



MILLSTREET COMMUNITY SCHOOL S.P.H.E. & R.S.E. POLICY

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Our School Philosophy

Millstreet Community School, is a coeducational community school under the joint patronage of the Diocese of Kerry, Cork Education and Training Board and the Presentation Order, now represented by C.E.I.S.T. MCS fosters:

- The full potential of all staff and students
- A positive partnership between all members of the school and wider community
- The highest standards of teaching, learning and performance.

Our commitment to S.P.H.E. is a feature of our general commitment to “promote all aspects of the growth and development of each student in a caring environment”.
(cf. School Mission Statement).

1. 2 Definition of Social, Personal and Health Education

We take as our working definition of S.P.H.E. as

‘the integration of the academic, social, emotional and religious education of our students so that an atmosphere of care obtains in the school community’.

(Feheney 1994, 2)

The general aim of education is to contribute to the development of all aspects of the individual for personal and family life, for living in the community and for leisure.

Commitment to education in the area of personal and social development arises out of this holistic aim of education and encompasses all the dimensions of life, including the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social and environmental, and the complex interplay between these dimensions, which contributes to personal well-being and to positive inter-personal relationships.

The social, personal and health education offered to our young people is as important (if not more so) than any other area of the curriculum. A young person who has a high degree of self-worth, a sense of security and a positive self-image will be more disposed to school life, will be more aware of the relationship between life-style, environment and health and conscious of the challenge to support personal, family and policy choices that promote health in all its dimensions.

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. Students can 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.

1.3 Aims of S.P.H.E.

The aims of the S.P.H.E. programme are:

- To enable to students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in community
- 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 physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

The school acknowledges that the primary responsibility for the personal development of children rests with their parents. However, it also accepts, as outlined in the 1998 Education Act, its role in supporting parents in this work.

1.4 A whole school approach

1.4.1 Our approach

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 teacher, every class and extracurricular activity offers opportunities for enhancing the personal and social development of the students.

Millstreet Community School aims to create an environment which fully supports SPHE. The introduction of S.P.H.E. gives the school an opportunity to develop positively and strive to achieve an environment in which

- People feel valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- Respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
- High expectations and standards are promoted
- There is support for those with difficulties
- Open communication is the norm
- Effort is recognised and rewarded
- Uniqueness and difference is valued
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Initiative and creativity are encouraged
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted.

1.4.2. SPHE Structures

The whole school approach to S.P.H.E. is reflected in the range of structures and processes that exist in the school to support the aims outlined above. The following structures have an important role to play in creating an atmosphere in the school community to sustain an effective S.P.H.E. programme.

Process Structures:

- S.P.H.E. co-coordinator
- S.P.H.E. policy committee (includes all involved in the subject area)
- Care Structures:

- Guidance and Counselling service
- Pastoral Care team
- School Chaplain
- Class Tutor system
- Peer Mentoring Programme

Policies:

- Behaviour Code.
- Anti- Bullying Policy and procedures.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement
- Pastoral Care Policy

Communications structures:

- Structures to inform subject teachers and students about events and developments.
- Structures for communication between Tutors, Year Heads and S.P.H.E. team and Pastoral Care team.

Structures for parental involvement:

- Parents' Advisory Committee
- Parent-Teacher-Student Meetings

Student structures:

- Mentor System
- Mentor and Leadership training courses
- Student Council

1.4.3 SPHE Programmes

There are two main structured programmes in SPHE in the school:

- (a) a classroom programme and
- (b) the Health Promoting School Initiative.

SECTION 2. THE S.P.H.E. CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

2.1 Structure of the Programme

The allocation of modules and themes in S.P.H.E. has been developed in response to the views of teachers and needs of students and mindful of the recommendations of the DES

2.2 Cross Curricular Links:

The SPHE team is conscious of the potential for cross-curricular links in particular with CSPE, RE, Science and Home Economics. The team will endeavour to develop and formalise these links as part of the development of the SPHE programme in the school.

2.3 R.S.E.

RSE is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

2.3.1 Social Context of R.S.E.

Relationships and Sexuality are key elements of healthy social and personal development in all our lives, but particularly in the life of an adolescent. Adolescence is marked by the onset of physical sexual maturity. This stage of development is also marked by the establishment of first significant boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, by the first experience of sexual attraction and by the experience of falling in, and out, of love. There is greater freedom and responsibility and exposure to a bewildering variety of messages about sexuality, issues of sexual orientation and the place of sexuality in personal and social life. Many parents and educators are concerned that the adolescent needs a thorough preparation for properly ordering sexuality and relationships in this cultural milieu. Such sexual development calls for the critical evaluation of the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values with which adolescents are bombarded within the parameters of a set of moral values.

2.3.2 Aims and Objectives in R.S.E.

Aims

- to help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
- to promote an understanding of sexuality
- to promote a positive attitude to one's sexuality and in one's relationship with others
- to promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction as participation in
- to the divine gift of life
- to enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral and spiritual framework

Objectives

R.S.E. should enable the students to:

- acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, and the skills for building and maintaining self-esteem
- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and
- change especially during adolescence and to develop respect for difference between individuals
- understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility and sexually transmitted infections
- understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex role stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality
- value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- develop strategies for decisions and actions consistent with personal moral integrity and respectful of the rights and dignity of others
- develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety.

SECTION 3. THE DELIVERY OF THE S.P.H.E. CLASS PROGRAMME

3.1 Methodology:

A variety of experiential teaching methods will be used to teach the S.P.H.E. programme.

- These methods are child-centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student and reflect the aims and ethos of the school.
- The class atmosphere must be one of respect for the privacy of each individual student and marked by sensitivity and care.
- Community resources may be used to enhance the programme in line with agreed school policy.

3.2 Sensitive issues/participation/ confidentiality/referral.

While the S.P.H.E. programme is a compulsory subject on the Junior Certificate curriculum, parents have the right to withdraw their child from the Relationships and Sexuality Education module. It will be necessary for parents of any students opting out of the Relationships and Sexuality Education module to make suitable arrangement with School management for the supervision of their child at these times.

Class teachers will not give advice on personal matters to individual students, but they will refer students to the Guidance Counsellor or to outside agencies in consultation with parents.

If a teacher comes into possession of sensitive information e.g. previously unreported sexual abuse, drug related behaviour, serious crime, suicidal behaviour, they will handle the information sensitively and they will follow D.E.S guidelines in informing the relevant authorities.

3.3 The Role of Visitors

- All S.P.H.E. guest speakers will be made aware of and requested to comply with the school's S.P.H.E. policy.
- All presentations must have appropriate content and also be appropriate to the age of the students.
- Guest speaker's work is supplementary to the existing core delivery of a teacher's work.
- The S.P.H.E. teacher may remain in the classroom for the presentation.

SECTION 4. RESOURCES.

4.1. Timetable / teacher allocation

On the timetable one class a week, for each class group will, ideally, be allotted to S.P.H.E. in Junior Cycle. At Senior Cycle, S.P.H.E. will be taught as part of the R.E. programme.

An S.P.H.E. co-coordinator has been appointed and given the role of co-coordinating programme development in this area.

4.3 Curriculum Planning & Development / In-service

The school recognises that all school staff need development and information regarding the S.P.H.E. programme. Teachers directly involved in the S.P.H.E. programme in the school require particular support. They will have an understanding of and a familiarity with the methodologies associated

with education in this area. Teachers will receive training in the methods for the respective programmes. This will be done on an ongoing basis, involving a wider pool of teachers in the provision of S.P.H.E. in the school.
All teachers assigned to S.P.H.E. will have access to in-service for the programme.

4.4 Resources

Monies will be made available for the purchase of materials for the development of Class Programmes in S.P.H.E. Materials for S.P.H.E. will be stored in the S.P.H.E. Co-ordinator's classroom. A catalogue of classroom resources will be maintained by the S.P.H.E co-ordinator.

SECTION 5. COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Parents

Parent representatives have been involved in the development of the S.P.H.E. policy. All parents of new students will be given a copy of the policy on request.

Staff

Staff are kept abreast of the aims and *raison d'être* of S.P.H.E. The school is mindful of the need to develop an awareness of the S.P.H.E. programme among the whole staff and will avail of opportunities at staff meetings to appraise staff of developments in the area. In this context the importance of the Health Promotion initiative cannot be underestimated as a vehicle for involving a broad range of staff in promoting an S.P.H.E.agenda.

SECTION 6. REVIEW, ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

6.1 Student programme assessment:

S.P.H.E. will not be formally examined at Certificate Examinations. Self-assessment by students, using self-assessment tools such as questionnaires and/or worksheets, will be seen as an integral part of the teaching, learning and assessment process. Self-assessment tools must be based on clearly stated criteria. Some outcomes of self-assessment must be private. Peer assessment might also be used to evaluate how well a group might work as a team.

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APPENDIX A - SPHE PLAN

Stage 1. Review / stocktake of current provision

A review of the current provision in relation to SPHE has been conducted during 2018/19 which will form the basis for the development of the subject in the coming years.

INVENTORY OF STRUCTURES IN THE SCHOOL IN RELATION TO S.P.H.E.

PROCESS STRUCTURES		Status as of Sept 2019	Issues identified for further action in plan for 2019/20
S.P.H.E. co-ordinator	Yes	Ms. J. O'Donoghue	
S.P.H.E. policy committee	Yes	Grúpa Stiúrtha	
S.P.H.E. Teacher Meetings	Yes	Occur at staff planning days and informally	
Care Structures:			
Guidance and counselling service	Yes	Guidance Counsellor and a referral system to outside agencies	
Chaplain Pastoral Care team	Yes	Full-Time Chaplain	
Class Tutor System	Yes	Supports the needs of the student & serves as an important link person for the student with the school	

Policy procedures:			
Discipline procedures	Yes	Ratified by the Board.	
Homework and study policy.	Yes	Ratified by the Board.	
Bullying policy procedures	Yes	Policy ratified by Board and reviewed on an annual basis	
Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement	Yes	Ratified y the Board and reviewed on an annual basis	

Communication structures:			
Structures to inform	Yes	Notice boards in the staffroom Digital Signage systems throughout the school VShare notices Email and Office 365	
Structures for communication between Tutors, Year Heads and subject teachers regarding students	Yes	Great effort has been made to forward relevant information to staff on a need to know basis. Email & Office 365 VShare	
Newsletters, School Website & Twitter Feed	Yes	Three newsletters per year communicate events and information Website & Twitter feed linked and are regularly updated	
Parents' Advisory Committee	Yes	Monthly Meetings followed by debriefing with Principal and Deputy Principal	
Student structures.			
Mentoring Programmes	Yes	Working very well	3 rd Yr applicants for TY to receive training before the end of the year
Students Council	Yes	Working very well	
Student training in Leadership	Yes	Aimed at Student Mentors	
Extra-Curricular Activities	Yes	There is a large range of activities available in the school.	

Programme Provision			
Junior Cycle Programme	Yes	One class period per week to all classes in First, Second and Third Year	
Senior Cycle Programme	Yes	RSE aspect of the course is taught during R.E. One SPHE class per week for TY students	Guest speakers, eg AWARE Life Skills Programme compliment the schools' curriculum
Learning Support	Yes	Provided to all who qualify	One staff member undertaking the Postgraduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs 2019-20
Child Protection & Safeguarding Statement	Yes	In compliance with DES and HSE Guidelines.	

Appendix B: Parental Request for Withdrawal from the RSE Programme

What we do if a request for withdrawal from the RSE programme is made by a parent:

- a) we discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent and if appropriate attempt to reassure them (initially such discussion takes place at a meeting with the Year Head and SPHE Co-ordinator, the Principal may become involved if necessary)
- b) we consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents - care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the RSE programme and the entitlement of the other pupils, e.g. it may be appropriate and desirable to have single sex classes for some sections of the RSE programme;
- c) we attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education,
- d) we also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers;
- e) we offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.

Signed: E. O'Sullivan Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 22/09/2019

Signed: P. Ó Síodhcháin Principal

Date: 22/09/2019

Date of Next Review: Sept 2021