



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Teaching Relationships & Sexuality Education across the Strands of the Junior Cycle SPHE Specification 2023

Professional Learning Booklet 2024 - 2025

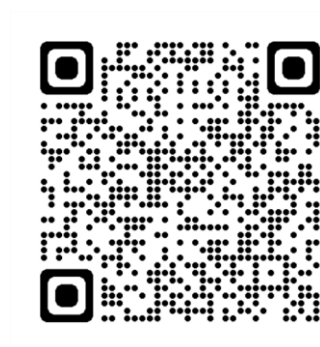


Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Spectrum Life Employee Assistance Scheme



<https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login?org=yIVIU17>

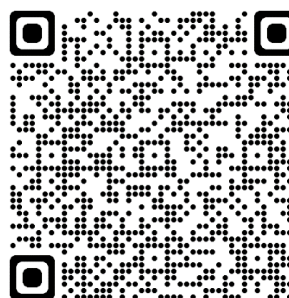
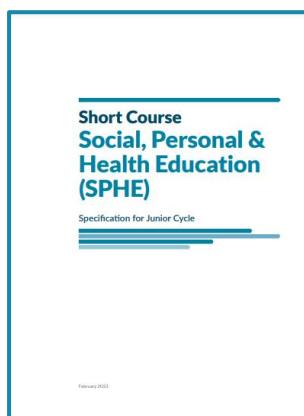
Notes:

Key Skills and Wellbeing Indicators



Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)

Specification for Junior Cycle



Four Strands within the SPHE Specification

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:

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.

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.

Cross Cutting Elements

The four strands are underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in SPHE. These are:

- Awareness
- Dialogue
- Reflection and action.

Awareness:

Awareness is the ability to understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour. It includes understanding how different factors influence our sense of self and how we live our lives, including the influence of family, peers, the internet, gender, culture and social norms. This element also includes an awareness that to be human is to be in relationships and that we all share a common humanity and dignity, have rights and responsibilities.

Dialogue:

Through dialogical teaching and learning students are facilitated to engage with a diversity of viewpoints; discuss and reflect on their own perspectives, values, and behaviours and those of others; enlarge their understanding of topics of relevance to their lives; and come to informed, thoughtful decisions based on their personal values, with due regard to their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. Respectful dialogue is aided by presuming a diversity of backgrounds, identities, cultures and experiences in every classroom and seeing this as a resource for learning.

Reflection and action:

This cross-cutting element focuses on students reflecting on what they have learned and coming to their own personal insights and conclusions in response to their learning. It enables students to consider how the learning can inform their choices, behaviour and relationships, and discerning what it means for their lives now or for the future. Learning in SPHE is a 'praxis'; an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, nurtured by dialogue with others.

Notes:

Book Walk Activity

Under the Cover of the Specification; Strands and Learning Outcomes

14

Junior Cycle
Specification
Social, Personal
and Health Education

Strand 1: Understanding myself and others

Awareness

Dialogue

Reflection and action

Students should be able to:

- 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 exclusion³ 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.

What's new?

What interests you about this strand?

Strand 2: Making healthy choices

Awareness

Dialogue

Reflection and action

Students should be able to:

- 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.

What's new?

What interests you about this strand?

Strand 3: Relationships and sexuality

Awareness

Dialogue

Reflection and action

Students should be able to:

- 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.

What's new?

What interests you about this strand?

Strand 4: Emotional wellbeing

Awareness

Dialogue

Reflection and action

Students should be able to:

- 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.

What's new?

What interests you about this strand?



Diamond 9 Activity

1. Why are these values important to you as an SPHE teacher?
2. What does the classroom look like and feel like if these are lived in every class?

Myself as the SPHE Teacher

What Makes a Topic Sensitive in Nature in the SPHE Classroom?

1. What is a sensitive issue? What makes issues sensitive?
2. Which values will underpin teaching sensitive topics?
3. Why should we teach sensitive issues?

Myself as an SPHE Teacher Activity



Self - Reflective Questions

1. Why are you feeling this way?
2. What do you need to achieve a greater level of comfortability?

3. How can you achieve this?

Group Reflections

1. What feelings and sensations are associated with a sense of comfortability and discomfortability for us?
2. What are the many internal and external factors involved in making a topic feel uncomfortable for us?
3. Could some comfortable topics become uncomfortable?
4. What can we do to alleviate some of this discomfortability?

The teacher as facilitator



Cross Cutting Elements

Awareness

Awareness is the ability to understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour. It includes understanding how different things influence our sense of self and how we live our lives, including the influence of family, peers, the internet, gender, culture and social norms. This element also includes an awareness that to be human is to be in relationships and that we all share a common humanity, dignity and rights.

1. Why is it important that students recognise, and understand, their own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviours?
2. How might this support them in school and outside of school?

Dialogue

Dialogue through dialogic teaching and learning students are facilitated in engaging with a diversity of viewpoints; can discuss and reflect on their own perspectives, values, and behaviours and those of others; enlarge their understanding on topics of relevance to their lives and come to informed, thoughtful decisions based on their personal values, with due regard to their own rights and the rights of others. Respectful dialogue is aided by presuming a diversity of backgrounds, identities, cultures and experiences in every classroom and seeing these as a resource for learning.

1. Can you think of a time in your teaching or your own CPD where the lesson involved much discussion?

2. Did your perspective change or shift after you listened to other perspectives?
How did that impact your learning?

Reflection and Action

This focuses on students reflecting on what they have learned and coming to their own personal insights and conclusions in response to their learning. It focuses on enabling students to consider how the learning can inform their choices, behaviour and relationships, and discerning what it means for their lives now or for the future. Education in SPHE is a 'praxis'; an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, nurtured by dialogue with others.

1. How does reflection support your own learning in life both personally and professionally? Is it something you do regularly?
2. Has reflection influenced your behaviour and actions in a positive light?

Making the Most of Sensitive/ Challenging Discussions

Gilly

Gilly was facilitating a walking debate in class. Gilly invited her students to consider the statement 'how I look online is more important than how I look offline'. Initially, this opened quite an interesting mix of responses with some students agreeing with this as they feel that they are always competing with filtered images. One student disagreed, stating that the online world is fake and how you look in person is most important as it's the real you. One student on the agreed side interrupted and responded to the student by saying 'You could do with some filtering if you ask me'. The student said it in a joking manner, but Gilly could tell by the student's body language that this really hurt her.

How could Gilly respond to this during the class?

Is there anything that Gilly could discuss with both students at the end of the class?

Is there anything that Gilly could consider focusing on in SPHE classroom following this comment?

Tate

Tate was facilitating a discussion on gender identity and gender expression with his third-year class. He hands out a sheet with a list of terms and definitions on it and reads them out. Tate asked the class to discuss the terms in small groups. Nobody had any questions. Tate thinks the class goes well, but at the end, a student stays behind and says they feel the class was a missed opportunity. He tells you that there should have been more time to discuss the definitions and the experiences of trans and gender-diverse people because people in his group don't really get it.

How could Tate respond to this student?

What could Tate do from a classroom perspective?

Kyle

Kyle was moving on to the topic of eating disorders in next week's SPHE class. He is aware of two of his students in class who have difficult relationships with food and are seeking support from CAMHS. He is aware of this as he is on the school care team. The other students in the class are unaware. Kyle is very nervous about the prospect of covering this topic in class.

What might Kyle do to help maintain a safe space for these students before, during and after the lesson?

Making the Most of Sensitive/Challenging Questions

Reflective Questions to discuss.

1. Would you feel comfortable answering this?
2. Why/ Why not?
3. How could this be answered to reflect the age and of the students?

Notes:

Cross Cutting Elements - How they support learning.



1. What supported the dialogic approach so far today?
2. How has this dialogue enhanced your own self- awareness and insights around teaching and learning in SPHE?
3. How are you going to employ some of this learning into your own life/ teaching practice?

The Experiential Learning Cycle in Action

Webwise Lesson 6 Lockers

Lesson 6:

Getting help when your digital
content seems to last forever



<https://www.webwise.ie/lockers/>



Download the handbook to access
Lesson 6 in full.

Notes

Resources to support teaching and learning in SPHE

2023 Toolkit



Preparing to teach



Teaching SPHE/RSE



Resources for
teaching and learning
SPHE/RSE 2023

2016 Toolkit



Preparing to teach



Teaching SPHE/RSE



Resources for
teaching and learning
SPHE/RSE 2016



<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-Cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE-2023/SPHE-toolkit/>

Lesson Review and Demonstration

Notes:

Lesson Review and Demonstration - Reflections

1. Which of the lessons modelled could you see yourself using in your SPHE classrooms?
2. What of your age groups might they be suited to?
3. How did it feel modelling this lesson? Was it different to how you approach lessons in your other subject areas?



What is Sexuality?



1. What questions would you use to assess students' knowledge?
2. Would you use this video with your students?

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation



1. What is the key message that you took from this video?
2. In what way could you use this video to explore the topics of sexual orientation and gender identity?

Lesson on Consent



Questions:

1. What is at the heart of consent?
2. Why is it important to seek consent in situations?
3. Can you think of day-to-day examples of giving and receiving consent?

4. In what way could you use this video to explore the topic of consent in class?

Final Reflection - 3,2,1 Activity

3 things that I learned...

2 things that I will embed in my teaching practice...

1 thing I will further research...

Notes Page:

