

Further Education Centre, Cathedral Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo VEC

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**Whole Centre Policy on Social, Personal and Health Education**

Definition of Social, Personal and Health Education SPHE provides trainees with an opportunity to develop their understanding of themselves, society and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development. SPHE provides learning opportunities and experiences which help students’ social, moral, cultural and personal development. It helps students grow and develop as individual people, and in their relationship to others as a family member, friend or citizen.

Youthreach Ballina is committed to the pursuit of excellence in a caring environment. The centre recognises that the world in which we live presents young people with many opportunities and challenges that affect their health and well-being. A student who has a high self-esteem and a sense of security will be better able to meet these challenges and opportunities. Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) supports the personal development, health and well-being of young people. It provides them with opportunities to develop skills and competence to learn about themselves and to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and development.

Youthreach Ballina recognises that the home is the natural environment in which children grow, develop and mature into adults. In line with the Education Act (1998) Youthreach Ballina supports parents and guardians in this work by promoting the social and personal development of students and by providing health education for them. The Centre’s approach to health education is in line with its Mission Statement and supported by all the teaching staff.

**Aims of SPHE**

* To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities
* To promote self-esteem and confidence.
* To enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.
* To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
* To promote physical, mental and health and well-being.



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**Outline of the programme.**

The programme is presented as ten modules over a year. The curriculum is an enabling one, its purpose is to offer a flexible framework around which the school can build an SPHE programme. Teachers of SPHE follow the DES guidelines. The order in which the modules are covered may vary depending on the needs of individual classes, as indicated by regular review and the circumstances and issues which may prevail at the time.

**Modules.**

1. Belonging and Integrating
2. Self-Management: a sense of purpose
3. Communication Skills
4. Physical Health
5. Friendship
6. Relationships and Sexuality
7. Emotional Health
8. Influences and Decisions
9. Substance Use

10.Personal Safety

**Staff**

Each year details of SPHE in-service will be circulated to the staff who will be facilitated to choose the in-service of interest to them.



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**Parents/Guardians**

Each parent/guardian of incoming Trainees is informed of the contents of the SPHE curriculum. If a parent/guardian has a concern about any aspect of the curriculum they are invited to contact the Co-ordinator to discuss the concern. Each parent has the right to withdraw her/his child from the Relations and Sexuality Education (R.S.E) module.

**Guidelines for the Use of External Agencies**

The teacher is the primary educator in SPHE. An outside speaker is a resource and does not replace the teacher.

When engaging the services of an outside agency suitably qualified and experienced personnel will be sourced.

The needs of the target group will be identified.

The SPHE teacher will normally be present and boundaries of confidentiality will be agreed beforehand.

Any concerns/issues arising will be followed up in SPHE classes, with referrals to appropriate authorities where necessary.

**Sensitive Issues**

While it is acknowledged that teachers have a professional responsibility to impart the SPHE course content, they will respond flexibly to the needs of students as they arise. Where it is appropriate the school will refer students to other supportive links, internal and external to the centre community in line with Child Protection Guidelines for secondary schools. Class discussion will be of a general nature in accordance with previously agreed ground rules and will not be personally directed. Questions not directly related to the lesson content will be addressed appropriately by the SPHE teacher.



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**Relationships and Sexuality Education**

R.S.E is covered as a module in SPHE. See the centre policy on R.S.E

**Confidentiality**

The normal limits of confidentiality will apply to any information coming to the attention of the teacher. Any concerns about a student’s welfare will be dealt with discreetly and sensitively within the Child Protection Guidelines for post-primary schools issued by the Dept. of Education and Science.

Reviewed March 2021