

St. Farnan’s Post Primary School

**Social Personal & Health Education Plan**

**2023-2024**

Adopted as a Working Document – 27 Feb 2024 at BOM meeting

***Our Mission Statement***

***St. Farnan’s is a school community which strives to be inclusive and caring.***  
***We aim to develop all students to reach their full potential, personally, academically and spiritually, so that they may enrich the school and wider community.***

St. Farnan’s is a co-educational post primary second level school in Prosperous, Co. Kildare under the patronage of Kildare and Wicklow ETB. The school opened in 1941 with three classrooms, student numbers have grown over the years and we now have over 570 student spaces filled (2023/24). The catchment area for our school is Prosperous, Timahoe, Donadea, Allen, Allenwood, Coill Dubh, Robertstown & Staplestown.

Our Core Values motto is ‘Cothrom na Féinne’ (Justice, Equality & Fair Play) are empowered by our F.A.I.R. acronym *Friendly*, *Ambitious*, *Inclusive of All* and *Respectful of Each Other* which guide all our policies and procedures and all stakeholders working relationships with each other in school.

**Definition of SPHE**

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the 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 social development.

**SPHE aims:**

* Develop students’ positive sense of themselves and their physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing.
* Build the capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships.
* To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.
* To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

With such support, students may be enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and the dignity of others. There is a growing recognition that the social, personal and health education offered to our students is as important as any other area of the curriculum.

These decisions are further supported and encouraged by school, community and national policies and guidelines.

**Junior Cycle Wellbeing**

For students who enrolled from September 2017 onwards, SPHE is now part of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing. SPHE provides opportunities for teaching and learning directly related to health and wellbeing. In Junior Cycle, six indicators have been identified as central to a student’s wellbeing –Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware– have been identified as central to students’ wellbeing. Teaching and learning in SPHE provides opportunities designed to enhance each of these indicators thereby contributing significantly to the school’s Wellbeing programme in Junior Cycle.

Through the use of experiential learning methodologies, including group work, SPHE aims to develop students’ positive sense of themselves and their physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing. It also aims to build the students capacity to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Through studying aspects of SPHE, students have time to focus on developing personal and social skills including self-management, communication, coping and problem-solving.

**SPHE and The School Ethos**

The aims of the SPHE curriculum contributes to the overall mission statement of St Farnan’s Post Primary School in promoting the holistic development of the students; personally, academically and spiritually.

**Whole School Overview: Management and Organisation of the Programme**

There should be a collaborative, whole-school approach to the development and delivery of the SPHE programme. To this end there will be a coordinator working with the SPHE teachers and with management.

**Class Organisation and Timetabling**

Circular M11/03

All second level schools must timetable SPHE as part of the Junior Cycle core curriculum from September 2003. The time allocation recommended is the equivalent of one class period per week.

Circular 0037/2010

All second level schools must implement Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) as an element of SPHE at Junior Cycle, and as an RSE programme in Senior Cycle, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE.

Circular 0015/2017

The new area of learning entitled Wellbeing will be introduced for First Years from September 2017. A key component of this area of learning is SPHE, including RSE.

SPHE is delivered to students in their assigned tutor class groups. All Junior Cycle, Transition Year and Senior Cycle classes are timetabled one class of SPHE per week.

Leaving Certificate Applied will receive RSE within their Social Education classes.

**Students with Special Educational Needs**

Children with Special Educational Needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others.

For learning activities to be meaningful, relevant and accessible to all students, it is important the teacher finds ways to respond to students’ diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies. In consultation with the Special Needs Coordinator the following strategies will be adopted:

* Ensuring that learning outcomes are realistic for the students and the task/activity is compatible with prior learning.
* Group work – providing opportunity for interacting and working with other students in small groups.
* Organising the learning task into smaller stages.
* Ensuring the language used is pitched at the students’ level of comprehension to facilitate understanding of the activity.
* Using task analysis, outlining the steps to be learned/completed in any given task.
* Posing key questions to guide students through the different stages /processes and to assist in self-direction and correction.
* Using graphic symbols as reminders to assist students in understanding the sequence in tasks/activities.
* Modelling task analysis by talking through the steps of a task as it is being done.
* Having short and varied tasks.
* Creating a learning environment that uses everyday concrete examples and samples.
* Displaying key words.

**Content and Teaching Methodologies**

Early adolescence is a time of significant change for young people, physically, emotionally and socially. Through the use of experiential methodologies and group work, students have the dedicated space and time in SPHE to develop their understanding and skills to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing in a rapidly changing world.

In SPHE, students have opportunities to revisit different themes which focus on developing self-awareness and respect for others, and the skills of self-management, communication, coping, decision-making and relating to others. This spiral approach of revisiting key ideas and topics is familiar from existing approaches to SPHE. This subject builds on this approach but also emphasises the importance of student agency and engagement in the learning process as key to learning in the affective domain. The skills involved are vital for self-fulfilment, for living in communities and for full engagement in learning beyond SPHE. Personal reflection, resilience and empathy are also promoted through SPHE.

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is important for young people at this stage of their lives. They are exposed to a lot of information about relationships and sex from informal sources, the media and online.  SPHE provides the context within which young people can learn about important physical, social, emotional and moral issues around relationships, sexual health, sexuality and gender identity, including where to get reliable information from trusted sources. It is important to build on students’ learning in SPHE in primary education also.

Learning in SPHE is essentially supported by a positive, empowering whole school environment and relevant school policies/guidelines including RSE, anti-bullying and substance-use policies, and child protection guidelines. This broader context for learning in SPHE helps to ensure that students learn to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

The four strands of Junior Cycle SPHE Short Course are:

* Strand One: Understanding Myself and Others
* Strand Two: Making Healthy Choices
* Strand Three: Relationships and Sexuality
* Strand Four: Emotional Wellbeing

SPHE is primarily skills based and so the teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with the emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be student centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student. The class atmosphere must be one of respect for the privacy of the individual teacher and students and hallmarked by sensitivity and care. A respectful code of conduct is expected from all participants. Every class establishes ground rules/a class contract which are referred to often.

Teaching methodologies may include:

* Group work
* Role play
* Brainstorming
* Icebreaker
* Simulation
* Narrative expression
* Debating
* Project work
* Art work
* Multimedia material
* Case studies
* Visiting speakers

The Department of Education and Skills recognises that each school has flexibility to plan the SPHE programme in harmony with the students’ needs and the school’s resources.

St Farnans PPS recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of children lies with their parents/guardians. The school has a long tradition of supporting parents in this role and SPHE is seen as building on this.

**Cross Curricular Links**

The teaching of SPHE in the school is the responsibility of a core group of staff. The following subject areas form cross curricular links with the SPHE Programme:

PE

CSPE

Wellbeing modules: Art, Music, Learning to Learn, Yoga, Ethics

Guidance

Science

Home Economics

RE

Student Mentoring (TY) & Prefect Programmes

Teacher/Student Mentoring; Check & Connect

**Resource and Accommodation**

A limited budget is available for SPHE and is used to purchase resources and/or textbooks and to facilitate workshops, guest speakers and awareness raising initiatives throughout the school year.

Resources include:

You’ve Got This (1st Year Textbook)

Health and Wellbeing 2 & 3 (2nd and 3rd Year Textbook)

It’s Your Wellbeing Senior Cycle Textbook

SPHE Junior Certificate Syllabus and Guidelines

Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines

RSE Junior Cycle Material

RSE Senior Cycle Material

B4udecide.ie

HSE.ie

NCCA.ie

**Staff Development and Subject Development**

The value placed on SPHE by the school will be evident by the commitment on the part of management to developing a core team of trained SPHE teachers preferably gender balanced and to appointing an SPHE co-ordinator. SPHE is enhanced when the appointment of teachers to the subject has been negotiated in advance of timetabling.

In-career development is an integral part of this programme. Management is responsible for responding to the relevant expressed and perceived training needs of SPHE teachers and whole staff.

See appendix 1. for the current SPHE team and their training to date.

**Confidentiality and Referrals**

**Participation**

SPHE at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle is a core curricular subject. Each parent has the right to withdraw their child from some or all of SPHE/RSE classes but parents/guardians are encouraged to provide alternative SPHE/RSE at home. The school will respect this choice as their right. It will be necessary for parents/guardians of any student opting out of SPHE/RSE to make suitable arrangements with school management for the welfare of their child at these times. Where students are withdrawn from SPHE/RSE the school cannot take responsibility for any version of class content passed on to them by other students. Parents must contact the Principal to discuss their decision to withdraw their child from the class.

**Sensitive Issues**

Class discussion will be of a general nature and will not be personally directed, in accordance with previously agreed class contract/ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by the class teacher, or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised he/she should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor, Student Support Team, HSCL Co-ordinator and/or the Principal.

**Referral**

While it is acknowledged that teachers have professional responsibility to impart the SPHE course content, the needs of students will be addressed 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. It has been agreed with the Student Support Team that teachers will regularly remind students of the supports we have in school and how they can the accessed. The teacher may inform the class of appropriate external services relevant to the class material also.

**Confidentiality**

While an atmosphere of trust is a prerequisite of SPHE class, the following limits of confidentiality must be observed. These limits are:

* Child abuse – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
* Intention to harm self or others.
* Substance misuse.
* Underage sexual intercourse.

Any disclosure will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in compliance with the Child Safeguarding Statement and the revised Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2023

SPHE teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year, remind them at necessary points throughout the year and where possible before making a disclosure.

**Visitors**

Circular 0023/2010

National and international research has consistently shown that the qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and that he/she can have a powerful impact on influencing students’ attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education.

However, in line with circular 0043/2018 outside speakers can be a resource when used as part of a school’s planned programme for SPHE/RSE. Visiting speakers are seen as complimenting and supporting the SPHE programme. Teachers inviting these speakers must:

* Inform the Principal in advance.
* Make the speaker aware of the ethos and SPHE Plan of the school.
* Agree the content of the presentation.
* Do preparatory and follow up work where possible.
* Remain with the class/year group during the visit.

**Parents/Guardians Consultation**

The school recognises that parents/guardians have primary responsibility for the education of their children. The school accepts that it is in the interest of all parents/guardians that their child grows up in a healthy and mature fashion. Many of the issues dealt with in SPHE will have been discussed at home. The school will strive to keep parents/guardians informed of the contents of the SPHE programme and resources available. The SPHE plan is available on the school website.

The involvement of parents at the core of every aspect of SPHE gives it extra impetus, depth and validity and from time to time training and/or input and development opportunities will be offered to parents in certain aspects of SPHE.

**Whole Staff**

This plan will be available for all staff in the school by its inclusion with the Planning Documents. Copies of this plan will be distributed to all SPHE teachers and available in the SPHE/RSE folder on the shared drive.

**Assessment, Record Keeping, Reporting and Reflection**

Junior cycle and senior cycle students will have an individual copy/folder. Written work, projects and general class participation is used by the teacher to assess student engagement within the programme. SPHE will not be formally examined at Certificate Examinations. Parents/Guardians are informed of their son/daughter’s progress in Christmas and Summer Reports and at Parent Teacher Meetings. The homework journal may also be used to communicate with Parents/Guardians.

The teacher’s journal is used to record student attendance/absence and completion/non-completion of projects/tasks.

SPHE teachers report progress in SPHE for Junior Cycle students on the Christmas and Summer reports and will meet teachers at parent – teacher meetings. The SPHE team will meet in the first and last term as a minimum going forward. Teachers will be encouraged to get students to reflect on their learning to help inform plans for each term The SPHE co-ordinator will issue a SPHE/RSE evaluation to all SPHE teachers during the last term to reflect on good practise and try to improve the subject and department for the following year.

**Whole School Support for SPHE**

While specific teachers are trained and charged with the responsibility of delivering the programme, we see every teacher as a teacher of SPHE in that he/she may from time to time see opportunities to promote healthy lifestyle and encourage responsible and mature decision making. There is generally a whole school approach to Wellbeing which SPHE helps to facilitate.

**Related Policies**

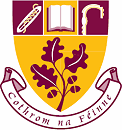
* RSE Policy
* Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
* Anti-bullying Policy
* Substance Use Policy
* ICT Acceptable Use Policy
* Student Support Plans

**Review and Evaluation**

The SPHE course is never static and it will be evaluated and reviewed regularly to adapt to the needs of the students. The implementation of the plan shall be monitored by the principal and updates reported to BOM when necessary.

The SPHE plans forms part of a whole school plan, it is an active document that will be reviewed and updated regularly.

The SPHE programme will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the SPHE team. All stakeholders; students, teachers, parents, management and BOM will have an opportunity to share their opinions.

Appendix 1 

**SPHE & RSE TEAM CORE TEAM 2023-2024**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1st year** | **MARTIN FUREY, NIAMH LYNCH, SAM de TURBERVILLE x 2 classes, GAYLE RICHARDSON** |
| **2nd year** | **FIONA JARDINE, COLIN GRAY, RACHEL FINLAY, ERICA GREHAN, SHONA ROCHE** |
| **3rd year** | **NIAMH LYNCH, FIONA JARDINE, COLIN GRAY, GAYLE RICHARDSON, SAM de TURBERVILLE** |
| **Transition Year** | **SHANE O’SULLIVAN, CAROL O’CONNOR** |
| **5th year LC** | **COLIN GRAY, MARTIN FUREY, DEIRDRE SMULLEN** |
| **6th year LC** | **COLIN GRAY RACHEL FINLAY** |
| **5th year LCA1 Social Ed** | **FIONA JARDINE** |
| **6th year LCA2 Social Ed** | **COLIN GRAY** |
| **ASD/MLU** | **KATHLEEN MOLONEY** |
|  | **Sinead Cassidy (DEIS Coordinator)**  **Iseult O’Donoghue (Mainstream SEN Lead)**  **Sinead Noonan (Wellbeing Coordinator)** |