



SOCIAL, PERSONAL & HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

Meán Scoil Mhuire

Chairperson:	Ms. Karen Clabby
Principal:	Ms. Mairéad Lyons (Acting)
Date:	19th March 2024

Mission Statement:

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Meán Scoil Mhuire is a voluntary Secondary Catholic School. It is a centre for the holistic formation of girls and young women.

Aims

- We respect the dignity of each person with their unique background, talents, traditions and beliefs.
- We provide a pleasant disciplined atmosphere in which students can grow spiritually, morally, academically, socially and culturally.
- We expose all to a rich cultural heritage and help them to acquire the knowledge and skills, which enables them to understand, appreciate and respect themselves, others and their environment.
- We foster positive Christian values and self-esteem so that our students leave school with a sense of self-worth and self-esteem and are well equipped for the challenges of life.
- We encourage partnership at all levels between the management, staff, parents, students and the local community.
- Meán Scoil Mhuire has not only a highly respected academic tradition. We also develop creativity, leadership and social skills by promoting involvement in extra-curricular activities

In line with the Mercy philosophy that embraces the holistic development of each student, we strive to create an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy education is committed to on-going whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Teaching Staff, Parents/ Guardians, Students and the wider community.

Definition of Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.)

S.P.H.E. including its module on Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) is a programme that provides students with an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves in society and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development.

Rationale

- S.P.H.E. builds on students learning in S.P.H.E. in primary education.
- S.P.H.E. provides learning opportunities designed to enhance each of the six indicators central to student wellbeing- Active; Responsible; Connected; Resilient; Respected and Aware.
- S.P.H.E. provides learning opportunities and experiences which help students' social, moral, cultural and personal development.
- S.P.H.E. helps students grow and develop as individual people, and in their relationship to others as a family member, friend or citizen.
- S.P.H.E. promotes the skills of personal reflection, resilience and empathy.

The Aims of S.P.H.E.

- To develop students positive sense of themselves and their physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing.

- To build the capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships.
- To develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence.
- 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.

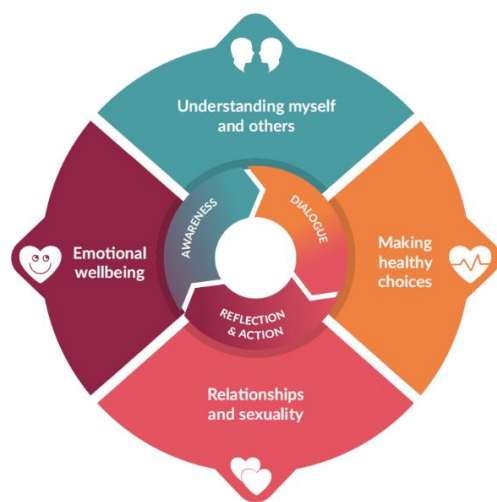
Whole School Approach

S.P.H.E. is a compulsory part of the Wellbeing programme offered in Meán Scoil Mhuire. We believe the ways in which every member of staff relates to one another and to the students, and the quality of relationships between the students themselves, form the foundation for personal and social development in a school. Consequently, every class and extra curricular activity offers opportunities for enhancing the personal and social development of the students. In keeping with our CEIST and Mercy ethos, Meán Scoil Mhuire strives to create an environment which fully supports S.P.H.E.

S.P.H.E. is timetabled for one class period per week in first, second and third year. In Transition Year, fifth and sixth year, it is taught as part of the Religious Education Programme.

Outline of the Programme Content for S.P.H.E.

The Junior Cycle S.P.H.E. specification consists of four strands:



- Strand 1: Understanding Myself and Others
- Strand 2: Making Health Choices
- Strand 3: Relationship and Sexuality
- Strand 4: Emotional Wellbeing

1st Year 2023 onwards

- Strand 1: Who am I?
- Strand 2: Minding myself and others
- Strand 3: Team up
- Strand 4: My mental health

2021

In S.P.H.E., 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. A spiral approach of revisiting key ideas and topics, while emphasising the importance of student agency and engagement in the learning process is key to learning in the affective domain. Each strand appears in each year of the three-year junior cycle programme, this promotes the development of the skills, attitudes and values, vital for self-fulfilment, for living in communities and for full engagement in learning beyond S.P.H.E. In addition to the specific content and knowledge, S.P.H.E. provides students with opportunities to support all the key skills of junior cycle education.

The 4 strands are underpinned by 3 cross cutting elements:

- Awareness
- Dialogue
- Reflection and Action

Key Skills of Junior Cycle



Topics for Senior Cycle students will build on elements covered in Junior Cycle and will treat issues in ways suitable for the young adult. Topics will include:

- Respectful Relationships
- Equality
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Parenting & Family Life

The contents of the R.S.E. programme are described in three terms. These are:

- Human Growth and Development
 - Human Sexuality
 - Human Relationships
1. Each theme is developed in an age appropriate manner during Junior and Senior Cycle in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (N.C.C.A.), the Mission Statement and ethos of our school.
 2. Teachers have opportunities for regular in-service training in S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. and are provided with relevant resources
 3. Prior to beginning any R.S.E. module, parents/guardians will be notified.
 4. The school recognises the rights of parents/guardians to withdraw their daughter from all or some parts of the R.S.E. programme.

Teaching Methods

S.P.H.E. is “spiral and developmental in nature”. It focuses on the development of life skills. Therefore, teaching methods must be of an experiential nature, with an emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. Any teaching methodologies employed will be child-centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student.

Having a flexible approach to the teaching methodologies used, ensures that all students in our care, including those students with special needs, can participate in the S.P.H.E. class. S.P.H.E. addresses areas that are particularly crucial in the development of a person with special educational needs, therefore it is our policy that students will not be withdrawn from S.P.H.E. class in order to receive learning support or resource help.

Cross-Curricular Links

The S.P.H.E. team is conscious of the potential for cross-curricular links in particular with C.S.P.E., R.E., Science and Home Economics and the Child Development Module completed in T.Y. The team will endeavour to develop and formalise these links as part of the S.P.H.E. programme in the school.

Assessment

The purpose of assessment and reporting is to support learning. Ongoing assessment and feedback takes place in S.P.H.E. Students will demonstrate their learning through discussion, explaining, researching, presenting, planning and taking action. The nature of much of student learning in S.P.H.E. is concerned with attitudes, values and feelings and is personal to the student. Much of this is recorded in the personal learning diary which is private to the student. With the agreement of the student, some entries may be used to demonstrate and support different learning activities.

If applicable, Junior Cycle Short Courses will have one Classroom-Based Assessment in 2nd or 3rd year. This assessment will be designed in consultation with the students based on the learning outcomes in more than one strand of the course. This is in line with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications. Developmental feedback

will be given to students during their engagement with the task and at the end of the process. The assessment can be produced in written, digital, visual or audio formats and may be supported through the use of an interview or presentation. The Subject Learning and Assessment Review process (SLAR) will be followed and reported to students and parents in interim reporting and in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (J.C.P.A.).

Inclusive Assessment

Accommodations which enable all students to access learning and assessment are based on specific needs and are a key feature of teaching and learning in Meán Scoil Mhuire. Special accommodations may be put in place to remove as far as possible the impact of a disability on the student's performance in a Classroom-Based Assessment.

Staff Development, Training and Resource Issues

The management of Meán Scoil Mhuire are committed to developing and maintaining a core team of trained S.P.H.E. teachers. A member of this team will be appointed to co-ordinate the subject each year. This will be done on a rotation basis. In-career development is an integral part of this programme. Management are responsible for the relevant training needs of S.P.H.E. teachers.

Sensitive Issues in S.P.H.E. and R.S.E.

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the S.P.H.E. course content, the needs of the students will be addressed in a caring and supportive manner. Where it is appropriate the school will refer students to other supportive links or services, internal or external to the school community e.g. Pastoral Care Team, Guidance Counsellor etc. Class discussion will be of a general nature in accordance with previously agreed ground rules and will not be personally directed. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by a teacher or by another student. Only questions directly related to the lesson content will be addressed.

Subject Planning for a Culturally Diverse Society

Students in Meán Scoil Mhuire come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. S.P.H.E. teachers must always be mindful that every classroom reflects this cultural diversity. Every module taught in S.P.H.E. must be taught in a culturally sensitive manner, always aware of how different cultural practices may impact on content and methodologies used. It is important that students learn about similarities and that in doing so they are helped to understand and to respect these differences.

The Role of Visitors

The S.P.H.E. teacher is best placed to deliver the S.P.H.E. curriculum. However, the use of visitors may enhance and complement the quality of the classroom provision. The S.P.H.E. teacher will consult with the Principal in relation to the suitability of guest speakers prior to their invitation to the school. All guest speakers must be Garda vetted. Guest speakers will be made aware of, and requested to comply with the school S.P.H.E. policy. The content of a guest speakers presentation will be discussed with the relevant S.P.H.E. teacher prior to delivering it to students. It is normal practice for teachers to remain in the classroom while

visitors are there. Preparatory work and follow up work where possible should be undertaken with the class.

How parents will be informed

The policy is available for inspection by all parents on the school website. Feedback is provided to parents at Parent Teacher meetings, Term Reports and the School Journal.

Links to Other Policies

- R.S.E. Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Review, Assessment and Evaluation

The S.P.H.E. policy will be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis by school management and the S.P.H.E. Co-ordinator and teaching team.

Formal reviews of the policy will only take place in collaboration with teachers, students, parents and the B.O.M..

APPENDIX 1

Below is a summary of what Meán Scoil Mhuire currently provides to support Wellbeing and the S.P.H.E. curriculum.

Junior & Senior Pastoral Student Support Teams	Mini Enterprise
Year Heads	School Tour & Trips within Ireland
Class Tutor System	Foreign School Tour
Class Teachers	Erasmus+
Student Council	Subject Field Trips
Class Representatives	School Masses
Peer Mentors	Student Retreats
Prefects	Charity Fundraising
Book Rental Scheme	Cross-Curricular Links
1 st Year Induction Programme	Parents Teacher Meeting
Gaisce Award	Parents' Council
Chaplain	Outside Speakers
L.C.V.P. Programme	Awards Night
Enterprise Education	Learning Support
Green Schools	Breakfast Club
Health Promoting School	Transition Year programme
After School Study	Lunchtime Activities
Basketball	Positive Health Week
Camogie	Maths Week
Gaelic Football	Science Week
Athletics	Catholic Schools Week
Career Guidance	Seachtain na Gaeilge
Wellbeing Classes	
Open Night	This list is not Exhaustive