

Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) POLICY
DONABATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



This SPHE Policy is to be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years.

This SPHE Policy was agreed on 5th March 2019

Signature

(Chair Person to the Board of Management)

Principal

Date for Review September 2020

Donabate Community College

Donabate Community College is a post primary college which opened in August 2008 under the Patronage of County Dublin VEC. The college is co-educational and aspires towards excellence in a caring and supportive environment.

As Donabate Community College will be catering in the foreseeable future to an ever-increasing population growth within its catchment area, the Board of Management will review the Enrolment Policy on a yearly basis.

The Board of Management is committed to the successful implementation of recent legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the Equal Status Act (2000). The Board fully subscribes to the principles of partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion and respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

College Mission

The Board of Management will promote Excellence. Our aim will be to create, with the assistance of parents/guardians, responsible citizens with pride in their community. The development of the whole person will be based on personal responsibility, inter dependence, respect for people and respect for property. Our college will seek to instil integrity, value discipline and punctuality and facilitate the best in academic and non-academic areas. We will value our culture, our tradition, be inclusive of religious beliefs and will seek to be a caring and compassionate community where justice and truth will be the central elements.

DEFINITION OF SPHE

Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) 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.

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 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

With such support, students may be enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and others. There is a growing recognition the social, personal and health education offered to our students is as important as any other area of the curriculum.

SPHE AND DONABATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

The aims of SPHE curriculum contribute to the overall mission statement of our college in promoting the development of the whole person.

CLASS ORGANISATION AND TIMETABLING

Circular M11/03

All second level schools must timetable Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of the Junior Cycle Core Curriculum from September 2003. The time allocation recommended is the equivalent of one class period per week.

Circular 0037/201

All second level schools must implement Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) as an element of SPHE at junior cycle and as an RSE programme in senior cycle, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class.

All junior cycle classes, 1st, 2nd and 3rd year are timetabled one class per week. Students receive SPHE classes in their dedicated class tutor groups.

SPHE is not a timetabled class for Senior Cycle students but these students receive six classes of RSE per year.

All SPHE teachers where possible have the SPHE class for another subject due to the importance of the teacher-student relationship.

The Principal is committed where possible to timetabling a weekly SPHE class for Senior students.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- For learning activities to be meaningful, relevant and achievable for all students, it is important that the teacher finds ways to respond to students diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies. In consultation with the SEN Coordinator the following strategies will be used:
- Ensuring that the objectives are realistic for students and ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups
- Spending more time on tasks and organising the learning task into small stages
- Ensuring that language is pitched at the students level of understanding and does not hinder understanding of the activity
- Using task analysis, outline the steps to be learned/completed in any given task
- Posing key questions to guide students through the different stages/processes and to assist in self direction and correction
- Using graphic symbols as reminders to assist students in understanding the sequence/steps in any given task/problem
- Modelling task analysis by talking through the steps of a task as it is being done
- Having short and varied tasks
- Creating a learning environment through the use of concrete and where possible everyday materials
- Displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.

CONTENT AND TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Through participation in the SPHE Programme the student will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of experiences. These issues will be addressed in ten modules, each of which appears in each year of the three year cycle. The emphasis will be on building skills, understanding, attitudes and values important in all these areas.

The ten modules are:

1. Belonging and integrating
2. Self-Management
3. Communication Skills
4. Physical Health
5. Friendship

6. Relationships and Sexuality
7. Emotional Health
8. Influences and Decisions
9. Substance Use
10. Personal Safety

SPHE is primarily skills based and so teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with the emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be student entered and appropriate to the age and development of the student. The class atmosphere must be one of respect and privacy of the individual teacher and student hallmarked by sensitivity and care. A respectful code of conduct is expected from all participants. Every class establishes ground rules which are referred to throughout the lessons. Any breach of this may result in the removal of the student from the class. To date this has never been necessary in this school.

Teaching Methodologies may include:

- Group work
- Roleplay
- Brainstorming
- Icebreakers
- Simulation
- Narrative expression
- Debating
- Project work
- Art work
- Multi-media materials
- Case studies
- Visiting speakers

The Department of Education and Skills recognises that each school has flexibility to plan the SPHE Programme in harmony with the students needs and schools resources. Donabate Community College recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, social and personal development of the children lies with their parents. Donabate Community College is committed to creating a tradition of supporting parents in this role and SPHE is seen as building on this.

CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

The following subject areas form the cross curricular links with the SPHE Programme:

- P.E.
- Science
- R.E.
- CSPE
- I.T. RESOURCES AND ACCOMMODATION

A limited budget is available for SPHE and is used to purchase resources and textbooks and to accommodate workshop facilitators and guest speakers.

Resources include:

- DES Syllabus and Guidelines
- Growing Up textbook
- Healthy Living/Healthy Times/Healthy Choices workbooks
- On my Own Two Feet
- Before You Decide
- Trust
- HSE leaflets and DVDs
- Growing Up LGBT
- Belong to Stand Up
- Mental Health Matters
- Working Things Out
- Body Whys
- Up to Us
- Marie Keating Cancer Awareness Pack

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT

The value placed on SPHE by the school will be evident by the commitment on the part of management to developing a core of trained SPHE teachers preferably gender balanced and to appointing an SPHE coordinator.

SPHE is enhanced when the appointment of teachers to the subject has been negotiated in advance of timetabling. Management is responsible for responding to the relevant expressed and perceived training needs of SPHE teachers and whole staff.

It is the aim that all SPHE teachers will have undertaken introduction to SPHE and Junior Cycle RSE in-service training.

All staff involved in SPHE are offered specific training and in-service opportunities.

All staff will attend Substance Use in-service training over the next two years. The school aims to request for support from the PDST and the Health and Wellbeing team supports the SPHE teachers throughout the year during school visits.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND REFERRALS

PARTICIPATION

SPHE at Junior Cycle and RSE at Senior Cycle (when relevant) is a core curricular subject. Each parent has a right to withdraw their child from some or all RSE classes but parents are encouraged to provide alternative RSE at home. The school will respect this choice as their right. It will be necessary for parents opting out of RSE to make suitable arrangements with the school management for the welfare of their child at these times.

Where students are withdrawn for RSE the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students. Parents must meet with the Principal in person to discuss their decision to withdraw their child from the RSE module.

A text message will be sent to parents prior to the RSE module to inform them that the course will take place over the coming days.

SENSITIVE ISSUES

Class discussion will be of a general nature, and will not be personally directed, in accordance with the previously agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by the class teacher, or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The SPHE teacher may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in checking whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. Should a teacher be concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal without identifying the student.

REFERRAL

While it is acknowledged that the teachers have a professional duty to impart the SPHE course content, the needs of students will be addressed in a caring and supportive manner. Where it is appropriate, the teacher may refer students to other supportive links within the school. As far as possible this should be done in negotiation with the student. The teacher may inform the class of external devices relevant to the class material. This should be done within the context of the Donabate Community College ethos.

SPHE teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal without identifying the student.

CONFIDENTIALITY

While an atmosphere of trust is a pre-requisite of SPHE class, the following limits of confidentiality must be observed. These limits are:

- Child abuse-physical, emotional, sexual, neglect
- Intention to harm self or others
- Substance misuse
- Underage sexual intercourse

Any disclosure will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in compliance with the Child Protection Policy.

SPHE teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year, remind them at necessary points throughout the year and where possible before making a disclosure.

VISITORS

Circular 00123/2010

National and international research has consistently shown that the qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with student and that he/she can have a powerful impact on influencing students attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education.

Research findings indicate that the following teaching approaches have limited effect and are counterproductive to the effective implementation of SPHE:

- Scare tactics and sensationalist interventions
- Testimonials
- Information only interventions
- Short term/once off interventions
- Outside speakers can be a resource when used as part of a schools planned programme for SPHE/RSE

Visiting speakers are seen as complimenting and supporting the SPHE Programme. Teachers inviting these speakers must:

- Seek permission from the Principal in advance of inviting a speaker in
- Make the speaker aware of the Mission Statement and SPHE Policy of Donabate Community College
- Agree the content of the presentation
- Do preparatory and follow up work where possible
- Remain with the class group during the visit

PARENTS

The school accepts that it is in the interests of all parents that the child grows up in a healthy and mature fashion. The school will strive to keep parents informed of the contents of the SPHE Programme.

The SPHE Policy will be available online at www.donabatecc.ie and notifications regarding reviews are also published on our website. Parents of incoming first years are directed to the SPHE Policy along with other relevant policies. The involvement of parents at the core of every aspect of SPHE gives it extra impetus, depth and validity and from time to time training and/or input and development opportunities will be offered to parents in certain aspects of SPHE.

WHOLE STAFF

This policy will be available for all staff in the school by its inclusion with the Policy Documents, which are contained in AutoDocs section on VShare. Copies will be given to each SPHE teacher by the SPHE Coordinator.

The school aims to apply for support from the PDST and the Health and Well-being Team supports the whole staff throughout the year during Croke Park hours.

WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR SPHE

While specific teachers are trained and charged with the responsibility of delivering the programme, all our staff will promote SPHE in their subject areas in so far as that he/she may from time to time see opportunities to promote healthy lifestyle and encourage responsible and mature decisions making. There is generally a whole school approach to key areas of SPHE and the school year has times earmarked when certain topics or issues are covered e.g. Mental Health Week, Wellbeing Days.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The SPHE course is never static and must be examined and evaluated regularly and adapted to the needs of the students. The SPHE programmes and policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the SPHE team. The opinions of students will be included and SPHE teachers will communicate with the Student Council. The opinions of parents will also be included and SPHE teachers will communicate with the Parents Association. The opinions of management will be included and the SPHE coordinator will communicate with the Principal and the Board of Management.

APPENDIX A Summary of what Donabate Community College provides both formally and informally to promote the whole development of students.

COURSES

- Junior Certificate JC
- Leaving Certificate LC
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Portfolio (LCVP)
- Transition Year (TY)

SUPPORTS

- Pastoral Care Team
- Guidance Counsellor
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator
- Special Needs Assistant
- Parents Association
- Student Council
- Attendance and Behaviour Officer
- NBSS Behaviour Support Person

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Gaelic Football
- Basketball
- Rugby
- Badminton
- Horse Riding
- Tennis

ACTIVITIES

- Chess Club
- Music / School Band / Choir

School Field Trips

- Debating Team
- Green Schools
- Amber Flag
- Cycle Against Suicide
- Mind your Head - Headstrong
- Student Council