

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles



S.P.H.E./R.S.E. Policy



January 2025



Policy Area	Schools
Document Reference number	CMCE/S.P.H.E..RSE/040/3
Version	1
Document Drafted by	Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles
Date previous version: adopted by SLT noted by TETB Committee	 14 February 2023 28 February 2023
Reviewed / Amended by School	January 2025
Reviewed and Ratified by BOM	3 April 2025
Date Noted / to be Noted by TETB	20 May 2025
Policy Review Date	Every two years
Date of Withdrawal of Obsolete Document	3 April 2025 Document Ref. No. CMCE/S.P.H.E..RSE/040/2 Version No. 1

SOCIAL PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

Mission Statement:

At Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed we aspire to develop a caring and inclusive learning community that optimises the potential of each person.

“Rath as Saothar”

(A) SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Name and address of school:	Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles
Description of School:	Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed is a co-educational multi-denominal school under the patronage of Tipperary ETB.
Mission Statement of School:	<p>At Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed we aspire to develop a caring and inclusive learning community that optimises the potential of each person.</p> <p>This policy is aligned to our core values of care, community, respect, equality and excellence in education.</p>

(B) INTRODUCTION TO S.P.H.E.

Social, Personal, and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) is a school subject that focuses on the overall development of students. It aims to foster well-being, personal growth, and the social skills necessary for students to navigate their lives effectively. The curriculum covers various areas, such as:

1. **Social Development:** Promoting positive relationships, understanding social responsibilities, and learning how to interact respectfully with others.
2. **Personal Development:** Encouraging self-awareness, emotional intelligence, decision-making, and coping strategies.
3. **Health Education:** Teaching about physical health, mental health, relationships, and topics such as nutrition, hygiene, safety, and the prevention of substance abuse.

S.P.H.E. is designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge to make informed choices, maintain healthy lifestyles, and develop strong, positive relationships with others. It plays a critical role in fostering a sense of responsibility, respect, and well-being in individuals, both within the school environment and beyond.

S.P.H.E. 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.

Aims of S.P.H.E.

This course aims to

1. Build students' self-awareness and positive self-worth;
2. Develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives;
3. Empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others;
4. Enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society.

These aims are consistent with the mission statement of Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed in that they foster the personal development of the individual by preparing the student for a meaningful and fulfilled life within the community, which aligns with our mission to optimise the potential of each individual.

(C) OUTLINE OF PROGRAMME

The curriculum for S.P.H.E. follows the NCCA short course specification which follows four strands, *“Understanding Myself and Others”, “Making Healthy Choices”, “Relationships and Sexuality”* and Emotional Wellbeing.

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.

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.

Relationships and sexuality

This strand explores the cognitive, physical, emotional and social aspects of relationships and sexuality through a positive, inclusive, rights and responsibilities-based approach. The focus is on family relationships, friendships, romantic and potential sexual relationships in the future.

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.

The Department of Education recognises that each school has flexibility within this framework to plan the S.P.H.E. programme in harmony with the students' needs and the school's resources. In Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed. R.S.E. (Relationships and Sexuality Education) is delivered through S.P.H.E. in Junior Cycle on a band for 6 lessons minimum to ensure that all students are provided with the required curriculum.

S.P.H.E. Teaching Methods

Teaching methods are of an experiential nature with an emphasis on discussion, reflection and classroom participation. These teaching methods will be student centred and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the student. Students will be assessed on their Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) in second year. A team approach is implemented in the planning and delivery of the programme. Folders are compiled of resources for all year groups which are shared with the S.P.H.E. teaching staff. Shared resources are used by all staff through the Google Drive folder which will be shared by the S.P.H.E. coordinator with teachers from the link below.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0AFKbv-V4JBB9Uk9PVA>

The class atmosphere must be one of respect for the privacy of the individual, student and teacher, and hallmarked by sensitivity and care. S.P.H.E. is allocated one class period per week for Junior Cycle R.S.E. is part of transition year and is part of the senior cycle and is taught to LCA students through the Social Studies module.

(D) WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS.

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of children lies with their parents/guardians. However, this school has a long tradition of supporting parents in this role.

A summary of what the school provides both formally and informally to promote the holistic development of our students is included in Appendix C. S.P.H.E. builds on this.

(E) STAFF DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND RESOURCE ISSUES.

A core group of teachers are in place and the senior leadership team (SLT) is committed to the continuous professional development of all staff. Continuous Professional Development (C.P.D.) is an integral part of this programme. The SLT is responsible for responding to the relevant needs of S.P.H.E. teachers for training and recognises the value of an S.P.H.E. co-ordinator. Teachers of S.P.H.E. are encouraged to attend S.P.H.E. training. S.P.H.E. has budgetary allocation

(F) PARTICIPATION, SENSITIVE ISSUES, CONFIDENTIALITY AND REFERRAL.

S.P.H.E. is a core curricular subject on the junior cycle curriculum as part of the school's wellbeing programme. R.S.E. is also included in the 5th and 6th year in the Religion programme. Relationships and Sexuality (R.S.E.) is one module of the programme. R.S.E. is mandatory in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Education. However, each parent has the right to withdraw their child from some or all R.S.E. classes (see more information in the R.S.E. section below) but are required to provide alternative R.S.E. at home. In the circumstances where a parent wishes to withdraw a child under the age of 18 from R.S.E., the parent will be required to provide supervision for their child during the class time. The parent must have a meeting with the Principal and must provide a letter to state that they have a conscientious objection to their child studying S.P.H.E.

The student can study at the back of the classroom, or the parents can sign out and back in the child for the hour of the class. In the case where a student is over 18, they can choose to opt out of R.S.E. It will be necessary for parents of any student or student over 18 opting out of R.S.E. to contact the school principal prior to the beginning of the school year. This is in line with circular 0037/2010.

Where students are withdrawn from R.S.E. the school cannot take responsibility for any misconstrued versions of class content passed onto them by other students.

Class discussion will not be personally directed and will be of a general nature, in accordance with the previously agreed ground rules.

If a student feels unable to ask a question in a classroom situation they are encouraged to hand in a written question. The teacher will use his/her professional judgement to determine whether the question will be dealt with in a classroom situation or privately with a student afterwards. S.P.H.E. teachers are professionals and are trained will consider the age and stage of the students, as well as the curriculum content when considering how to answer any questions.

While an *atmoS.P.H.E.re* of trust is a prerequisite of S.P.H.E. class, the following limits of confidentiality must always be observed. The limits are outlined in the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment available to staff on the school shared drive. Staff have been trained to recognise the types of abuse and to understand that there are four types of abuse:

- Child Abuse- physical, emotional, sexual and neglect
- Intention to harm self or others
- Substance Use
- Underage sexual intercourse - the age of consent is 17

Where possible students should be informed of these limits before making a disclosure. The S.P.H.E. teacher should outline the limits to the class at the beginning of the school year and inform the students that the teacher is a mandated person.

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the S.P.H.E. course content, the needs of our students will be addressed in a caring and supportive manner. Where it is appropriate, the teacher may refer students to other supportive links within the school. As far as

possible this should be done in negotiation with the student. The teacher may inform the class of external support services relevant to the subject matter. This should be done within the context of the school's ethos S.P.H.E. teachers, where in doubt as to a certain course of action, are encouraged to refer the student to the student support team. The S.P.H.E. Coordinator is a member of the student support team. However, if the issue pertains to Child Protection the staff members should only discuss this with the Designated Liaison Person (D.L.P.), in line with school policy. Information revealed about a student should be on a need-to-know basis.

(G) EXTERNAL PROGRAMMES AND FACILITATORS

In line with circular letter 43/2018 and our CMCO Visiting Speakers and Guest Speaker Policy – January 2022, Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed adopts the following procedures when using external programmes and facilitators.

Use of External Programmes/External Facilitators

Use of programmes and/or external facilitators can play a role in supplementing S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. Programmes and/or external facilitators are most likely to be effective when they:

- are part of a whole school approach and address an identified need
- are delivered to class groups with the involvement of school staff and the appropriate involvement of parents/carers
- enhance protective factors which predispose students to positive outcomes in the face of adversity such as: facilitating supportive adult pupil relationships, strengthening life skills, helping students believe in their capacity to overcome hardship and building a sense of mastery over life circumstances
- adopt a planned implementation process, for example, incorporate needs analysis, use evidence informed programmes and track and evaluate outcomes for students
- are implemented and used in a school in a sustained way over a number of years in order to bring about lasting effects and benefits

Guidance for Engaging External Facilitators

When engaging external facilitators schools are advised to consider the following best practice criteria:

- External facilitators supplement, complement or support an identified component of the school's Wellbeing Promotion Process
- External facilitators are approved by the S.P.H.E. coordinator/principal in consultation with the relevant teaching staff
- All materials proposed for use by the external facilitator must also be agreed in advance by the S.P.H.E. coordinator/principal and teacher involved
- All external facilitators are compliant with the school's child safeguarding statement and other relevant school policies and procedures
- External facilitators are aware of the schools S.P.H.E. policy
- The S.P.H.E. coordinator/principal ensures that any vetting obligations that arise under the Vetting Act and in line with Circular 0031/2016, for such external facilitators are met
- Programmes used are delivered by facilitators who are qualified to work within the specific area of content and with the students for whom the programmes are designed
- Relevant school staff liaise with facilitators in advance of the delivery
- Preparatory work is done with the class in advance of the visit by the class teacher
- External facilitators always work under the guidance and supervision of the relevant classroom teacher who remains in the classroom with the students at all times and retains a central role in the delivery of the subject matter. Absence of the teacher may undermine the integrity of the curriculum, and the credibility and professionalism of the teacher. It may also compromise the safety of the students
- Relevant school staff are informed of the details of the programme being provided by external facilitators
- Parents/guardians are consulted and made aware in advance of the content of the programmes provided by external facilitators
- External facilitators and programmes are evaluated by students and teachers with regard to the subject matter, messages communicated, methodology and proposed learning outcome

Appraisal of Appropriate Use of External Facilitators

When appraising appropriate use of external facilitators, teachers/S.P.H.E. coordinator should consider the following best practice criteria:

- Facilitators supply comprehensive information to the school about their organisation, programme content and programme methodology.

- Facilitators demonstrate an understanding of the D.E.'s Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice and have appropriate educational training and qualifications.
- Facilitators demonstrate skills in facilitating and managing groups and students. Facilitators demonstrate an understanding of the general organisation and structure of schools.
- Facilitators show an understanding of the role of SLT, school support structures, roles of support staff and other relevant support services in the event of a challenging situation arising.

Appraisal of Appropriate Use of Programmes

When appraising the appropriate use of programmes, schools should consider the following best practice criteria:

- The programme or input supports/complements the whole school Wellbeing Promotion Process which includes the social personal and health education, physical education and civic, social and political education curricula.
- The programme is appropriate for the educational stage of the students, and includes evidence informed content and methodology with clear educational outcomes.
- The programme content is appropriate for the age, gender and cultural background of students.
- The programme does not focus on a single topic, or use shock tactics, and does not directly or indirectly raise an unhealthy awareness of, for example, topics such as suicide, self-harm or eating disorders.
- The programme and its outcomes have been independently evaluated and/or informed by research and evidence.
- The programme does not place an unreasonable onus on students to take an unduly high level of responsibility for the wellbeing of their peers.

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY (R.S.E.)

Our R.S.E. policy is nested within the overall context of the S.P.H.E. programme and the ethos of the school. See Appendix B for a full breakdown of R.S.E. curricular content. The R.S.E. policy acknowledges the importance of R.S.E. being taught in the context of Wellbeing/S.P.H.E. Health Education and a whole-school climate that is inclusive and respectful. S.P.H.E./Wellbeing provides opportunities for students to develop personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

R.S.E. is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.

Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education

Social Personal and Health Education is spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology. The R.S.E. programme is designed to follow this principle and pattern. Apart from the specific lessons of R.S.E., S.P.H.E. covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's relationship with others. S.P.H.E. deals with many issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision-making skills - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the R.S.E. programme.

The aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme

- Relationships and sexuality education which is located in the overall framework of Social, Personal and Health Education, has as its specific aims:
 - To help pupils understand and develop friendships and relationships
 - To promote an understanding of sexuality
 - To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others
 - To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
 - To enable pupils to develop attitudes and values toward their sexuality
 - To provide opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

It is acknowledged that in a course of limited duration these aims are aspirational.

Guidelines for the management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school

1. Arrangements regarding the teaching of the programme and the deployment of staff will be made by the SLT.

2. Informing and Involving Parents:

Parents are the primary educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sexuality is seen by the school as very important. The policy is published on the school website. It is brought to parents' attention during parent induction for new students. This policy has been designed in consultation with Parents' Association representatives and the views expressed by parents will be taken into account when reviewing the policy. A printed copy of this policy is made available to any parent on request to the school Office.

As stated above parents have the right to withdraw their child from S.P.H.E.

3. Offering Advice:

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. Teachers may provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g., their doctor or other suitable agency. Advice offered should not be directive and should be appropriate to the age of the pupil.

4. Explicit Questions:

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. It is important that students understand that teachers are mandated persons and there are limits to confidentiality within an R.S.E. class. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised s/he should seek advice from the S.P.H.E. co-ordinator or the Principal. When deciding whether or

not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the students, the R.S.E. programme content, the ethos of the school and the R.S.E. policy.

5. Confidentiality:

It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or declining mental health issues or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Principal. The Principal will decide whether to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling.

The following is also school policy:

- teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality
- pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal and possibly to parents if the Principal decides that it is in the best and/or vital interests of the pupil to notify parents
- teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard information
- teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.

The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools state in 4.1.1. and 4.2.1.

4.1.1 If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he/she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Designated Liaison Person. The need for confidentiality at all times, as previously referred to in Chapter 1 Paragraph 1.2 of these guidelines, should be borne in mind. The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

4.2.1 If the Designated Liaison Person is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation, he/she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.

6. Withdrawing pupils from the R.S.E. programme:
 - This policy is available on the school website. It is included (with the relevant consent forms) as part of the parent induction pack. Parents are provided with a printed copy of this policy upon request.
 - Parents are asked to opt in or opt out as part of the new parent induction process.
 - Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so - sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Parents who choose to opt out of RSE must make an appointment to see the principal and Appendix E is used to guide this conversation. If, after this meeting, the parent decides to continue with their request to withdraw the student, they must provide the school with a letter to state that they have conscientious objection to their child studying RSE. The parent must then sign the child out and provide supervision for the duration of the class and sign the child back in afterwards. Alternatively, the student can remain in the classroom and study another subject while not participating in the lesson. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.
7. Using visiting speakers and others

The same procedure for visiting speakers applies as with S.P.H.E. (see above)
8. LGBT+

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that LGBT+ issues will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning LGBT+ issues is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice.
9. Contraception

This topic will be dealt with in an age appropriate, open manner, looking at all sides of the issues in a non-directive way.
10. Special Educational Needs (S.E.N)

Children with special needs may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by

others. Specialist teachers may be required to support the provision of R.S.E. for students with S.E.N.

11. RSE content in other subjects

Please note that: Issues such as over population and birth control are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and RE. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the R.S.E. Programme.

Ongoing Support, Development and Review

Training:

1. All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. The skills acquired in general teaching apply also to health education. Furthermore, many teachers have training in related areas such as counselling. Some teachers have expert training in the specific areas of health, relationships and sexuality education and will be encouraged to train other teachers.
2. The school will facilitate teachers to obtain expert training in this field, bearing in mind the overall budgetary framework and the need for the ongoing teaching and learning programme of the school to continue with as little disturbance as possible.

Resources:

The school will purchase appropriate R.S.E. teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful and which have been approved by the Principal, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school resources allow.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the R.S.E. programme:

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the R.S.E. Programme are:

- student feedback
- staff review and feedback
- parental feedback

(H) HOW PARENTS AND STUDENTS WILL BE INFORMED

Current students will be informed of this policy through their S.P.H.E and Religion class. Parents will be informed that the policy is on the school website. It will be given to incoming first year parents in their information pack. Parents will be asked to read and sign the attached form when a child enters the school in appendix D and return it to the school.

(I) HOW STAFF WILL BE INFORMED

This policy will be available for all staff in the school by its inclusion with the Policy Documents. An S.P.H.E. team drive is available and all staff have access to that drive.

(J) HOW THE S.P.H.E. AND R.S.E. PROGRAMME AND POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED AND EVALUATED.

The S.P.H.E. and R.S.E. programme and policy will be reviewed and evaluated on a bi-annual basis by the Student Support team. The opinion of the students will be included as part of the review. The S.P.H.E./R.S.E. policy will be reviewed in line with the schools' programme of School Development Planning.

APPENDIX A

S.P.H.E. JUNIOR CYCLE COURSE SPECIFICATION

Strand 1: Understanding myself and others

Learning outcomes
Students should be able to...

	Active*	Responsible	Connected	Resilient	Respected	Aware
1.1 explore the physical, social and emotional changes that happen during adolescence						
1.2 reflect on their personal strengths and values and how they bring these into relationships						
1.3 explore the range of influences and life experiences that can impact on self-image and self-esteem and identify ways to nurture a positive sense of self-worth						
1.4 recognise the factors and influences that shape young people's self-identity, such as family, peers, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnic background, dis/abilities, religious beliefs/ world-views						
1.5 reflect on gender equity and how gender stereotypes impact on expectations, behaviour and relationships						
1.6 discuss experiences/situations of bias, inequality or exclusion and devise ways to actively create more inclusive environments						
1.7 communicate in a respectful and effective manner and listen openly and sensitively to the views/ feelings of others						
1.8 reflect on the meaning and importance of empathy and discuss ways that it can be expressed						
1.9 demonstrate self-management skills, including setting personal goals, delaying gratification, and self-regulation of thoughts, emotions and impulses						

Strand 2: Making healthy choices

Learning outcomes

Students should be able to...

	Active*	Responsible	Connected	Resilient	Respected	Aware
2.1 consider the multifaceted nature of health and wellbeing, and evaluate what being healthy might look like for different adolescents, including how food, physical activity, sleep/rest and hygiene contribute to health and wellbeing						
2.2 investigate how unhealthy products such as nicotine, vapes, alcohol, and unhealthy food and drinks are marketed and advertised						
2.3 discuss societal, cultural and economic influences affecting young people when it comes to making healthy choices about smoking, alcohol and other addictive substances and behaviours, and how harmful influences can be overcome in real-life situations						
2.4 demonstrate skills and strategies to help make informed choices that support health and wellbeing and apply them in real-life situations that may be stressful and/or involve difficult peer situations						
2.5 discuss the physical, social, emotional and legal consequences of using addictive substances – immediate and long-term						
2.6 consider scenarios where, for example, alcohol, nicotine, drugs, food and electronic devices might be used to cope with unpleasant feelings or stress, and discuss possible healthy ways of coping						
2.7 assess the benefits and difficulties associated with their online world and discuss strategies for dealing with a range of scenarios that might arise						
2.8 discuss how to share personal information, images, opinions and emotions in a safe, responsible and respectful manner online and in person						
2.9 explore why young people share sexual imagery online and examine the risks and consequences of doing this						
2.10 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information, supports and services about health and wellbeing						

Strand 3: Relationship and sexuality

Learning outcomes

Students should be able to...

	Active*	Responsible	Connected	Resilient	Respected	Aware
3.1 reflect on the values, behaviours and skills that help to make, sustain and end relationships respectfully with friends, family and romantic/intimate relationships						
3.2 examine benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships – friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationships						
3.3 identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships						
3.4 appreciate the importance of setting healthy boundaries in relationships and consider how to show respect for the boundaries of others						
3.5 consider the importance of taking care of their reproductive health						
3.6 appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways						
3.7 explore the pressures to become sexually intimate and discuss ways to show respect for people's choices						
3.8 appreciate the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships, from the perspective of building caring relationships and from a legal perspective						
3.9 explain the importance of safer sexual activity with reference to methods of contraception and protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)						
3.10 discuss the influence of popular culture and the online world, in particular, the influence of pornography, on young people's understanding, expectations and social norms in relation to sexual expression						
3.11 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health						

Strand 4: Emotional wellbeing

Learning outcomes

Students should be able to...

	Active*	Responsible	Connected	Resilient	Respected	Aware
4.1 discuss the fluid nature of emotional wellbeing and ways to nurture and protect it						
4.2 recognise and acknowledge their emotions and recognise the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviour						
4.3 consider the impact of stress and draw upon a variety of techniques to help self-regulate emotions and cope with the day-to-day stresses of life						
4.4 discuss ways to support themselves and others in challenging times and where/how/when to seek support, if needed						
4.5 explore how emotional wellbeing can be affected by factors within our control, such as sleep, diet, exercise, substance use and online exposure, and factors beyond our control						
4.6 recognise different kinds of abusive and bullying behaviour that can occur in interactions online and in person						
4.7 explain why noticing and responding to different kinds of abusive or bullying behaviour that can occur in person and online is important and discuss appropriate responses including, why, how, where and when to report						
4.8 identify actions young people can take, without putting themselves at risk, in situations where they are aware of incidents of abusive behaviour or bullying happening and explore the barriers to standing up						
4.9 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information and services aimed at supporting young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health.						

The Department of Education recognises that each school has the flexibility within this framework to plan the S.P.H.E. Programme most suitable for the students' needs and the school's resources.

APPENDIX B

R.S.E. CURRICULUM CONTENT

Development of themes at Junior Cycle.

Human Growth and Development

- Awareness of changes in the human cycle.
- An understanding of the physical and emotional changes that take place in males and females at puberty and appreciation of variation
- Knowledge of sexual organs and their function
- An appreciation of hygiene associated with puberty
- An awareness of the sometimes conflicting feelings, moods and emotions characteristic of adolescence
- Development of a language for the expression of emotions
- An understanding of fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth
- Awareness of implications of sexual activity
- Understanding of sexually transmitted diseases, with particular reference to HIV/AIDS

Human Sexuality

- An awareness of what it is to be female and male.
- An awareness of stereotyping and its influence on attitudes and behaviour
- An appreciation of equality and difference
- Information on and sensitivity to sexual orientation
- Awareness of discrimination
- Respect for sexuality
- Developing skills for personal safety
- Awareness of sexual abuse and rape including identification of help agencies within and outside the school.

Human Relationships

- Developing skills for self-awareness
- Developing skills for building and maintaining self esteem
- Awareness of the qualities valued in friendships and how friendship patterns change
- Developing skills for establishing and maintaining relationships
- Awareness of roles and responsibilities in relationships and families
- Identifying groups students belong to, behaviour in these groups and response to peer pressure

Development of themes at Senior Cycle.

Human Growth and Development

- Understanding the structure and function of sex organs
- Awareness of fertility
- Awareness of the importance and methods of family planning
- Understanding of pregnancy and the development of the foetus
- Appreciation of the importance of health care during pregnancy
- Recognizing the range of human emotions and ways to deal with these
- An understanding of the relationships between safe sexual practice and sexually transmitted diseases with particular reference to HIV/AIDS

Human Sexuality

- Understanding of what it means to be male or female
- Exploration of some of the issues pertaining to equality
- Understanding the concept of sexual harassment and its different forms
- Awareness of sexual abuse and rape, including legal issues and the identification of help agencies in these areas
- Skills for making choices about sexual activity
- Laws in relation to sexual activity
- Exploration of the range of attitudes, values and beliefs regarding sexual behaviour in modern society
- Understanding the nature of peer pressure
- Developing skills for resolving conflict
- Development of an awareness of the complex nature of love and loving relationships
- Understanding what it means to be LGBTQIA

- Understanding marriage as a loving commitment
- Understanding of marriage in various cultures
- Deeper awareness of the importance of family life

APPENDIX C

PROVISION FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN COLÁISTE MHUIRE CO-ED (FORMAL AND INFORMAL).

- Teachers
- Principal & Deputy Principal
- Class Tutor
- Year Heads
- Special Needs Assistants
- Student Council
- Book Scheme
- R.S.E. Programme
- S.P.H.E. Programme
- Mental Health Promoters
- Students Council
- Friends Programme
- Le Cheile - peer student mentoring of 1st years
- Extra-Curricular Activities
- School Completion Programme
- Parent's Association
- JCSP
- Supervised Study
- Homework Club
- Resource/Learning Support Teachers
- School Policies
- Anti-Bullying Workshops
- Check and Connect
- Talks – outside speakers
- School Tours
- Young Scientist involvement
- School Journal - Merits and ENERGY programme
- Positive Comments in Journal
- Merits in Compass

- Religious Services
- Career Guidance Counsellor
- Religion Classes
- Awards Ceremonies
- Attendance Awards
- School website - student support pages
- School Newsletters - celebrating student achievements
- TV Display at main entrance - celebrating student achievements
- Co-curricular activities
- School Show
- Sport programmes
- Progression opportunities (QQI)
- Peer Education
- Team Teaching
- Mixed Ability Teaching
- Study Skills CouR.S.E.
- Academic tracking - including target grades and effort grades
- Canteen
- Cultural Activities
- Friendship Week
- Debates
- Parent Teacher Meetings
- Information Nights for Parents
- Induction Programme
- Leaving Certificate Applied
- Leaving Cert Vocational Programme
- Enrolment
- Open Night
- Local Paper Notes
- Intercom
- Visits to Primary Schools
- Music
- Parenting Programme

- Professional Counselling Support
- HSCL support
- Employers – Work Experience

APPENDIX D

The following information is collated as part of the “New Parent Information Form”.

Dear Parents/Guardians

Junior Cert Cycle S.P.H.E. - R.S.E.

The S.P.H.E. Social, Personal, Health Education programme is a compulsory subject in the Junior Cert curriculum as specified by the Department of Education as set out in circular 0037/2010. It is delivered to the students each week for one class period. Please find enclosed our S.P.H.E. policy which includes a summary of the programme which covers the course content over the three years. One part of the programme is the module known as R.S.E. - Relationships & Sexuality Education.

Parents are required to consent to their son/daughter participating in this module.

If you do not wish your child to avail of this module you must make an appointment with the school principal to discuss the care of your child at this time. **Please tick the box below if you wish your child to avail of this programme.**

☐

I consent to my child availing of this programme.

APPENDIX E

What we do if a request for withdrawal from the R.S.E. programme is made by a parent:

- we discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent and if appropriate attempt to reassure them (initially such discussion takes place at a meeting with the Year Head and S.P.H.E. Co-ordinator, the Principal may become involved if necessary).
- we consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents - care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the R.S.E. programme and the entitlement of the other pupils,
- we attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education.
- we point out that pupils who have been withdrawn are vulnerable to teasing - we therefore attempt to cause minimal embarrassment to the pupil and minimal disruption to the programme.
- we also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers.
- we offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.