SALESIAN COLLEGE CELBRIDGE

Social, Personal and Health Education &

Relationship and Sexuality Education 2023-2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Aware of the important life skills and learning that SPHE provides as part of a holistic education for young people, Salesian College supports the implementation of the updated Junior Cycle Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.

Salesian College is satisfied that the redevelopment of the SPHE curriculum has been informed by extensive research, by work with schools and education partners, and has been the focus of far-reaching public consultation, including an extensive consultation on the draft curriculum. For further detail please see the **Report on the consultation on the draft SPHE junior cycle curriculum**

Deliberations by the members of NCCA Council, its Boards and SPHE Development Groups provided a further important source of expertise and advice. In carrying out their deliberations, the members of these representative structures have drawn on both national and international research, consultation findings and relevant government policy commitments.

Furthermore, in developing the curriculum, significant attention has been paid to ensuring that learning is age appropriate.

Decisions about what to include in the curriculum are evidence-based and informed by international best practice, as well as extensive consultations with parents/guardians, teachers and children/young people themselves.

With regard to questions or concerns that have arisen about the teaching of specific topics such as pornography, sexual orientation and gender identity, the NCCA has provided helpful clarification on the intended learning - available at this link and entitled **'Additional guidance**

for teachers on specific learning outcomes'. Resources for teaching and learning in SPHE (curriculumonline.ie)

Schools have obligations regarding SPHE under Department of Education Circular 0028/2023, which states: 'The SPHE short course is 100 hours spread across first, second and third year (and must be provided in each of the three years). Students must follow the newly developed NCCA short course specification'.

In the context of the school's responsibilities under **Child Protection Procedures** (Section 8.4.1.) the teaching of Junior Cycle SPHE is a mandatory part of the curriculum for all students at junior cycle and must be fully implemented in all post-primary schools.

To view the Junior Cycle updated SPHE curriculum, please visit: **https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-Cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE/**

All students in the school have a textbook for SPHE and while other teaching materials are also used, this is a helpful resource to help inform you of what they will be studying and discussing in SPHE. Sixth Year and Transition Year students begin their RSE modules in September and the RSE module for Junior Cycle and Fifth Year students begins in January. However, teaching students about their sexuality, healthy relationships, inclusivity, and respect for everyone is an integral part of the SPHE programme and aspects of RSE will be taught and discussed throughout the year as part of the curriculum and in an age-appropriate manner.

This year we will also continue the An Garda SPHE programme which we participated in last year, delivered again by local Garda; Juvenile Liaison Officer Audrey Sheridan and Community Guard Marc Connelly from Leixlip Garda Station. Junior Cycle modules covered are Personal Safety, Internet Safety, Substance Misuse and Human Rights, Equality and Diversity. At Senior Cycle students will cover Substance Abuse and Consequences of Criminal Behaviour/ Anti-Social Behaviour and Assaults.

If you would like any further information on any of the above, please contact Ms. Harris (Assistant Principal for Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Programmes) at the school on mharris@salesianscelbridge.com.

Yours faithfully,

B. Kearns , Principal   Ms. M. Harris, Coordinator of Pastoral Programmes