

# Social Personal and Health Education Policy

## **(a) Scoil Mhuire Mission Statement**

Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon, Co. Clare is an all girls' school under the trusteeship of the Sisters of Mercy. Our philosophy is based on Christian principles that find expression in our policies and practices.

The School is committed to fostering the holistic development of each student in a supportive learning environment enabling all to live fulfilling lives.

## **(b) Definition of S.P.H.E., and its aims.**

S.P.H.E. is a programme which provides students with the opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and others, it assists informed decision making about their health, personal lives and social development.

### **Aims of S.P.H.E.**

- To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence.
- To enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

The above aims of S.P.H.E. contribute to the ethos of Scoil Mhuire.

## **(c) Outline of Programme Content and Teaching Methods**

The curriculum for junior cycle S.P.H.E. is presented in ten modules, over a three year cycle as outlined in Appendix A. The emphasis will be on developing skills, understanding, attitudes and values important to these areas. These ten modules are:

- Belonging and integrating
- Self-management – a sense of purpose
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendship
- Relationship and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety

The Department of Education and Science recognises that each school has flexibility within this framework to plan the S.P.H.E. programme in harmony with the students' needs and the school resources.

Scoil Mhuire recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of children lies with their parents. However the school has a long tradition of supporting parents in this role.

The curriculum for Transition Year S.P.H.E. is attached in Appendix B.

A summary of what the school provides both formally and informally to promote the holistic development of our students is included in Appendix C. S.P.H.E. is seen as building on this.

**(d) Teaching Methods: How S.P.H.E. will be taught and timetabled**

Because the programme is primarily skills-based teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with an emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be student centred and appropriate to the age and the stage of development of the student.

The class atmosphere must be one of respect for the privacy of the individual and hallmarked by sensitivity and care. S.P.H.E. is allocated one class period a week for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> and Transition years and will be taught in the context of the ethos of Scoil Mhuire.

**(e) Staff Development, Training and Resources**

The value placed on S.P.H.E. by the school will be evident by the commitment on the part of management to develop a core of trained S.P.H.E. teachers. In-career development is an integral part of this programme. Management are responsible for responding to the relevant training needs of S.P.H.E. As part of core curriculum S.P.H.E. will have a budgetary allocation in line with its stage of development, its teaching methodologies and timetabled allocation. The school management is committed to the appointment of an approved S.P.H.E. Co-ordinator.

**(f) Sensitive Issues / Participation / Confidentiality / Referral**

S.P.H.E. is a core curricular subject on the Junior Cycle Curriculum. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is one module of the Programme.

Participation

Each parent has the right to withdraw their child from some or all R.S.E. classes but are encouraged to provide alternatives to R.S.E. at home. It will be necessary for parents of any student opting out of R.S.E. to make suitable arrangements with school management for the welfare of their child at these times.

Where children are withdrawn from R.S.E. the school cannot take responsibility for any version of class content passed on to them by other students.

Sensitive Issues

Class discussion will not be personally directed and will be of a general nature in accordance with the previously agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered in class. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The teacher may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in deciding whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. The Career Guidance Counsellor, the School Counsellor and the Chaplain are available to listen to students issues. Students are always welcome to discuss their

concerns. It is important to emphasise the commitment of Scoil Mhuire to the care of the students.

### Referral

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the S.P.H.E. course content in a caring and supportive manner. Where it is appropriate, the teacher may refer students to other supportive links within the school. As far as possible this should be done in negotiation with the student. The teacher may inform class of external support services relevant to the subject material. This should be done within the context of the Scoil Mhuire ethos. S.P.H.E. teachers, where in doubt as to a course of action, are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Career Guidance Counsellor / Principal.

### Confidentiality

While an atmosphere of trust is a pre-requisite of S.P.H.E. class, the following limits of confidentiality must always be observed. In accordance with Child Protection Guidelines these limits are:

- (a) Child Abuse: i) Physical ii) Emotional iii) Sexual iv) Neglect
- (b) Underage Sexual Intercourse

Scoil Mhuire also limits confidentiality when there is

- (c) Intention to harm self or others
- (d) Substance misuse

The S.P.H.E. teachers should outline these limits at the beginning of the school year (where possible students should be reminded of these limits before making a disclosure.)

### **(h) The Role of Visitors**

Visiting speakers are seen as complementing and supporting the S.P.H.E. Programme in the school. Teachers inviting these speakers must:

- i) Inform the Principal in advance
- ii) Make the speaker aware of the ethos and S.P.H.E. Policy of the school.
- iii) Agree the content of the presentation in advance.
- iv) Do preparatory and follow up work where possible
- v) Under normal circumstances remain with the class group during the visit.

### **(i) How Parents and Students will be informed**

Present Junior Cycle and Transition Year students will be informed of the policy through their S.P.H.E. class. Parents of these students will be informed by letter. Thereafter, the outline of the S.P.H.E. Programme (Appendix A + B) and a summary of the policy will be given to parents of incoming students in their introductory pack.

### **(j) How Staff Will Be Informed**

This policy will be available in the teachers handbook.

### **(k) How the S.P.H.E. Programme and Policy will be Reviewed and Evaluated**

The S.P.H.E. programme will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the S.P.H.E. team. The opinions of the students will be included as part of this review. The S.P.H.E. **Policy** will be reviewed in line with the schools programme of School Development Planning.

This Policy was drawn up by:

|                    |   |                                    |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Ms Mary Nolan      | : | Teacher Representative             |
| Ms Joanne O'Brien  | : | Teacher Representative             |
| Ms Rita Clancy     | : | Board of Management Representative |
| Mr Brendan Murphy  | : | Board of Management Representative |
| Ms Annie O'Brien   | : | Parents Representative             |
| Ms Mary Unglert    | : | Parents Representative             |
| Ms Eibhlis O'Brien | : | Student Representative             |
| Ms Elaine Hogan    | : | Student Representative             |

Ratified by the Board of Management on ..... Effective from the ....Aug 2006

**Social, Personal and Health Education Junior Cycle Programme**

| <b>NO</b> | <b>Module</b>               | <b>Year One</b>  | <b>Year Two</b>  | <b>Year Three</b>  |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1         | Belonging and Integrating   | Coping with Change<br>Joining a New Group<br>Appreciating Difference<br>Bullying is everyone's business<br>Coping with loss                                | Looking back, Looking forward<br>Group work<br>Family ties   | Goal Setting for third year contract   |
| 2         | Self Management             | Organising Myself<br>Organising my work at home and at school<br>Balance in my life  | What motivates me<br>Study skills  | Organising my time<br>Planning for effective study<br>Coping with examinations   |
| 3         | Communication Skills        | Express Yourself<br>Learning to Listen<br>Passive, Assertive and Aggressive Communication  | Assertive Communication  | Learning to communicate<br>Communication in situations of conflict   |
| 4         | Physical Health             | Body Care<br>Healthy Eating<br>Exercise  | Body care and Body Image   | Physical exercise<br>Relaxation<br>Diet  |
| 5         | Friendship                  | Making new Friends<br>A Good Friend  | The Changing Nature of Friendship  | Boyfriends and Girlfriends   |
| 6         | Relationships and Sexuality | Me as unique and different<br>Friendship<br>Changes at Adolescence<br>The Reproductive System<br>Images of Male and Female<br>Respecting myself and others | From conception to birth<br>Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions<br>Peer pressure and other influences<br>Managing relationships<br>Making responsible decisions<br>Health and personal safety | Body image<br>Where am I now?<br>Relationships – What's important<br>The three R's: Respect, rights and responsibilities<br>Conflict |
| 7         | Emotional Health            | Recognising feelings<br>Respecting my feelings and the feeling to others   | Self confidence<br>Body image  | Stress<br>Feelings and moods   |
| 8         | Influences and Decisions    | My Heroes  | Positive and negative influences<br>Making decisions   | Making a good impression   |
| 9         | Substance Use               | Why use drugs<br>Alcohol: The Facts<br>Smoking and its effects<br>Smoking; Why, why not  | The effect of drugs<br>Alcohol and its effects<br>Alcohol: why, why not?<br>Cannabis and its effects<br>Cannabis: why, why not?  | Ecstasy: The Realities<br>Heroin: The Realities  |
| 10        | Personal Safety             | Look after yourself  | Accidents at home<br>Feeling threatened  | Recognising unsafe situations<br>Violence<br>Help Agencies   |

The Department of Education and Science recognised that each school has flexibility within the framework to plan the S.P.H.E. Programme most suitable for the students needs and the schools resources.

## Social, Personal and Health Education Transition Year Programme

| <u>Module</u>                      |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Belonging and Integrating</b>   | Goal Setting for Transition year<br>Work Contract  |
| <b>Self Management</b>             | Organising my time<br>Planning for effective study<br>Coping with examinations   |
| <b>Communication Skills</b>        | Learning to communicate<br>Communication in situations of conflict   |
| <b>Physical Health</b>             | Physical exercise<br>Relaxation<br>Diet  |
| <b>Friendship</b>                  | Boyfriends and Girlfriends   |
| <b>Relationships and Sexuality</b> | Body Image<br>Where am I now?<br>Relationships – What’s important<br>The three R’s: respect, rights and responsibilities<br>Conflict |
| <b>Emotional Health</b>            | Stress<br>Feelings and Moods   |
| <b>Influences and Decisions</b>    | Making a good decision   |
| <b>Substance Use</b>               | Ecstasy; the realities<br>Heroin; the realities  |
| <b>Personal Safety</b>             | Recognising unsafe situations<br>Violence<br>Help agencies   |

## Appendix C

### **Summary of what the school provides both formally and informally to promote the holistic development of our students**

#### **Pastoral Care**

Home School Liaison Officer  
Year Head System  
Career Guidance Counsellor  
Chaplain  
Buddy System  
Learning Support  
Retreats  
R.E. Programme  
Awards System  
Participation in Charitable Events  
and Fundraising  
Hospital and Creche Project

Homework Club  
Graduation Ceremony for Leaving Cert  
and Transition Year  
Liturgies  
Assemblies  
The Book Lending Scheme  
Staff Mentoring

#### **Academic Initiative**

Transition Year  
Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme  
Green Flag  
Adult Education  
Cultural Exchange  
Seachtain na Gaeilge  
Arts Activities  
Annual European Day  
I.C.T.  
Maths and Science Olympiads  
Study  
Young Scientist

#### **Extra Curricular Activities**

Musicals  
Newsletters  
School Tours  
Drama  
Debates / Public Speaking  
Quizzes

#### **Parents Association**

#### **Students Council**

#### **Sport**

Physical Education  
Athletics, Basketball, Volleyball  
Golf, Soccer, Gaelic Football,  
Camogie, Walking Club