



## SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

Vision Statement: Ours is a Catholic school which aims to provide a holistic education for our students, enabling them to acquire the life skills necessary to live fulfilled lives. The qualities of respect, justice and compassion, which are rooted in Gospel values, should permeate all school policies. We believe that promoting healthy relationships and a spirit of collaboration within the school itself and with the wider community are the best means of ensuring a good school. We recognise that each pupil entrusted to us is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. Rationale: In keeping with the Catholic ethos of St. Joseph's College, Social, Personal, and Health Education plays a central role in contributing towards the overall development of students in our care.

Our S.P.H.E. programme reflects the Catholic ethos of our school where we strive to support each individual within the school community to reach their full potential in a caring environment. The S.P.H.E. programme in this school takes place within a Christian understanding of human development and sexuality and recognises the dignity of the individual. The programme addresses contemporary topics which are dealt with at a level appropriate to the age of the student and within the moral framework in keeping

with the characteristic spirit of the school. S.P.H.E. ensures that each student receives a well-rounded education, so that on completion of his formal education, he may emerge as a self-disciplined, responsible and well-adjusted citizen, capable of playing an active and positive role in a modern society. S.P.H.E. provides students with a unique opportunity to develop skills and competencies to learn about themselves and to care for themselves and others, to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

S.P.H.E. aims to:

- Promote self-esteem and self-confidence in each student.
- Enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision making.
- Provide students with an opportunity for reflection and discussion.
- Promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.
- Enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities. Class Organisation and Timetabling: SPHE is allocated one class period per week for all Junior Cycle students. Classes are organised in mixed ability groupings.

New Junior Certificate SPHE Outcomes:

- 1- Active and healthy, physical and mental wellbeing.
- 2- Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development.
- 3- Safe and protected from harm.
- 4- Economic security and opportunity.
- 5- Connected respected and contributing to their world.

An RSE programme takes place as part of Religious Education in Transition Year, Fifth and Sixth Year. In addition to classes a number of workshops are conducted on topics pertinent to the RSE curriculum in Transition Year.

RSE is a development process through experimental learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

In organising the learning environment, the teacher will be careful to create an atmosphere which respects the privacy of each individual student and treats each student with sensitivity and care. Active learning methods are used to ensure that students actively participate in their own learning. Contemporary topics and issues which emerge in this class are dealt with at a level appropriate to the age of the student and within a moral framework, in keeping with the school ethos.

Planning for students with special needs:

We are aware that every student has individual needs and abilities and that differentiation to the S. P.H.E. programme is necessary to meet the needs of all students, especially students in the Special Class. Links are made with the Learning support and the Pastoral Care teams to ensure a successful delivery of the S.P.H.E. programme to all students.

Planning for a Culturally Diverse Society

Students in Garbally College come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. Therefore, S.P.H.E. teachers must always be mindful that every classroom includes students from a variety of cultures. Every module taught in S.P.H.E. must be taught in a culturally

sensitive manner, always aware of how different cultural practices must impact on content and methodologies used. It is important that students learn about similarities and differences and that in doing so they are helped to understand and respect difference. Content: SPHE for Junior Cycle comprises ten modules. These are re-visited each year as the students mature and their needs and abilities change. The emphasis is on building life skills and developing attitudes and values in relation to the areas explored.

Ten modules of Junior Cycle SPHE:

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

Methodologies: Active teaching methodologies employed may include:

- Group Discussions
- Case Studies
- Brainstorming

- Role Play
- Artwork
- Narrative Expression
- Games – Icebreakers
- Games – Simulation
- Debates
- Project Work In the light of the advice contained in Circular 0023/2010, the following approaches will be avoided when teaching SPHE in Garbally College:

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

At the beginning of each academic year, students are informed that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Information may have to be passed on to the Designated Liaison Person (Principal) or to the Pastoral Support Team.

Resources and accommodation for SPHE:

A wide range of resources can be found in the SPHE Resource Press located in the Teachers' workroom and easily accessible to all SPHE teachers. Cross-curricular links: Links are made with the following departments:

- Home Economics re healthy living
- Religion re RSE • Biology re RSE
- Art re posters to highlight issues, e.g. substance abuse
- Physical Education
- Pastoral Care Team
- Learning Support Team.

Visitors:

The school is informed in this regard by Circular 0023/2010, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools. We recognise that visiting speakers/facilitators play a valuable role in supplementing, complementing and supporting our programme. Visitors/visiting groups are required to adhere to the following guidelines of good practice:

- All visits will be planned in line with the relevant whole-school SPHE/RSE programmes.
- Visitors to the school will be made aware of the Child Protection policy, RSE policy and Substance Use policy.
- Talks/programmes delivered by outside agencies or speakers must be consistent with the ethos of St. Joseph's College, Garbally and the

SPHE/RSE programmes. All visits must be planned with school personnel.

- Parents/guardians must be made aware of visiting speakers or agencies to the classroom.
- A teacher(s) must remain in the classroom with the students.
- All programmes and events delivered by visitors and external agencies must use appropriate, evidence-based methodologies with clear educational outcomes. Such programmes are best delivered by those specially qualified to work with young people for whom the programmes are designed.
- All programmes, talks, interventions and events should be evaluated by students and teachers in terms of subject matter, messages, structure, methodology and proposed learning outcomes.

Parents:

The school acknowledges the role of parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The programme seeks to support parents in this challenging task.

The Parents' Association can organised talks for parents during the academic year on issues pertinent to adolescent development.

Assessment, record keeping and reporting: Written work and general class participation is used by the teacher to assess student engagement within the programme. Regular department meetings take place during Staff planning time. Discussion and consultation takes place with school management when appropriate.

Whole school support for SPHE:

St. Joseph's College, Garbally is a health promoting school which supports the ideals of the SPHE programme. Some examples of this are:

- Wellbeing Week – highlighting positive mental health issues
- Healthy Options Initiatives - Healthy, nutritious lunches are available to students each day at a reasonable price.
- An extensive extra-curriculum sports programme.
- The Hiking Club.
- Lunchtime Activities,
- Mentor system for First Year Students.
- Annual 'Fun Run' to raise funds for Charity.
- Social Action in Transition Year.
- Student involvement in preparing Garbally grounds for the 'Darkness in Light' walk in support of Pieta House.

## **(B) RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (RSE)**

### 1. Why do we need the RSE programme?

Our students live in a world of many influences. From a young age, they are bombarded with conflicting value systems, each claiming to offer fulfilment and happiness. Fundamental values concerning relationships and sexuality in particular, are no longer as clear to our young people as they once were. There are many reasons for this lack of clarity. Research has indicated some possible explanations.

- Children receive informal and unsupervised information about relationships and sexuality.



- Such information may be inadequate and inappropriate.
- Young people are already exposed to a variety of sexual practices and attitudes through the media, particularly TV, film and magazines.
- In magazines, in particular, young people find a diet of instant romance and immediate gratification.
- Children are maturing physically at a younger age.
- The roles of men and women in society are changing.
- Young people are becoming sexually active at an earlier age than in the past.
- The nature of family life is changing in a way that places many pressures on children and young people.

RSE provides an organised, yet informal, student-friendly way of responding to the above challenges.

## **2. RSE – Aims:**

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) which is located in the overall framework of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), has as its specific aims:

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality.
  - To provide opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others.
  - To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.
  - To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
3. RSE – Objectives: RSE should enable the 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 diseases.
  - Understand sexual development and identity, and explore aspects of sexuality including sex roles, stereotyping gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality.
  - Value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
  - Be aware of the methods of contraception that are available (Third Year and above)
  - 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.

#### 4. RSE Programme content:

Teachers will use materials deemed suitable and appropriate for students' needs and in accordance with school ethos. Programme content falls under three headings:

##### Human Growth and Development

This 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 relationship and sexual activity.

##### Human Sexuality

Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions. In this section, students are encouraged 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.

##### Human Relationships

This section 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, influences, intimacy, sexual attraction and sexual expression in relationships consistent with personal and mental integrity.

## 5. Students:

The dignity and privacy of students is to be respected at all times. Students will not be asked to participate in any class activity, e.g. role play, or to respond to any questions that they do not feel comfortable with.

6. Time allocation: In Junior Cycle, RSE is covered as part of a module for SPHE.

At Senior Cycle, RSE takes place within Senior Cycle RE classes but is viewed as a separate module.

EVALUATION: The SPHE/RSE programmes will be evaluated regularly, (following approval of the B.O.M.) keeping in mind the changing cultural context

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in September 2019

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_