



## SPHERE Policy Document Approved by the BOM 6-3-19

---

### **College Mission Statement**

“Our college is a vibrant, friendly, learning community where students, teachers and parents are encouraged, supported and challenged in pursuit of the highest standards of achievement and academic excellence. We foster equality, respect and integrity in our college. We embrace diversity and recognise that everyone is unique and has a positive contribution to make”.

### **Definition of SPHERE**

In Colaiste Pobail Setanta all students have one class period at Senior Cycle per week to engage in a modular programme combining, SPHE, Religious Education and Career Guidance.

SPHE is part of the core curriculum at second level and builds on the students’ prior learning in SPHE by providing students with opportunities to examine social, personal and health issues and concerns during adolescence. There is an added emphasis on students understanding the wider influences on health and wellbeing and how these impact on their experience of health and wellbeing.

Students are provided the time and space where they can develop their knowledge and understanding about health and wellbeing from a wide variety of perspectives including the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school. Students can develop interpersonal skills by participating in a wide range of learning activities with other students from various social and cultural backgrounds. In doing so, students learn to engage with the principles and requirements of a democratic society and have respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society today. Students will also be given the opportunity to examine how they might cope constructively with life challenges including personal stress, change, loss, peer pressure and conflict.

### **SPHERE aims**

- to enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- to promote self-esteem and self-confidence.



# Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

- 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

## The objectives for SPHERE in Senior Cycle are to:

- develop self-awareness through opportunities to reflect on thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings enhance students' knowledge and understanding of essential health concepts and the wider influences on health and wellbeing to enable informed decision making
- develop students' self-efficacy; the confidence to think and behave independently especially in the face of social pressure
- strengthen students' capacity to empathise with another person's situation, feelings and motives in order to enhance relationships with other people
- develop coping strategies for adolescence and adult life in support of greater resilience
- develop students' health literacy skills, including the ability to obtain, critically evaluate and act on health information in support of health and wellbeing
- develop a willingness to participate in the creation and maintenance of healthy communities and environments

## Course Overview

The emphasis on what students should be able to do having studied SPHERE provides an effective basis for monitoring, evaluating and reporting to parents and others in the wider school community. The SPHE curriculum framework emphasises the particular importance of a supportive whole school environment, effective learning practices and authentic approaches to assessment.

SPHERE in senior cycle is built around five areas of learning. These areas of learning focus on what is important for students 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:

- Mental health
- Gender studies
- Substance use
- Relationships and sexuality education
- Physical activity and nutrition.



# Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

For each area of learning, there is a rationale and a list of learning outcomes which identify what students should understand and be able to do.

The learning outcomes draw on three interrelated perspectives which emphasise the multi-dimensional nature of health and wellbeing:

- Emotional and social health and wellbeing focuses on the knowledge and understanding, values, attitudes and skills students need to inform decisions about emotional, social and spiritual health and wellbeing
- Physical health and wellbeing focus on the knowledge and understanding, values, attitudes and skills that students need to inform decisions about physical health and wellbeing
- Personal and group health and wellbeing focuses on knowledge and understanding of the wider influences on the health and wellbeing, an awareness of relevant supports and agencies in the community and the development of advocacy skills.

## Our Whole School Approach

The processes of all teaching and learning have implications for personal and social development.

The ways in which members of the staff relate to one another, in this College and to the students, and the quality of relationships between the students themselves, form the foundation for personal and social development in our College. Therefore, every teacher and staff member, every class and extra-curricular activity continues to offer opportunities for enhancing the personal and social development of the student.

A supportive school environment is essential if SPHERE is to be effective. In our College:

- people feel valued
- self-esteem is fostered
- respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
- high expectations and standards are promoted
- there is support for those with difficulties
- open communication is the norm
- effort is recognised and rewarded
- uniqueness and difference are valued
- conflict is handled constructively
- initiative and creativity are encouraged
- social, moral and civic values are promoted.



# Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

The principles of pride, courage, teamwork, respect, tolerance and reward for effort permeates our whole college. These are important values of our college that encompasses the aims and objectives of SPHERE.

Socio-economic background of our students as well as their physical and cultural environment can have a significant impact on the range of choices and options that they may face. This college gives due regard to these contextual factors in planning our social, personal and health programme.

## **Teachers**

Teachers assigned to SPHERE must have an understanding of and a familiarity with the methodologies associated with education in this area.

Teachers who are assigned to teach SPHERE will be afforded the relevant CPD in so far as it is possible

All teaching is challenging, but teaching a SPHERE programme is a particular challenge, demanding a range of skills and a high degree of sensitivity.

Those involved in the SPHERE programme in a school will need continuing support from their colleagues, from the principal and Board of Management, and from a range of other agencies that are in a position to offer in-career support.

Meetings between the SPHE team, the Guidance Department, Learning Support Department and Language Support Department will be planned for. The Guidance Department will help with the Study Skills Seminars for the SPHERE Programme.

## **Mindfulness Module**

Mindfulness is a technique that is becoming vital in the roll of managing mental health and negative thoughts. A number of staff members are trained in mindfulness practice and are timetabled to deliver mindful classes across junior and senior cycle classes throughout the year. This is not just reflective of the school's ethos but also in line with the introduction of Wellbeing to our schools through the new junior cycle. The scheme is included in the SPHERE folder.

## **SPHERE Team**

The SPHERE Team consists of:

- Teachers of the programme



# Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

- The SPHERE Co-ordinators
- A guidance counsellor
- A member of School Leadership Team
- Learning Support Department and Language Support Department

The team will meet regularly during Subject Department Meeting times.

## **Parents:**

Parents will be informed of the contents of the programme each year in early September by letter. Parents will also be asked for feedback and advice on the programme. Parents are informed by letter when the teaching of the module Relationships and Sexuality also.

## **RSE**

Please consult separate RSE policy document for information on this programme

## **Student Assessment**

Assessment needs to value and recognise what students have done or completed successfully, thereby raising their self-esteem. A variety of approaches to the assessment of individual achievement will therefore need to be practiced by teachers. Teachers need to exercise caution in judging the individual performance of pupils, in terms of attitudes, values and behaviours apparent, as their own attitudes, values and behaviours will undoubtedly have an influence on this process.

Assessment may take the form of:

- Homework
- A reflective copy/diary
- Questionnaires
- Worksheets to record their own progress in a given skill
- A certificate of completion given at the end of the year

The assignments for assessment will be agreed by teachers and set at the beginning of each school year.

Achievements of pupils in SPHERE are reported to parents in each subject report sent home at December, March and May. Each student will also receive a certificate of completion at the end of each year.



# Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

## Programme Evaluation

Evaluation is an intrinsic part of any effective SPHERE programme. A continuous evaluation of the programme structure and materials in a school will take place through out the year, at the Subject Department Meeting times. Teachers will be asked to evaluate each module at the end as will the students. The evaluations will be discussed during the Department meetings.

## Teaching and learning styles

We use a range of teaching and learning styles, including the students in activities such as discussions, role play, games, investigations and problem-solving activities. We encourage the students to take part in a range of practical activities that promote active citizenship, e.g. charity fundraising, the planning of school special events such as an assembly or open day, or involvement in an activity to help other individuals or groups less fortunate than themselves. We organise classes in such a way that pupils are able to participate in discussion to resolve conflicts or behaviour. Students have opportunities to meet and work with members of the community, such as health workers, fire fighters, police, and representatives from the local church, whom we invite into the school to talk about their role in creating a positive and supportive local community. Students take in different roles of responsibility during their school life.

## Teaching SPHERE to students with special needs

At Coláiste Pobail Setanta, we teach SPHERE to all students, regardless of their ability. Our teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the individual needs of our students, including those who are gifted and talented or have language and learning difficulties. When teaching SPHERE we take into account the targets set for the student in their Individual Education Plan (IEPs).

## Resources

[www.SPHERE.ie](http://www.SPHERE.ie)

[www.curriculum.ie](http://www.curriculum.ie)

[www.PDST.ie](http://www.PDST.ie)

[www.JCT.ie/wellbeing](http://www.JCT.ie/wellbeing)



# Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

## Additional Resources

DES SPHERE Syllabus

NCCA Guidelines for Teachers

HSE

Lockers Pack: Sharing of Explicit Images

Belong To Resources

Before You Decide

[www.SPHE.ie](http://www.SPHE.ie)

[www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

[www.tes.co.uk](http://www.tes.co.uk)

[www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie)

[www.healthyschools.org](http://www.healthyschools.org)

[www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)

[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

[www.letsomeoneknow.ie](http://www.letsomeoneknow.ie)

[www.healthypromotion.ie](http://www.healthypromotion.ie)

[www.tacklebullying.ie](http://www.tacklebullying.ie)

[www.B4udecide.ie](http://www.B4udecide.ie)

[www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

## Monitoring and review

The SPHERE team is responsible for monitoring the standards of students' work and the quality of teaching and learning. This will happen during the Subject Department Meetings.

Like other departments in the college, the SPHE Department encourages peer observation and team teaching.

The monitoring and reporting of SPHERE is to be done through formative assessment.

## Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator will be elected by the SPHE Team every year. The co-ordinator will rotate between members of the SPHE Team.

The co-ordinator will:

- support colleagues in the teaching of SPHERE



# Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

- distribute information about current developments in the subject, inform the staff of any relevant in-service courses or any progress or issues in the area of curriculum development
- will ensure that the SPHERE Department Plan, including the schemes of works, be reviewed annually and amended as necessary to be in line with the Department of Education and Science's curricula as well as to the College's policies.

## Subject Co-ordinators to date:

| Date                      | Name                        |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| September 2018- June 2019 | Cara Doyle/ Krista Dunne    |
| September 2017- June 2018 | Cara Doyle/Susan O' Donovan |
| September 2016- June 2017 | Mairead McGuire             |

## Time Allocation, Timetabling

The students of SPHERE have 1 period a week for 58 minutes. This is in line with the recommended allocation of hours.

## Grouping of students

All classes are mixed ability and are taught in their tutor class.

The Department needs to assess the appropriateness of resources for EAL students and Special Needs.

## Confidentiality and Referrals

### Sensitive Issues

Group discussion will be of a general nature, and will not be personally directed at any person, in accordance with the agreed class ground rules. Inappropriate questions will not be answered by the class teacher, or from student to student. Only questions directly pertinent to the lesson content will be addressed in class. The facilitators may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in checking whether to answer the question privately after the class has finished. Should a teacher be concerned about a matter that has been



# Colaiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

raised he/she should seek advice from the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal without identifying the student.

The teacher has the responsibility to set clear boundaries to ensure the classroom is a safe place for everyone, including themselves. While there are no definitive guidelines, the teacher should bear the following in mind when making decisions about where to set limits:

- Age of student
- School ethos
- Schools RSE policy
- RSE Curriculum Guidelines.

## **Referral**

While it is acknowledged that the teachers have a professional obligation to impart course content, the needs of 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 group of external devices relevant to the class material. Teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Guidance Counsellor or the Principal without identifying the student.

## **Confidentiality**

While an atmosphere of trust is a pre-requisite of SPHERE classes, the following limits of confidentiality must be observed. These limits are:

- Child abuse-physical, emotional, sexual, neglect
- Intention to harm self or others
- Substance misuse
- Underage sexual intercourse

Any disclosure will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in compliance with the Child Protection Policy.

The Designated Liaison Person in Colaiste Pobail Setanta is the Principal; Mr. Liam Walsh and the Deputy Liaison Person in Colaiste Pobail Setanta is Ms. Gillian Murphy

Teachers will inform students of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the year, remind them at necessary points throughout the year and where possible before making a disclosure.



# Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

## **Cross-Curricular Planning**

SPHERE is the concern of the whole staff of the college and as a staff we need to model behaviour and respect in all our relationships.

SPHERE should be vital through the cross-curricular introduction of the importance of Wellbeing being introduced to schools.

## **Review and Evaluation**

The SPHRE course is never static and must be examined and evaluated regularly and adapted to the needs of the students. The SPHRE programmes and policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the SPHRE and SPHRE team.

The opinions of students will be included and SPHE teachers will communicate with the Student Council. The opinions of parents will also be included and SPHE teachers will communicate with the Parents Association. The opinions of management will be included and the SPHE coordinator will communicate with the Principal and the Board of Management.