

Scoil Phádraig



School Policy SPHE

SPHE

1. Introductory Statement

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Scoil Phádraig is a primary school under Catholic Patronage, located on Prosperous Road, Clane. It is an all-boys mainstream school with an enrolment of 484 pupils comprising of 19 classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class and 2 ASD classes.

This Policy on SPHE Provision in Scoil Phádraig was reviewed in 2023 and further reviewed on 11/02/2026.

The Policy was discussed and further developed by the teaching staff of Scoil Phádraig.

The Policy was discussed, accepted and ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Phádraig on 12/05/'26.

Recognising that Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a collective and shared responsibility, between all members of the whole school community, this SPHE Plan and formulation was led by the school Middle Management Team, informed by the views of staff, pupils, parents (via pupil/parent surveys) and the Board of Management (BOM), in accordance with the Primary Schools SPHE Curriculum. This review was carried out as part of the School Self-Evaluation process.

Rationale

Social, personal and health education provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the child and to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. Through the SPHE programme children can develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their actions and decisions in these areas of their lives both now and in the future. The purpose of this plan is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other relevant persons. The Plan sets out a structured programme and procedures for SPHE to: inform all members of the school community, provide a ready basis for teacher planning, both long and short- term, and familiarise new teachers with the approach adopted at Scoil Phádraig.

2. Mission and Ethos

Our Mission

- Scoil Phádraig is committed to promoting and protecting emotional, social, spiritual, physical & mental wellbeing in our whole school community.
- We strive to create an environment which has a whole school approach in providing support, understanding and intervention for all individuals in order to maintain their positive wellbeing and mental health.
- We aim to create a school environment which is inclusive & safe for students, staff & parents alike, where each child "realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing & has a sense

- We strive to build healthy, mutually respectful relationships among pupils, staff & parents.
- We actively promote equal opportunities for all.
- The wellbeing of our pupils is central to all elements of our teaching, communications & interactions.
- We do not solely view education as the passing on of knowledge and skills, but rather as the development of the whole person.
- It is our aspiration to encourage and foster independence, self-confidence, self-motivation and self-discipline so that our pupils are happy with themselves, others and the world in which they must live.
- Our everyday, lived experiences are based on the principles of Peace, Honesty and Respect.

"Ní neart go cur le chéile"

Our Ethos

- Scoil Phádraig Boys National School is a school with a Catholic ethos that is welcoming and inclusive of all members of our community, underpinned by the Christian values of Peace, Honesty and Respect.
- Our vision is for all our students, staff and those in our school community to have the support they need in order to build lifelong coping skills and thrive.
- We endeavour to provide a safe, happy environment for all of our pupils. We recognise neurodiversity and each child is encouraged to try his best and is afforded the opportunity to reach his full potential, academically, spiritually, socially, physically and emotionally.
- Having a positive culture, we actively promote student and staff emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- Our school will endeavour to promote, both individually and collectively, the personal and professional development of our staff within a collaborative and collegial setting. We will strive to offer the highest standards of teaching and learning to our pupils and provide them with the necessary skills for lifelong learning.
- We will provide opportunities for staff and students to engage in wellbeing-based activities on a regular basis.
- We will seek to ensure that all members of the school community work in partnership, having the best interests of our pupils at heart.

3. Vision, Aims & Objectives

Vision

Scoil Phádraig values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school environment. We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the learning and teaching that occurs both formally

and informally in the school and in the classroom. Through the SPHE programme we wish to assist children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The SPHE Programme should foster personal development, health and well-being of the child and help him/her create and maintain supportive relationships and to become active and responsible citizens in society.

Aims

The aims of the SPHE Plan for Scoil Phádraig are:

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- To enable the children to develop an awareness of their responsibilities to others in a caring community,
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To encourage the children to be active in determining their own learning
- To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future
- To develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life
- To enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world

Objectives

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the SPHE curriculum should enable the child to:

- be self-confident and have a positive sense of self-esteem
- develop a sense of personal responsibility and come to understand his sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction
- develop and enhance the social skills of communication, co-operation and conflict resolution
- create and maintain supportive relationships both now and in the future
- develop an understanding of healthy living, an ability to implement healthy behaviour and a willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health
- develop a sense of safety and an ability to protect himself from danger and abuse
- make decisions, solve problems and take appropriate actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- become aware of, and discerning about, the various influences on choices and decisions
- begin to identify, review and evaluate the values and attitudes that are held by individuals and society and to recognise that these affect thoughts and actions
- respect the environment and develop a sense of responsibility for its long-term care

- develop some of the skills and abilities necessary for participating fully in groups and in society
- become aware of some of the individual and community rights and responsibilities that come from living in a democracy
- begin to understand the concepts of personal, local, national, European and global identity
- appreciate and respect the diversity that exists in society and the positive contributions of various cultural, religious and social groups
- promote the values of a just and caring society in an age-appropriate manner and understand the importance of seeking truth and peace.

4. Curriculum Content

The school follows the NCCA SPHE curriculum as prescribed. Detailed curriculum content, strand unit organisation and programme resources are set out in the Whole School SPHE Plan.

5. Sensitive Issues

Sensitive Issues within the RSE Programme

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), alongside the Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes, is taught as a compulsory element of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in our school.

Sensitive topics will be addressed with care, professionalism and respect for the dignity of all. The school does not promote any particular lifestyle; rather, it promotes:

- Respect for all individuals
- Inclusivity
- Anti-bullying principles
- The dignity and worth of every person

RSE lessons are delivered by the class teacher and are scheduled during the school day. The language used at each class level will be age- and stage-appropriate and will follow the guidance outlined in the current Oide (formerly PDST) Sensitive Language Guidance. The *Busy Bodies* resource may be used where appropriate. Any additional resources or supplementary interventions must be approved in advance by the Principal and Board of Management, be age- and stage-appropriate, evidence-based, and consistent with the ethos of the school and the aims of the SPHE curriculum.

Parents/guardians will be informed of the content of RSE lessons, and links to relevant resources will be shared at least two weeks prior to the commencement of lessons where practicable.

Teachers will answer pupils' questions honestly, sensitively and within the limits of the primary school curriculum. If a question is considered inappropriate for a group setting, the teacher may:

- Provide access to a question box; and/or
- Speak with the child individually; and/or
- Encourage the child to discuss the matter further with their parent(s)/guardian(s).

Teachers will not provide information beyond the scope of the primary school curriculum.

In delivering RSE, the school will also take account of all relevant policies and procedures, including the Child Safeguarding Statement, RSE Policy, SPHE Policy and Substance Misuse Policy. The SPHE Teacher Guidelines provide criteria for the selection of appropriate resources and materials.

While every effort is made to ensure that sensitive topics are addressed in a structured and age-appropriate manner within the classroom, the Board of Management cannot accept responsibility for information of a sensitive nature that pupils may discuss or encounter outside the classroom environment, including in the playground, on school transport, or on their journey to and from school.

6. Parental Involvement

Parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children in matters of relationships and sexuality.

The school supports parents by:

- Informing parents in advance of sensitive lessons.
- Providing access to curriculum outlines
- Offering opportunities to discuss concerns with the class teacher or Principal

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from specific RSE lessons by informing the Principal in writing. The school will make reasonable supervisory arrangements during this time.

7. Child Safeguarding

This policy operates in conjunction with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and procedures under:

- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools
- Children First Act

Mr Cathal Carr, Principal, is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). Mrs Maria Tully, Deputy Principal, is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLPP).

If a disclosure is made during an RSE lesson, the teacher will follow school safeguarding procedures. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where a child protection concern arises.

While the school delivers RSE in an age-appropriate, structured and sensitive manner within the classroom setting, it is recognised that pupils may discuss aspects of RSE informally with their peers at other times, including during break time. Such interactions are outside the direct supervision and control of the school, and the school cannot assume responsibility for informal peer discussions.

8. Inclusion

The RSE programme will:

- Reflect the diversity of modern Irish society
- Promote equality and respect
- Support children with additional educational needs
- Be differentiated where necessary

All children have a right to age-appropriate RSE education.

9. Staff Support and Training

Teachers will be supported to access professional development in SPHE/RSE as provided by:

- Oide Support Services
- Department of Education CPD
- Relevant diocesan guidance (where applicable)

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- As required
- In line with Department of Education updates
- Following new NCCA curriculum developments
- Following consultation with staff and Board of Management

Review Date	Reviewed By	Next Review Due
February 2028	_____	_____

11. Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Phádraig Boys National School on 12/5/2026

Signed:


Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:


Principal