Sample SPHE Policy

Downloadable resource

The following is a sample SPHE school policy. You can edit it to suit your own school’s needs by downloading the document from FolensHIVE ([www.folenshive.ie](http://www.folenshive.ie)).



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| Introduction to Social, Personal and Health Education (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. It helps them to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. |
| Aims of SPHE  Building on the aims of SPHE in primary school, at post-primary level SPHE aims to:   * Build students’ self-awareness and positive self-worth * Develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives * Empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others * Enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society |
| How SPHE Links with Our School Ethos  Our school ethos states that our school aims to ensure that every pupil receives the best education in a calm, caring environment, thus encouraging the development of self-esteem, mutual respect and a sense of justice and care for others. The aims of SPHE coincide with our school ethos, and through teaching SPHE, our school ethos should be upheld and reinforced. |
| SPHE Class Organisation, Timetabling and Teaching  The recommended time allocation for SPHE is 100 hours, or about one class period per week. In this school SPHE is taught for one period per week in First, Second and Third Year. If possible, the maximum number of students in a class is 20. All teachers who teach SPHE have expressed an interest in doing so and will receive the induction training for new SPHE teachers as soon as possible in that school year. Teachers assigned to SPHE must have an understanding of and a familiarity with the methodologies associated with education in this area. SPHE should not be assigned to teachers without consultation. |
| Outline of the Content and Teaching Methods for SPHE  SPHE is a core pillar of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme. The six indicators of wellbeing – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware – describe what is important for young people and their wellbeing. The SPHE course supports young people to develop all six indicators of wellbeing.  This Junior Cycle course in SPHE is designed to support students in developing a positive sense of self and a capacity to care for themselves and others. It is designed around four interconnected strands and three cross-cutting elements: awareness, dialogue, and reflection and action. |

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| Strand 1: Understanding Myself and Others  This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and self-esteem and building some of the foundational skills and dispositions needed for healthy relationships and to thrive in life, including communicating and negotiating, listening, showing empathy, respecting difference, and self-management/self-regulation. |
| Strand 2: Making Healthy Choices  This strand offers opportunities for students to consider how they can make healthy choices to support their wellbeing. It explores what being healthy might look like for a teenager, what helps or gets in the way of making healthy choices and how to access reliable information to support good choices. Students will also practise the skills needed for making healthy decisions and come to understand contextual factors, such as family, peer, media and social pressures, that influence decisions. |
| Strand 3: Relationships and Sexuality  This strand explores the cognitive, physical, emotional and social aspects of relationships and sexuality through a positive, inclusive, rights and responsibilities-based approach. The focus is on family relationships, friendships, romantic and potential sexual relationships in the future. |
| Strand 4: Emotional Wellbeing  This strand primarily focuses on nurturing emotional wellbeing and promoting positive mental health.  It helps students develop problem-solving and coping skills for dealing with the emotional ups and downs of life, explores how they can support themselves and others in challenging times and discusses where/how to find support, if needed. |
| Teaching Methods  Teaching methods are discussed at the subject meetings and the preferred teaching methods used are up to the individual teacher. There is a strong emphasis on experiential learning in the SPHE classroom. Examples of some of the methods used are as follows:   * Group activities and projects * Pair work * Class discussion * Debates * Guest speakers * Watching videos and listening to case studies * Research and class projects |
| Children with Different Needs  Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by students with special needs. The learning support and resource teachers will collaborate with class teachers to support and supplement the work done in the classroom where necessary.  We will liaise with trained professionals/appropriate agencies when dealing with sensitive issues such as bereavement or loss to ensure that the children involved are fully supported. |

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| Resources for SPHE  The book used is *SPHE for Wellbeing*, which comes with many additional resources, such as videos, quizzes and games, audio tracks of case studies and weblinks. Where required, teachers should use recommended resources from the [SPHE/RSE Toolkit on Curriculum Online](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE-2023/SPHE-toolkit/).  Other resources are kept in the SPHE folder, which is accessible to all SPHE teachers, both online and via a hard copy in the SPHE office.  All resources used in SPHE should be reviewed by the teacher to ascertain suitability for their class. |
| Policies and Programmes that Support SPHE   * Child Safeguarding Statement * Anti-Bullying Policy * Substance Use Policy * Code of Behaviour * Enrolment Policy * Health and Safety Policy * Acceptable Usage Policy |
| Cross-curricular Links  SPHE has links with home economics, CSPE, science, religion and PE. |
| Homework  SPHE homework, if prescribed in SPHE, will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class. |
| Staff Development  [Enter teacher name]: SPHE induction for new teachers, [enter date].  [Enter teacher name]: SPHE induction for new teachers, [enter date].  [Enter teacher name]: SPHE induction for new teachers, [enter date]; Be Safe, Be Webwise, [enter date]; Senior Cycle RSE, [enter date]. |
| Management of Sensitive Issues, Confidentiality and Referral  When certain issues such as bereavement are going to be taught, the SPHE teacher will liaise with the school counsellor and class tutor beforehand. Students may be referred to the school counsellor, who may counsel them or refer them to appropriate outside agencies when needed.   |  | | --- | | All staff in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in the Children First guidelines and the Department of Education and Skills document called Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.  The board of management of this school has appointed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as the designated liaison person (DLP) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as the deputy DLP. |   The staff and management of this school have agreed that:   * All concerns/disclosures involving child protection/child welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the DLP (or the deputy DLP where appropriate). * Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making that report. * They will strictly adhere to maintaining confidentiality. Information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should only be given on a need-to-know basis. |
| Role and Involvement of Visitors to the SPHE Class  The school management should approve all visitors to the SPHE class before the visit is arranged and with due regard to Garda vetting procedures.  The role of the visitor is to supplement the learning and teaching in SPHE class and should not replace the role of the SPHE teacher. |
| How Parents Will Be Informed and Involved (Initial and Ongoing)  Parents are informed about the content of SPHE at the First Year parents’ open evening and through an email that is sent to all First Year parents in September. Information on SPHE is also on the school website, which is updated annually. Parents can also communicate with teachers at parent-teacher meetings. |
| How the Whole Staff Will Be Informed and Involved  Relevant teachers, such as the year head, class tutors or school counsellors, will liaise with individual SPHE teachers when necessary. |
| Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting  An assessment for learning approach is used in each lesson through group work, pair work, the use of case studies and peer assessment. Students reflect on what they have learned by completing the ‘Reflect’ section in their book at the end of each lesson and the Strand Reflection after each strand. At the end of the year, the teacher will give the students an overall comment, having examined their books and reflected on their performance and participation in class. This comment will then be included on their report card. |
| How SPHE Is Supported by the Whole School  SPHE is supported in our school through a supportive school environment. Every teacher and staff member, every class and every extracurricular activity has offered, and continues to offer, opportunities for enhancing the personal and social development of the student. |
| How SPHE Will Be Reviewed and Evaluated  The programme structure and materials will be continuously evaluated at subject meetings by SPHE teachers. Management and parents will be invited to contribute to this on a yearly basis. |

Summary

Download this sample SPHE policy from FolensHIVE and edit to suit your school requirements.

Letter for parents on SPHE course

Although it is not essential, some schools may choose to inform parents about the topics that are covered in SPHE. Below is a sample letter that may be used to do so. You can edit it to suit your own school’s requirements.

Dear parent/guardian,

This letter is to inform you about Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), which is taught for one period each week in First, Second and Third Year. Students are familiar with SPHE, as it is covered as part of the primary-school curriculum.

In line with Department of Education requirements, we are teaching from the official SPHE Junior Cycle curriculum (2023). The key areas of the curriculum are: Making Healthy Choices, Understanding Myself and Others, Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) and Emotional Wellbeing.

Some topics are sensitive in nature but they will always be covered in an age-appropriate manner. More information about the SPHE curriculum can found by visiting the [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie) website and selecting Junior Cycle – Short Courses – SPHE.

The textbook we are using is SPHE for Wellbeing, published by Folens. It is fully in line with the SPHE curriculum and we feel that it is the most suitable publication for this subject. The content is covered in an age-appropriate manner and, in each lesson of the student book, there is a ‘Reflect’ section that parents/guardians may sign. This is a useful way of keeping you informed of what topic was covered in SPHE class that week. It may also help to initiate discussion about that topic at home.

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for the personal development of their children. We aim to complement that role in SPHE class, and hope that you can support the SPHE programme at home by communicating with your child about their own growth, development, friendships, decisions and health.

We welcome any comments you might have regarding SPHE. If you have any queries or would like to discuss the programme further, please contact the school for an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SPHE co-ordinator/teacher

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I have received the letter from the SPHE co-ordinator explaining the content of Junior Cycle SPHE to me.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Units of Learning

Downloadable resource

The following is a sample subject plan for Third Year SPHE. The lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3 are listed for each unit of learning. The idea is to use and edit these templates for your yearly planning. The lessons in the Student Book are carefully planned, with activities for each class. You can download this subject plan from FolensHIVE and edit to suit your school’s requirements.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date for reflection: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Resources: SPHE for Wellbeing Student Book, PowerPoint slides and Teacher’s Guide, resources as per subject plan, SPHE curriculum online and resources linked in the [SPHE toolkit](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE-2023/SPHE-toolkit/) on Curriculum Online.

September to Midterm 1

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| --- | --- | --- |
| UNIT OF LEARNING | | |
| Unit Title  Settling In | | Teacher Notes |
| Duration  5 weeks | |
| Lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3  Lesson 1 – Settling Back In  Lesson 2 – My Opportunities  Lesson 3 – Getting Started  Lesson 4 – Getting Focused  (The digital resources available for these lessons are listed later in this Teacher’s Guide under ‘Section 1: Lessons, Learning Outcomes and Digital Resources’.) | |
| Learning Outcomes  1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9 | Related LOs  2.1 |
| Learning Experiences   * Students revisit and develop ground rules/a group contract for their SPHE class. * Students discuss privilege and how gender can affect privilege, then debate whether boys and girls should all learn in co-educational settings. * Students analyse how they learn and set goals for their learning. | |
| Assessment Reporting  Portfolio piece: Students create a study skills presentation for Third Years and include samples of study aids that they have made. | |
| Reflection  (Mention what worked well, and what can be changed or improved.) | |

September to Midterm 2

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| UNIT OF LEARNING | | |
| Unit Title  Being Myself | | Teacher Notes |
| Duration  4 weeks | |
| Lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3  Lesson 5 – Knowing Myself  Lesson 6 – Self-Expression  Lesson 7 – Gender Bias Ends with Us  (The digital resources available for these lessons are listed later in this Teacher’s Guide under ‘Section 1: Lessons, Learning Outcomes and Digital Resources’.) | |
| Learning Outcomes  1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7 | Related LOs  2.1, 4.2 |
| Learning Experiences   * Students practise mindfulness. * Students complete a questionnaire that helps them analyse their type of intelligence. * Students practise self-expression by writing a letter to themselves. * Students watch a video about gender stereotyping and discuss how gender stereotyping may affect career choices. | |
| Assessment Reporting  Portfolio piece: Students read about the ‘Women’s Rights’ campaign on the ActionAid Ireland website or search for ‘Gender Equality’ on the UNICEF Ireland website.  They then prepare a presentation on this issue and consider organising a fundraiser to raise awareness and support the issue. | |
| Reflection  (Mention what worked well, and what can be changed or improved.) | |

Midterm to Christmas

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| UNIT OF LEARNING | | |
| Unit Title  A Healthy Me | | Teacher Notes |
| Duration  4 weeks | |
| Lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3  Lesson 8 – Supporting Wellbeing  Lesson 9 – Gut Health  Lesson 10 – Get Moving  (The digital resources available for these lessons are listed later in this Teacher’s Guide under ‘Section 2: Lessons, Learning Outcomes and Digital Resources’.) | |
| Learning Outcomes  2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 2.10 | Related LOs  4.3, 1.9 |
| Learning Experiences   * Students discuss and reflect on factors that affect their wellbeing and map this on a chart. * Students list some ways in which teenagers can incorporate NEAT activities into daily life and choose one specific NEAT goal for the upcoming week. * Students take part in physical activity. * Students examine food labels and list foods they like that can support their gut health. | |
| Assessment Reporting  Portfolio piece: Students plan a wellbeing activity for their class or year that involves exercising together or going on a break from social media, or both. | |
| Reflection  (Mention what worked well, and what can be changed or improved.) | |

January to Midterm

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| UNIT OF LEARNING | | |
| Unit Title  Minding Myself | | Teacher Notes |
| Duration  3–4 weeks | |
| Lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3  Lesson 11 – Minding Myself Online  Lesson 12 – Drug Awareness  Lesson 13 – Alcohol  (The digital resources available for these lessons are listed later in this Teacher’s Guide under ‘Section 2: Lessons, Learning Outcomes and Digital Resources’.) | |
| Learning Outcomes  2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10 | Related LOs  3.8, 4.2 |
| Learning Experiences   * Students debate the age that they consider appropriate for social media use. * Students create an online sharing awareness campaign for their school community. * Students create an information leaflet or social media post for peers on drug or alcohol awareness. | |
| Assessment Reporting  Portfolio piece: Students write a reflective piece on the meaning of gender identity. | |
| Reflection  (Mention what worked well, and what can be changed or improved.) | |

Midterm to Easter 1

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| UNIT OF LEARNING | | |
| Unit Title  Relationships | | Teacher Notes |
| Duration  4 weeks | |
| Lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3  Lesson 14 – Building Healthy Relationships  Lesson 15 – Recognsising Unhealthy Relationships  Lesson 16 – Understanding Sexuality  Lesson 17 – Consent  (The digital resources available for these lessons are listed later in this Teacher’s Guide under ‘Section 3: Lessons, Learning Outcomes and Digital Resources’.) | |
| Learning Outcomes  3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7 | Related LOs  2.4, 1.2 |
| Learning Experiences   * Students assess the values that are important to them in relationships. * Students reflect on the causes of conflict in relationships. * Students analyse and examine their own personal boundaries. | |
| Assessment Reporting  Portfolio piece: Students create a work of art depicting the range of emotions experienced in friendship (see Student Book). | |
| Reflection  (Mention what worked well, and what can be changed or improved.) | |

Midterm to Easter 2

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| UNIT OF LEARNING | | |
| Unit Title  Healthy Relationships | | Teacher Notes |
| Duration  4–5 weeks | |
| Lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3  Lesson 18 – Sex and Relationships  Lesson 19 – Sexual Health  Lesson 20 – STIs  Lesson 21 – Reproductive Health  (The digital resources available for these lessons are listed later in this Teacher’s Guide under ‘Section 3: Lessons, Learning Outcomes and Digital Resources’.) | |
| Learning Outcomes  3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11 | Related LOs  2.7, 2.9 |
| Learning Experiences   * Students reflect on the variety of relationships in their lives. * Students demonstrate their understanding of terms relating to conception and menstruation. * Students consider the advantages and disadvantages of different contraceptives. * Students research the symptoms and treatment of common STIs. | |
| Assessment Reporting  Portfolio piece: Students create a quiz for their classmates on the topic of reproductive health (e.g. Kahoot, Quizlet or Blooket). | |
| Reflection  (Mention what worked well, and what can be changed or improved.) | |

Easter to Summer 1

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| UNIT OF LEARNING | | |
| Unit Title  Standing Up | | Teacher Notes |
| Duration  2 weeks | |
| Lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3  Lesson 22 – Mapping My Wellbeing  Lesson 23 – Mindfulness  (The digital resources available for these lessons are listed later in this Teacher’s Guide under ‘Section 4: Lessons, Learning Outcomes and Digital Resources’.) | |
| Learning Outcomes  4.6, 4.7, 4.8 | Related LOs  1.9, 2.4, 3.2 |
| Learning Experiences   * Students analyse factors that have impacted on their wellbeing. * Students research and practise a variety of mindfulness techniques. | |
| Assessment Reporting  Portfolio piece: Students research a mindful technique and teach it to their class. | |
| Reflection  (Mention what worked well, and what can be changed or improved.) | |

Easter to Summer 2

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| UNIT OF LEARNING | | |
| Unit Title  I Can do This | | Teacher Notes |
| Duration  4–5 weeks | |
| Lessons from SPHE for Wellbeing 3  Lesson 24 – Challenging Times  Lesson 25 – Resilience  Lesson 26 – My Wellbeing Plan  (The digital resources available for these lessons are listed later in this Teacher’s Guide under ‘Section 4: Lessons, Learning Outcomes and Digital Resources’.) | |
| Learning Outcomes  4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.9 | Related LOs  1.7, 2.5, 2.6 |
| Learning Experiences   * Students investigate and analyse mental health support services. * Students identify skills that help with resilience and coping. * Students reflect on how social media and bullying behaviour online can affect their emotional wellbeing. * Students develop a personal wellbeing plan. | |
| Assessment Reporting  Portfolio piece: Students investigate a particular mental health service. | |
| Reflection  (Mention what worked well, and what can be changed or improved.) | |