



St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow

## Wellbeing Policy: SPHE & RSE

**Title:** Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) including Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

**Duration:** Timetabled for 1 class per week as part of our Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme.

**Aims:** Social, Personal & Health Education (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 capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of the Junior Cycle SPHE and the Wellbeing curriculum. Its aim is to help young people to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework (2017, Wellbeing Guidelines, p.47).

### **Course Content:**

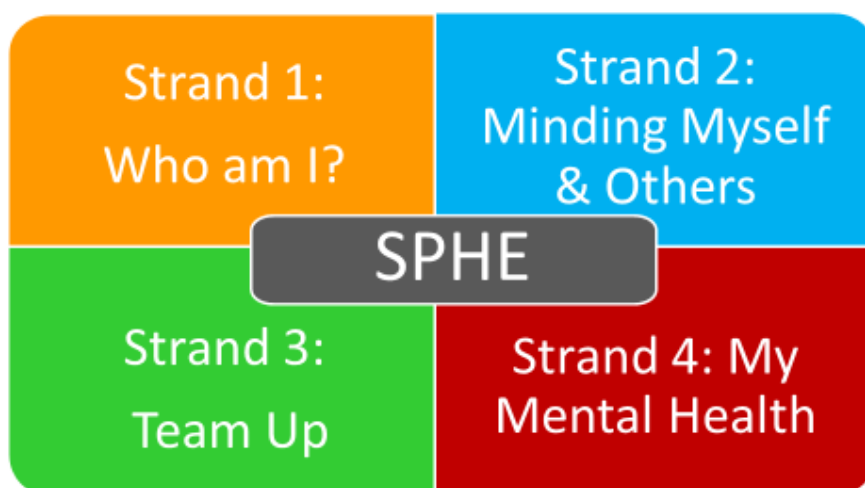
SPHE is designed to enable students to develop a positive sense of themselves and a commitment to caring for themselves and others.

**Strand 1: Who am I?** This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and building self-esteem.

**Strand 2: Minding myself and others.** This strand provides opportunities for students to reflect on how they can best take care of themselves and others.

**Strand 3: Team up.** This strand focuses on students learning about important relationships in their lives and building relationship skills.

**Strand 4: My mental health.** This strand focuses on building positive mental health, examining young people's experience of mental ill health and learning how to support themselves and others in challenging times.



### Rationale:

It is accepted that the home and the parents are the primary educators of their children in the area of Social, Personal and Health Education and Relationships and Sexuality Education. Programmes in these areas carried out in the school are extensions of the education already begun in the home.

SPHE aims to help students develop skills which will enable them to make informed decisions about their health, social development and personal lives thus enabling them to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and the dignity of others.

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 classes 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 new Wellbeing programme 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. 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.

RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which students participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships. Learning in SPHE and RSE is supported by a positive, empowering whole school environment and relevant school policies including our anti-bullying and child protection policies. It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must immediately refer this under the Child Protection Guidelines to the designated liaison person, the Principal. The Principal will then take further action in keeping with the policy. Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality as teachers may have to report to the Principal under the Child Protection Guidelines.

The context for learning in SPHE helps to ensure that students learn to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. These decisions are further supported and encouraged by school, community and national policies and guidelines. Ground rules/class contracts are drawn up by the class teacher in consultation with the class at the start of each school year. Ground rules should be clear and simple and adhered to by all.

In Junior Cycle, six indicators-Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware- have been identified as central to students' wellbeing.

Learning in SPHE provides learning opportunities designed to enhance each of these indicators thereby contributing significantly to the school's Wellbeing programme in junior cycle.

**Statements of Learning Links to SPHE:**

The following tables show how SPHE may be linked to the central features of learning and teaching in junior cycle.

Statement of learning	Example of related learning in SPHE
The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making (SoL 5)	Students participate in a range of activities that promote responsible behaviours and help them to develop skills for making personal and group decisions that respect their own dignity and the dignity of others.
The student appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she lives. (SoL 6)	In SPHE, students have opportunities to discuss opinions, examine problems and decide how these might be approached with their peers, thereby helping them to appreciate the value of different perspectives. By examining case studies and undertaking role-play, students can learn to be more empathetic towards others and to respect different values, beliefs and traditions.
The student takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others (SoL 11)	Students examine how their values, attitudes and behaviour impact on their own and others' health and wellbeing. They develop different resources designed to support young people in making informed decisions for their own wellbeing and that of others.

**Key Skills Developed Through SPHE:**



Key Skill	Element	Student learning activity
<b>Being Creative</b>	Exploring options and alternatives	Students explore and evaluate options and alternatives in the context of decisions they make. They record and communicate their learning in creative ways.
<b>Being Literate</b>	Expressing ideas clearly and accurately	Students learn to articulate their thoughts and feelings clearly and respectfully through group work, role-play and reflections, and by exploring and discussing scenarios and case studies.
<b>Being Numerate</b>	Gathering, interpreting and representing data	Students gather information through questionnaires, surveys and personal records and present their findings in graphic form to different audiences.

<b>Communicating</b>	Listening and expressing myself	Students learn to express themselves clearly and respectfully, to ask for help, to listen to other peoples' viewpoints and discuss ideas and opinions.
<b>Managing Information and Thinking</b>	Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information	Students become familiar with how and where they can access information and support to maintain their physical and mental health in a holistic way.
<b>Managing Myself</b>	Knowing myself	Students learn more about themselves as they engage in decision-making activities and goal setting. They learn to be flexible, to organise themselves, to plan to achieve their goals and to develop a sense of balance in their lives.
<b>Staying Well</b>	Being healthy and physically active	Students learn about taking responsibility for their wellbeing and relationships. They also learn how to include a balanced diet, physical activity and relaxation as part of a healthy lifestyle.
<b>Working with others</b>	Respecting difference	Students learn about group processes and how group membership can affect an individual's thinking and behaviour. They develop greater empathy as they learn about other peoples' perspectives and develop skills for relating effectively to others.

**Wellbeing Indicators & SPHE Learning Outcomes:**

The six wellbeing indicators make explicit what is important learning in Wellbeing. The learning outcomes in each of the four strands of SPHE are aligned to the indicators for Wellbeing in junior cycle

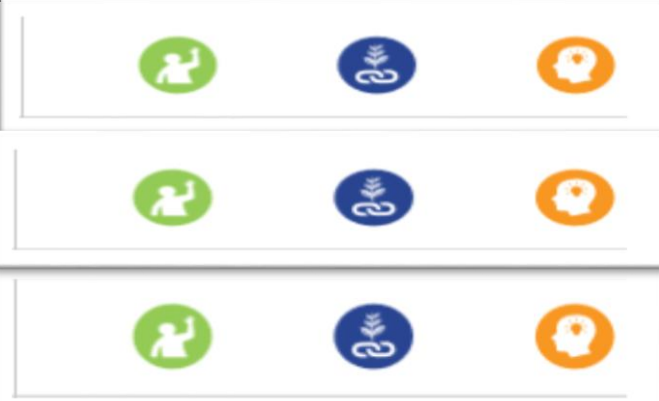
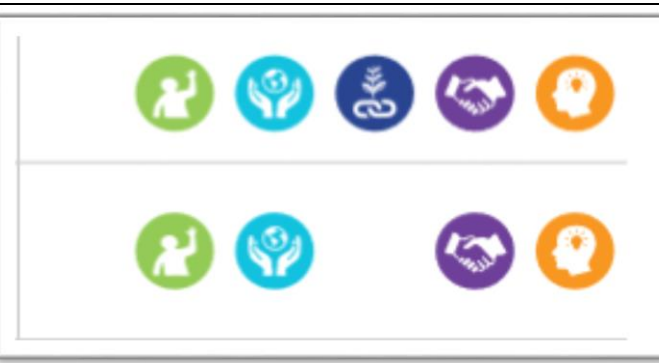


**Learning Outcomes:**

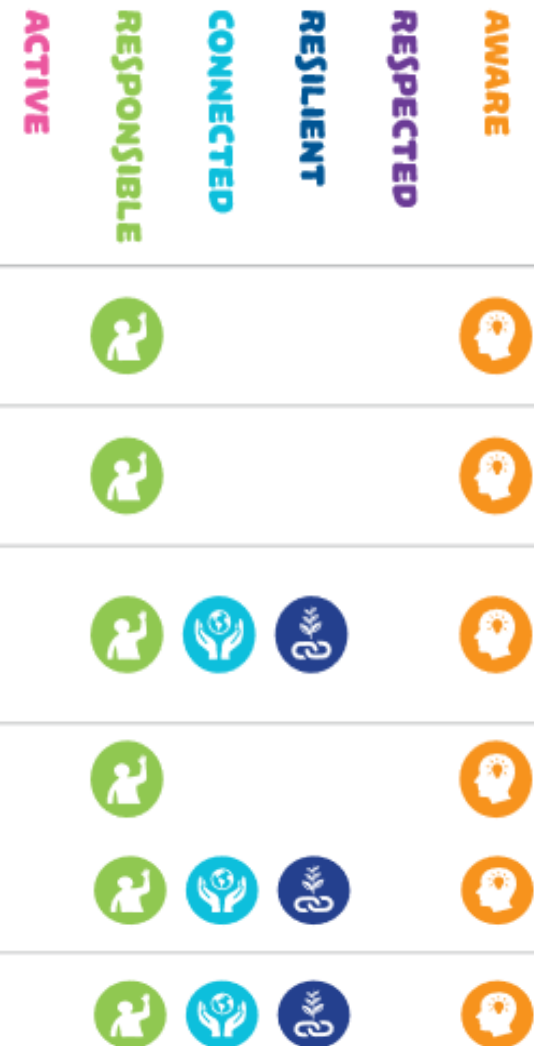
Learning outcomes are statements that describe what knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate having completed the four strands of the junior cycle SPHE course. Each SPHE learning outcome is aligned to the indicators of wellbeing.

SPHE Strand 1: Who am I?		ACTIVE	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
Students learn about	Students should be able to						
How I see myself and others	1.1 appreciate the importance of building their own self-esteem and that of others 1.2 welcome individual difference based on an appreciation of their own uniqueness						
Being an adolescent	1.3 participate in informed discussions about the impact of physical, emotional, psychological and social development in adolescence 1.4 recognise how sexuality and gender identity is part of what it means to be human and has biological, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions.						



<p>Self-management</p>	<p>1.5 identify short, medium and long-term personal goals and ways in which they might be achieved</p> <p>1.6 apply decision-making skills in a variety of situations</p> <p>1.7 source appropriate and reliable information about health and wellbeing</p>	
<p>My rights and the rights of others</p>	<p>1.8 explain how stereotyping can contribute to a person's understanding and experience of rights and wellbeing</p> <p>1.9 appreciate the importance of respectful and inclusive behaviour in promoting a safe environment free from bias and discrimination</p>	

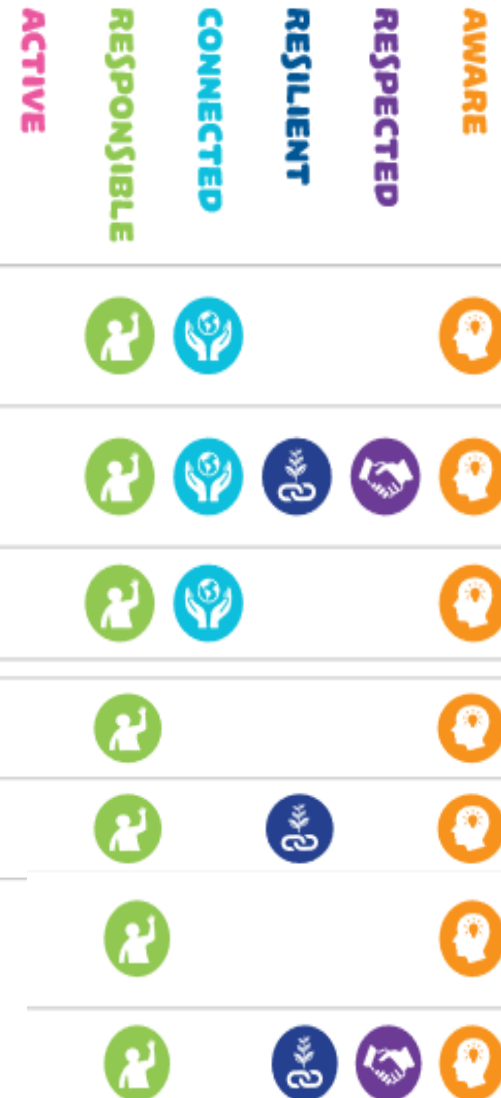
SPHE Strand 2: Minding Myself and Others	
Students learn about	Students should be able to
Being healthy	2.1 evaluate how diet, physical activity, sleep/rest and hygiene contribute to self-confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing
	2.2 critique the impact of the media, advertising and other influences on one's decisions about health and wellbeing
	2.3 describe what promotes a sense of belonging in school, at home and in the wider community and their own role in creating an inclusive environment
	2.4 distinguish between appropriate care giving and receiving
Substance use	2.5 demonstrate the personal and social skills to address pressure to smoke, to drink alcohol and/or use other substances
	2.6 reflect on the personal, social and legal consequences of their own or others' drug use
	2.7 critique information and supports available



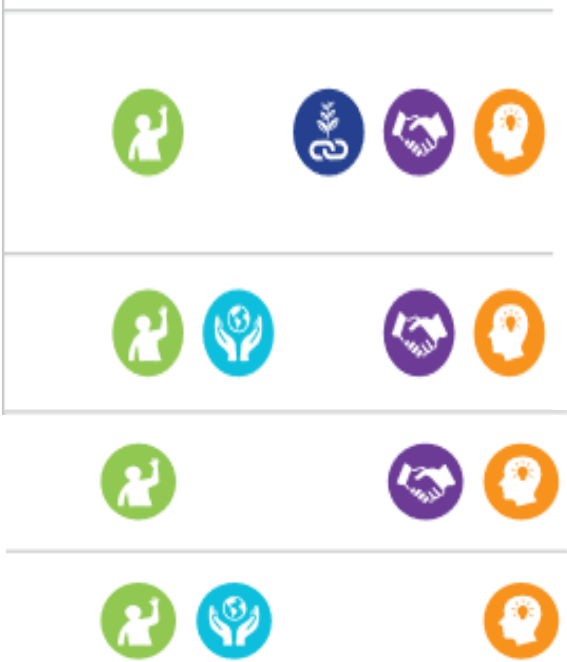
	for young people in relation to substance use
Respectful communication	2.8 use the skills of active listening and responding appropriately in a variety of contexts 2.9 use good communication skills to respond to criticism and conflict
Anti-bullying	2.10 describe appropriate responses to incidents of bullying 2.11 appraise the roles of participants and bystanders in incidents of bullying 2.12 review the school's anti-bullying charter and internet acceptable usage policy explaining the implications for students' behaviour and personal safety

































SPHE Strand 3: Team up	
Students learn about	Students should be able to
Having a friend and being a friend	3.1 establish what young people value in different relationships and how this changes over time
	3.2 evaluate attitudes, skills and values that help to make, maintain and end friendships respectfully
	3.3 recognise their capacity to extend and receive friendship
The relationship spectrum	3.4 explain the different influences on relationships and levels of intimacy
	3.5 analyse relationship difficulties experienced by young people
Sexuality, gender identity and sexual health	3.6 describe fertility, conception, pre-natal development and birth, and the particular health considerations for each
	3.7 explain what it means to take care of their sexual health
	3.8 demonstrate assertive communication

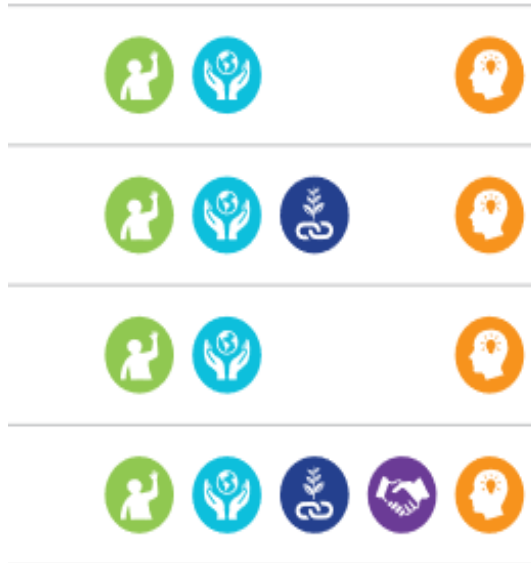


	<p>skills in support of responsible, informed decision-making about relationships and sexual health that are age and developmentally appropriate</p> <p>3.9 reflect on the personal and social dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity</p>
<p>Media influence on relationships and sexuality</p>	<p>3.10 critically analyse the use of sexual imagery and gender stereotyping in various forms of media</p> <p>3.11 critique the influence of media on their understanding of sexuality and sexual health</p>



<b>SPHE Strand 4: My Mental Health</b>		ACTIVE	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
Students learn about	Students should be able to						
Positive mental health	4.1 explain what it means to have positive mental health						
	4.2 appreciate the importance of talking things over, including recognising the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviour						
	4.3 practise some relaxation techniques						
Mental health and mental ill-health	4.4 participate in an informed discussion about mental health issues experienced by young people and/or their friends and family						
	4.5 appreciate what it means to live with mental ill-health						
	4.6 critique mental health services available to young people locally						
	4.7 explain the significance of substance use for one's mental health						
Dealing with tough times	4.8 practise a range of strategies for building resilience						
	4.9 use coping skills for managing life's challenges						

<p>Loss and bereavement</p>	<p>4.10 explain the wide range of life events where they might experience loss and bereavement</p> <p>4.11 outline the personal, social, emotional and physical responses to loss and bereavement</p> <p>4.12 compare how loss and bereavement are portrayed in a variety of contexts and cultures</p> <p>4.13 describe how they might care for themselves and be supportive of others in times of loss or bereavement</p>
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### **Cross-Curricular Links:**

As a school that promotes health and wellbeing, a number of whole school initiatives are organised for example the Amber Flag and Health Week. SPHE teachers work in conjunction with the Home Economics and the PE Departments to promote physical fitness and healthy eating. Extra-curricular sports such as gaelic football, camogie, basketball and orienteering promote physical activity, teamwork, leadership, fair play and social skills. Opportunities to represent St. Mary's in co-curricular or extra-curricular dramas, debating, mini-companies, sports, Young Scientist, Young Social Innovators and many other school events instils a sense of school pride. Positive mental health is further promoted through the Amber Flag, mindfulness workshops and meditation classes.

### **SPHE and RSE as part of the Wellbeing Programme:**

This SPHE & RSE Policy was collated by SPHE teachers who formed part of the Wellbeing Planning team. It is envisaged that the Wellbeing programme 2017-2020 will achieve synergy and a cohesive approach to Wellbeing. All components of the Wellbeing programme, spanning SPHE, CSPE, PE and Other Units of Learning are linked to the Indicators of Wellbeing. Course content is aligned to the 2015 Junior Cycle Framework, 2017 Wellbeing Guidelines and NCCA Course Specifications.

### **SPHE and RSE Continuity into Senior Cycle**

The Junior Cycle curricular provision is for one SPHE class per week as part of our Wellbeing Programme. Social Education is timetabled for a double class for transition year and LCA students. RSE is delivered to all 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year students as part of a rotating block for a single class.



**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Chairperson's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

