**De La Salle College Macroom**

**Social and Personal Health Education Policy**

**1. Rationale:**

Our vision of education gives priority to the integration of the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and emotional development of the individual student. The work of the school is not an enterprise conducted in isolation but is very much influenced by the cultural reality in which the students live and must aim to equip students with the skills necessary to cope in a world that is challenging and presents choices all the time.

In De La Salle College we hope to develop persons who feel confident in responding to such choices. The SPHE programme in this school takes place within a Christian understanding of human development and sexuality and recognises the dignity of the individual. The programme addresses contemporary topics which are dealt with at a level appropriate to the age of the student and within a moral framework in keeping with the characteristic spirit of the school. This spirit is in keeping with the Mission Statement of our school.

**Our community aims to assist our pupils to develop their full potential in a Christian environment. In our school this vision will be achieved by mutual respect and co operation amongst all the partners in an open, safe and caring atmosphere.**

While the school acknowledges that the home is the natural environment for the social, personal and health development of children, the education of 1998 (section 9, subsection d) requires all recognised schools to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. This will happen in consultation with their parents and in the context of the Catholic Ethos of the school.

**2. Aims and objectives at Junior Cycle.**

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in Junior Cycle provides a unique opportunity where students can develop the skills and competences to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their overall health and wellbeing. SPHE also provides the context within which students can learn about the important moral, physical, social and emotional issues around relationships, sex and sexuality including where to get reliable information from trusted sources.

SPHE is not formally assessed in the Junior Certificate examination.

The aims of the social, personal and health education (SPHE) programme are:

* To add the creation of a school community which promotes good relationships mutual respect and encourages personal development.
* To focus on the development of each students feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.
* To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
* To assist students in developing a critical understanding of influences in their world from the media, their peers and people in their home, school and community.
* To prepare our students for a constructive and fulfilling role in their community and society.
* To promote physical, mental, emotional, spiritual health and well-being.
* To develop healthy attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identities, relationships and intimacy.
* Identify and name feelings and to distinguish between feelings and actions.
* Develop a framework for making informed and healthy choices and decisions.
* Develop an awareness that decisions and actions have consequences.
* Listen to and respect different opinions.
* Understand the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.

SPHE comprises of ten modules. These are revisited each year as the students mature and their needs and abilities change. The emphasis is on building life skills and developing attitudes and values in relation to the areas explored.

The ten modules of SPHE are:

* Belonging and Integrating
* Self management: A sense of Purpose
* Communication skills
* Physical health
* Friendship
* Relationships and sexuality (RSE)
* Emotional health
* Influences and Decisions
* Substance Use
* Personal Safety

**3. Relationships and Sexuality Education**

All aspects of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are located in the overall framework of SPHE. It is supported like SPHE, by the whole school environment including ongoing communication with parents/guardians. Parents/Guardians are aware of religious traditions, civic, moral, spiritual, family and personal values and priorities which they hold to be important and which they endeavour to hand to their children. RSE is planned in consultation with Parents/Guardians of the students. The aims of RSE are set firmly within the moral, spiritual and social framework. Students’ positive attitudes to sexuality will be expressed in responsible and respectful attitudes and behaviour towards themselves and each other. These positive attitudes will recognize that sexual behaviour is not just a personal and private matter but has social and community implications as well. Students make decisions about their attitudes and values in the light of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours delivered in RSE, inside and outside school.

**4. Organisation and Timetabling:**

SPHE is allocated one class period per week for all Junior Cycle students. Classes are organised in mixed ability groupings.

In organising the learning environment, the teacher will be careful to create the atmosphere that respects the privacy of each individual student and treats each student with sensitivity and care. Active learning methods are used to ensure that students actively participate in their own learning. Contemporary topics and issues which emerge in the class are dealt with at a level appropriate to the age of the student and within a moral framework, in keeping with the school ethos.

The methodologies employed will include:

* Group Discussions
* Case Studies
* Brainstorming
* Role Play
* Artwork
* Narrative Expression
* Games – Icebreakers
* Games – Stimulation
* Debates

**5. Confidentiality**

At the beginning of each academic year, students are informed that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Information may have to be passed on at the discretion of the SPHE teacher to the Designated Liaison Person (Principal), Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy Principal) or to the Pastoral Support Team.

**6. Parents:**

The school acknowledges the role of Parents/Guardians as the primary educators of their children. The programme seeks to support parents in this challenging task. If parents require further discussion/clarification, this is accommodated by the school.

**7. Staff development and subject development**

SPHE staff members engage in professional development on an ongoing basis. The SPHE team avails of the in-service training continuously on offer by the SPHE support service and PDST. The above training ensures that teachers become familiar and comfortable with all aspects of the syllabus.

**8. Review and evaluation of SPHE**

Review and evaluation in SPHE happens at a number of levels: students, SPHE teachers, the general teaching body, parents, management and other parties involved; outside speakers etc. At the end of each academic year, students and SPHE teachers reflect together and separately on the strengths and weakness of the SPHE programme. Specific suggestions and recommendations will be noted to inform planning for teaching and learning in SPHE for the following year. Parents’/guardians/ feedback can provide important information for the planning process also.

**9.Timeframe**

Reviewed 2020

Next Review 2023