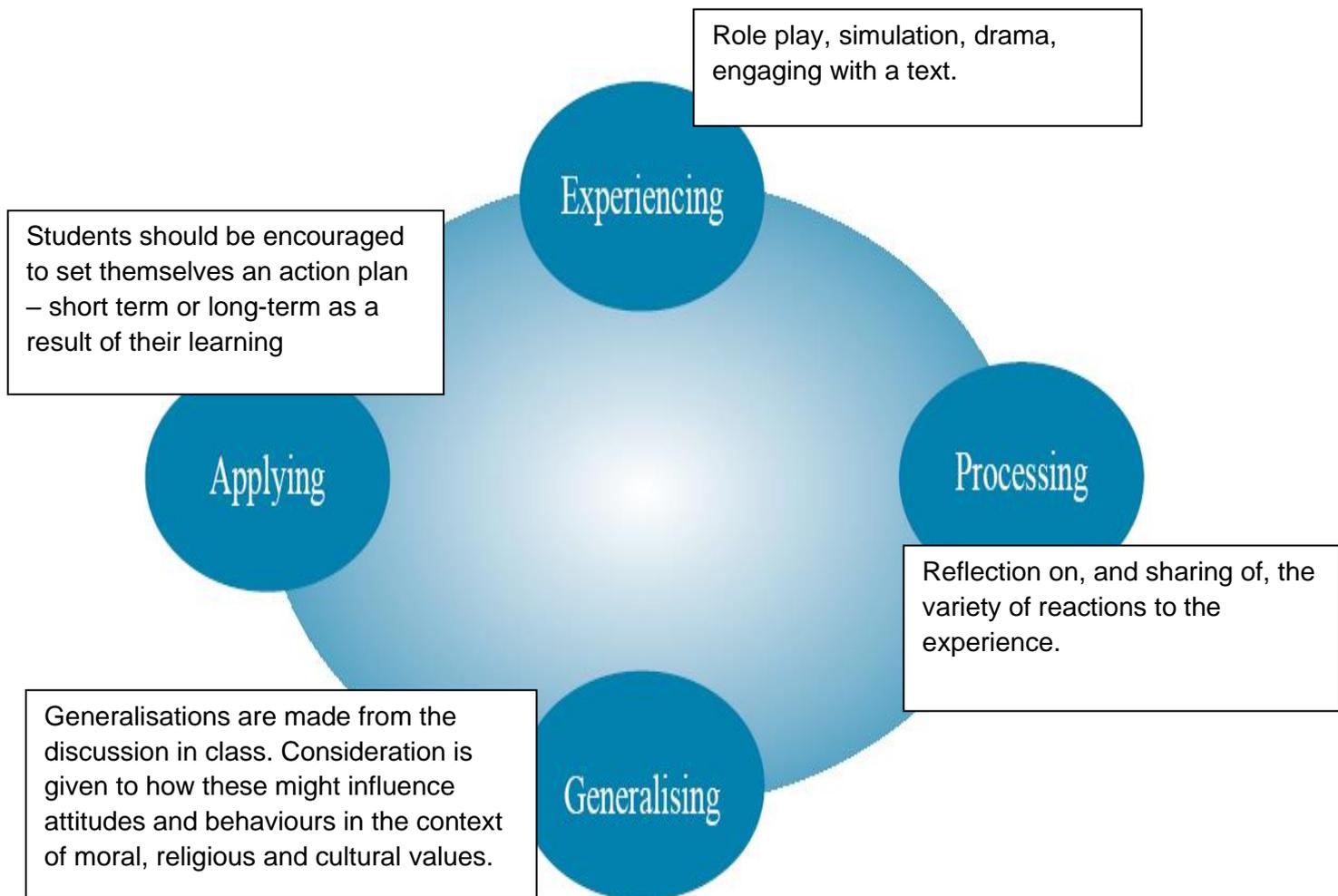
Damien O'Rourke

2 day introduction to SPHE

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING:

The structured experiential method, or active learning, is widely recognised as the most appropriate method for use in all forms of SPHE. The use of this method in the classroom setting ensures that students actively participate in their own learning. They are not simply the passive recipients of information. Active participation gives a greater significance to the learning because it arises out of the students' own experience, ideas and behaviour. This method is made up of four stages:

- experiencing,
- processing,
- generalising and
- applying.



Suggested methods and activities

Group discussion

Case studies

Brainstorming

Role play

Artwork

Narrative expression

Games – icebreakers

Debates

Project work

Visitors (guidelines from the S.P.H.E. support service should be adhered to when organising visiting speakers (see Appendix 2))

Multimedia materials

Evaluating learning

- To gain an insight into how useful the students are finding the modules it is good practice to get them to fill in the Dear Diary at the end of each section.

Review and Evaluation:

- S.P.H.E. teachers will meet as a subject department at the beginning and the end of each school year where they will continue to evaluate resources, timetabling, topics, speakers etc.
- All teachers are different
- All classes are different
- S.P.H.E. teachers are encouraged to teach to their strengths, use the methodologies that work for you and your class.
- It can be difficult to get all lessons in the book covered, therefore teachers will have to evaluate which ones are most critical for their class group. **However R.S.E. must be taught for 6 periods per year.** R.S.E. policy (see Appendix 3)

Appendix 1

Pastoral care team

The pastoral care team will be made up usually of the Pastoral care co-ordinator, Principal, vice-Principal, Chaplain, a year head, a class tutor, learning support co-ordinator, home school liaison officer, sphe co-ordinator, counsellor, other suitable members.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The pastoral care committee shall normally meet on a bi-monthly basis. Their main role is to report and review the progress of students and identify any apparent difficulties and any strategies or interventions that may be required to be put in place.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Personal student information will be shared only on a need to know basis as laid out in the child protection guidelines for post primary schools.

Procedures:

Our school has an excellent record of pastoral care in both an informal and formal manner. All students are encouraged to talk to any member of staff if they have any difficulties or issues they need to discuss.

- If a student raises an important issue or difficulty with a teacher then the teacher will fill in a form for the pastoral care committee. This form indicates the name of the student, the difficulty or issue and if follow up is required. This is a duplicate form. One copy will be left in the pastoral care box and the other in the year head box.
- The pastoral care box will be checked weekly by 2 members of the committee.
- If required this will be entered into the pastoral care book which can be accessed by other members of staff. If the matter needs immediate attention, follow up will be decided by the 2 members of staff in consultation with other relevant staff members.
- These students will be discussed at the next pastoral care meeting where an action plan will be put in place if required.

Appendix 2



Circular 0023/2010

**To Chairpersons of Boards of Management and Principals
of all Post-Primary Schools**

**Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) & Relationships and
Sexuality Education (RSE)**

Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education and Science wishes to advise management authorities of the necessity to adhere to best practice guidelines in the mandatory implementation of SPHE/RSE in the junior cycle and RSE in the senior cycle.

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 s/he can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education.

The SPHE/RSE programme should have a substantial skills development element and should not merely be information based. Such skills are developed over time and founded on an ongoing relationship based on trust, understanding and mutual respect.

Young people flourish in an environment where there is a whole-school approach to the holistic growth of students and where there is a shared belief in their potential for development, learning and wellbeing.

RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

The Education Act (1998) states that:

A recognised school shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

School management, principals and teachers have a duty to provide the best quality and most appropriate social, personal and health education for their students. They also have a duty to protect students in their care at all times from any potentially harmful, inappropriate or misguided resources, interventions or programmes.

VISITORS TO POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS: GUIDELINES

If schools wish to enhance or supplement SPHE/RSE by inviting visitors to the classroom precise criteria must apply. Outside facilitators who contribute to the SPHE/RSE programme can play a valuable role in

supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned, comprehensive and established SPHE/RSE programme. Any such visitor or visiting group should adhere to the guidelines of good practice as set out in the SPHE Handbook Section 7 and which are condensed herewith:

- Visitors to the classroom or school, particularly those engaging directly with students, should be aware of relevant school policies including the school's child protection policy, RSE policy and substance misuse policy. Any such visit must be carefully planned in advance in line with the relevant whole-school SPHE/RSE programme(s) and policies.
- Talks/programmes delivered by outside agencies or speakers must be consistent with and complementary to the school's ethos and SPHE/RSE programme. Visits should be planned, researched and implemented in partnership with school personnel.
- Relevant teachers need to liaise with and be involved with all visitors and external agencies working with the school and the whole staff needs to be made aware of same.
- It is strongly recommended that parents should be consulted and made aware of any such visiting people or agencies to classrooms / schools.
- The school's SPHE/RSE coordinator may also help in the process of whole-school planning and coordination to support the effective implementation of SPHE/RSE.
- It is of the utmost importance that classroom teachers remain in the classroom with the students and retain a central role in delivery of the core subject matter of the SPHE/RSE programme. The presence of the classroom teacher should ensure that the school follows appropriate procedures for dealing with any issue(s) that may arise as a result of the external input(s).
- All programmes and events delivered by visitors and external agencies must use appropriate, evidence-based methodologies with clear educational outcomes. Such programmes are best delivered by those specifically qualified to work with the young people for whom the programmes are designed.
- All programmes, talks, interventions and events should be evaluated by students and teachers in terms of the subject matter, messages, structure, methodology and proposed learning outcomes.

PLEASE NOTE

Research findings indicate that the following teaching approaches have limited effect and are counterproductive to the effective implementation of SPHE. In light of this, schools are advised to avoid the following approaches:

Scare tactics

Information that induces fear, and exaggerates negative consequences, is inappropriate and counterproductive.

Sensationalist interventions

Interventions that glamorise or portray risky behaviour in an exciting way are inappropriate and can encourage inappropriate risk taking.

Testimonials

Stories focused on previous dangerous lifestyles can encourage the behaviour they were designed to prevent by creating heroes/heroines of individuals who give testimony.

Information only interventions

Programmes which are based on information alone are very limited in the learning outcomes they can achieve and can in fact be counter productive in influencing values, attitudes and behaviour.

Information that is not age appropriate

Giving information to students about behaviours they are unlikely to engage in can be counterproductive in influencing values, attitudes and behaviour.

Once off/short term interventions

Short-term interventions, whether planned or in reaction to a crisis, are ineffective.

Normalising young people's risky behaviour

Giving the impression to young people, directly or indirectly, that all their peers will engage/are engaging in risky behaviours could put pressure on them to do things they would not otherwise do.

Didactic approach

Didactic approaches which are solely directive in nature are ineffective in the successful implementation of SPHE/RSE.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information, advice and support is available from the SPHE Support Service which is a partnership between the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Health and Children, and the Health Service Executive, in association with Marino Institute of Education.

SPHE Support Service Tel: (01) 805-7718
(Post-Primary) Fax: (01) 853-5113
Marino Institute of Education Email: sphe@mie.ie
Griffith Avenue Website: www.sphe.ie
Dublin 9.

Please bring this circular to the attention of teachers and members of the school board of management. This circular may also be accessed at www.education.ie under Education Personnel/Circulars.

Alan Wall
Principal Officer
Teacher Education Section
March 2010

Appendix 3