

Coláiste na hInse

SPHE Policy



Vision Statement

Vision

'Our vision for Coláiste na hInse is an outstanding progressive centre of teaching and learning, where the three cornerstones of our school bród (pride), uailmhian (ambition) and dearfach (positivity) are lived daily allowing personal growth and wellbeing and empowering us to aimh ar realt eolais through positive relationships, respect, inclusivity, and encouragement'.

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* National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

1. RATIONALE

This policy outlines the school's approach to the planning, delivery and review of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Education and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). SPHE supports the personal development, health and wellbeing of all students and contributes to the creation of a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment.

SPHE is a compulsory subject at both Junior and Senior Cycle and forms a key component of the school's overall wellbeing programme. Through a structured and developmental SPHE programme, students are supported to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for positive personal growth and responsible citizenship.

Coláiste na hInse recognises that student wellbeing is central to effective learning, personal development and lifelong success. SPHE provides students with opportunities to:

- Develop self-awareness and positive self-esteem
- Build and maintain respectful, healthy relationships
- Make informed, responsible decisions
- Develop resilience, coping strategies and emotional literacy
- Understand their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of their community

2. RELATION TO VISION

The SPHE programme at Coláiste na hInse directly supports and reflects the school's vision of being an outstanding, progressive centre of teaching and learning where *bród* (pride), *uaillmhian* (ambition) and *dearfacht* (positivity) are lived daily. Through SPHE, students are encouraged to develop a strong sense of self-worth, confidence and pride in who they are, while being supported to set goals, make positive choices and strive for personal excellence.

SPHE promotes positive relationships, mutual respect, inclusivity and encouragement, creating a learning environment where students feel safe, valued and empowered to grow. In this way, SPHE plays a central role in nurturing students' personal growth and wellbeing and in enabling them to *aimigh ar realt eolais* by developing the skills, attitudes and values needed for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

3. AIM OF POLICY

The aim of this SPHE policy is to support the holistic development and wellbeing of all students at Coláiste na hInse by providing a structured, inclusive and developmentally appropriate Social, Personal and Health Education programme. Through SPHE, students are enabled to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to manage themselves, build positive relationships, make informed decisions and participate responsibly in school and society.

4. OBJECTIVES OF POLICY

1. Students (Wellbeing and Personal Development)

The SPHE programme aims to:

- Support the holistic wellbeing and personal development of all students, including self-awareness, self-esteem, resilience and emotional literacy
- Promote positive, respectful and inclusive relationships and the development of empathy, communication and social skills
- Develop students' self-management and decision-making skills to enable informed and responsible choices
- Encourage student voice, agency and active participation in their learning and in the life of the school

2. Teaching and Learning

The SPHE programme aims to:

- Provide a planned, sequential and developmentally appropriate SPHE programme at Junior and Senior Cycle
- Use active, student-centred teaching and learning methodologies that promote engagement, reflection and skills development
- Create a safe, supportive and respectful classroom environment through agreed ground rules and sensitive facilitation
- Ensure assessment in SPHE is formative and supports student learning and wellbeing

3. Inclusion and Safeguarding

The SPHE programme aims to:

- Ensure inclusive practice that respects diversity and meets the needs of all students, including those with additional educational needs
- Promote equality, respect and inclusion in line with school ethos and national policy
- Ensure SPHE delivery is consistent with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and all relevant child protection procedures
- Provide clear guidance for the handling of sensitive issues and disclosures in line with school child protection and safeguarding statement and policy

4. Whole-School Practice and Policy Coherence

The SPHE programme aims to:

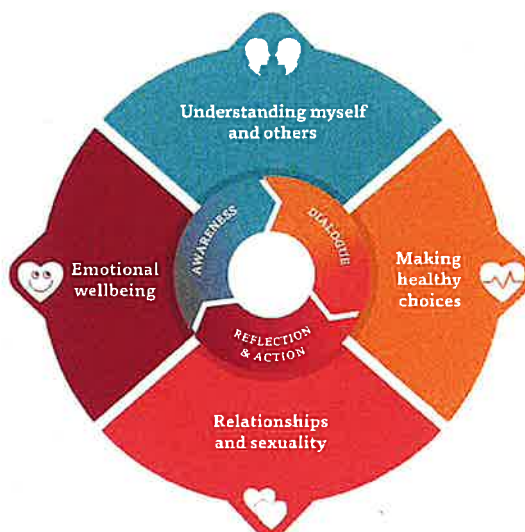
- Strengthen links between SPHE and the wider wellbeing programme of the school
- Ensure coherence between SPHE and related school policies, including RSE, Anti-Bullying, SEN, Guidance and Wellbeing policies
- Support ongoing professional development and collaboration among SPHE teachers
- Ensure regular monitoring, evaluation and review of SPHE provision in response to student needs and national guidance

5. POLICY CONTENT

Section 1: Junior Cycle SPHE Programme (NCCA)

Junior Cycle Programme Content

The Junior Cycle SPHE programme 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** with three additional **elements** that are incorporated across all four strands.



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 practice 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:

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) forms an integral and mandatory part of the SPHE programme at Coláiste na hInse and is delivered annually to all year groups in accordance with Department of Education requirements and the school's RSE Policy.

RSE is delivered in a structured, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner across Junior Cycle. The content is aligned with the relevant NCCA specifications and incorporates themes such as:

- Building respectful and healthy relationships
- Consent, boundaries and personal safety
- Emotional and sexual wellbeing

- Online relationships and digital safety
- Gender, identity and inclusivity
- Recognising and responding to abuse
- Sexual health and contraception (age-appropriate)

Parents/guardians are informed in advance of the delivery of RSE modules in line with school policy. All RSE lessons are delivered by members of the school's teaching staff. Where external facilitators are invited to support specific aspects of the programme, a teacher remains present at all times.

RSE is delivered in a safe and respectful classroom environment where agreed ground rules are established. Teachers are mindful of the sensitive nature of certain topics and follow the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and relevant child protection procedures in the event of any disclosure.

The RSE programme in Coláiste na hInse is inclusive and reflects diversity in gender identity, sexual orientation, family structures, culture and ability, in line with equality legislation and national guidance.

(see the school's RSE policy for specific details of this strand of the SPHE programme)

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.

Three additional elements that are incorporated across all four strands

Awareness

Awareness is the ability to understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour, and to recognise the factors that influence how we see ourselves and live our lives, including family, peers, media, culture, gender and social norms. It also includes an understanding of our shared humanity, dignity, rights and responsibilities.

Dialogue

Through dialogue, students engage with a diversity of viewpoints, reflect on their own and others' perspectives, values and behaviours, and deepen their understanding of issues relevant to their lives. Respectful dialogue supports informed, thoughtful decision-making regarding personal values, rights and responsibilities.

Reflection and Action

Reflection and action enable students to make personal meaning from their learning by developing insights and applying these to their choices, behaviour and relationships. SPHE learning is an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, supported through dialogue with others.

Junior Cycle Programme Delivery in Coláiste na hInse

- SPHE is timetabled for one class period per week for all Junior Cycle year groups in Coláiste na hInse. Where possible, SPHE is delivered by the student's class tutor (*Caomhnóir*), who has developed a strong relationship with their *rang* (class) group and is therefore well placed to support student wellbeing and engagement.
- A structured programme of work has been developed for each of the three years of the Junior Cycle SPHE short course. All members of the SPHE team follow this agreed programme to ensure consistency and continuity of provision across year groups.
- SPHE teachers have access to shared teaching and learning resources on the school's SharePoint platform. This resource bank is regularly updated by members of the SPHE team to reflect current topics of importance and relevance to students' lives.
- Students are provided with an SPHE textbook and essential stationery for the subject. Current textbooks include *You've Got This! 1* for 1ú Bliain, *My Wellbeing Journey 2* for 2ú Bliain, and *My Wellbeing Journey 3* for 3ú Bliain.
- The SPHE department meets at regular intervals throughout the academic year for subject planning (*ábhar planning*) to review and update the programme in line with student needs and national guidance.
- As part of the Junior Cycle SPHE programme, students complete one Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA). Feedback on this assessment is provided and reported as part of the student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).
- Students do not take written examinations in SPHE but are assessed formatively. Feedback from these formative assessments is given on school reports which are available to view using the school COMPASS app.

Section 2: Senior Cycle SPHE Programme – Idirbhliain

A. Idirbhliain (TY) unlike other programmes, is a school-developed and flexible programme. Therefore, the NCCA does not develop specifications for Idirbhliain in any subjects, including SPHE. Coláiste na hInse has developed its own programme for SPHE in Idirbhliain.

Idirbhliain Programme Content

Strand 1: Self-Management & Personal Development

1. Introduction to SPHE & class agreements
2. Getting to know myself better and recognising potential.
3. Managing stress, mindfulness.
4. Gratitude and happiness.
5. Living life with purpose. Personal values.
6. Emotions and emotional intelligence.
7. Managing emotions: facing fear and challenge.
8. Beliefs: understanding and challenging limiting beliefs.

Strand 2: Mental Health & Wellbeing

9. Growth V's fixed mindset.

10. Building resilience and strength
11. The concept of 'Flow'.
12. Learning to be optimistic, planning for the future (Bucket list)
13. Personality and core values.
14. Goal setting and performing under pressure
15. The benefits of failure
16. Sleep, diet and exercise
17. The power of listening

Strand 3: Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) forms an integral and mandatory part of the SPHE programme at Coláiste na hInse and is delivered annually to all year groups in accordance with Department of Education requirements and the school's RSE Policy.

RSE is delivered in a structured, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner across Junior and Senior Cycle. The content is aligned with the relevant NCCA specifications.

Parents/guardians are informed in advance of the delivery of RSE modules in line with school policy. All RSE lessons are delivered by members of the school's teaching staff. Where external facilitators are invited to support specific aspects of the programme, a teacher remains present at all times.

RSE is delivered in a safe and respectful classroom environment where agreed ground rules are established. Teachers are mindful of the sensitive nature of certain topics and follow the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and relevant child protection procedures in the event of any disclosure.

The RSE programme in Coláiste na hInse is inclusive and reflects diversity in gender identity, sexual orientation, family structures, culture and ability, in line with equality legislation and national guidance.

Content of Idirbliain RSE strand

18. Friendships, peer pressure & belonging
19. Healthy vs unhealthy relationships
20. Communication skills & boundaries
21. Consent, respect & personal safety
22. Online relationships & digital safety
23. LGBTQ+ awareness & inclusivity
24. Recognising and responding to abuse
25. Sexually transmitted diseases and contraception (age appropriate)

(see the school's RSE policy for specific details of this strand of the SPHE programme)

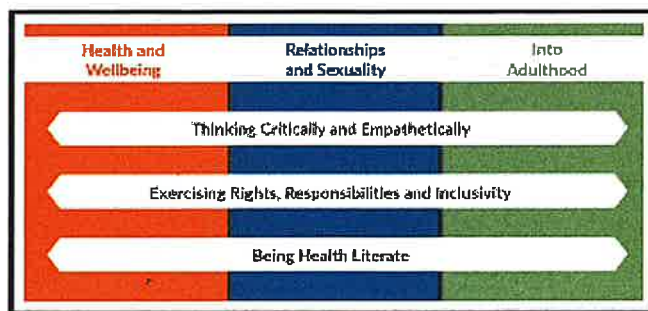
Idirbhliain Programme Delivery in Coláiste na hInse

- SPHE is timetabled for one class period per week for all Idirbhliain rang groups in Coláiste na hInse. Where possible, SPHE is delivered by the student's class tutor (*Caomhnóir*), who develops a strong relationship with their *rang* (class) group throughout the year and is therefore well placed to support student wellbeing and engagement.
- A structured programme of work has been developed for the Idirbhliain programme. All members of the SPHE team follow this agreed programme to ensure consistency and continuity of provision across year groups.
- The student workbook 'Ways to Well-Being' by John Doran is used for parts of the IB SPHE programme. Teachers have access to shared teaching and learning resources on the school's SharePoint platform. This resource bank is regularly updated by members of the SPHE team to reflect current topics of importance and relevance to students' lives.
- The SPHE department meets at regular intervals throughout the academic year for subject planning (*ábhar planning*) to review and update the programme in line with student needs and national guidance.
- Students do not take written examinations in SPHE but are assessed formatively. Feedback from these formative assessments is given on school reports which are available to view using the school COMPASS app.

Section 3: Senior Cycle SPHE (NCCA) – 5ú and 6ú bliain Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

Senior Cycle (5ú and 6ú) Programme Content

Senior Cycle SPHE provides dedicated time for students to develop the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing, now and in the future, grounded in respect, equality, inclusivity, responsibility, dignity, compassion, and empathy. The programme is divided into **three** strands.



Strand one – Health and Wellbeing

Within this strand, students explore the factors influencing their physical, social, spiritual, emotional, and mental wellbeing and learn strategies to care for themselves, with a particular focus on protecting their mental health. This includes:

- Factors that influence health and wellbeing generally
- Fostering positive mental health
- Coping with emotional or mental health challenges
- Safely managing social situations

Strand two – Relationships and Sexuality

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) forms an integral and mandatory part of the SPHE programme at Coláiste na hInse and is delivered annually to all year groups in accordance with Department of Education requirements and the school's RSE Policy.

RSE is delivered in a structured, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner across Senior Cycle. The content is aligned with the relevant NCCA specifications.

Parents/guardians are informed in advance of the delivery of RSE modules in line with school policy. All RSE lessons are delivered by members of the school's teaching staff. Where external facilitators are invited to support specific aspects of the programme, a teacher remains present at all times.

RSE is delivered in a safe and respectful classroom environment where agreed ground rules are established. Teachers are mindful of the sensitive nature of certain topics and follow the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and relevant child protection procedures in the event of any disclosure.

The RSE programme in Coláiste na hInse is inclusive and reflects diversity in gender identity, sexual orientation, family structures, culture and ability, in line with equality legislation and national guidance.

Content of senior cycle RSE

Within this strand, students explore the range of important relationships in their lives and develop the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to build respectful, caring, and healthy relationships. They also learn to recognise and respond to abuse or violence in relationships. This includes:

- Healthy relationships
- Gender, culture and social norms
- Abusive and violent relationships
- Sexual health

Note: Each of the learning outcomes below should be taught in a way that LGBTQ+ identities, relationships and families are fully integrated and reflected in teaching and learning, as opposed to being addressed within stand-alone lessons.

(see the school's RSE policy for specific details of this strand of the SPHE programme)

Strand three – Into Adulthood

Within this strand, students develop the knowledge and skills needed to transition into adulthood, take responsibility for themselves, make informed choices, plan for the future, build positive habits, and achieve goals. They also learn to care for themselves during change or challenge, understand their rights and legal responsibilities, and build skills to advocate for themselves and others facing discrimination or inequality. This includes:

- Self-management and self-care skills
- Rights and responsibilities before the law
- Ways to advocate for and create greater equality

As with Junior cycle and SPHE in idirbhliain, lessons are planned to foster awareness and encourage dialogue, reflection and action.

Senior Cycle (5ú and 6ú) Programme Delivery in Coláiste na hInse

- SPHE is timetabled for one class period per week for all Senior Cycle year groups in Coláiste na hInse. Where possible, SPHE is delivered by the student's class tutor (*Caomhnóir*), who has developed a strong relationship with their *rang* (class) group and is therefore well placed to support student wellbeing and engagement.
- A structured programme of work has been developed for each of the two years of the Senior Cycle SPHE programme. All members of the SPHE team follow this agreed programme to ensure consistency and continuity of provision across year groups.
- Students are provided with an SPHE textbook and essential stationery for the subject. Current textbook is 'Its Your Wellbeing'. In addition to this SPHE teachers have access to shared teaching and learning resources on the school's SharePoint platform. This resource bank is regularly updated by members of the SPHE team to reflect current topics of importance and relevance to students' lives.
- The SPHE department meets at regular intervals throughout the academic year for subject planning (*ábhar planning*) to review and update the programme in line with student needs and national guidance.
- Students do not take written examinations in SPHE but are assessed formatively. Feedback from these formative assessments is given on school reports which are available to view using the school COMPASS app.

Section 4: Senior Cycle SPHE (leaving Certificate Applied Programme)

As of September 2025, students entering year one of the LCA programme will be required to study the new Senior Cycle Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum specification (as described above). The curriculum specification has been designed as a mandatory curriculum component to support 60 hours of teaching and learning over the final two years of senior cycle education for both the LCA and LCVP Programme. For students following the Leaving Certificate Applied programme, this specification will replace Social Education modules 1 and 4, namely social and health education 1&2. The other four modules in Social Education will remain as they are currently i.e. My community, Contemporary Issues 1&2 and Taking Charge. The final examination of Social Education will be discontinued (after

June 2026). Instead, students will accumulate credits through the relevant Key Assignments and credits awarded for the Contemporary Issues Task.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Board of Management will approve the policy and ensure its development and evaluation.
2. The Principal will be responsible for dissemination of the policy.



7. RATIFICATION OF POLICY



lmetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Lú agus na Mí
Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

Policy for Resolution/Ratification by LMETB Board

School	Coláiste na hInse
Policy Title	SPHE
Date of School Board of Management Meeting	24.3.26.
Please confirm if a quorum was present at the meeting (4)	Yes.
Please confirm if the completed Policy Consultation Record was presented at the meeting	Yes.
Policy Proposed By	Aisling Power.
Policy Seconded By	Chv. Carol Lennon.
Signed 	Chairperson of Board of Management
Date 24-03-2026	
Signed 	Principal
Date 24.3.26.	