



**DOMINICAN COLLEGE MUCKROSS PARK**  
**SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (S.P.H.E.)**  
**POLICY**  
*(Ratified by BOM 2012 )*

**Our Vision**

To create a progressive learning environment of the highest quality where our students grow to become independent, respectful and caring women of integrity who live by Christian values and Dominican principles.

**Our Mission**

To provide our students with an education that in the spirit of St Dominic:

- recognises and responds to the unique needs and abilities of each individual student
- encourages the development of positive, respectful and inclusive relationships
- challenges each student to speak and act with honesty and integrity.

**Definition of S.P.H.E.**

S.P.H.E. is a programme that provides students with the unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and others, and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

**The Aims of S.P.H.E.**

To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.

To promote self-esteem and self-confidence.

To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.

To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

**S.P.H.E and School Ethos**

S.P.H.E. will provide young people with skills to evaluate critically the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values offered today, in order that they will make positive, responsible choices about themselves and about the way they live their lives.

While the school acknowledges that the home is the natural environment for the social, personal and health development of children, the Education Act 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.

### **Outline of the Programme Content**

**JUNIOR CYCLE.** The programme for S.P.H.E. is presented in **ten modules**, each of which appears in each year of the three-years. The emphasis will be on developing skills, understanding, attitudes and values important to all these areas.

The ten modules are:

1. Belonging and Integrating
2. Self-management – a Sense of Purpose
3. Communication Skills
4. Physical Health
5. Friendships
6. Relationships and Sexuality
7. Emotional Health
8. Influences and Decisions
9. Substance Use
10. Personal Safety

**SENIOR CYCLE.** The framework is built around **five areas** of learning through an enabling curriculum. These areas of learning focus on what is important for learners in senior cycle to know understand and be able to do in order to make and maintain healthy lifestyle decisions. The five areas of learning are:

1. Mental health
2. Gender studies
3. Substance use
4. Relationships and sexuality education
5. Physical activity and nutrition

The Department of Education and Science recognises that each school has flexibility within this framework to plan the S.P.H.E. programme most suitable for the students and the school.

### **Teaching Methods**

Because the programme is primarily skills-based, teaching methods will be of an experiential nature with an emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation.

These teaching methods will be child-centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student.

### **How S.P.H.E. will be Timetabled and Taught**

S.P.H.E. will be timetabled for one class period a week at both junior and senior levels. It will be taught in the context of the Dominican ethos and the Mission Statement of the school.

### **Staff Development, Training and Resource Issues**

The value placed on S.P.H.E. by the school will be evident by the commitment on the part of management to develop a core of trained S.P.H.E. teachers. In-career development is an integral part of this programme.

### **Participation/Sensitive Issues/Confidentiality**

#### ***Participation***

S.P.H.E. is a core curricular subject on the junior cycle curriculum. Relationships and Sexuality (R.S.E.) is one module of the programme. (Please ref. school's policy re same) Each parent has a right to withdraw their child from R.S.E. However it will be necessary for parents of any student opting out of RSE to make suitable arrangements with school management for the welfare of their child at these times. It is important to be aware that in these circumstances the school cannot be responsible for information subsequently passed on by participating pupils.

#### ***Sensitive Issues***

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the S.P.H.E. course content, the needs of the students will be addressed in a caring and supportive manner. Where it is appropriate the school will refer students to other supportive links or services, internal or external to the school community e.g Pastoral Care Team etc. Class discussion will be of a general nature in accordance with the previously agreed ground rules and will not be personally directed. Inappropriate questions will

not be answered by a teacher or by another student. Only questions directly related to the lesson content will be addressed.

***Confidentiality***

The normal limits of confidentiality will apply to any information coming to the attention of the teacher. However every effort should be made to ensure that this information is dealt with in a sensitive and discreet manner.

**The Role of Visitors**

The Department of Education and Skills guidelines for the appropriate use of outside facilitators will be adhered to at all times. All guest speakers/facilitators will be made aware of, and be requested to comply with the school S.P.H.E. policy. The presentations of guest speakers will be negotiated with the relevant S.P.H.E teacher before delivery to students. It is normal practice for teachers to remain in the classroom while visitors are there. Preparatory and follow up work where possible may be undertaken by class.

***Policy Ratified by Board of Management of Dominican College Muckross Park***

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Chairperson

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

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Principal