

St.Patrick's Classical School



School SPHE Policy

Social Personal Health Education

Mission statement

The mission of St. Patrick's Classical School is to educate its students according to the best traditions and highest standards of Catholic schooling. It endeavours at all times to provide, through as wide, as varied and as balanced a curriculum as is possible, for the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural and moral development of all its students.

Introductory Statement

This policy has been drawn up by the SPHE Team following consultation between the staff, parent representatives, the Principal and Board of Management. The policy outlines the aims of the RSE programme, the relationship of RSE to SPHE, Religious Education, Science, Biology and other subjects and the organisation and management of RSE within the school.

Ethos

In our school community we endeavour to mind and to care for each other. This sense of caring is experienced in our School Mission Statement:

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a well ordered, sensitive, caring environment where the intellectual, spiritual, creative, physical, moral, and cultural needs of the pupil are identified and addressed.
- To encourage pupils to take ownership & responsibility for their behaviour and learning.
- We see personal discipline as central to achieving a well ordered, sensitive and caring atmosphere in which learning can take place.

Whole School Approach

St.Patrick's Classical School has a collective responsibility to educate and support our students in Social Personal Health issues and topics

The SPHE Policy is read in conjunction with the following school policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Critical Incident Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- Storage and Administration of Medications Policy (to be developed)
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

In particular, this policy is read in conjunction with the S.P.H.E Plan

Rationale for SPHE

In keeping with the philosophy of St.Patrick's Classical School, Social Personal Health Education plays a central role in contributing towards the overall development of the students in our care.

The policy is part of a general pastoral approach adapted by St.Patrick's Classical School to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment.

The SPHE Policy is one that serves to model the school's ethos.

In such an environment

- People feel valued
- Self esteem is fostered
- Fairness and tolerance are evident
- High expectations and standards are promoted
- Those experiencing difficulties are supported
- Communication is open
- Effort is recognized and rewarded
- Uniqueness and difference are valued
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Initiative and creativity are encouraged
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted

S.P.H.E. ensures that each child receives a well-rounded education, so that on completion of his/her formal education, he/she may emerge as a self-disciplined, responsible and well-adjusted citizen, capable of playing an active and positive role in a modern society.

S.P.H.E. provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves, and to care for themselves and others, and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

Subject Aims

S.P.H.E. in aims to:-

- Promote self-esteem and self- confidence in each student
- Enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision making
- Provide students with an opportunity for reflection and discussion
- Promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.
- Nurture a sense of personal identity.
- Foster a spirit of self reliance.
- Promote each other’s learning by sharing helping and encouraging each other.

Current Situation

S.P.H.E. is a compulsory subject that must be taken by 1st, 2nd,3rd,4th and 5th year students in accordance with DES guidelines. All students are allocated one class period (of one hour) per week for S.P.H.E.

R.S.E. is integrated into class time and supported by guest speakers.

S.P.H.E. is not part of the Junior or Leaving Certificate Examination.

The Role of Parents in S.P.H.E.

Parents have the primary responsibility for the social personal and health development of their children. S.P.H.E. will be assessed on a regular basis and will form part of the schools reporting to parents.

Parental Consent

Parents are informed at the beginning of 1st year of our S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. policy and syllabus.

Role of the S.P.H.E. Teacher

We believe that the way a teacher manages the class and the relationship he/she establishes with the students are important in determining the success of the S.P.H.E. class. The relationship between teacher and student must be one of respect and understanding.

- This respect is shown when students are referred to by their first names, their efforts are praised, each student is allowed to have his or her say.
- Understanding is shown when students are asked for their points of view, when teachers share experiences where appropriate, are consistent, and deal with issues raised.
- Clear ground rules must be established so that both teacher and student can feel safe and comfortable in the less traditional classroom set up which best facilitates the S.P.H.E. lesson.
- It is important that teachers establish a classroom climate, which encourages respect and mutual esteem.
- The teacher will establish ground rules for classroom interactions e.g. – listening to each other, accepting others' contributions, respecting others' views and opinions, not feeling obliged to discuss personal details/ or to share personal information if they feel uncomfortable about doing so. Where appropriate, students will be encouraged to work together and to be prepared to work with anyone in the class group.
- Teachers are encouraged to avail of relevant in-service training.

Child Protection

Students must have the confidence that teachers of S.P.H.E. will listen to them, support and respect their confidence.

However, it is important that teachers always tell a student in advance that any personal information they give, even in confidence, will be passed onto the Guidance Counsellor, Student Support Team or the Designated Liaison Person if it is in the interests of the child's safety or if covered by Child Protection Guidelines.

Curriculum for S.P.H.E.

The curriculum for S.P.H.E. is presented in ten modules, each of which appears in each year of the programme. The emphasis will be based on building skills, understanding attitudes and values important to these areas.

The ten modules are:-

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self Management
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendship
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety

(See the S.P.H.E plan)

Planning for Students with Special Needs

We are very aware that each child has individual needs and abilities. We believe that we must sometimes adapt the S.P.H.E. programme to suit the huge variety of needs displayed by children in our care, some of whom may have particular special needs. As S.P.H.E. teachers, we are conscious of the need to include each student in the lesson by using various different teaching methods.

S.P.H.E. is a subject that requires participation, involvement and interaction from each student so it is very important that each teacher will use a wide variety of teaching methods to make it possible for all students to be actively involved. Through the use of appropriate methodologies, students with special needs can fully participate in the S.P.H.E. class.

S.P.H.E. addresses areas that are particularly crucial in the development of a person with learning difficulties and special needs and so it is our policy that a child will not be withdrawn from S.P.H.E. class in order to receive learning support or resource help.

Where necessary the S.P.H.E Department will liaise with the Special Education Needs and Guidance Departments

Subject Planning for a Culturally Diverse Society

Students come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. Therefore, S.P.H.E. teachers must always be mindful that every classroom includes students from a variety of cultures.

(See S.P.H.E Plan for more detail)

Range and Variety of Resources

Junior Level - We use the Textbooks: My Wellbeing Journey 1,2,3 for Junior Cycle SPHE

1. Belonging and Integrating

Prim Ed: set of photocopy able resources on Bullying

Coping with Family Change (Coping with Life series)

2. Relationships and Sexuality Education

DES: Resource materials for RSE: Junior Cycle

DES: RSE: a partnership between home and school: policy pack

3. Peer Mentoring Program

ASK: Drug Education Materials for 11 - 14 year olds for True

Mixed Ability Classes by Tacade

Handouts: Smoking/Alcohol/Drugs

4. Personal Safety RSA Handouts

WEBWISE

All Modules SPHE Syllabus by NCCA

SPHE Book

NCCA SPHE Syllabus guidelines

SPHE Handbook

One my own two feet: full pack with work cards; Education
Resources Materials for Substance abuse prevention.

North Western Health Board: SPHE Materials

- Healthy Living: Teachers Book and Workbook
- Healthy Times: Teachers Book and Workbook
- Healthy Choices: Teachers Book and Workbook

Transition Year and 5th Year

Module Resource

Mental Health SPHE Book - It's Your Wellbeing Senior Cycle SPHE

You've Got This! Fifth Year Senior Cycle SPHE

Know The Score H.S.E Resources

NCCA TY SPHE Resources

Mental Health Matters, Mind Out Mental Health Resource

Gender Studies SPHE Book - It's Your Life

Substance Abuse SPHE Book - It's Your Life

SAP - Substance Abuse

Relationships and

Sexuality Education

Trust Pack - RSE

Consultation and Evaluation

St.Patrick's Classical School will monitor, review and evaluate this policy and all related procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practice.

Consultation

All staff, parents, students, Board of Management and other relevant groups will be involved in the writing and evaluation of this policy and any changes incorporated into the amended policy.

Dissemination of Policy

Copies of this policy:

1. Will be available from the main office
2. Will be given to all new staff
3. Will be available to view on the school website
4. Students will be made aware of the policy through the Students' Council and within the context of the SPHE programme
5. May be included in our Teacher's' Handbook

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 15/09/2025.

The Board of Management approved and ratified the School Policy on 15/09/2025.

Signed:



Signed:



Fr. Gerry Stuart

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 15/09/2025.

Mr. Harry Mc Garry

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 15/09/2025.