



## **Whole-School Policy on Social, Personal and Health Education for Sancta Maria College**

### **Definition of Social, Personal and Health Education**

SPHE provides students with an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves and of society and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. SPHE provides learning opportunities and experiences which help students' social, moral, cultural and personal development. It helps students grow and develop as individual people and in their relationship to others as a family member, friend or citizen.

### **The Aims of SPHE**

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

- To develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence
- To develop a framework for responsible decision-making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing

### **Relationship to School Ethos/Mission/Vision/Aims**

Sancta Maria College is a community which is committed to developing each person's full potential in positive, supportive and holistic environments.

The SPHE Programme has developed out of a vision for holistic education of the individual, providing a myriad of valuable life skills which is entirely compatible with the ethos of Sancta Maria College and its commitment to the education of the whole student in a caring and supportive environment.

This policy is rooted in our fundamental aim to develop each member of the school community. Through the implementation of this policy, we strive to enact the stated mission, vision and aims of Sancta Maria College.

### **Rationale for Policy**

Sancta Maria College acknowledges that the home is the natural and primary place where students grow, develop and mature into adults.

However, as educators we have a duty "to 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."

[Section 9, subsection (d) of the 1998 Education Act]

## **Goals of the Policy**

The SPHE Policy has at its core the aim that student members of the school community will:

1. Be afforded an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves and of society and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development
2. Be provided with learning opportunities and experiences which help students' social, moral, cultural and personal development
3. Be enabled to grow and develop as individual people and in their relationship to others as a family member, friend or citizen
4. Experience a consistent and coherent programme of SPHE during each academic year

## **Roles & Responsibilities in Developing, Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating this Policy**

### **1. Board of Management**

The Board will ensure that the ethos and values of the Trustees are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

### **2. Principal and Deputy Principal**

The Principal and Deputy Principal are committed to supporting all those involved in delivering the SPHE Programme in Sancta Maria College.

The management will facilitate in-house staff development and encourage participation in external programmes and courses – particularly when these programmes/courses have a direct influence on student learning within the SPHE Programme.

### **3. SPHE Coordinator**

The Coordinator will work with the SPHE Teachers to ensure a coherent and consistent delivery of the programme during each school year and will maintain records of meetings and updates.

The Coordinator will work with the various partners in developing the programme to meet the emerging needs of students.

### **4. Teachers of SPHE**

Teachers conduct classes in a structured and ordered environment. The relationship fostered in the classroom is based on mutual respect. Teachers will avail of opportunities to participate in external programmes/courses that have a direct influence on student learning within the SPHE Programme.

## **Policy Content**

### **Outline of the Programme and Teaching Methods**

The SPHE Curriculum is delivered in ten modules at Junior Certificate level. The Department of Education and Skills recognises that each school has flexibility within this syllabus to plan and order the delivery of the SPHE Programme according to school or class needs and circumstances.

The ten modules throughout the three-year Junior Cycle are:

- **Belonging and Integrating**
- **Self-Management: a Sense of Purpose**
- **Communication Skills**
- **Physical Health**
- **Friendship**
- **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**
- **Emotional Health**
- **Influences and Decisions**
- **Substance Use**
- **Personal Safety**

### **Success Criteria**

1. The student members of the school community will:

- Experience a consistent and coherent programme of SPHE during each academic year
- Be afforded an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves and of society and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development
- Be provided with learning opportunities and experiences which help students' social, moral, cultural and personal development
- Be enabled to grow and develop as individual people and in their relationship to others as a family member, friend or citizen

2. The SPHE Coordinator and Teachers will have access to in-house staff development and will be encouraged to participate in external programmes and courses – particularly when these programmes/courses have a direct influence on student learning within the SPHE Programme.

### **Implementation**

#### **Timetabling**

SPHE is timetabled for one period a week for each of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> year class groups.

Provision for SPHE in Transition Year is subject to the TY Programme.

In 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> year, SPHE & RSE are incorporated into the Religious Education and Guidance Programmes.

## **Teaching & Learning Methods**

As the SPHE Programme is mainly skills-based, teaching and learning styles will be of an active, experiential nature with an emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student. Incorporating assessment for learning into SPHE teaching methods can inform the teacher of the personal response and understanding of pupils to particular topics.

Creating a safe learning environment is vital, and this can be achieved, for example, through distancing techniques such as the use of drama or non-personalised debate.

The class atmosphere needs to be one of respect for the privacy of each individual student and also of sensitivity and care.

## **Staff Development, Training and Resource Issues**

The Board of Management will endeavour to provide the necessary human and material resources to support the programme on an ongoing basis. School management will encourage and facilitate teachers to attend relevant in-service training for the continued development of the SPHE Programme. All teachers involved in the delivery of the SPHE Programme in a given year, together with the Deputy Principal, are involved in the co-ordination of the programme.

## **Participation**

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.

## **Publishing the Policy**

An outline of the SPHE Programme will be available in the school and on the school website. The Principal can be contacted for further information.

## **The Role of Visitors**

It is the duty of the teacher who organises the visit to ensure the suitability of the visit for the programme and the school. Teachers will remain with the class for the duration of the visit. The Principal must be informed in advance of all visiting speakers and the content of their presentation.

## **Sensitive Issues**

Class discussions will be of a general nature and not be personally directed. The SPHE Teacher will act as a facilitator, and not as a counsellor. Teachers advise students to keep parents updated when dealing with sensitive issues. If individual issues emerge, they will be referred on by the teacher to the appropriate person(s). All teachers are aware of their

responsibilities under the revised 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (Department of Children & Youth Affairs, 2011).

### **Review and Evaluation**

The policy will be reviewed each year. The review team will comprise of representatives from:

- The Board of Management
- Students' Council
- Parents' Council
- SPHE Teachers

The evaluation of the SPHE Programme will take place annually and will include input from teachers, students and the Principal/Deputy Principal.

**This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on Tuesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014**

Signed: John Shortt

Signed: Gerardine Kennedy

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014

Date: June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014