



Glenstal Abbey
SCHOOL

**Social, Personal & Health Education
(SPHE) Policy**

Version 2.0

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1.0	May 2007	Original Version
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Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy

Glenstal Abbey School forms an integral part of the wider community associated with the Benedictine monastery at Glenstal. Central to its culture as a boarding school, its staff, students and parents share in much of the life of the community.

Religious and Educational Philosophy

Glenstal Abbey School exists in order to help young men grow in knowledge and grace. Grounded in the Catholic faith and the Benedictine intellectual tradition, the school seeks to foster:

- Reverence for God and the human person
- Respect for learning and order
- Responsibility for the shared experience of community life

At Glenstal Abbey School, we seek to promote in the lives of our students a lifelong search for God as the beginning and end of their lives. This spiritual education of the heart, soul and mind is the basis for intellectual and academic work at Glenstal Abbey School.

In Glenstal Abbey School, what we seek to do above all is to encourage all to achieve the fullest potential that God has granted them, utilising all their talents to the full benefit of all. The life of the school is structured “so that the strong have something to strive for and the weak nothing to run from” (*Rule of Saint Benedict [RB] 64.19*).

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 religious and educational philosophy. Glenstal Abbey School is inspired by a monastic presence and the Benedictine tradition of common life that includes prayer, study, work and recreation. Living the common life means learning to live with the talents and challenges presented by the other individuals. The challenge is for each person to flourish and grow in unity in the spirit of Benedictine tradition. The school seeks to provide an environment wherein the diverse talents of all of our students may find a voice to express themselves. All educational programmes and activities emphasise the formation of the whole person. SPHE is a programme that 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 well-being.

The above aims are consistent with the Glenstal Abbey School Religious and Educational Philosophy, in that they foster holistic development of the individual.

Outline of the Programme Content and Teaching Methods

The SPHE curriculum is presented in ten modules, which appears in each year of the three year Junior Cycle as outlined in Appendix A. Transition Year students are allocated one class of SPHE a week. In addition, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) continues for a further two years into the Senior Cycle. The emphasis will be on developing skills, understanding, attitudes and values important to these areas. These ten modules are:

1. Belonging and Integrating
2. Self Management
3. Communication Skills
4. Physical Health
5. Friendships
6. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
7. Emotional health
8. Influences and decisions
9. Substance use
10. Personal safety

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

Glenstal Abbey School recognises that the primary responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of the children lies with their parents. Glenstal Abbey School has a long tradition of supporting parents in this role and SPHE is seen as enhancing this.

Teaching Methods - How SPHE will be taught 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 'ASK Model' (Attitude, Skills and Knowledge) is widely used in the delivery of classes. 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.

SPHE is allocated one class period a week from 1st to 4th Year. In Senior Cycle, SPHE is timetabled every second week within the two-week rotating timetable for 5th and 6th years, with the main focus on Relationships and Sexuality Education.

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 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. Therefore, appropriate timetabling of trained teachers is necessary due to the importance of the teacher-student relationship in SPHE. With this in mind, it is best practice to assign a teacher to a particular class for a three-year cycle.

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. As part of the core curriculum, SPHE will have a budgetary allocation in line with other subjects, its teaching methodology and timetable allocation. Management will provide appropriate storage facilities for SPHE.

Participation

SPHE is a core subject on our school curriculum. Relationships and Sexuality Education is one module within this programme. The aims of RSE are:

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality.
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and one's relationship with others.
- To promote knowledge and respect for reproduction.
- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Each parent has the right to withdraw his/her son 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. 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 Headmaster in writing of their decision to withdraw their child from the RSE module at the start of each academic 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 guarantee confidentiality. The issues surrounding the following cannot be treated as confidential:

- Child Abuse: Physical, Emotional, Sexual or Neglect. (*Child Protection Procedures 2011*)
- Intention to harm self or others
- Substance misuse as per the school's Substance Abuse Policy

SPHE teachers should inform students of these limits on confidentiality at the beginning of the year and where possible before making any disclosure. All teachers are aware of the *Glenstal Abbey Safeguarding Children - Policies & Procedures* booklet with regard to reporting and dealing with any disclosures. Any issues relating to Child Protection will be referred directly to the DLP or DDLP. Any behaviour deemed 'at risk' will be communicated initially to the school's Pastoral Care team.

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 advise the class of external services relevant to the class material, within the context of the Glenstal Abbey School ethos. SPHE teachers where in doubt as to a course of action, are encouraged to discuss the issue with fellow SPHE teachers, the school Pastoral Care Team, the guidance councillor and/or the Housemaster. Any Child Protection issues will go directly to the DLP or DDLP.

Sensitive issues

Class discussion will be of a general nature and will not be personally directed, in accordance with the previously agreed 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 and appropriate to the age of the student will be addressed in class. The SPHE teacher may also exercise his or her own professional judgement in deciding whether to answer the question privately at a later stage. If a teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised they should seek advice from the SPHE coordinator, Pastoral Care Team, Guidance Counsellor or Housemaster. Any/ all concerns relating to Child Protection will be directly reported to the DLP or DDLP.

Role of Visitors

Visiting speakers are seen as complimenting and supporting the SPHE programme in the school in accordance with the Department Circular 0023/2010.

Teachers inviting speakers must:

- Inform the Headmaster in advance.
- Make the speaker aware of the SPHE & RSE school policies.
- Agree the content of the presentation.
- Do preparatory and follow up work where possible.
- A teacher will remain with the class group during the visit.
- Speakers are invited in to enhance the subject matter not to substitute teaching.

How Parents and Students will be informed

Present students will be informed of this policy through their SPHE class and it will be available on the school website. Parents will also be informed by letter of this policy.

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 incorporated as part of the review. The SPHE policy will be reviewed in line with the schools programme of School Development Planning.

Appendix A

Module	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Belonging and Integrating	Coping with Change Joining a new group Appreciating Difference Bullying is everyone's business Coping with Loss	Looking Back, Looking Forward Group work Family ties	Goal Setting for Third Year Work Contract
Self Management	Organizing Myself Organizing my work at home and at school Balance in my life	What motivates me? Study Skills	Organizing my time Planning for effective study Coping with examinations
Communication Skills	Express yourself Learning to listen Passive, Assertive and aggressive communication	Assertive communication	Learning to communicate Communication in situations of conflict
Physical Health	Body Care Healthy Eating Exercise	Body Care and Body Image	Physical exercise Relaxation Diet
Friendship	Making New Friends A Good Friend	The changing nature of friendship	Boyfriends and Girlfriends
Relationships and Sexuality	Me as Unique and Different Friendship Changes at Adolescence The Reproductive System Images of Male and Female Respecting myself and others	From conception to birth Recognizing and expressing feelings and emotions Peer pressure and other influences Managing relationships Making responsible decisions Health and Personal safety	Body Image Where am I now? Relationships – what's important The three R's: respect, rights and responsibilities Conflict
Emotional Health	Recognizing Feelings Respecting My Feelings and the Feelings of Others	Self Confidence Body image	Stress Feelings and Moods
Influences and Decisions	My Heroes	Positive and negative influences Making decisions	Making a good decision
Substance Use	Why use drugs? Alcohol: the facts Smoking and its effects Smoking: why, why not?	The effects of drugs Alcohol and its effects Alcohol: why, why not? Cannabis and its effects Cannabis: why, why not?	Ecstasy; the realities Heroin: the realities
Personal Safety	Looking after myself	Accidents at home Feeling threatened	Recognizing unsafe situations Violence Help agencies