



### **Patrician Academy, Mallow, SPHE Policy.**

**Title:** Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) Policy.

**School ethos:** The Patrician Academy is a Catholic school and we encourage our students to examine contemporary culture and values in the light of Christian beliefs. We are a centre of education where all stakeholders i.e. management, teachers, pupils and parents co-operate to help each student reach his full potential. We are committed to the development of the students' moral, social and cultural values. We encourage their creativity and seek to develop fully their academic, intellectual and physical potential. We provide an education where what is excellent in traditional educational theory is strengthened by what is best in modern educational developments. We stress the importance of enhancing each student's sense of dignity and self-worth in order to enrich their quality of life. We encourage each pupil to be an influence for good in the society in which he lives.

**Aims:** Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) aims to develop students' positive sense of themselves and their physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing. It also aims to build the capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

**Course Content at Junior Cycle:** SPHE is designed to enable students to develop a positive sense of themselves and a commitment to caring for themselves and others.

**Strand 1:** Who am I? This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and building self-esteem.

**Strand 2:** Minding myself and others. This strand provides opportunities for students to reflect on how they can best take care of themselves and others.

**Strand 3:** Team up. This strand focuses on students learning about important relationships in their lives and building relationship skills.

**Strand 4:** My mental health. This strand focuses on building positive mental health, examining young people's experience of mental ill health and learning how to support themselves and others in challenging times.

**Rationale:** It is accepted that the home and the parents are the primary educators of their children in the area of Social, Personal and Health Education. Programmes in these areas carried out in the school are extensions of the education already begun in the home.

SPHE aims to help students develop skills which will enable them to make informed decisions about their health, social development and personal lives thus enabling them to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and the dignity of others.

Early adolescence is a time of significant change for young people, physically, emotionally and socially. Through the use of experiential methodologies and group work, students have the dedicated space and time in SPHE classes to develop their understanding and skills to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing in a rapidly changing world.

In SPHE, students have opportunities to revisit different themes which focus on developing self-awareness and respect for others, and the skills of self-management, communication, coping, decision-making and relating to others. This spiral approach of revisiting key ideas and topics is familiar from existing approaches to SPHE. This new Wellbeing Programme builds on this approach but also emphasises the importance of student agency and engagement in the learning process as key to learning in the affective domain. The skills involved are vital for self-fulfillment, for living in communities and for full engagement in learning beyond SPHE. Personal reflection, resilience and empathy are also promoted through SPHE.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is important for young people at this stage of their lives. SPHE provides the context within which young people can learn about important physical, social, emotional and moral issues around relationships, sexual health, sexuality and gender identity. Learning in SPHE and RSE is supported by a positive, empowering whole school environment and relevant school policies including our anti-bullying and child protection policies. It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must immediately refer this under the Child Protection Guidelines to the designated liaison person, the Principal. The Principal will then take further action in keeping with the policy. Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality as teachers may have to report to the Principal under the Child Protection Guidelines.

The context for learning in SPHE helps to ensure that students learn to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. These decisions are further supported and encouraged by

school, community and national policies and guidelines. Ground rules/class contracts are drawn up by the class teacher in consultation with the class at the start of each school year. Ground rules should be clear and simple and adhered to by all.

In Junior Cycle, six indicators–Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware– have been identified as central to students’ wellbeing. Learning in SPHE provides learning opportunities designed to enhance each of these indicators thereby contributing significantly to the school’s Wellbeing Programme in junior cycle.

**Statements of Learning Links to SPHE:**

The following tables show how SPHE may be linked to the central features of learning and teaching in junior cycle.

Statement of Learning	Example of Related Learning in SPHE
The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making (SoL 5).	Students participate in a range of activities that promote responsible behaviours and help them to develop skills for making personal and group decisions that respect their own dignity and the dignity of others.
The student appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she lives. (SoL 6).	In SPHE, students have opportunities to discuss opinions, examine problems and decide how these might be approached with their peers, thereby helping them to appreciate the value of different perspectives. By examining case studies and undertaking role-play, students can learn to be more empathetic towards others and to respect different values, beliefs and traditions.
The student acts to safeguard and promote his wellbeing and that of others (SoL 11).	Students examine how their values, attitudes and behaviour impact on them own and others’ health and wellbeing. They develop different resources designed to support young people in making informed decisions for their own wellbeing and that of others.

## Key Skills Developed Through SPHE



Key Skill	Element	Student Learning Activity
Being Creative	Exploring options and alternatives	Students explore and evaluate options and alternatives in the context of decisions they make. They record and communicate their learning in creative ways.
Being Literate	Expressing ideas clearly and accurately	Students learn to articulate their thoughts and feelings clearly and respectfully through group work, roleplay and reflections, and by exploring and discussing scenarios and case studies.
Being Numerate	Gathering, interpreting and representing data	Students gather information through questionnaires, surveys and personal records and present their findings in graphic form to different audiences.
Communicating	Listening and expressing myself	Students learn to express themselves clearly and respectfully, to ask for help, to listen to other peoples' viewpoints and discuss ideas and opinions.
Managing Information and Thinking	Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information	Students become familiar with how and where they can access information and support to maintain their physical and mental health in a holistic way
Managing Myself	Knowing myself	Students learn more about themselves as they engage in decision-making activities and goal setting. They learn to be flexible, to organise themselves, to plan to achieve their goals and to develop a sense of balance in their lives.

Staying well	Being healthy and physically active	Students learn about taking responsibility for their wellbeing and relationships. They also learn how to include a balanced diet, physical activity and relaxation as part of a healthy lifestyle.
Working with others	Respecting difference	Students learn about group processes and how group membership can affect an individual's thinking and behaviour. They develop greater empathy as they learn about other peoples' perspectives and develop skills for relating effectively to others.

## Wellbeing Indicators & SPHE Learning Outcomes:

The six wellbeing indicators make explicit what is important learning in Wellbeing. The learning outcomes in each of the four strands of SPHE are aligned to the indicators for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle.



## **Transition Year SPHE**

The framework builds on students' prior learning in primary and junior cycle SPHE. The aim of senior cycle SPHE is to support learners in making choices for health and wellbeing now and in the future.

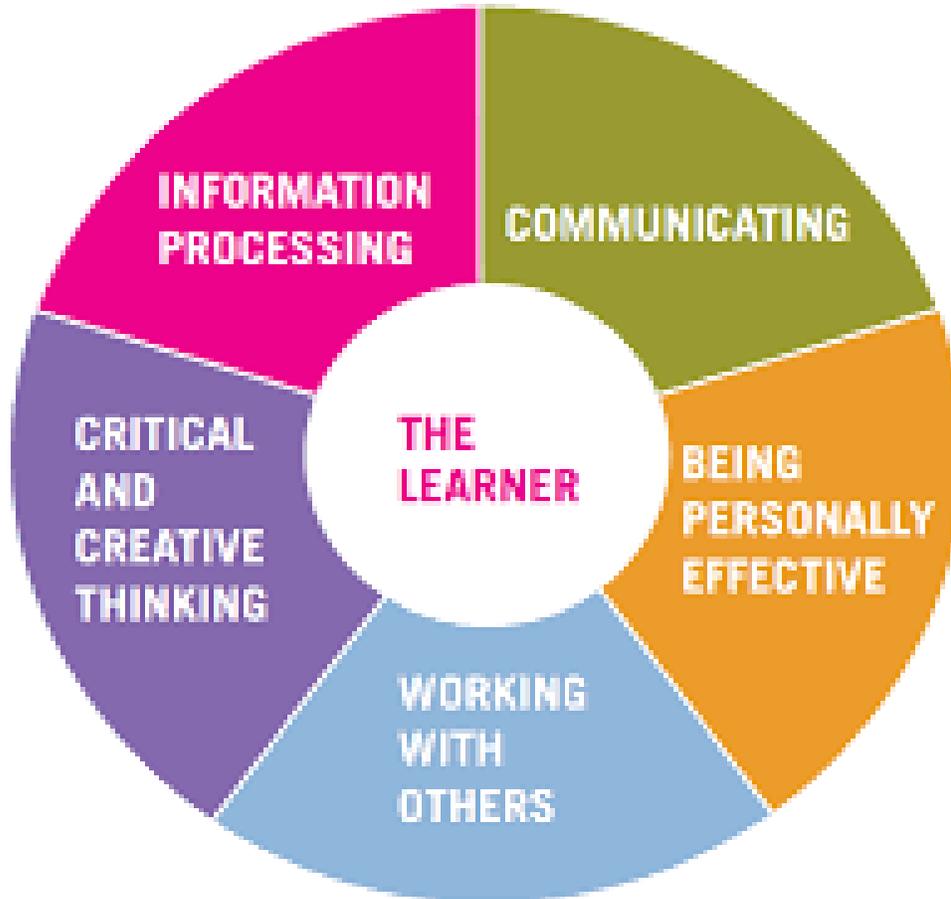
The curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle is an enabling curriculum. The framework is built around five areas of learning. These areas of learning focus on what is important for learners in senior cycle to know, understand and be able to do in order to make and maintain healthy lifestyle decisions. The five areas of learning are:

- Mental health
- Gender studies
- Substance use
- Relationships and sexuality education
- Physical activity and nutrition

### **The objectives for SPHE in Transition Year are to:**

- Develop self-awareness through opportunities to reflect on thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings.
- Enhance students' knowledge and understanding of essential health concepts and the wider influences on health and wellbeing to enable informed decision making.
- Develop students' self-efficacy; the confidence to think and behave independently especially in the face of social pressure.
- Strengthen students' capacity to empathise with another person's situation, feelings and motives in order to enhance relationships with other people.
- Develop coping strategies for adolescence and adult life in support of greater resilience.
- Develop students' health literacy skills, including the ability to obtain, critically evaluate and act on health information in support of health and wellbeing.
- Develop a willingness to participate in the creation and maintenance of healthy communities and environments.

## Key Skills in Senior Cycle SPHE



There are five key skills identified as central to teaching and learning across the curriculum in senior cycle. These are information processing, being personally effective, communicating, critical and creative thinking and working with others. These skills are important for all students to achieve their full potential, both during their time in school and into the future. The World Health Organisation (WHO) also advocates a skills-based approach to health education where opportunities to model, observe and socially interact are at the centre of teaching and learning. The focus of WHO is on creating and maintaining healthy lifestyles through the development of knowledge, attitudes and especially skills, using a variety of learning experiences, with an emphasis on participatory methods. There are significant similarities between the skills promoted by WHO and the five key skills identified as being central to teaching and learning in senior cycle.

<b>Key Skills in Senior Cycle Education</b>
Information Processing
Critical/creative thinking
Being personally effective
Communicating
Working with Others

<b>WHO Life Skills</b>
Decision making/critical thinking skills
Coping/self-management skills
Communication/interpersonal skills

### **Students with Special Educational Needs**

Children with Special Educational Needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.

For learning activities to be made 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 Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator the following strategies will be adopted:

- Ensuring that objectives are realistic for the 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 used is pitched at the students' level of understanding and does not hinder understanding of the activity.
- Using task analysis, outlining 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 every day, materials.
- Displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures.

#### **Assessment, record keeping and reporting:**

- SPHE teachers report progress in SPHE for Junior Cycle students and Transition Year students. First years receive a report at Christmas and the Summer.
- Second years receive a report at Christmas and the Summer.
- Third years receive a report in October, after their pre-exams and students that started secondary school from 2019 onwards as part of Junior Cycle Wellbeing will be formally assessed in SPHE and their results will be recorded on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.
- SPHE teachers also meet parents at Parent Teacher Meetings.

The SPHE team meets at least once a term, subject to current restrictions, to review, plan and evaluate SPHE in the school. Minutes of all meetings are recorded and contained in the SPHE Subject Folder.

#### **Cross-Curricular Links:**

As a school that promotes health and wellbeing, a number of whole school initiatives are organised for example the Green Flag Health Week. SPHE teachers work in conjunction with the Science and PE Departments to promote physical fitness and healthy eating. Extra-curricular sports such as Gaelic football, hurling, basketball, rugby and soccer to name but a few promote physical activity, teamwork, leadership, fair play and social skills. Opportunities to represent The Patrician Academy in co-curricular or extra-curricular dramas, debating, mini-companies, sports, Young Scientist, Young Social Innovators and many other school events instils a sense of school pride.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities Teachers:**

- Encourage all students to work to their full potential in a positive, inclusive and healthy atmosphere.
- Enable students to develop personal and social skills.
- Promote self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Promote and foster respect for diversity within the school community and in society.
- Enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision making.
- Promote the mental and emotional health and wellbeing of each student.

- Liaise with other staff: S.P.H.E. teachers, Guidance Counsellor, SENCO, Year Heads, Deputy Principal and Principal.

### **S.P.H.E. Teachers**

- Provide opportunities for reflection and discussion on relevant topics and issues.
- Foster a sense of care and respect for oneself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
- Promote and foster respect for diversity.
- Follow the Programme of study agreed.
- Refer students to the appropriate school-based personnel for follow up if a student's response to discussion of issues or their general presentation gives rise for concern within the classroom setting.

### **Year Heads**

- Promote the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of each student within their Year Group.
- Offer support to the class teacher.
- Offer support to the individual student.
- Consult with parents.
- Communicate with other staff, Deputy Principal and Principal regarding individual students.
- Refer students for further support, guidance or counselling when appropriate.

### **Principal**

- Oversees the implementation of the S.P.H.E. policy
- Supports the staff through personal development programmes and access to Inservice training.
- Liaises to all concerned parties in school and outside of school.
- Promotes a Pastoral Care Policy that endeavours to meet the needs of students with difficulties or troubles and respond appropriately.
- Promotes and fosters a school climate which is inclusive and values and respects diversity.

### **Deputy Principal**

- Supports the implementation of the S.P.H.E. policy
- Supports the Principal and Staff in the pastoral care of all pupils.
- Liaises with staff.

### **Special Needs Assistants**

- Support teachers in the implementation of the S.P.H.E. policy.
- Liaise with staff. Parents
- Support teachers and staff in the implementation of the S.P.H.E Policy.
- Encourage and support their sons to engage meaningfully with the S.P.H.E. Programme in the school.

- Appraise the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head or S.P.H.E. Teacher if there is an area of SPHE that the student would find sensitive to discuss and agree the most appropriate way to support the student.
- Communicate any significant events to which the student may have difficulty in adjusting. (i.e. bereavement, separation, illness in the family etc.) so that the school can support the student.

### **Parents**

- Support teachers and staff in the implementation of the S.P.H.E Policy.
- Encourage and support their sons to engage meaningfully with the S.P.H.E. Programme in the school.
- Appraise the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head or S.P.H.E. Teacher if there is an area of SPHE that the student would find sensitive to discuss and agree the most appropriate way to support the student.
- Communicate any significant events to which the student may have difficulty in adjusting. (i.e. bereavement, separation, illness in the family etc.) so that the school can support the student.

### **Whole School Support for SPHE**

While specific teachers are trained and charged with the responsibility of delivering the Programme, we see every teacher as a teacher of SPHE in that he/she may from time to time see opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle and encourage responsible and mature decision 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. Health Week.

### **Review and Evaluation**

This policy will normally be reviewed regularly by a review group consisting of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, School Development Planning Coordinator, two Teachers of S.P.H.E. two other teachers nominated by staff and two Parents.