

St. Aidan's Community College

Social Personal Health Education Policy

Introduction:

St. Aidan's Community College was founded in 1983 to provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education for the boys and girls of the community. The aim of our school is to co-operate with parents in fostering the holistic development of our students, so that each student may realise and bring to fulfilment his/her own special talents and unique personality. The College Spirit is enshrined in our Motto: "*Bíodh bhur solas ag taitheamh - Let your light shine*". We aim to ensure that each pupil lets his or her light shine; cherishes his or her ideals whilst respecting the ideals of others; develops his or her talents whilst respecting the talents of all.

SPHE compliments the school's mission of creating effective learners who are well-balanced, ethical and engaged young people. Our vision is to equip students with the skills necessary to cope with and adapt to changes that they are confronted with during adolescence and into young adulthood. It is our hope that we help them to feel confident in the life choices that they make regarding relationships, friendships, health issues (physical, emotional and social).

The SPHE programme addresses contemporary topics which are dealt with at a level appropriate to the age of the students and within a moral framework in keeping with the ethos of the school.

The Aims of SPHE:

Building on the aims of SPHE in the primary school, at post-primary level SPHE aims:

- To enable the 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 provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

We see these aims as contributing towards the school's commitment to nurturing the Christian values of respect, justice and integrity in all aspects of school life and to fostering the holistic development of the students in our care.

The school recognises that the home is the natural environment where children grow, develop and mature into adults. However, the school also accepts to undertake a role in supporting parents in this work and in fostering the social, moral, spiritual and personal development of the students (as outlined in the Education Act, 1998). S.P.H.E. plays a valuable role in delivering on this commitment. In addition the commitment to the development of the student community is evident in the many examples of activities and support structures available to students in St. Aidan's Community College.

Outline of the Programme

The curriculum for Junior Cycle S.P.H.E. is presented in ten modules. The Department of Education and Science recognises that each school has flexibility within this framework to plan the SPHE Programme most suitable for the students and the school.

Each Junior Cycle Class is timetabled for one period of SPHE a week. The textbook chosen for the classes is 'Grow Up' Stephanie Mangan. SPHE for LCA classes are incorporated in two classes of the Social Education module throughout Year 1 & Year 2.

The curriculum for SPHE in junior cycle is presented in ten modules, each of which appears in each year of the three-year cycle:

- Belonging and Integration.
- Self-management: a sense of purpose.
- Communication skills.
- Physical health.
- Friendship
- Relationships and sexuality
- Emotional health.
- Influences and decisions.
- Substance use
- Personal safety.

Teaching Methods:

- A variety of experiential teaching methods are used to teach the S.P.H.E. programme. These methods are child-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 these ten modules over the school year.
- Only material which has been outlined in the SPHE course content for that year will be addressed in class.
- It is compulsory to teach at least 6 lessons of RSE and the SPHE teachers aim to teach all years the RSE module at the same time (January-February).

The Role of Visitors:

At times, guest speakers may be invited to speak to SPHE classes. Visitors to SPHE classes will deal with discussions in line with the aims of the programme and the ethos of the school. All presentations must have appropriate content and also be appropriate to the age of the students. Guest speaker's work is supplementary to the existing core delivery of teacher's work. Teachers remain with the class for the duration of the visit.

Sensitive Issues:

Class discussion will be a general nature and not be personally directed. If individual issues emerge, they will be referred on by the teacher to the appropriate person(s). The SPHE teacher will act as a facilitator and not a counsellor.

Structure of the programme:

The whole school approach to S.P.H.E. is reflected in the range of structures and processes that exist in the school to support the aims outlined above. The following structures have an important role to play in creating an atmosphere in the school community to sustain an effective S.P.H.E. programme.

School Structures:

- S.P.H.E. co-coordinator(s)
- S.P.H.E. team of teachers

Care Structures:

- Guidance and Counselling service
- Pastoral Care team
- School Chaplain
- Class Tutor system
- Year Head System
- Mentoring Programme

Policies:

- Code of Behaviour.
- Anti- Bullying Policy and procedures.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Whole School Guidance plan.

Structures for parental involvement:

- The Parents' Association.
- Parenting programmes.
- Parent teacher meetings.

How parents will be informed:

A full and complete syllabus, core resource material and the policy document will be available in the school for viewing or online at curriculumonline.ie. While SPHE is part of the core curriculum for Junior Certificate students, parents may withdraw their child from the RSE module. In this event, suitable supervision must be agreed with the school management. A standard text message is sent to parents outlining the content of the RSE course for that year group and when teaching of this topic will be taking place.

Staff development, training, and resource issues:

The role of the SPHE co-ordinator(s) is seen as vital to a meaningful SPHE Programme. The school recognises that teachers directly involved in delivering S.P.H.E. will need training and development in delivering the S.P.H.E. programme. All teachers assigned to S.P.H.E. will have access to in-service for the programme. Provision will also be made for the S.P.H.E. teachers directly involved to meet during the school year during staff days.

Evaluation & Review:

The SPHE policy will be reviewed every two years. The evaluation of the SPHE programme will take place annually and will include teachers, students and the principal.

The Board of Management of St. Aidan's Community College ratified this policy on 5th April 2017.

Signed _____

Date _____

This policy and policies mentioned within are available to view on the school website or at the school by parents on request.