



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 3". 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:

- Understanding My Thoughts and Actions (September-November)



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- Caring for My Body and Mind (December)
- Understanding and Dealing with Substance Use (January)
- Intimate Relationships (February-March)
- Sexual and Emotional Wellbeing (April/ May)

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 "Protecting myself 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.
- Explore the pressures to become sexually intimate and discuss ways to show respect for people's choices.
- Appreciate the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships, from the perspective of building caring relationships and from a legal perspective.
- Explain the importance of safer sexual activity with reference to methods of contraception and protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Discuss the influence of popular culture and the online world, in particular, the influence of pornography, on young people's understanding, expectations and



- social norms in relation to sexual expression
- Demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health.

Useful Websites shared with students:

- [REACH OUT: Australia](#)
- [Jigsaw online:](#)
- www.sexualwellbeing.ie: HSE website designed to provide information on all aspects of sexual health.
- [Webwise](#)

Resources:

You've got this 3 :

Chapter 10 Mastering Resilience in Challenging Times
 Chapter 20 The Role of Intimacy and Pleasure in Relationships
 Chapter 21 Consent in Intimate Relationships
 Chapter 22 Pressure To Become Sexually Intimate
 Chapter 23 Popular Culture and Sexual Expression
 Chapter 24 What is Pornography and Why Is It a Concern?
 Chapter 25 The Impact of Pornography
 Chapter 26 Ending Relationships
 Chapter 27 Sexual Harassment
 Chapter 28 The Influence of Social Media on Gender Norms
 Chapter 29 Contraception: Options and Communication
 Chapter 30 Contraception: Making Choices
 Chapter 31 STIs Transmission and Type
 Chapter 32 STIs Testing and Treatment

NCCA approved activities which may also be used by some teachers. :

- [Making decisions](#) (Lesson 8)
- [Relationships Pressures](#) (Lesson 13)
- [Resisting Relationships Pressures](#) (Lesson 14)
- [Be in Ctrl](#): Online Educational Resource by Webwise.
- [Influence of the media and gender stereotypes](#) (Lesson 5)
- [Influence of the media](#) (Lesson 5)
- [Gender Equality - Learn About the Root Causes of Gender Inequality](#): A resource by UNICEF Ireland - see especially Activity 3 for a number of short videos on sexism in the media, sexual objectification and related topics.
- [The Consent Education Programme](#) (2nd Year activities)

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



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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. An official withdrawal form will be provided by the Principal 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. 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.

Kind Regards,
Management & SPHE team.



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