



POLICY STATEMENT ON SOCIAL, PERSONAL, HEALTH EDUCATION & RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is an All-Boys Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin.

INTRODUCTION

St Mary's Knockbeg College endeavours to create a Christian community as we strive to realise our Mission Statement whereby "the values of the Gospel find daily expression" and whereby students are enabled and empowered to "acquire the self-confidence, academic qualifications, life skills and attitude for leading satisfying lives". Respect is at the core of our Code of Behaviour and of all interactions in the school.

Through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme the school aims to support the personal development, health and well being of our students and help them create and maintain supportive relationships.

THE AIMS OF SPHE

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfillment 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.

SPHE is made up of ten modules. These modules are revisited each year as the students mature and their needs and abilities change. The emphasis will be on building skills understanding attitudes and values important in all these areas.

Ten Modules in SPHE

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-Management
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendship
- Relationship and Sexuality (RSE)
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety

SPHE is covered in the 1st Yr. RE programme and is allocated one class period per week for all Junior Cycle students in 2nd and 3rd yr. The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) module is located in the overall framework of SPHE. Senior Cycle students will receive RSE through their Religion programme.

Through RSE the school, aims to provide opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

THE AIMS OF RSE

- To help young people to understand and develop friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality.
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in ones relationship with others.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for human reproduction.
- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

RSE PROGRAMME CONTENT

Teachers will use materials deemed suitable and appropriate for students needs and in accordance with the school ethos.

The content of the RSE Programme is described under three themes. These themes are neither sequential nor discrete; they merge and overlap with each other.

1. Human Growth and Development

This theme consists of an age appropriate understanding of the biology and psychology of the human life cycle. This is accompanied by a rationale for responsible behaviour in relationships and sexuality activity.

2. Human Sexuality

Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions. The theme offers opportunities to develop a holistic understanding of sexuality as contributing to the development of personal well being, enhancing personal and family relationships and ultimately contributing to the well being of society.

3. Human Relationships

This theme focuses on the importance of relationships for health and well-being. It examines how one relates to self and others, stressing the importance of self-esteem as a basis for worthwhile friendships and relationships. It addresses issues such as communication, influence, intimacy, sexual attraction and sexual expression in relationships consistent with personal and moral integrity.

What the school currently provides

There are aspects of the SPHE/ RSE programme addressed in other subject areas such as Religion, Science, CSPE and PE. The programme is also supported informally through our Home School Contacts, Care Team and Guidance Programmes. The school encourages a holistic approach to the development of each pupil and each year head, class teacher and subject teacher endeavours to achieve this approach. The strong tradition of extra curricular activities also contributes to the personal development of students.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of SPHE in the school

- To allow for the effective delivery and planning of the programme, a post holder will act as co-ordinator.

- 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 due 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 student and within a moral framework.

- Parents have the primary responsibility for the teaching of sexuality to their children and RSE is a support to the family in this.

- Parents are welcome to view the programme content by appointment.

- Visiting speakers on SPHE / RSE topics will be given a copy of the school SPHE / RSE policy and must speak within the spirit of the policy. Teachers will be present at all times when a guest speaker is visiting the class and parents will be informed beforehand of the content of the talk.

TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Within budgetary constraints, all resources needed in terms of time, finance and personnel, will be made available to develop and support the SPHE programme in the school. Teacher training is seen as an essential element in delivering the programme. The objectives of this training are to enhance the personal development of teachers and to enable them to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to teach the programme. The programme will be supported by the SPHE support service and the schools team within the Health Promotion Service of the Health Service Executive.

DOCUMENTS

- ✚ [1997 RSE Going Forward Together - an Introduction to RSE for Parents](#)
- ✚ [2000: SPHE Junior Cycle Syllabus](#)
- ✚ [2001: SPHE Guidelines for Teachers](#)
- ✚ [2004: Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools](#)
- ✚ On My Own Two Feet Substance Abuse Prevention Programme. Department of Education and Science, Department of Health and Children, Mater Dei Counseling Service (1994).
- ✚ Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education, Junior Cycle, Department of Education and Science (1998).

WEBSITE LINKS

- ✚ SPHE Support Service www.sphe.ie
- ✚ Crisis Pregnancy Agency www.crisispregnancy.ie
- ✚ Pobal www.pobal.ie. A resource guide for inclusion of young gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students

Teachers on occasions may use other materials deemed suitable and appropriate for student needs and in accordance with school ethos.

EVALUATION

The SPHE policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

REVIEW OF POLICY

The Board of Management after one year, and every two years thereafter will review his policy.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management

Signed _____ Chairperson _____ Date

Next review date : _____