



St Louis Secondary School SPHE Policy

1. Mission Statement

St. Louis Secondary School Monaghan is an all-girls Catholic voluntary secondary school, founded by the Sisters of St. Louis and under the trusteeship of Le Cheile Catholic Schools Trust.

Our school recognises that each pupil who enrolls is unique and has different gifts, as well as different needs. It is our wish that our pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence, and with life skills and attitudes, which enable them to lead lives which may contribute to the betterment of society. We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self-image, and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential. We see ourselves as working in partnership with parents, to develop the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment characterised by care and justice.

2. Aims of SPHE

Junior Cycle 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 and
- Enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society.

Senior Cycle SPHE aims to support students in making choices for health and wellbeing.

The objectives for SPHE in senior cycle are to:

- Develop self-awareness through opportunities to reflect on thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings
- Enhance students' knowledge and understanding of essential health concepts and the wider influences on health and wellbeing to enable informed decision making
- Develop students' self-efficacy; the confidence to think and behave independently especially in the face of social pressure
- Strengthen students' capacity to empathise with another person's situation, feelings and motives in order to enhance relationships with other people
- Develop coping strategies for adolescence and adult life in support of greater resilience
- Develop students' health literacy skills, including the ability to obtain, critically evaluate and act on health information in support of health and wellbeing
 - Develop a willingness to participate in the creation and maintenance of healthy communities and environments.

3. Whole School Provision

Junior Cycle

SPHE is a core pillar of the junior cycle 400 hours of Wellbeing programme. Junior Cycle SPHE is a 100-hour short course, taught over the three years of Junior Cycle. It is timetabled for one period (60 mins) per week.

Senior Cycle

Senior Cycle SPHE is provided for students in TY, 5th and 6th Year. It is timetabled for one period (60 mins) per week.

LCA students study Social Education which encompasses teaching and learning around SPHE and Life Skills.

In addition, St. Louis provides the following formal and informal activities and support structures to promote the general well-being of students:

- Tutor Time
- A range of Extra-Curricular activities
- Work Experience TY and LCA
- Student Leadership: Coiste
- Cairde
- Anti-Bullying month
- Student Support Team
- Wellbeing Committee/Wellbeing Week
- Critical Incident Management Team
- First year Induction programme
- Guidance
- School Counsellor
- School policies: Anti-Bullying; RSE; Code of Behaviour, etc.

4. SPHE Curriculum

Junior Cycle

First and Second Year Provision 2022/23

As per circular 0028/2023, (<https://bit.ly/3tV26Zw>), First and second Year students entering St. Louis in the academic year 24/25 will follow the 2023 Junior Cycle SPHE Short Course Specification, (<https://bit.ly/3tPFB8s>).

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.



Third Year Provision 2022/23

Third year students in the academic year 24/25 will follow the 2016 Junior Cycle SPHE Short Course Specification, (<https://bit.ly/3Fvnszv>).

This junior short course in SPHE is designed to enable students to develop a positive sense of themselves and a commitment to caring for themselves and others. It is designed around four strands of learning:

Strand 1: Who Am I

Strand 2: Minding Myself and Others

Strand 3: Team UP

Strand 4: My Mental Health

Senior Cycle

Senior Cycle SPHE is primarily planned using the NCCA 2011 Senior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework [2011 Curriculum Framework](#).

Seven modules have been devised which focus on what is important for students in senior cycle to know, understand and be able to do in order to make and maintain healthy lifestyle decisions.

The seven modules are:

- Mental health
- TY Future Leaders Wellbeing Module
- Gender Studies
- Substance Use
- Relationships and Sexuality Education

- Health and Wellbeing
- Personal Safety

However, Curriculum Specification for Senior Cycle SPHE <https://tinyurl.com/537s8zd4> is available for implementation in schools for the 2024/25 school year. However, schools have until September 2027 to introduce the specification for all students entering fifth year, with the exception of students following the Leaving Certificate Applied. The new specification will replace Social Education modules I and II of the Leaving Certificate Applied and this change will apply for all LCA students entering 5th year in 2025.

An overview of learning in the Senior Cycle SPHE Curriculum

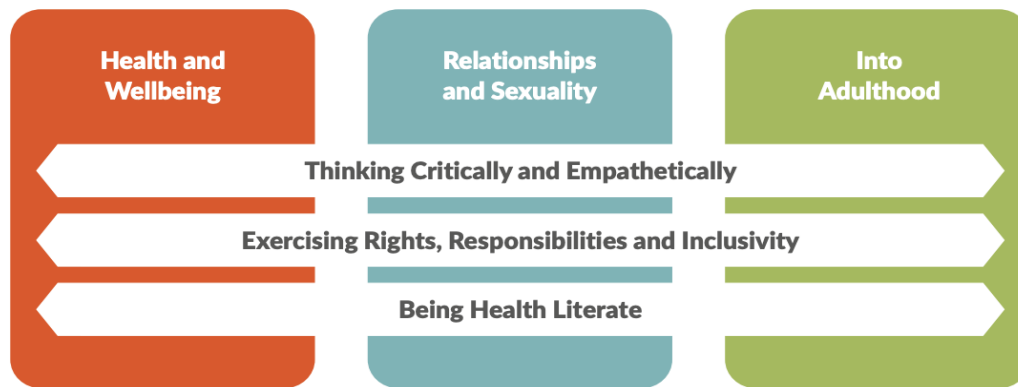


Figure 3: Visual overview of Senior Cycle SPHE

In the case of TY SPHE, NCCA will provide a new TY section on the NCCA SPHE Toolkit with lots of guidance and resources. In addition, three 10- hour SPHE micro-modules specifically for TY are currently under development. These can be used or adapted by schools in planning for teaching and learning in TY SPHE.

5. Pedagogical Approaches

SPHE is primarily skills-based and so pedagogical approaches in SPHE should be experiential in nature with an emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. The Experiential Learning Cycle (<https://tinyurl.com/4k3hx6xe>) provides a useful framework for planning for meaningful learning in SPHE. These approaches will be student centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of students.

The four strands are underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in SPHE. These are:

- Awareness
- Dialogue
- Reflection
- Action.

The SPHE specification offers opportunities to support all key skills of Junior Cycle. Teachers can build elements of particular key skills into their classroom planning.

Suitable Methodologies may include and are not limited to:

- Group Work
- Group Discussion
- Brainstorming
- Case Studies
- Artwork
- Games/icebreakers
- Written Reflection
- Mindfulness
- Project Work
- Walking Debates
- Quizzes

The following documents and resources outline effective pedagogical approaches in SPHE:

- Effective Pedagogical Approaches in SPHE, <https://bit.ly/3QwWCNI>
- [Myself as an SPHE Teacher](#)

6. Class Organisation

Junior Cycle

Classes are taught in Tutor groups. Where possible, at junior cycle, class tutors are assigned the role of SPHE teacher for a three year cycle. The purpose of this is to build a positive classroom relationship and to ensure continuity. If timetabling does not allow for this then a teacher from the SPHE team is assigned.

Senior Cycle

Classes are taught in Tutor groups. Senior Cycle SPHE is modular in nature. Each module is delivered by teachers with expertise or training in a particular area. Classes rotate from teacher to teacher.

Teaching and Learning Environment

In organising the teaching and learning environment, the teacher will ensure the creation of a safe and inclusive classroom environment using NCCA support documents.

The following strategies can help create a safe classroom environment: What Makes a Safe SPHE Classroom? (<https://bit.ly/3FzNHod>)

The following strategies can help create a classroom where everyone has a sense of belonging, What Makes an Inclusive SPHE Classroom? (<https://bit.ly/45N2maq>)

7. Staff Development

SPHE teachers are encouraged to register with Oide.ie for all school support and for professional learning events. The school will support the training and professional development of teachers delivering the Junior Cycle SPHE specifications and the Senior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework.

8. Resources

Extensive resources are available to support teaching and learning in the resources section of the SPHE toolkits. The Toolkit does not provide a prescriptive list of teaching and learning resources and it is important to decide what resources are best suited to supporting learning in the context of students' needs, stage of development and school context. The following questions will support SPHE teachers with resource choices:

Choosing SPHE Resources – Questions to Consider (<https://bit.ly/3FzklGF>)

Junior Cycle

First Year Resources:

- The HSE have developed [Junior Cycle SPHE Resources](#), to support the teaching and learning of the learning outcomes from the 2023 redeveloped SPHE specification. The 1st and 2nd year set are currently available with a 3rd year set to follow.
- NCCA SPHE Toolkit also contains a section titled '[Resources for teaching and learning in SPHE](#)'.
- Catholic schools may also avail of RSE resources made available by the Catholic Education Partnership. These resources are available at <https://tinyurl.com/ab3vmcs8>

Second Year:

- The HSE have developed [Junior Cycle SPHE Resources](#), to support the teaching and learning of the learning outcomes from the 2023 redeveloped SPHE specification. The 1st and 2nd year set are currently available with a 3rd year set to follow.
- NCCA SPHE Toolkit also contains a section titled '[Resources for teaching and learning in SPHE](#)'.
- Catholic schools may also avail of RSE resources made available by the Catholic Education Partnership. These resources are available at <https://tinyurl.com/ab3vmcs8>
- FUSE Anti-Bullying: <https://tinyurl.com/u3td8h3n>

Third Year:

- SPHE Health and Wellbeing 3

Senior Cycle

Resources can be accessed from:

- SPHE Online Resource Portal <https://bit.ly/46L5K77>
- Curriculum Online Resources for Learning and Teaching SPHE/RSE <https://tinyurl.com/2r2nwabr>
- Curriculum Online 2024 Resources for Learning and Teaching SPHE <https://tinyurl.com/y7dyewkj> (These resources are offered in the interim as a support for planning.)

TY

TY Future Leaders Wellbeing Module

- GAA Future Leaders Transition Year Course <https://tinyurl.com/2467y95c>
- [YouTube - Guided Meditations](#)
- Walk In My Shoes <https://tinyurl.com/52v75uyt>

Substance Use:

- Know The Score <https://bit.ly/497rawB>

Gender Studies:

- Growing UP Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender <https://shorturl.at/fjEW8>

RSE:

- Relationships and Sex Education KS 3-4 Lesson Pack (PSHE Approved Resource) <https://shorturl.at/ctM58>
- B4U decide <https://tinyurl.com/65kssa5w>
- TRUST Resource. Although this has been removed by the DE to be updated. Teachers in St Louis feel that there are still some good lessons within this resource and will continue to access these lessons and update these to be more reflective of the students in our school and the ever changing world they are growing up in.

5th

Personal Safety:

- PDST SPHE Personal Safety Resource Pack <https://bit.ly/46KdPZv>
- What is Coco's Law - Webwise <https://tinyurl.com/23tx6krt>

RSE:

- YES Project <https://tinyurl.com/bde5thz2>
- NSPCC Talk Relationships KS 3-4 (PSHE approved resource) <https://tinyurl.com/muy846zh>
- Consent Lesson Pack KS3-5 PSHE Association <https://tinyurl.com/cecafxhr>
- TRUST (See TY)

Mental Health

- Mental Health Matters: Available to view SPHE Online Resource Portal <https://bit.ly/46L5K77>
- Mindout: <https://shorturl.at/puvET>

6th Year

Health and Wellbeing

- Mental Health Educate <https://tinyurl.com/3ww5nsin>
- Youtube - Guided Meditations
- HSE Mental Health <https://tinyurl.com/343v5ah6>
- Being Mental Health Literate and Understanding Where and How to get Help. <https://tinyurl.com/8xp23yme>
- Young Minds Stress Bucket <https://tinyurl.com/48mmyy3r>
- Yoga session <https://tinyurl.com/78j5jz3j>
- Walk In My Shoes <https://tinyurl.com/52v75uyt>

RSE

- B4U decide <https://tinyurl.com/65kssa5w>
- PSHE Association, Teaching About Consent, KS3-5 PSHE Association <https://tinyurl.com/cecafxhr>
- YES Project <https://tinyurl.com/bde5thz2>

- Medway Public Health Directorate Relationships and Sex Education Packs KS4 (PSHE Approved resource) <https://tinyurl.com/8e4k6j58>
- HSE 'What You Need to Know About Contraception' <https://tinyurl.com/aeuv84wr>
- HSE 'Your Guide to Sexually Transmitted Infections' <https://tinyurl.com/5dmv6uks>
- TRUST (see TY)

Substance USE

- Know The Score <https://bit.ly/497rawB>

Some lessons and resources have been modified and selected to take account of Irish context, particularly resources from PSHE Association.

AEN

The following guidelines [NCSE SPHE Guidelines](#) are designed to support teachers of students with mild general learning disabilities who are accessing the junior cycle SPHE curriculum, to develop the skills necessary to care for themselves and others, and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

Assessment and Reporting

Junior Cycle

First and Second Year Students – 2023 Specification.

The purpose of assessment and reporting at this stage of education is to support learning. The SPHE course supports a wide variety of approaches to assessment, ([SPHE-Teaching-Approaches-Creative-approaches-to-assessment-in-SPHE_RSE_ef1 \(14\).pdf](#))

It is envisaged that most assessment in SPHE will be formative in nature and students will provide evidence of their learning through multiple means of expression, including oral, written, visual, digital, music and art-based pieces. In these contexts, students, with their teachers and peers, will reflect upon and make judgements about their own and others' learning by looking at the quality of particular pieces of work, and they will agree the next steps in their learning based on feedback they give and receive. In this way, ongoing formative assessment can support the student in their learning journey and in preparing for the Classroom-Based Assessment related to this course.

Considering the diversity of learners and contexts, and to support maximum flexibility and choice, students will engage in **one** of the following CBAs.

Title	Format	Student preparation
Portfolio of my learning and reflection on learning in SPHE	Individual selection of items of work, such as digital, written texts, posters, audio-visual or multi-modal	Students will choose three pieces of work, completed over time and linked to different strands of learning within the course, and present these accompanied by a reflection on why each piece was chosen and how it marked important learning for the student in SPHE.

OR

Title	Format	Student preparation
Taking action for SPHE	Individual or small group project that can be presented in a wide range of formats	Students will, over a specified time, with support and guidance from the teacher, research, report and reflect on an action they have taken to raise awareness about or promote an aspect of health/wellbeing studied in the SPHE short course.

Third year Students – 2016 Specification

Essentially, the purpose of assessment and reporting at this stage of education is to support learning. This short course supports a wide variety of approaches to assessment. Some learning outcomes lend themselves to once-off assessment, others to assessment on an ongoing basis as students engage in different learning activities such as discussing, explaining, researching, presenting, planning and taking action. In these contexts, students with their teachers and peers reflect upon and make judgements about their own and others' learning by looking at the quality of particular pieces of work. They plan the next steps in their learning, based on feedback they give and receive. Ongoing assessment can support the student in their learning journey and in preparing for the Classroom-Based Assessment related to this short course.

It is envisaged that students will provide evidence of their learning in a variety of ways including digital media, audio recordings and written pieces.

Students will complete one Classroom-Based Assessment based on learning outcomes in more than one strand of the course. The Classroom-Based Assessment will be designed in consultation with the students. A particular purpose of the Classroom-Based Assessment will be to facilitate developmental feedback to students during their engagement with the task and at the end of the process. The Classroom-Based Assessment for the SPHE short course can be completed in second or third year. The Classroom-Based Assessment can be produced in written, digital, visual or audio formats and it may be supported in these formats through the use of an interview or presentation.

Student progress and achievement in SPHE short courses, both in ongoing assessments and in the specific Classroom-Based Assessment relating to this short course will be communicated to parents in interim reporting and in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Senior Cycle Assessment

Assessment in SPHE is concerned with assessment at two levels:

- assessment for learning which takes place as part of teaching and learning
- assessment of learning, which takes place at the completion of an area of learning and/or at the completion of the course.

Assessment of learning is about gathering and interpreting the evidence of learning in SPHE over two years. The outcomes of students' learning in SPHE are personal in nature but some may also be suitable for sharing. Assessment of learning therefore is more appropriately carried out within the class and school. Students assemble their selection of evidence in a student-centred SPHE portfolio where the content is the work of the student and the student has selected what to include in the SPHE portfolio. Guidance on assessment approaches for Senior Cycle is available: [2011 Curriculum Framework](#).

9. Sensitive Issues

Discussions on sensitive/challenging topics can be challenging, but they can become opportunities for learning as they challenge students to think about and question not only their opinions, values, beliefs and worldviews but also those of others. Sensitive/ challenging topics should not be avoided, but they do need careful facilitation. The following Making the Most of Sensitive/Challenging Discussions <https://tinyurl.com/yc85d83t> provides guidance.

10. Participation

Parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their children from RSE classes (indeed any classes) following consultation with school authorities (JMB Bulletin 55, 2022/2023).

11. Limits To Confidentiality

SPHE/RSE teachers should inform students of the limits to confidentiality and that teachers do not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality.

The school's *Child Protection Policy* and the *Children First Guidelines* (<https://tinyurl.com/mv99vsf7>) will be fully adhered to at all times.

12. Referrals

SPHE teachers may signpost in-school support and external support services which may be relevant to the class material. If individual issues emerge, the teacher may refer students to the supportive links within the school.

However, if a teacher receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected the teacher must follow the Child Protection Guidelines/Children First Guidelines and report the matter, without delay, to the Designated Liaison Person in the school. The following Dealing With Disclosure About Sexual Abuse <https://tinyurl.com/zahkcav2> provides guidance.

Every registered teacher, as a mandated person, has a statutory obligation to make his or her own mandated report to TUSLA when the concern about a child is at or above a threshold of harm as defined in the Children First Act, 2015. Therefore, in addition to reporting a concern to the DLP, registered teachers must also consider whether or not the concern is at or above the defined threshold of harm at which the registered teacher has his or her own statutory obligation under the Children First Act, 2015 to submit a mandated report to Tusla, regardless of whether or not the DLP reports the concern in question.

13. Visitors

When arranging for a speaker or visitor to the school, teachers should be guided by the school Visiting Speaker Policy.

Working With External Facilitators, (<https://tinyurl.com/5ypkvtfp>) also sets out some of the key questions and considerations to keep in mind when deciding to engage external support.

[Circular 0043/2018](#) provides schools with 'Best practice guidance for PP schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators'

14. Parents/Guardians

- St. Louis acknowledges the role of parents as our partners in education. sexualwellbeing.ie have created a resource **for parents** that supports having the RSE conversations in the home as the primary educators. [Making the Big Talk many small talks](#) comes with [nine support videos](#) to equip parents as the primary educators.
- The NCCA have also created an [Information for Parents](#) leaflet in relation to the redeveloped JC SPHE specification.

A copy of this policy will be made available for parents/guardians to view on the school website.

In the case of SPHE/RSE, parents are informed via school messaging service at the beginning of school year regarding SPHE/RSE and where they can view policies should they require further information.

15. Whole Staff

The SPHE policy is available for all staff to view by its inclusion on the school website, within school policy documents and in the SPHE department folder on the whole school Drive.

16. Review and Evaluated

The SPHE policy will be reviewed in line with the school's programme of school development planning.