



Scoil Mhuire, Trim

Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy

Rationale

The teaching and learning of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides a unique space where students can develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values needed to support their physical, emotional, social and spiritual* wellbeing, now and in the future. The SPHE specification is grounded in values of respect, equality, inclusivity, responsibility, dignity, compassion and empathy.

In placing a strong focus on the development of these important life skills, students gain knowledge and skills to help them develop a strong sense of self, make informed and healthy decisions, be able to take care of themselves and others, and manage life's challenges.

Specifically, it focuses on developing the core social and emotional skills of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness and relationship skills. These have been shown to determine how well people manage changing and challenging environments and can influence many important life outcomes.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of, and connects with, aspects of SPHE. (Please refer to the Scoil Mhuire RSE Policy in Appendix 1). It is of particular importance for students at this stage of their lives as they reflect on questions such as 'what kind of person am I?' and 'what matters for me in relationships?' As they continue to form their identity, they are making sense of life experiences, information, images and messages about relationships and sexuality from a range of informal sources such as their peers, family, the media and online world. Having the opportunity to think about and discuss relationships, sexuality and healthy sexual expression within a safe classroom setting and with a skilled teacher is vitally important.

In Junior cycle, six indicators have been identified as central to students' wellbeing (Appendix 2). Teaching and learning within the SPHE classroom can provide meaningful learning opportunities to foster all six indicators of wellbeing, helping students become more Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware. SPHE is thereby a core pillar of a school's Wellbeing programme in Junior cycle along with Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Physical Education (PE)

This specification supports teachers in adopting an approach that is inclusive in accordance with principles of equality, human rights and responsibilities. This ensures that all students can see themselves, their families and their communities reflected across the learning and can learn to value diversity as a feature of humankind and as a source of enrichment. SPHE thus contributes to building a cohesive, compassionate and fair society; one that is inclusive of all genders, sexualities, ethnicities, religious beliefs/worldviews, social classes and abilities/disabilities.

Aim

As stated in the school`s Mission Statement

Scoil Mhuire seeks to provide a quality education for all its students in a challenging and positive environment.

We are committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised.

The Junior Cycle SPHE programme (Appendix 3a) aims to:

- Build students' self-awareness and positive self-worth
- Develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and health lives
- Empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others
- Enhance their capability to contribute positively to society.

Expectations for Students

Having completed the Junior Cycle course in SPHE students may expect the following learning outcomes **(Appendix 3b)**

- Understanding myself and others
- Making healthy choices
- Relationships and sexuality
- Emotional wellbeing

The Junior Cycle SPHE course employs a spiral approach that allows students to revisit important themes over the three years in order to allow for deeper engagement, relevant to the students' evolving needs and stage of development.

The 100 hours of student engagement is a progression of learning over the three years.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment in Junior Cycle SPHE will optimise the opportunity for students to become reflective and active participants in their learning and for teachers to support this.

Assessments will be formative in nature and students will provide evidence of their learning through multiple means of expression, including oral, written, visual, digital and art-based pieces. Students, with their teachers and peers, will reflect upon and make judgements about their own and others' learning by looking at the quality of particular pieces of work, and they will agree the next steps in their learning based on feedback they give and receive. In this way, ongoing formative assessment can support the student in their learning journey and in preparing for the Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) related to this course.

CBA's will be communicated to parents/guardians in interim reporting and in the Junior Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Implementation

Through the use of critical and participative pedagogies, SPHE can provide a safe, supportive and non-judgemental space where students' self-awareness and awareness of others can grow, and where they engage in reflection and dialogue, and identify actions they can take to protect and promote their own wellbeing and that of others. By affirming and developing students' strengths and capacities as active agents in their own lives, SPHE can play an important role in enabling students to find their voice and develop self-efficacy.

- The 1st and 2nd Year classes of August 2023 and August 2024 will complete the above programme over three years with an allocation of one 58 minutes class per week.
- The 3rd Year students of August 2024 will complete the above strands over three years with the allocation of one 58 minutes class per week in 1st Year and an allocation of one 58 minutes class per week for 16 weeks in each of 2nd and 3rd year.

SPHE is mandatory for all Junior Cycle students. Parents/Guardians have the right to withdraw their child from the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) module.

The Education Act, 1998 (section 30, subsection (2)(e)) provides that a student is not required to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent or in the case of a student who has reached the age 18 years, the student. Hence, parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their child from the sensitive issues in RSE if they wish to do so on the understanding that as parents/guardians they take full responsibility for this aspect of their daughter's education. Parents/Guardians are asked to make this request in writing to the Principal.

Senior Cycle SPHE

Aim

Senior cycle SPHE aims to support students in making informed positive choices for health and wellbeing now and in the future by:

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

SPHE Framework for Senior Cycle

The framework is built around five areas of learning (**Appendix 4**):

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

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 learning outcomes draw on three interrelated perspectives which emphasise the multi-dimensional nature of health and wellbeing:

- Emotional and social health and wellbeing focuses on the knowledge and understanding, values, attitudes and skills students need to inform decisions about emotional, social and spiritual health and wellbeing
- Physical health and wellbeing focuses on the knowledge and understanding, values, attitudes and skills that students need to inform decisions about physical health and wellbeing
- Personal and group health and wellbeing focuses on knowledge and understanding of the wider influences on the health and wellbeing, an awareness of relevant supports and agencies in the community and the development of advocacy skills.

Implementation

- Transition Year students are timetabled for one 58 minutes period of SPHE per week
- 5th and 6th Year students are timetabled for one 58 minutes period per week of SPHE rotating with Guidance.
- Leaving Certificate Applied students are timetabled for one 58minutes period of Social Health per week.

Fulfilling the aims of the SPHE programme, Scoil Mhuire will endeavour to provide a supportive school environment where:

- members of the school community feel valued
- self-esteem is fostered
- respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
- high expectations and standards are promoted
- there is support for those with difficulties
- open communication is the norm
- effort is recognised and rewarded
- uniqueness and difference are valued
- conflict is handled constructively
- initiative and creativity are encouraged
- social, moral and civic values are promoted.
- didactic approach

Learning and Teaching

Learning methods and teaching methodologies will be of an active nature and will emphasise discussion, reflection, and student participation in a manner appropriate to the age and needs of the students. The SPHE classroom environment will foster respect, for the privacy of individual students and a safe learning environment for all.

In light of the advice contained in Circular letter 0023/2010, the following approaches will be avoided when teaching SPHE in Scoil Mhuire, Trim:

- Scare tactics
- Sensationalist interventions
- Testimonials
- Information only interventions
- Information that is not age appropriate
- Once off/short term interventions
- Normalising young people's risky behaviour

Roles and Responsibilities in Developing, Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating the SPHE Policy.

✓ **Board of Management**

The Board of Management will ensure that the Scoil Mhuire ethos and CEIST values are reflected in the formulation of the SPHE policy and programme.

✓ **Principal and Deputy Principals**

The Principal and Deputy Principals are committed to supporting all staff who deliver the SPHE programme and will facilitate all opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for staff in the area of SPHE.

✓ **SPHE Coordinator**

The SPHE coordinator works with the teachers of SPHE to ensure consistent and effective delivery of the SPHE programme as per the specifications.

The coordinator will maintain records of the work covered by the SPHE teachers in class during each academic year.

✓ **SPHE Teachers**

Teachers will deliver the SPHE programme meeting its aims and objectives using a range of teaching and learning strategies. Teachers will attend SPHE department meetings and avail of relevant in-service when it is available.

Cross Curricular links - The following subjects may also deal with topics related to SPHE; Religious Education, Science, Home Economics, Physical Education, Biology and Guidance.

Whole School Support for SPHE

- Students Council
- Athrú
- Senior Prefects
- Pastoral Care
- Form Time
- Mentoring programme
- Wellbeing initiatives
- The many extra – curricular activities available to students
- Information meetings for parents/guardians
- Guidance department
- Sports Committee
- Transition Year Technology Team
- Music Committee

(This list is not exhaustive)

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Approved by the Board of Management: 5th December 2024

Appendix 1



Scoil Mhuire, Trim

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction:

An RSE policy is a written statement of the aims of the RSE programme, the relationship of RSE to SPHE, and the organisation and management of RSE within the school.

This policy was developed with reference to the following documentation and consultation with relevant personnel:

- ✚ Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy Guidelines 1997
- ✚ Template for developing and revising/updating the RSE policy.
- ✚ Circulars M04/95, M20/96, M22/00, M11/03, 0037/2010, 0027/2008, 0023/2010
- ✚ SPHE teachers
- ✚ Senior Management team
- ✚ Student Council
- ✚ Parents Council

Our School:

Scoil Mhuire is an all-girls Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). It was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1936 and currently has a student enrolment of approximately 825, a teaching staff of approximately 60 and an ancillary staff of 10.

Our Mission Statement:

Scoil Mhuire seeks to provide a quality education for all its students in a challenging and positive environment. We are committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised.

Our Ethos:

Upholding our Mercy ethos, Scoil Mhuire promotes the core values of respect, courtesy, responsibility, and accountability, while ensuring that a holistic approach to the education of our students prevails. We are committed to promoting inclusion with a spirit of respect and welcome for

diversity. We also acknowledge the unprecedented challenges in education, as we anticipate, define, and meet the evolving needs of today's young people.

Scope:

This policy will apply to all aspects of teaching and learning about relationships and sexuality. Discussion about relationships and sexuality also takes place in classes other than SPHE/RSE. It is therefore important that all teachers are familiar with the RSE policy.

Rationale:

- Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development. Young people are exposed to a bewildering variety of messages about sexuality and sexual activity. Schools, in consultation with parents/guardians, need to reflect on how to provide for the needs of their students.
- The [Education Act, 1998](#) requires that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- Section 4 of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for RSE and a suitable RSE programme in place for all students at both junior and senior cycle. At Junior Cycle, the RSE programme is part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).
- Circulars [0027/2008](#) and [0023/2010](#) request schools to commence a process of RSE policy development.
- The effectiveness of an RSE programme is dependent on a collaborative policy process involving teachers, parents/guardians, members of the board of management and students.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school:

- **The policy relates to the school's mission/vision/aims. It acknowledges the importance of SPHE/RSE being taught in the context of a whole school climate that is inclusive and respectful.**
- **The policy reflects the educational philosophy of the trustees and the core values and ethos of the school, as outlined in the school's mission statement above.**
- Spiritual, moral, and ethical issues will arise when teaching RSE. The RSE policy guides teachers in the treatment of such issues in accordance with the ethos of the school. Teachers of RSE understand that their role is to express the views of the whole school community on these sensitive issues, and not their own personal views. In this regard, it should be noted that:
 - ✓ Schools are required to deliver all aspects of the RSE curriculum, including those in relation to sexual orientation, contraception, sexually transmitted infections etc. This can be done

within a context in which teaching of the programme is informed by the school's ethos.

- ✓ A school can express its ethos while at the same time facilitating students in discussing a range of views in relation to topics within the RSE programme.

Defining Relationships and Sexuality Education:

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships, and intimacy. In the school setting, it is an integral part of general education provision, which seeks to promote the overall development of the person, and which includes the integration of sexuality into personal understanding, growth, and development. Through RSE, formal opportunities are provided for young people to evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes, and values which they receive. In this way they can be helped to form values and establish behaviours within a moral framework. While parents are the primary educators in this area, schools have a key role to play. Ideally, parents/guardians and schools work in partnership to provide comprehensive relationships and sexuality education for young people.

The Objectives of Relationships and Sexuality Education programme:

RSE is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme. RSE should enable students to:

- acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships.
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness and the skills for building and maintaining self-esteem.
- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change, especially during adolescence and to develop respect for difference between individuals.
- understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility, and sexually transmitted infections.
- understand sexual development and identity.
- explore aspects of sexuality including stereotyping and gender issues.
- examine cultural influences on sexuality.
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- develop strategies for decisions and actions consistent with personal moral integrity and respectful of the rights and dignity of others.
- develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict, and threats to personal safety.

KEY MEASURES OF THE RSE POLICY:

A) The Provision of Training / Staff Development:

- Arrangements regarding the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education will be made by the Principal.
- Teachers are consulted prior to being timetabled to teach SPHE/RSE
- All teachers of SPHE/RSE will receive a minimum of two days training.
- The Principal and/or the SPHE coordinator will be responsible for informing relevant staff members of continual professional development training.
- The Board of Management must inform all members of staff of any amendments to this policy should they arise.

B) The Inclusion of Parents / Guardians:

- Both staff, parent/guardian and student representatives were consulted in the making of the RSE policy.
- The RSE policy is available to view on the official Scoil Mhuire website www.scoilmhuiretrim.ie
- The [Education Act, 1998](#) provides that a student is not required to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent/guardian or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student. Hence, parents/guardians have a right to opt their child out of the sensitive issues in RSE if they wish to do so. In such circumstances, the parents/guardians are asked to consult with, and make arrangements with the Principal about this withdrawal. Any requests for withdrawal must be made in writing.

C) Ethical / Moral Considerations:

The following is a list of guidelines on the moral and ethical considerations which may arise:

➤ **Answering Questions**

It is important to create an environment in RSE in which students feel comfortable to ask questions openly. However, teachers may not be able to answer all questions asked by the students and therefore, boundaries should be set appropriately. Teachers should use their professional judgement guided by the age, gender and needs of the students presented to them. The Child Protection Policy and the Ethos of the school must be upheld.

➤ **Confidentiality**

Students are not encouraged to disclose personal or private information in RSE classes but there may be times when they discuss their own lives. Confidentiality should be respected, unless the student is considered at risk, in which case the appropriate action should be taken e.g., follow the procedures set down in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools 2017, notifying the Principal (Designated Liaison Person-DLP) or Deputy Principal (Deputy Designated Liaison Person-DDLP) immediately and/or refer to any of the school policies such as substance abuse, notify parents/guardians etc.

Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality. Teachers indicate clearly to students when the content of the conversation can no longer be kept confidential. This is in line with Child Protection Procedures.

➤ **Sexual Activity**

Parents/Guardians and teachers should give students information on the age of consent, which is seventeen years of age for both males and females as legislated in The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences Act) 2006.

➤ **Aspects of Sexual Education that arise in school curriculum**

The curricula of other subject's deal with sensitive content in regard to relationships and sexuality. It is the discretion of the teacher to decide what information is appropriate to give in the context of the class. The subsequent discussion should be limited and set within the context of the subject curriculum.

➤ **Contraception/ Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

The post-primary RSE Curriculum Guidelines state that the subject of Family Planning should be covered in detail within the Senior Cycle RSE programme. In line with the new JC SPHE specification 2023, the topic of contraception and STIs are introduced and taught in Stand 3, RSE. It is also covered in Junior Cycle Science, Home Economics and Leaving Certificate. Biology. The RSE programme requires that young people are provided with information on methods of contraception and an overview of the transmission and prevention of STIs. Both topics will be dealt with in a factual, open but age-appropriate manner.

➤ **Sexual Identity**

The subject of sexual orientation and gender identity is covered as part of the RSE programme at Senior Cycle, and with the discretion of the teacher at Junior Cycle. Under the Equal Status Act, 2000, and the Equality Act, 2004, associated discrimination is prohibited. Teachers must not promote any one gender identity or sexual orientation.

➤ **Visiting Speakers**

It is recommended that trained RSE teachers facilitate the programme. All visiting speakers must be approved by the Principal and provided with a copy of the RSE policy which they must adhere to. The Office should be informed of the date and name of the visitor and a record kept. All visitors must be welcomed at the door and accompanied by a teaching member of staff for the duration of the visit. Any issues arising from appropriateness of the content delivered must be brought to the attention of the Principal.

➤ **Special Needs**

Teachers of RSE should be aware of students with special educational or/and emotional needs and liaise with parents/guardian.

D. Practical Issues:

- All Junior Cycle students are timetabled for approximately 100 hours of SPHE over three years. The classes are in form groups of all girls, which range between 28 and 30 students. RSE is taught as part of SPHE.
- Aspects of RSE are taught through Science, Biology, Home Economics and may arise in other subjects.

- Where there is a written request from parents/guardians to withdraw a student from RSE, arrangements are made in consultation with the Principal, teacher, parent/guardian, and student.
- SPHE/RSE teachers meet at the beginning of the school year. A co-ordinator is appointed, and a Scheme of Work is agreed for the year.

Links to Other Policies:

Other School Policies which reference RSE are:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- School Policy concerning the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices.
- Policy on Substance Abuse.
- Anti-bullying Policy.
- Acceptable Use Policy for Students.
- The School Guidance Plan.
- Code of Behaviour.

Implementation Arrangements, Roles, and Responsibilities:

Board of Management

The Board of Management supports the development of the RSE policy ensuring that the school ethos is reflected in the policy.

Principal and Deputy Principals

The Principal and Deputy Principals are committed to supporting all staff involved in the RSE programme.

They will facilitate and support continuous professional development in this area.

SPHE Co-ordinator

The SPHE coordinator will work with the SPHE teachers to coordinate the delivery of the RSE programme effectively during the academic year.

SPHE Teachers

The teachers of SPHE will deliver the RSE programme to students in the school. They will attend SPHE subject department meetings and participate in continuous professional development related to RSE.

RSE Policy reviewed and revised 5th December 2024

Appendix 2. SPHE and Wellbeing

SPHE is a core pillar of the junior cycle Wellbeing programme. The six indicators of wellbeing – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware - describe what is important for young people and their wellbeing. The SPHE course supports young people to develop all six indicators of wellbeing. The following image provides an overview of the six wellbeing indicators.



Appendix 3a. SPHE Programme at Junior Cycle (1st and 2nd Years 2024-2025)

The Junior cycle course in SPHE is designed to support students in developing a positive sense of self and a capacity to care for themselves and others. It is designed around four interconnected strands and three cross-cutting elements.



Strand 1: Understanding myself and others.

This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and self-esteem and building some of the foundational skills and dispositions needed for healthy relationships and to thrive in life, including communicating and negotiating, listening, showing empathy, respecting difference, and self-management/self-regulation.

Strand 2: Making Healthy Choices.

This strand offers opportunities for students to consider how they can make healthy choices to support their wellbeing. It explores what being healthy might look like for a teenager, what helps or gets in the way of making healthy choices and how to access reliable information to support good choices. Students will also practice the skills needed for making healthy decisions and come to understand contextual factors, such as family, peer, media and social pressures, that influence decisions.

Strand 3: Relationship and Sexuality.

This strand offers opportunities for students to consider how they can make healthy choices to support their wellbeing. It explores what being healthy might look like for a teenager, what helps or gets in the way of making healthy choices and how to access reliable information to support good choices. Students will also practice the skills needed for making healthy decisions and come to understand contextual factors, such as family, peer, media and social pressures, that influence decisions.

Strand 4: Emotional Wellbeing.

This strand primarily focuses on nurturing emotional wellbeing and promoting positive mental health. It helps students develop problem solving and coping skills for dealing with the emotional ups

and downs of life, explores how they can support themselves and others in challenging times and discusses where/how to find support, if needed.

The four strands are underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in SPHE. These are:

- Awareness
- Dialogue
- Reflection and action.

Awareness

Awareness is the ability to understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour. It includes understanding how different factors influence our sense of self and how we live our lives, including the influence of family, peers, the internet, gender, culture and social norms. This element also includes an awareness that to be human is to be in relationships and that we all share a common humanity and dignity, have rights and responsibilities.

Dialogue

Through dialogical teaching and learning students are facilitated to engage with a diversity of viewpoints; discuss and reflect on their own perspectives, values, and behaviours and those of others; enlarge their understanding of topics of relevance to their lives; and come to informed, thoughtful decisions based on their personal values, with due regard to their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. Respectful dialogue is aided by presuming a diversity of backgrounds, identities, cultures and experiences in every classroom and seeing this as a resource for learning.

Reflection* and action

This cross-cutting element focuses on students reflecting on what they have learned and coming to their own personal insights and conclusions in response to their learning. It enables students to consider how the learning can inform their choices, behaviour and relationships, and discerning what it means for their lives now or for the future. Learning in SPHE is a 'praxis'; an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, nurtured by dialogue with others.

*Reflection is "the ability to take a critical stance before deciding, choosing and acting, such as, by stepping back from the assumed, known, apparent, and accepted, comparing a given situation from other, different perspectives, and looking beyond the immediate situation to the long-term and indirect effects of one's decisions and actions. This enables individuals to reach a level of maturity that allows them to adopt different perspectives, make independent judgments and take responsibility for their decisions and actions."

OECD, 2020,

Technical Report: Curriculum Analysis of the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030.

Appendix 3b. SPHE Programme at Junior Cycle (3rd Year 2024-2025)

The curriculum for SPHE in the Junior Cycle for the current 3rd year students is presented in ten modules.

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-management: a sense of purpose
- Communication skills
- Physical health
- Friendship
- Relationships and sexuality
- Emotional health
- Influences and decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal safety

| Modules | Topics |
|--|--|
| Belonging and integrating | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coping with change 2. Joining a new group 3. Appreciating difference 4. Bullying is everyone's business 5. Coping with loss |
| Self-management: a sense of purpose | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organising myself 2. Organising my work at home and in school 3. Balance in my life |
| Communication skills | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Express yourself 2. Learning to listen 3. Passive, assertive and aggressive communication |
| Physical health | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body care 2. Healthy eating 3. Exercise |
| Friendship | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making new friends 2. A good friend |
| Relationship and sexuality | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Me as unique and different 2. Friendship 3. Changes at adolescence 4. The reproductive system 5. Images of male and female 6. Respecting myself and others |
| Emotional health | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognising feelings 2. Respecting my feelings and the feelings of others |
| Influences and decisions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My heroes |
| Substances Use | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why use drugs? 2. Alcohol: the facts 3. Smoking and its effects 4. Smoking: why, why not? |
| Personal safety | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking after myself |

Appendix 4. SPHE Senior Cycle Framework – Five areas of learning

Mental Health

The objectives of this area of learning are to:

1. develop students' confidence and competence to act in support of mental health and wellbeing
2. develop students' self-awareness about the attitudes, values and beliefs that underpin healthy personal lifestyle behaviours and choices
3. develop students' capacity to empathise with others through a greater understanding of different life experiences, motives and feelings of other individuals and groups
4. examine the factors which impact on mental health and wellbeing and develop young people's ability to act on behalf of personal and group health and wellbeing

Gender Studies

The objectives of this area of learning are to:

1. develop students' knowledge and understanding about the influence of gender on one's experience of health and wellbeing
2. explore personal experience of gender and gender stereotyping and the impact of these experiences on their lives
3. explore the differences and similarities between both genders in their approach to health and wellbeing
4. develop personal and interpersonal skills which support the development of respectful, dynamic relationships for both genders
5. examine the different influences on sex-role stereotyping and the implications for health and wellbeing
6. examine how different males and different females support or hinder their own and others' effective participation in education.

Substance Use

The objectives of this area of learning are to:

1. enhance students' knowledge and understanding about substance use and misuse
2. develop awareness of personal experiences, values, attitudes and feelings which influence lifestyle choices about substance use
3. develop students' personal and interpersonal skills so that they might have the confidence to act appropriately in the face of social pressures to behave differently
4. examine life stories associated with the harmful use of substances to develop understanding and empathy with those involved
5. examine the external influences on substance use including the media, peers and community

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

(Please refer to the Scoil Mhuire RSE Policy, Appendix 1)

The objectives of this area of learning are to:

1. explore personal thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings about relationships
2. develop an understanding of the different types of relationships, what is important in them and the skills to enhance relationships

3. promote empathy with others who have different cultural values, attitudes and beliefs about family, relationships, sex and sexuality
4. develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills in support of sexual and reproductive health
5. develop students' understanding of sexuality and sexual orientation and the importance of an inclusive environment
6. develop personal and interpersonal skills which support beginning, maintaining and ending relationships
7. develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict, and threats to personal safety

Physical Activity and Nutrition

The objectives of this area of learning are to:

1. provide students with opportunities to reflect on personal experiences, attitudes, values and beliefs about nutrition and physical activity
2. enhance students' knowledge and understanding about the role of physical activity and nutrition in a healthy lifestyle
3. develop the confidence and competence to make and maintain healthy lifestyle choices about physical activity and nutrition
4. examine the concept of body image, including an understanding of how students can promote a positive body image for themselves and others
5. explore the social and environmental factors which enhance or hinder the adoption and maintenance of healthy lifestyle choices about physical activity and nutrition.