



**NORTH WICKLOW
EDUCATE TOGETHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

SPHE Policy

1. Our School

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school under the patronage of Educate Together. Our school provides a caring and supportive school community that nurtures each student's personal, social and academic potential throughout their school career. The school currently has an enrolment of around 225 students with an ASD class. A Board of management devolves the day to day running of the school to the Principal and staff.

Our ethos provides a strong moral, ethical and spiritual framework for the whole school community, and informs all policies and practices in the daily life of the school. Students follow Ethical Education which includes learning about different religions and belief systems. The four core principles of Educate Together are equality based, co-educational, child-centred and democratically run. An Educate Together school provides an ethical curriculum that focuses on the ethical, moral and social development of young people. It will provide the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that young people need to enable them to make informed moral decisions and prepare them for life in a pluralist society which embraces diversity. The ethical curriculum will be part of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and visible in every lesson and embedded in RSE lessons.

2. Our School Mission Statement

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School is dedicated to creating a co-educational, learner-centered, caring, happy and positive environment where equality and democracy are celebrated and nurtured. We are committed to enabling students to become creative, empathetic, life-long learners who are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century in a sustainable and ethical way.

We embrace collaborative educational practices both in our school and through engagement with the wider community. Through the process of teaching and learning we aim to inspire, support and challenge all students to develop their skills and passions. In doing so, we dedicate ourselves to empowering all students to truly understand themselves and others better so that when they leave school, they are ready to actively engage in society and to lead purposeful, fulfilling and happy lives.

3. Definition of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

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:

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

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 the social, personal and health education offered to our students is as important as any other area of the curriculum.

Junior Cycle Wellbeing

For students enrolled since September 2017, SPHE is part of Junior Cycle Wellbeing. SPHE provides opportunities for teaching and learning directly related to health and wellbeing. Using experiential 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 student's 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.

Six indicators of Wellbeing – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware have been identified as central to wellbeing. The indicators of wellbeing are used to plan teaching and learning within the SPHE programme and to scaffold conversations with students about their learning.

Shorter units of learning which are related to student wellbeing are recorded using an Appendix I template. (See Appendix II of this document) .This template is designed to record aspects of our Wellbeing Programme that are delivered outside of the SPHE , CSPE and PE timetable.

4. Class organisation and timetabling

Circular M11/03

All second level schools must timetable Social, Personal and Health Education (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 Social Personal and Health Education at Junior Cycle, and as an RSE programme in Senior Cycle, even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class.

Circular 0015/2017

The new area of learning entitled Wellbeing was introduced for First Years from September 2017. A key component of this area of learning is Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), including Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). All Junior Cycle students receive SPHE classes in their class group for one sixty-minute period per week. SPHE is not a timetabled class for Transition Year but these students receive at least six classes of RSE a year.

5. Students with additional support needs (ASN)

Students with additional support 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 made meaningful, relevant and achievable for all students, it is important that the teacher finds ways to respond to students' diversity by using differentiated approaches and methodologies. In consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) the following strategies will be adopted:

- Ensuring that objectives are realistic for the students and ensuring that the learning task is compatible with prior learning
- Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other students in small groups
- Spending more time on tasks and organising the learning task into small stages
- Ensuring that language used is pitched at the students' level of understanding and does not hinder 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/steps in any given task/problem
- Modelling task analysis by talking through the steps of a task as it is being done and having short and varied tasks
- Displaying word lists and laminated charts with pictures

If the SPHE teacher is concerned about any difficulties or gaps in a student's learning a referral will be made to the Additional Support Needs Department and the students learning will be supported through resource teaching.

Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs)

In the new Junior Cycle, some students may follow a personalised L2LP alongside other curriculum components from Level 3 courses. The L2LPs are planned around several Priority Learning Units which focus on developing the personal, social and practical skills of students. The target group of students who follow the L2LPs are typically students presenting with significant learning needs. Formal assessments by an educational psychologist will have placed these students in the low mil to high moderate categories of learning disability.

In SPHE the learning outcomes of the Level 3 strands are mapped to the relevant Priority Learning Units. The priority of mapping is relevant for the Personal Care PLU and some are relevant to Living in a Community and Preparing for Work. Evidence of the student's work is retained and collated by a Level 2 Coordinator for the student's portfolio.

See APPENDIX 1 for L2LP mapping.

6. Content and teaching methodologies

Through participation in the SPHE Programme the student will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of learning experiences. The old SPHE course comprised of ten modules, each of which appeared in each year of the three-year cycle.

The ten modules of Junior Certificate SPHE are:

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-management
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health

- Friendship
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety

The new Junior Cycle short course contains four strands:

- Who am I?
- Minding myself and others
- Team Up
- My Mental Health

In our school we follow some elements of the SPHE short course. SPHE is timetabled for 100 hours over the three years. The programme is tailored to include 10 hours of Friends for Life in 1st Year and 4 hours of the Pieta House Resilience Programme in 2nd Year. Approximately 86 hours of the SPHE curriculum is followed which ensures that many of the learning outcomes within the four strands can be achieved.

SPHE is primarily skills-based and so teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with an emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. The class atmosphere must be one of respect for the privacy of the individual teacher and student and hallmarked by sensitivity and care. Every class establishes a class contract which is referred to throughout the lessons.

The ASK model places an emphasis on Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge development in SPHE, and that feelings and values are also integral to the teaching and learning in SPHE.

Teaching Methodologies may include:

- Groupwork
- Role play
- Brainstorming
- Icebreaker
- Narrative expression
- Debating
- Project work
- Art work
- Multi-media materials
- 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.

NWETSS recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students lies with their parents. Our school under the patronage of Educate Together encourages active participation by parents and students in the daily life of the school whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers.

7. Cross Curricular Links

The following subject areas form cross curricular links with the SPHE Programme:

- Physical Education
- CSPE
- English
- Guidance Related Learning
- Physical Education
- Tutor Time
- Science
- The Buddy Programme
- Ethical Education
- Mindfulness

8. Resources

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

Resources include:

- SPHE Junior Certificate Syllabus and Guidelines
- Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines
- Folens My Life 1,2 and 3
- RSE Junior Cycle Materials
- Before You Decide
- Trust
- HSE leaflets and DVD
- Growing Up LGBT
- Belong to Stand Up Resources
- Mental Health Matters
- Friends for Life Junior Cycle Resilience Programme
- Mind Out Senior Cycle Resilience Programme
- Emotional Health Material
- Body Why
- #Up to Us
- The Lockers Programme
- Marie Keating Cancer Awareness Pack
- JC Personal Safety Lesson
- Enable Ireland Disability Awareness Programme

This list is not exhaustive.

9. Staff and Subject Development

The value placed on SPHE by the school is evident by the commitment on the part of management to develop a core of trained SPHE teachers preferably gender balanced and 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.

The SPHE Co-ordinator is Aisling Sammon. The core SPHE teaching team includes Aisling Sammon and Sarah Kernaghan.

Aisling has worked as a part time associate for the PDST, providing SPHE Inservice teachers and Sarah Kernaghan has undertaken Introduction to SPHE , Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle RSE in-service training. Aisling Sammon has attended all SPHE training since 2004 to date and JCT SPHE training.

Over the next two years it is envisaged that all SPHE teachers will attend Introduction to SPHE and RSE in-service training.

10. Confidentiality and Referrals

SPHE at Junior Cycle and RSE at Senior Cycle is a core curricular subject. Each parent has the right to withdraw their child from some or all RSE lessons, but parents are encouraged to provide alternative RSE at home. The school will respect this choice as their right. The school will facilitate any student opting out of RSE. Where students are withdrawn from RSE the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students. Parents must meet with the Principal in person to discuss their decision to withdraw their child from the RSE module.

Sensitive issues

Class discussion will be of a general nature, and will not be personally directed, in accordance with the previously agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered in class by a teacher, or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The SPHE teacher may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in deciding whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, he/she should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor, Student Support Team, and/or the Principal.

Referrals

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a 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. The teacher may inform the class of external services relevant to the class material. This should be done within the context of the school's mission statement and ethos. SPHE teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are to discuss the issue with the Guidance Counsellor, Student Support Team, and/or the Principal.

Confidentiality

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

- Child abuse - physical, emotional, sexual, 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 2017.

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.

11. Visiting speakers

Circular 0043/2018

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.

If a speaker is invited to the school:

- As per circular **0043/2018** the Principal and Board of Management will be informed
- The speaker will be made aware of the ethos and SPHE Policy of the school
- The SPHE teacher will discuss and agree the content of the presentation
- The SPHE teacher will do preparatory and follow up work where possible
- The degree of explicitness of the content of the class should be discussed and agreed before the visit
- The visitor will be accompanied by the class teacher
- The visitor should be informed of the level and ability of the students
- Links to the school safety procedures - visitors must report to the school office
- Principal must be informed of the date and arrangements of the visit
- The principal advises parents/guardians/carers of the talk via the school app

Research findings indicate that the following teaching approaches have limited effect and are counterproductive to the effective implementation of SPHE:

- Scare tactics
- Testimonials
- Information only interventions
- Short term / once off interventions

Outside speakers can be a resource when used as part of a school's planned programme for SPHE/RSE

12. Parents

The school accepts that it is in the interests of all parents that the child grows up in a healthy and mature fashion. The school will strive to keep parents informed of the contents of the SPHE programme and resources available for parents. An overview of SPHE, RSE information and any relevant updates are given to Parents at the Year Head Parent Information Evenings. The SPHE Policy is available on the school website and on request at the school. Parents of incoming first years are informed of the availability of the SPHE Policy along with other relevant policies on the school website.

A letter with the details of the Relationships and Sexuality Modules is sent to all parents/guardians and carers. While all partners in the school community - teaching staff, parents and management are agreed on the programme, we recognise the right of any parent /guardian/ carer wishing to withdraw their son/daughter. The parent must contact the SPHE coordinator in the first instance. Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawing a student, but we respectfully invite them to do so during a meeting with the Principal and SPHE coordinator. If the parent/guardian still wishes to withdraw their child from RSE, then this request must be made in writing and the student shall be facilitated.

For more details : see Appendix 1- RSE Policy

13. Whole Staff

This policy will be available for all staff on the school website. Copies will be given to each SPHE teacher by the SPHE co-ordinator.

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 key areas of SPHE and the school year has times earmarked when certain topics or issues are covered e.g. Anti-Bullying/Friendship Week, Mental Health Week and Sports Week. Weekly allocated tutor time supports further implementation of the SPHE programme and resources are provided to tutors at the tutor induction and further updates on programmes are provided throughout the year.

14. Assessment and reporting in SPHE

Every student in Junior Cycle is required to have a SPHE Portfolio folder that is kept by SPHE teachers in the classroom. The folder contains their SPHE book, work sheets, a copy and an SPHE reflection journal. At the end of a lesson students record a short reflection in their reflection journal.

From 2019 , as part of Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme , SPHE will be assessed via a Classroom based assessment and will reported on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. SPHE teachers report progress in SPHE for Junior Cycle students on the Christmas and Summer reports. SPHE teachers also meet parents at Parent Teacher Meetings.

The SPHE team meet at least once a term, subject to current restrictions, to review, plan and evaluate SPHE in the school. Minutes of all meetings are recorded and contained in the SPHE Subject Folder.

15. Related Policies

- RSE Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Positive Code of Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy

16. Review and evaluation

The SPHE course is never static and must be examined and evaluated regularly and adapted to the needs of the students. The SPHE programme and policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the SPHE team. The opinions of students and requests of parents will also be considered. The Parent Staff Association will liaise with the SPHE coordinator in relation to SPHE. The opinions of management will be included and the SPHE co-ordinator will liaise with the Principal and the Board of Management.

Date of ratification by the Board of Management _____

SIGNED _____ (Principal)

SIGNED _____ (Chairperson) Date _____

APPENDIX I

L2LPs Element mapping with SPHE Short Course Learning Outcomes

PLU Personal Care	SPHE Strand	Learning Outcome / class topic
A1 identify essential daily personal care practices	Strand 3 – Team up	During RSE we look at personal hygiene. We examine how to take care of cleaning our body and regular showering. We examine various beauty products and use visuals to compare deodorants and anti-perspirants and shower gels
A2 Describe the most important ways of keeping the body clean	Strand 3 – Team up	We discuss showering, how to clean the male / female body properly. We discuss hormones and body secretions and the importance of showering daily.
A4 Explain the benefits of a range of Daily personal care products	Strand 3 – Team up	As above – Student reflects on personal learning in the lesson in their SPHE journal. They relate the learning to outside of the classroom.
B2 Developing healthy eating habits Describe typical foods and drinks associated with a well-balanced diet	Strand 4 – My mental health	Learning outcomes 4.1 explain what it means to have positive mental health During this module we looked at the importance of a healthy diet and how this important for mental health. We made up a healthy menu.
B2 Describe common consequences of good diet	Strand 4 – My mental health	This is covered in 1 st year.
	Strand 2 – Minding myself and others	Learning outcome 2.1 evaluate how diet, physical activity, sleep/rest and hygiene contributes 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 (level 2 observed videos of photo shopping and Dove body image campaign, some understanding of the concept)
Developing a healthy lifestyle C1 Identify 3 benefits of regular exercise	Strand 2 – Minding myself and others	Learning outcome 2.1 evaluate how diet, physical activity , sleep/rest and hygiene contributes to self-confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing
C2 Outline a personal weekly exercise plan	Strand 4 – my mental health	Learning outcome 4.8 practise a range of strategies for building resilience. We look at the importance of leisure time. During this module we examined our sleep patterns and the effect that a lack of sleep can have on our general mental health
C5 Explain how the food we eat contributes to our state of health	Strand 4 – My mental health	Learning outcomes 4.1 explain what it means to have positive mental health During this module we looked at the importance of a healthy diet and how this important for mental health. We made up a healthy menu.
Being able to manage stress D1 Describe school/ personal / community situations that are stressful	Strand 4 – My mental health	Learning outcome 4.1 explain what it means to have good mental health We would have discussed personal triggers to stress
D2 recognise the signs of stress	Strand 4 – My mental health	Learning outcome 4.2 appreciate the importance of talking things over, including recognising the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviour
D3 identify some ways to relax	Strand 4 – My mental health	Learning outcome 4.3 practise some relaxation techniques Regularly participate in guided meditation
D4 demonstrate a relaxation technique	Strand 4 – My mental health	Learning outcome 4.3 practise some relaxation techniques

		Regularly participate in guided meditation
D5 Practise a range of relaxation techniques	Strand 4 – My mental health	Learning outcome 4.3 practise some relaxation techniques Regularly participate in guided meditation. We examine in 2 nd year mind out how to respond and not react
E2 Recognise when personal safety is threatened	Strand 2 – Minding myself and others	Learning outcome 2.10 describe appropriate responses to incidents of bullying. This is covered in depth during SPHE and Anti-Bullying week.
F1 Becoming aware of one's sexuality Identify the standard names of the sexual organs	Strand 3 – Team Up	Learning outcome 3.6 Sexuality describe fertility, conception, pre-natal development and birth, and the health considerations for each Use my life 1 and Busy Bodies to differentiate
F2 Describe the functions of the sexual parts of the body	Strand 3 – Team Up	Learning outcome 3.6 Sexuality describe fertility, conception, pre-natal development and birth, and the health considerations for each Use my life 1 and Busy Bodies to differentiate describe fertility, conception, pre-natal development and birth, and the health considerations for each Use my life 1 and Busy Bodies to differentiate
F5 recognise the difference between a friendship and more intimate relationship	Strand 3 – Team Up	Learning outcomes 3.1 establish what young people value in different relationships and how this change over time (we look at intimacy in relationships using B4Udecide) 3.2 evaluate attitudes, skills and values that help to make, maintain and end friendships respectfully (we examine healthy V unhealthy relationships and ways to respond)

G1 Identify common emotions and words to express them	Strand 4 My mental health	Learning outcome Emotional health – a lot around emotional literacy
G2 Recognising their own emotional responses in a range of situations	Strand 4 - My mental health	Learning outcome All covered under mental health and various case studies and role plays used 4.2 appreciate the importance of talking things over, including recognising the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviour
H1 list the main values in the student's life	Strand 1 – Who am I	Learning outcome 1.2 welcome individual difference based on an appreciation of their own uniqueness
H2 Describe how values are linked to making decisions in a range of situations	Strand 2 – Minding Myself and others	Learning outcome 2.5 demonstrate the personal and social skills to address pressure to smoke, to drink alcohol and/or use other substances
H4 identify the choices and consequences involved in an imminent short-term decision	Strand 1- Who am I Strand 2 – Minding Myself and others	Learning outcome 1.6 (self- management) apply decision-making skills in a variety of situations 2.8 use the skills of active listening and responding appropriately in a variety of contexts
PLU Living in a community	SPHE Strand	Learning Outcome / class topic
Developing good relationships A1 recognise different kinds of relationships	Strand 3 – Team Up	Learning outcome 3.1 establish what young people value in different relationships and how this change over time
A3 List ways in which name calling and teasing can be hurtful to self and others	Strand 2 – Minding Myself and others	Learning outcome 2.10 describe appropriate responses to incidents of bullying
A7 Recognise the importance of respect in relationships	Strand 3 – Team Up	Learning outcome 3.4 explain the different influences on relationships and levels of intimacy
B1 Resolving conflict Describing what peer pressure is	Strand 3 – Team Up	Learning outcome 3.8 demonstrate assertive communication skills in support of responsible,

		informed decision-making about relationships and sexual health that are age and developmentally appropriate
B2 Describe a way of handling peer- pressure	Strand 3 – Team Up	Learning outcome 3.8 demonstrate assertive communication skills in support of responsible, informed decision-making about relationships and sexual health that are age and developmentally appropriate
B4 Describe characteristics of bullying behaviour	Stand 2 – minding myself and others	Learning outcome 2.11 appraise the roles of participants and bystanders in incidents of bullying
B5 Identify the school’s approach to dealing with bullying behaviour	Stand 2 – minding myself and others	Learning outcome 2.12 review the school’s anti-bullying policy and internet safety guidelines explaining the implications for students’ behaviour and personal safety
C1 List ways of spending leisure time	Strand 4 – My mental health	Learning outcome 4.1 explain what it means to have positive mental health
PLU Preparing for Work	SPHE Strand	Learning Outcome / class topic
Preparing for Work Be able to set goals for learning A1 Set learning goals	Strand 1 – Who am I	Learning outcome 1.5 identify short, medium and long-term personal goals and ways in which they might be achieved

Appendix II:

Appendix I: Template to support schools in planning shorter units of learning in Wellbeing

Title of unit: SPHE – Buddy Programme	Duration
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Aim of the unit

Links

The following tables show how _____ (Unit title) may be linked to the central features of learning and teaching in junior cycle.

Statement of learning	Example of related learning in the unit
1.	
2.	

Key skills. (The elements and the learning outcomes for the eight key skills in junior cycle are set out in detail in Key Skills for Junior Cycle. Select the four key skills that this unit is particularly significant in supporting.)

Key skill	Element	Student learning activity

The wellbeing indicators make explicit what is important learning in Wellbeing. Circle which of the indicators and the descriptors learning in this unit supports. (See page 45)

Learning outcomes

At the end of this unit, students will be able to...

Sample learning activities

Assessment

Students will show evidence of their learning when they...

Useful resources, web links and community links
