



Holy Family School for the Deaf

Navan Road, Cabra, Dublin DO7 TH79

SPHE Policy Statement

This policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians and members of the Board of Management.

Our School Philosophy:

True to our Mission Statement, the aim of Holy Family School for the Deaf in co-operation with parents, is to enable each deaf pupil to reach his/her full potential; intellectually, physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially in an atmosphere and environment in which he/she feels safe, respected and valued.

What is SPHE?

Social Personal and Health Education is part of the Well Being curriculum and supports the personal development, health and well-being of young people and helps them create and maintain supportive relationships. It provides students with opportunities to develop 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 development. Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a module within the SPHE programme and the policy governing this module should be read in conjunction with the SPHE Policy.

Aims of SPHE:

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the student.
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.
- To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- To help the young person develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To enable the student to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.
- To foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

Parents as Primary Educators

Recognising the rights of parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children, the school undertakes to:

- Make new parents/guardians aware of the existence of the SPHE policy and provide a copy on request.
- Give parents/guardians of new students a copy of the RSE policy on request.
- Facilitate any parent who wishes to view resource materials.
- Facilitate the withdrawal and supervision of their child from any RSE class dealing with sensitive issues on receipt of a request from the parent or guardian to this effect

Respect for Differences

It is considered essential that all students regardless of their ethnic background, religion or sexual orientation are treated with respect and support and that an attitude of respect of difference is fostered among students. Opportunities to discuss diversity and to foster tolerance and respect will be provided in SPHE class. There is an opportunity for cross curricular work in this area within the Well Being programme.

Sensitive Issues

Sensitive issues will be dealt with in an atmosphere and environment in which each pupil feels safe, respected and valued in accordance with the ethos of the school. Teachers should strive to ensure that appropriate personal disclosures are not made in the classroom situation. It is important to explain to students that there is always someone who will help and support a student who is experiencing difficulty. A private meeting with the school counsellor or form teacher can be arranged to discuss the student's concerns.

Confidentiality

If a pupil discloses any issue of concern or is considered at risk of any type of abuse, in-line with the School's Child Protection Statement the teacher will refer this as soon as possible to the Principal as DLP. The Principal and the teacher as mandated persons will decide or seek advice from TUSLA as to whether this concern meets the threshold for reporting to the Child and Family Agency/TUSLA. A pupil cannot be promised confidentiality in such a situation.

SPHE in the Post Primary

The SPHE programme will reflect the ethos of the school. Our aim is to promote a positive school climate and atmosphere to support SPHE. Many activities carried on in the school support SPHE. Opportunities to enhance self-esteem and to develop a sense of responsibility and initiative are particularly encouraged such as, membership of the Student Council, involvement in national competitions, organisation of outings & activities and participation in Well Being week. Holy Family is determined to provide a supportive school environment by following the aims of the SPHE curriculum.

In line with the Junior Cycle Well Being Requirements, Students will be timetabled for 70 hours of SPHE over three years.

First year students have two SPHE class period each week and second and third years are timetabled for one period a week. The programme is adapted to suit the needs of each class but builds on many of the areas covered in the Junior Cycle programme. The RSE module closely follows the Department of Education and Skills recommendations for this cohort of students. Through participating in the SPHE programme the young person will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of learning experiences. At Post Primary level, these issues will be addressed in forty five learning outcomes over the Junior Certificate cycle programme. The emphasis will be on building skills, understanding, attitudes and values important in all these areas.

Relevant programmes: Where possible, students will have the opportunity to engage in the following mental health programmes; 'Think Right Feel Good', 'Healthy Minds' in junior cycle and 'My Friends Youth' and 'Mindout' in senior cycle

SPHE in the context of Deaf Education

Research has consistently found Deaf people to be at a higher risk of mental health difficulties than the general population (McClelland et al. 2001).

- Language is essential in articulating feelings. It is important that Deaf students acquire the vocabulary of emotions to enable them to both recognise for themselves and if necessary express to others across the emotional range. SPHE will set out to help students acquire the linguistic skills necessary.
- As is best practice in deaf education an experiential approach to learning is also essential to SPHE. Methodologies such as; art work, project work, use of visual resources (DVDs/videos with subtitles), worksheets, role play and ICT can greatly enhance the student's learning and support different learning styles.
- In-line with Circular 0043/2018 (SPHE within the context of the Well Being curriculum) teachers endeavour to raise awareness of Deaf culture and issues.

- Teachers support Deaf students' development of their Deaf identity.
- The school SPHE and Well Being programmes endeavour to include Deaf organisations and agencies relevant to issues concerning Deaf students. To facilitate this speakers from these organisations are welcomed and visits to appropriate events are organised.
- Cross curricular teaching and learning is a core principle of the new Junior Cert programme. Some topics such as vocabulary, personal hygiene, physical and mental health are also dealt with across a range of subjects such as, Science, Home Economics, CSPE, Religion, Physical Education, Guidance and Art.

Suitability of Material

Teachers will take cognizance of the age, intellectual ability, maturity level and the pupil's own life experience in the implementation of the SPHE programme.

Students with Additional Educational Needs

Teachers will select, differentiate and devise materials and use methodologies which will enable students with additional educational needs to access the curriculum in a meaningful way.

Provision for on-going support, development and review

Our policy aims to support teachers, pupils, parents and board members involved in SPHE at policy and programme level. This will include:

- Designating an experienced teacher of SPHE to act as Co-ordinator of the Programme
- Ensuring access to in-career development opportunities for teachers.
- Providing information to parents and to the Board
- Providing information on relevant courses or workshops for parents and board members
- Providing in-school learning opportunities for parents
- Providing funding for relevant SPHE school resources.
- Ensuring all teachers have access to shared resources by means of a resource room.

Evaluation

The policy will be evaluated after five years or earlier if deemed necessary. The views of parents, teachers and members of the Board of Management will be taken into account when reviewing the policy.

Signed: *Fr Paddy D Boyle*

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: **March 2019**

Reviewed & **Approved 15 February 2022**