

## **Social, Personal and Health Education – SPHE**

### **Mount Sion Secondary CBS, Waterford**

#### **SPHE Policy**

“Mount Sion is a place where our children can develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually in a safe and caring environment”. (Mission Statement)

Mount Sion CBS, Waterford, is a Catholic all boys secondary school under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. In Mount Sion we place emphasis on the holistic development of the individual. Our school incorporates a “Pastoral” approach to education which seeks to value and develop the young person. The SPHE Programme provides our students with the unique opportunity to develop their skills and competencies and learn about themselves and others and to make informed decision about their health, personal issues and social development.

#### **Aims of SPHE**

Mount Sion develops the SPHE primary school programme and at this level aims to;

- Enable the students to develop personal and social skills

- Promote self-esteem and self-confidence

- Enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision making

- Provide opportunities for reflection and discussion

- Promote physical, mental and emotional health and well being

#### **Programme Contents and Teaching Methods**

SPHE is taught in the following modules:

- Belonging and Integrating

- Communication skills

- Friendship

- Self-management

- Influences and decisions

- Substance use

- Emotional health

- Relationships and sexuality

- Physical health

- Personal safety

Some methods and activities which can support the experimental learning cycle include:

- Group discussion
- Case studies
- Brain-storming
- Role-Play
- Art work
- Narrative expression
- Games – e.g. Ice Breakers
- Games – e.g. Simulation
- Debates
- Project work
- Visiting speakers
- Multi-media materials

### **Current Provision**

It is recognised that aspects of the SPHE Programme are currently informally addressed and supported in other subject areas. Such subject areas include Physical Education, Religious Education, Civic, Social & Political Education and Science at Junior Cycle Level and Biology at Senior Level. This programme is also supported through the Pastoral Care System, Class Teacher and Year Head System, Home-School Community Liaison, and Guidance Counsellor. The Anti-Bullying Policy and the Substance Misuse Policy also support the aims of the SPHE Programme.

### **Management and Organisation of SPHE in Mount Sion**

The school is presently committed to offering all classes one period of SPHE per week at Junior Cycle Level. Within that time Relationships and Sexuality Education is taught as a module of 6-8 lessons.

At senior level, SPHE is incorporated into the Religious Education content and it is aimed to provide classes yearly on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

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 RSE Programme aims to:**

- Help young people to understand and develop friendships and relationships
- Promote an understanding of sexuality
- Promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and relationships with others
- Promote knowledge of and respect for human reproduction
- 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 manage 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 sexual 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 wellbeing, enhancing personal and family relationships and ultimately contributing to the wellbeing of society.

3. Human Relationships

This theme focuses on the importance of relationships for health and wellbeing. 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.

## **Staff Development and Training**

Insofar as practicable, all resources needed in terms of time, finance and personnel will be made available in order to develop and support the SPHE Programme in this school. On-going teacher training is seen as an essential element in delivering the programme. The objectives of such training are to enhance the personal growth of the teacher and to enable the teacher to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to facilitate the SPHE Programme.

The SPHE Programme will be supported by the SPHE Support Service.

## **Confidentiality**

The normal limits of confidentiality will apply.

## **Sensitive Issues**

Class discussions will be general in nature and not personally directed. While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the SPHE course content, the needs of the student will be addressed in a caring and supportive manner. If individual issues emerge, they will be referred on by the teacher to the appropriate person(s).

## **Participation**

SPHE is a core curricular subject on the Junior Cycle curriculum. It is the right of any parent to withdraw their child from the RSE module of the programme. However, suitable supervision must be agreed with the school management. The RSE module is informed by the rationale of the school's RSE policy.

## **Role of Visitors**

The SPHE teacher will consult with the SPHE Co-ordinator and Principal in relation to the suitability of guest speakers prior to their invitation to the school. Visitors to SPHE classes will deal with discussions in line with the aims of the programme and the ethos of the school.

## **Involving and Informing Staff**

All staff will be made aware of the existence of this policy, as it will be circulated amongst them and their views sought. The School is committed to informing staff on a regular basis about SPHE through delivery at staff meeting and use of notice board.

## **Monitoring of SPHE Policy**

This will form part of SPHE subject planning group meetings. Any suggested changes will be discussed with the Principal, recorded and made available in the school office.

### **Review procedures**

The policy will be reviewed annually, or in the light of changing information, by the SPHE Policy Working Group. Review will take place in consultation with the wider school community.

### **Evaluation of the Policy**

Teachers, Parents, Students and Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of the policy when it has been in place for one year from date of its acceptance. Any changes will be incorporated into the amended policy.

The three main areas of the policy to be evaluated are:

Programme content and teaching method

Management and organisation of SPHE

Staff and Parent/Guardian training, development and resources.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal