



Reviewed November 2023



Salesian Secondary College.
Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick

POLICY STATEMENT ON SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Mission Statement.

The mission of Salesian Secondary College, Pallaskenry, is to provide the best possible Education based on the christian /Catholic values, in partnership with parents and within a caring community. This school incorporates the characteristics of Salesian Education as practised by St. John Bosco in his "Preventive System".

In order to achieve this we aim to provide opportunities for students to:

1. gain skills, knowledge and understanding that will be of lasting value throughout their lives;
2. develop each individual's talents to the level of his/her personal potential for the benefit of Community and Society;
3. develop the characteristics appropriate to a member of a Christian community, including those of mutual respect and concern for others, irrespective of race, colour, gender or creed.
4. promote the physical and emotional well-being of students by developing self-esteem, personal responsibility and the ability to live and work with others;
5. work with staff committed to these ideals.

Relationship of SPHE to the schools mission statement:

SPHE provides students with an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves and others. It also allows them to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. It helps students grow and develop as individuals and in their relationship to others.

SPHE Policy Context and Rationale:

The school acknowledges that the primary responsibility for the personal development of children rests with their parents. However it also accepts, as outlined in the 1998 Education Act, its role in supporting parents in this work. Section 4 of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for RSE and a suitable RSE programme in place for all students at both Junior and Senior cycle.

The policy is also developed in the context of the DES circulars M48/00 - (Syllabus) M11/03, 0023/2010 and 0037/2010 and the Education Act (1998) which specifies 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’

Further to this, Circular 15/2017 ‘Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19’ The philosophy of the policy also draws on the NEPS document “Wellbeing in Post-Primary schools” and the Department of Education and Skills ‘Junior Cycle wellbeing Guidelines’.

The school adopts and adheres to the DES Child Protection Procedures, Children First Legislation (2017) and has a Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement, with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principals as the Deputy DLPs. The RSE Policy is cognisant of all aspects of our current Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement.

This policy is informed by:

The Don Bosco ethos of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness. The WELLBEING policy in the school. The Code of Behaviour.

The Child Protection Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement.

The Internet Acceptable Use Policy. The Special Educational Needs Policy. The Guidance Plan.

Scope:

This policy refers to all students of Salesian Secondary College. This also refers to students on exchange programmes and visiting students.

The Policy applies at all times during the school day, from 8am (when school opens) until 6.15 pm (when school closes on a normal school day). The policy also applies to students engaging in extracurricular activities or who are on school business or school run events, which take place outside of normal school hours. (eg. Study, retreats, matches etc.)

Visitors to the school premises or to school events are informed that this policy is in Place. This policy takes effect from the date of ratification.

Members of the S.P.H.E Departments

- Personnel in the SPHE Department rotates. All teachers of SPHE are informed

of this policy.

- The SPHE Coordinator also rotates on a yearly basis.
- This policy recognises that, as part of a school wide Wellbeing Programme, all staff are involved in the provision of education for the social and healthy person.

The Aims of S.P.H.E

Salesian Secondary College's SPHE programme supports the building of wellbeing among our students and staff. The programme exists:

- to enable students to develop skills for self fulfilment and living in communities.
- to promote self esteem and self confidence
- to enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision making
- to promote opportunities for reflection and discussion
- to promote physical, mental and emotional health and well being
- to promote resilience

SPHE comprises 3 strands in both Junior and senior Cycle. These Strands are revisited each year as the student matures and their needs and abilities and values are important in all these areas.

Strands

- 1. Myself**
- 2. Myself and Others**
- 3. Myself and the wider world**

Timetabling

Salesian Secondary College has a Wellbeing Programme Which is facilitated through the provision of a number of key areas on the timetable. The Wellbeing subjects include: SPHE, CSPE, RE, PE, Active Leisure Studies, Guidance and Ethics. There are cross-curricular links with Home Economics, Science, Biology, Guidance and the Pastoral Care structure. This helps in forming a whole school approach to SPHE and the delivery of our Wellbeing Programme.

In addition, wellbeing (and the objectives of the SPHE programme) can be achieved across all subject departments and in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Each Subject Department indicates how wellbeing is facilitated in its Subject Plan.

SPHE is allocated two class periods per week to First and Second years and one class period for Third Years. This makes up the 100 hours necessary to complete the short course. Seniors have one class period per week. All groups are mixed ability. SPHE teachers / facilitators will facilitate the drawing up of a class contract. The SPHE department implements the Literacy and Numeracy policy as outlined by the school. Approximately six SPHE classes per year will be allocated to the RSE module.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of SPHE in the School

In organising the learning environment the teacher will be careful to create an atmosphere which respects the privacy of each individual student and treats all students with sensitivity and care. Active learning methods will be used to ensure that students actively participate in their own learning.

Contemporary topics and issues, which may emerge in this class, will be dealt with at a level appropriate to the age and stage of the individual student and within a moral framework. Contact may be made with the Additional Needs Co-ordinator, the Guidance Counsellor, Pastoral Care System, SNA's and parents / guardians before facilitation of topics that may prove challenging for students. Opportunities are made available to explore issues that students may find challenging from their personal experiences on a one to one basis, with the Guidance team. Referral can be made by the individual student, parent, staff and management. Students are advised in advance of areas of sensitivity which may arise in the classroom and are given the opportunity of withdrawing from class, to a supervised location, for a period if necessary. Parents / guardians should communicate this request in the school journal. Parents / guardians have the primary responsibility for the delivery of sex education to their children and school based RSE is a support to the family in this. While SPHE is compulsory in Salesian Secondary College, parents / guardians have the right to withdraw their children from RSE classes. Notifications must be made to the Principal in writing. In the event that school resources do not allow for the supervision of a student during a period of withdrawal, parents / guardians will be responsible for the supervision of their son / daughter during that period.

Visitors and guest speakers, who are invited to address students as part of our Wellbeing Programme will be advised of the substance of this policy. Teachers will be present at all times when a guest speaker is visiting a class.

Issues which arise for students through the SPHE programme may be referred on to the appropriate member of the school community; Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, member of the pastoral care team etc. At all times, school personnel are required to adhere to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the Children First Act 2015.

Training and resources

All available resources needed in terms of time, finance and personnel, will be used to develop and support the SPHE programme in the school. Teachers' 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. The programme will be supported by SPHE / Wellbeing support services and the schools' team within the Health Promotion Services.

RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education.)

Through RSE, the school aims to provide opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in an age-appropriate way and in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way, as per our Salesian ethos.

The RSE programme enables students to learn about how relationships are formed and sustained. As part of the new changes in SPHE for this year the new specification 2023 is now being followed by First Year Students. This specification involves changes to the delivery in RSE.

Definition of RSE

RSE is an integral part of the SPHE programme. It provides structured opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships. It enables students to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Relationships and Sexuality

Relationships and sexuality is an integral part of the Junior and Senior Cycle SPHE and the Wellbeing curriculum.

Relationships and sexuality education 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 the young people can learn important physical, social, emotional and moral issues around relationships, sexual health, sexuality and gender identity, including where to get reliable information from trusted sources.

The RSE programme forms part of the SPHE programme. The guidelines for RSE state that social, personal and health education is ‘ spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology’. The RSE programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from specific lessons of RSE, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's relationship to others. The content of the schools SPHE programme includes a wide range of topics such as self esteem, self identity, assertiveness, motivation, effective communication, decision making skills, bullying, healthy eating, hygiene and safety - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

Sensitive Issues

Class discussion will be of a general nature, and will be respectful of all individuals in accordance with the class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by a teacher in class. The SPHE teacher may exercise his or her own professional judgement in deciding whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. This must be done in harmony with the ethos of the school. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised they should seek advice from the DLP, DDLP, yearhead, guidance or pastoral care team.

Confidentiality

While students should not be encouraged to disclose personal or private information in SPHE class there will be times when they do talk about their own lives. Confidentiality should be respected unless the teacher becomes aware that a child is at risk, in which case the following limits of confidentiality must be observed. These limits are

- Child abuse
- Intention to harm self or others

- Substance Misuse
- Underage Sexual Intercourse

It is important that students are made aware of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year and where possible before making disclosures.

If a disclosure is made by the child, or a teacher ascertains that a child is at risk, the appropriate action will be taken- follow the child protection procedures and guidelines for post primary schools.

Sexuality, Gender Identity and Sexual Health

Teachers do not promote any one lifestyle as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that sexuality, gender identity and sexual health will be discussed during a programme of sexual education.. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning sexuality, gender identity and sexual health is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussion on sexuality, gender identity and sexual health should be appropriate to the age of the students. Contraception will be dealt with in an age appropriate , open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way.

Sexual Activity

Teachers must inform students of the age of consent, which following passage of the Criminal Law(Sexual Offences Act 2017), is 17 years for both male and females, and for homosexual and heterosexual sex. If a teacher becomes aware that a student is sexually active under the age of consent the teacher must inform the Schools DLP.

Additional Needs

Children with special needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up, they may need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.

Referral

While it is a professional responsibility to impart the SPHE course content in a caring and supportive manner. There may be times when the teacher deems it necessary, he/she may refer the student to support outside the classroom i.e. Pastoral care team

Guest speakers

Visiting speakers may play a role in providing supportive and supplementary information to the students. All Guest speakers have access to the SPHE policy and are subject to the school procedures of the SPHE classroom.

Withdrawal from RSE

RSE is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education. However, a parent has the right to withdraw a student from themes pertaining to sensitive issues and will be respected on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of their education. **Withdrawal from the RSE section of SPHE must be completed in writing to the Principal.**

As the new specification has changed the layout of the course elements of RSE are woven into all strands. However specific RSE will be completed in Term 3 by the teacher. Advance notice will be given to students. In order to undertake the RSE classes, Permission is sought from Parents on the school APP/Journal. This permission is recorded at the start of the year by the class Tutor. It is a government requirement that all students in Ireland complete 6 lessons of RSE a year.

SPHE Co- Coordinator.

To allow for the effective delivery and planning of the programme a coordinator will be appointed. The SPHE co- coordinator will rotate from year to year. He / she will liaise with members of the Wellbeing Team, with members of the Pastoral Care team and with school management.

The role of the coordinator is to inform other staff members of in-service training available, to receive correspondence on behalf of other staff and to relay necessary information on to other members of the SPHE Department. The coordinator should also organise guest speakers and resources for the SPHE Department. The coordinator can delegate members to help in the above responsibilities.

School Staff

The policy will be made available for all staff to view. It will be included in the policy documents and will be available on the school website.

Parents and Students

The Student council of the school will gain access to the policy before ratification and all students will be informed of the policy at the start of the year in the SPHE classroom. Parents will have access to the policy on the schools website.

Evaluation.

School management will accept feedback from staff, students and parents / guardians made through the proper use of the appropriate channels

i.e. staff meetings, student committees and Parents' Council. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by management.

Ratification by the board of Management

The policy will be reviewed in line with Salesian Secondary College procedure regarding policy reviews and updates.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date : _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date : _____