



Blessington Community College

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a part of your child's educational experience at Blessington Community College, we aim to promote personal wellbeing and development through a comprehensive taught programme of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) that gives children and young people the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live healthy, safe, productive and fulfilled lives, both now and in the future.

The goal of SPHE is to raise age appropriate awareness of social, personal, health and wellbeing issues so students can become more confident in making their own life choices. SPHE should also help them create and maintain supportive relationships. Confidentiality is only requested in relation to identifying individual students and their points of view outside of the classroom; students are encouraged to share and discuss their own thoughts and feelings arising from class discussions with a trusted adult in their life. Younger students may not always appreciate the importance of protecting others' confidentiality, we implore you as adults in a position of trust to respect the confidentiality of our students should your child disclose another student's point of view during a discussion of their own thoughts and feelings.

SPHE is conducted as part of a 58-minute Pastoral Care period once a week and is a heavily discussion-based subject, allowing the students to have their voices heard and their opinions considered, with all child protection and safety measures considered. There is no written examination in SPHE, but each student completes regular reflective journals in their SPHE Journal in google classroom. This reflection will allow students to keep track of their growth and progress in each class and help them to complete the Classroom Based Assessment in second year for inclusion on their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

As you are the primary educators of your children, it is important that you are aware of SPHE curriculum content and the resources teachers may use in their classroom. Students have received their workbook for class "You've got this 1". We would encourage parents to review the workbook and activities included as the units of work will be completed in the order described in the book:



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- Understanding myself and building connections (September-November)
- Building a healthy mind and body (December)
- Substance abuse (January)
- Relationships and Sexuality (February-March)
- Being Safe and Respectful Online and in Person (April/ May)

[NCCA workbook](#) of activities may also be used by some teachers.

As SPHE is responsive to students' needs, teachers may use their discretion in planning. For example if bullying is highlighted by class feedback a teacher will, in collaboration with the department, complete "Being safe and respectful online and in person" before April / May. This will be agreed across the department and parents will be notified on VShare if this occurs. Awareness weeks run throughout the year are also often facilitated through the SPHE class time.

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a required part of the curriculum and provides our students with a healthy understanding of all aspects of relationships. It will help them to develop positive attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework. It will also help them develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety. RSE provides opportunities for young people to learn about both relationships and sexuality, to increase their knowledge and skills, and to explore their attitudes in a carefully facilitated and safe environment.

Due to recent concerns raised in social media we feel it is important to highlight the learning outcomes and activities we will aim to cover in RSE this year:

Learning Outcomes:

- Reflect on the values, behaviours and skills that help to make, sustain and end relationships respectfully with friends, family and romantic/intimate relationships
- Examine benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships - friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationships
- Identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships
- Appreciate the importance of setting healthy boundaries in relationships and consider how to show respect for the boundaries of others
- Consider the importance of taking care of their reproductive health
- Appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways
- Demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health.

Useful Websites shared with students:



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- [REACH OUT: Australia](#)
- [Jigsaw online](#)

Resources:

You've got this 1 :

Chapter 7 Understanding Boundaries

Chapter 21 Reproduction and Sexuality

Chapter 22 Gender Identity and Expression

Chapter 23 Sexual Orientation

Chapter 26 Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

Chapter 27 Challenges in Relationships

NCCA workbook:

Activity 3: Gender diversity and inclusion

Activity 4: Sexual orientation

Activity 5: What makes a family

Activity 6: Healthy connected relationships

Activity 7: Maintaining healthy relationships

Activity 9: Human reproduction

We recognise the right of any parent/guardian who wishes to request that their child should not participate in the programme. The school will respect this choice. Where students are withdrawn from SPHE, the school cannot take responsibility for any versions of class content passed on to them by other students. Parents must make a written withdrawal from class following a meeting with the Principal or Deputy Principal and will be required to make their own arrangements to supervise their student during the class period. The Principal will provide an official withdrawal form upon request.

Parents' involvement is vital to the success of the SPHE curriculum across our school community. A holistic approach respecting the core values of our college in care, community, equity, and respect is at the core of our teaching strategies. We are aware that we are building on the conversations that you have had with your child. We would encourage you to continue to talk to your child about the SPHE programme throughout the school year.

We look forward to collaborating with you all going forward. For any activities in either workbook that may cause you concern please email the Principal/Vice-Principals, including SPHE/RSE in the subject line. As a department, we appreciate the importance of collaborating with parents on all resources used in the SPHE classroom.



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Kind Regards
Management & SPHE team.



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