

**Laurel Hill Secondary School**  
**Social Personal and Health Education Policy**

## **Social Personal and Health Education**

**Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ is a Voluntary Secondary Catholic all-girls school.**

### **(a) Philosophy of Education:**

Companionship is central to the FCJ philosophy of Education. It is particularly expressed through faithfulness, gentleness, and respect. In the spirit of the FCJ Foundress Marie Madeline D'Houet, the school seeks to create a caring atmosphere where all can find a place and feel at home. The uniqueness of each person is respected, and all are invited to use their gifts for the service of others, for the transformation of society and the coming of the reign of God.

All educational programmes and activities emphasise the formation of the whole person. The FCJ community seeks to provide a stimulating and supportive environment, encouraging all to develop their full potential, with a special care for those deprived in any way.

Responsible citizenship, cultural identity, care for the environment and peace that does justice are fundamental principles in FCJ Educational Philosophy. On-going reflection, evaluation and innovation ensure that the school is open to the signs of the times.

Each member of the school community is committed to work in the light of Gospel values and in response to Jesus cry "I thirst" as spoken in the world today. Mary, Mother of God has a special place in FCJ tradition and in our schools. Through "finding God in all things" FCJ schools strive to be nurturers of life and joyful messengers of hope and love, inspired by the mission of Jesus "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10)

### **(b) Definition of Social Personal and Health Education SPHE, its aims and how it integrates with the school ethos:**

SPHE is a particular expression of our overall holistic educational orientation as elaborated in our philosophy statement. The uniqueness of each person is respected and all are invited to use their gifts for the service of others, for the transformation of society and the coming of the reign of God. All educational programmes and activities emphasise the formation of the whole person. SPHE is a programme which provides students with the unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and others, to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

#### **Aims of SPHE :**

- To enable students to develop skills for self fulfilment and living in communities
- To promote self esteem and self confidence
- To enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- To build the capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships

The above aims are consistent with the Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ Philosophy of Education in that they foster holistic development of the individual.

### **(c) Outline of the Programme Content and Teaching Methods:**

The Junior Cycle short course in SPHE is designed to enable students to develop a positive sense of themselves and a commitment to caring for themselves and others. The course is broken down into 4 strands:

Strand 1	Who am I?	This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and building self-esteem.
Strand 2:	Minding myself and others.	This strand provides opportunities for students to reflect on how they can best take care of themselves and others.
Strand 3:	Team up.	This strand focuses on students learning about important relationships in their lives and building relationship skills.
Strand 4:	My mental health.	This strand focuses on building positive mental health, examining young people's experience of mental ill health and learning how to support themselves and others in challenging times.

The Department of Education and Science recognises that each school has flexibility within this framework to plan the SPHE programme in harmony with the students' needs and school resources.

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of the children lies with their parents <sup>1</sup>. Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ has a long tradition of supporting parents in this role and SPHE is seen as enhancing this. Appendix (b) is a summary of what the school provides formally and informally to promote the holistic development of our students.

<sup>1</sup> In this document, Parent refers to Parent or Guardian

### **(d) Teaching Methods- How SPHE will be taught, assessed and timetabled:**

SPHE is primarily skills-based and so teaching methods must be of an experiential nature with the 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. The class atmosphere must be one of respect for the privacy of the individual teacher and student and hallmarked by sensitivity and care. A respectful code of conduct is expected from all participants. Any breach of this may result in the removal of the student from the class.

The SPHE short course has been designed for approximately 100 hours of student engagement.



Personal learning diary:

The nature of much of students' learning in SPHE is concerned with attitudes, values and feelings and is personal to the student. Students should be encouraged to keep a personal learning diary for the duration of the short course, where they can reflect privately on their learning in SPHE.

Classroom-Based Assessment:

Final project Students will complete one Classroom-Based Assessment based on learning outcomes in more than one strand of the course. The Classroom-Based Assessment for the SPHE short course can be completed in second or third year. The Classroom-Based Assessment can be produced in written, digital, visual or audio formats and it may be supported in these formats through the use of an interview or presentation.

### **(e) Staff Development, Training and Resourcing Issues:**

The value placed on SPHE by the school will be evident by the commitment on the part of the management<sup>2</sup> to develop a core of trained SPHE teachers and to appointing an SPHE co-ordinator. SPHE is enhanced when the appointment of teachers to the subject has been negotiated in advance of timetabling. Due to the importance of the teacher- student relationship in SPHE it is best practice to assign a teacher to a particular class for a three-year cycle. Where this is not possible and a teacher takes up a class in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year, it is important that the teacher has that class for another subject.

In-service development is an important part of the programme. Management is responsible for responding to the relevant expressed and perceived training needs of SPHE teachers and whole staff.

As part of the core curriculum SPHE will have a budgetary allocation inline with its stage of development, its teaching methodology and timetable allocation. Appropriate storage facilities for SPHE will be provided by management.

<sup>2</sup> In this document, Management refers to Board of Management.

### **(f) Participation /Confidentiality/Referral /Sensitive Issues:**

#### **Participation:**

SPHE is a core subject on the Junior Cycle curriculum. Relationships and Sexuality Education is one module of the programme. Each parent has the right to withdraw his/her daughter from some or all RSE classes but parents are encouraged to provide some RSE at home. The school will respect this choice as their right. It will be necessary for parents of any student opting out of RSE to make suitable arrangements with school management for the supervision of the child at these times. Where students are withdrawn from RSE the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students. **Parents should inform the Principal in writing of their decision to withdraw their child from the RSE module in September of each year.** Details of the RSE programme and resources are available for parents to view on request.

#### **Confidentiality:**

While an atmosphere of trust is important, there are times when the teacher cannot promise confidentiality. The issues surrounding the following cannot be treated as confidential

- Child abuse: Physical, Emotional, Sexual or Neglect. c.f. Child Protection Guidelines.
- Under age sexual intercourse (under 17 years of age for girls)
- Intention to harm self or others
- Substance misuse

SPHE teachers should inform students of these limits on confidentiality at the beginning of the year and where possible before making disclosure.

### **Referral:**

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the SPHE 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 services relevant to the class material, within the context of the Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ ethos. SPHE teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Deputy Principal or Principal without identifying the student.

### **Sensitive issues:**

Class discussion will be of a general nature and will not be personally directed, in accordance with the previously agreed ground rules. See appendix (c) for sample of ground rules.

Inappropriate questions will not be answered in class by the teacher or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The SPHE teacher may also exercise their own professional judgement in deciding whether to answer the question privately at a later stage. This must be in harmony with the ethos of the Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, they should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal without identifying the pupil.

### **(g)Role of Visitors:**

Visiting speakers are seen as complementing and supporting the SPHE programme in the school. Teachers inviting speakers must:

- Inform the Principal in advance
- Make the speaker aware of the ethos of the school and of the schools SPHE policy.
- Agree the content of the presentation.
- Do preparatory and follow up work where possible
- Under normal circumstances remain with the class group during the visit.

### **How Parents and Students will be informed:**

Present students will be informed of this policy through their SPHE class. Parents will be informed by letter of this policy. There after, the outline of the programme appendix (a) and section (d) and (f) of the policy will be given to parents of incoming students. They will be informed that they can view the entire policy on request.



**How Staff will be informed:**

The policy will be available for all staff in the school by its inclusion with the policy documents. Copies will be given to each SPHE teacher.

**How the SPHE programme and policy will be reviewed and evaluated:**

The SPHE programme will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the SPHE team. The opinions of the students will be included as part of the review. The SPHE policy will be reviewed in line with the schools programme of School Development Planning.

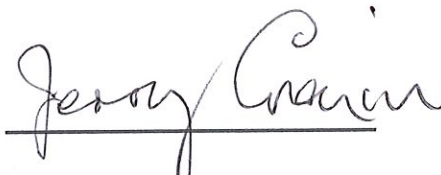
**This policy was drawn up by representatives of Students, Parents, Board of Management and Staff.**

Adopted and ratified by Board of Management on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Effective from 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022



**James Collins**  
Secretary,  
Board of Management



**Jerry Cronin**  
Chairperson,  
Board of Management

Date: 8/11/2022

Date: 8/11/2022

**Appendix (a)**

<b><u>Strand 1: Who am I?</u></b>	
<b>How I see myself and others</b>	Self esteem Individual differences
<b>Being an adolescent</b>	Physical, emotional, social and psychological development in adolescence
	Sexual and gender identity Biological, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions of being a human
<b>Self – management</b>	Short, medium- and long-term goals Decision making Appropriate and reliable information about health and wellbeing
<b>My rights and the rights of others</b>	Stereotyping Respectful and inclusive behaviour
<b><u>Strand 2: Minding myself and others</u></b>	
<b><u>Being healthy</u></b>	Diet, physical activity, sleep/ rest and hygiene Media, advertising and influences on health and wellbeing Sense of belonging Care giving and receiving
<b><u>Substance Use</u></b>	Peer pressure Personal, social and legal consequences of drug use Information and supports available
<b><u>Respectful Communication</u></b>	Active listening Communication skills
<b><u>Anti-bullying</u></b>	Responses to bullying Roles of participants and bystanders School's anti-bullying policy and internet safety guidelines

<b><u>Strand 3: Team Up</u></b>	
<b><u>Having a friend and being a friend</u></b>	Attitudes, skills and values
<b><u>The relationship spectrum</u></b>	Influences on relationships and levels of intimacy
<b><u>Sexuality, gender identity and sexual health</u></b>	Fertility, conception, pre-natal development and birth Sexual health Responsible and informed decision making about relationships and sexual health Personal and social dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity
<b><u>Media influence on relationships and sexuality</u></b>	Sexual imagery and gender stereotyping Influence of media on sexuality and sexual health

<b><u>Strand 4: My Mental Health</u></b>	
<b><u>Positive mental health</u></b>	Mental health Relaxation techniques
<b><u>Mental health and mental ill-health</u></b>	Mental health issues Mental health services Substance use and mental health
<b><u>Dealing with tough times</u></b>	Building resilience Coping skills
<b><u>Loss and bereavement</u></b>	Life events Personal, social, emotional, and physical responses Loss and bereavement in various contexts and cultures Supports available



## **Appendix (b)**

After School Study  
Annual Musical.  
Art Competitions  
Charities/ Fundraising i.e. Shoe Box Appeal, Romania, Special Olympics.  
Choir/ Orchestra  
Cookery Competitions  
Debating- Concern Debating and inter schools debating.  
Drama  
Environment Committee- Green Flag  
Extensive Gardens  
Faith formation  
First year induction programme  
Foreign Trips i.e. Ski Trips, Paris, England.  
French exchanges  
Gaisce Awards  
Guidance counselling  
Hall, Gym and IT facilities.  
Interaction with the school for the deaf  
LCVP  
Oratory, RE Room, Meditation Room  
Out-door Pursuits  
Para liturgies, retreats,  
Parents Association.  
Parents programme: Table Quiz, Fashion Show, Golf Classics, Talks for parents,  
Pastoral Care Programme  
Religious ceremonies  
Rites of Passage i.e. graduation nights, awards ceremonies.  
School Walk  
School Website  
Science competitions – Young Scientist  
Self defence/ First Aid  
Senior prefect system  
Sports- Hockey, Gaelic football, Camogie, Basketball, Athletics, Aerobics  
Student Council  
Visiting Tours  
Work Experience  
Year Book/ News Letter

## **Appendix (c)**

### **Ground Rules:**

In order for effective learning to take place in SPHE class a climate of respect and trust needs to be created. This requires drawing up ground rules or a contract. Many teachers of SPHE find these ground rules a valuable reference point over the three years.

Ground rules make explicit the roles, rights and responsibilities of all concerning in the learning relationship. In SPHE they respect people's privacy and establish appropriate boundaries for what should and should not be raised in the classroom situation. Rules need to be stated in the positive and should be few in number. A rule needs to be enforceable. Rules help channel the energies of the group towards definite goals and tasks.

## EXAMPLE OF GROUND RULES/CLASS CONTRACT

### WE AGREE THAT THESE ARE THE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN WORK FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS GROUP

**\*Confidentiality:** Personal details which may be revealed in the class are not discussed outside the group. I can talk about my learning in the class, the material being covered and the activities we are doing.

**Responsibility:** I will take responsibility for my own sharing and make **I STATEMENTS.** I will share responsibility for the progress of the class group.

**Freedom:** I have the freedom to opt out or pass in discussions.

**Participation:** I will participate and not dominate.

**Listening:** I will listen when another person is speaking.

**Respect:** I will respect others' views even when they are different from mine.

**Request:** If I want something I will ask for it.

**Time - Keeping:** I will keep to the allotted time for the task.

**Materials:** I will bring the materials needed for the class and complete any home task so that the group can progress to the next stage of the learning.

**Punctuality:** I will be punctual.

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_

The teacher and students have their own individual signed copy of the Ground Rules/Class Contract that they have drawn up and agreed on together. These will be referred to at various stages as the group progresses.

**\*Teachers should not give unconditional guarantees of confidentiality. It should be explained to students that in some circumstances the teacher may need to seek advice on an issue raised in class or to tell someone what has been revealed in class.** In addition, teachers will need to be sensitive to the privacy of family circumstances and will need to draw clear boundaries for all discussions. Students need to be made aware of the importance of their own privacy, and the privacy of their family.