



Coláiste Phádraig CBS

SPHE - Social, Personal and Health Education Policy.

School Name: Coláiste Phádraig CBS.

Address: Roselawn, Ballydowd, Lucan, Co Dublin.

Coláiste Phádraig is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The school is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex all boys school.

School Management: The Board of Management of Coláiste Phádraig is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement: Coláiste Phádraig is operated according to the religious and educational philosophy of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter (ERST). We strive to live up to Christian values and show genuine concern for our school community. Our core aims are to provide a broad and comprehensive education and to recognise the needs and develop the talents of each person. We strive to enrich all those with whom we are privileged to come in contact, we strive to succeed.

Ethos: Inspired by the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice, the Christian Brother School prioritises education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life and mission of Jesus Christ. His aim was to show special concern for the

poor and underprivileged and develop a curriculum which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.

Coláiste Phádraig aims to encourage the development of the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social creative and physical qualities of each student. This school is made up of Trustees, Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principal, Teaching Staff, Ancillary Staff, Parents and Students. The central purpose of the school is the religious, moral, intellectual, physical, and social development of the students. Such a purpose is best achieved in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Rationale:

The teaching and learning within Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) at Coláiste Phádraig provides a unique space where students can develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions, and values needed to support their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being, now and in the future. The SPHE specification is grounded in values of respect, equality, inclusivity, responsibility, dignity, compassion, and empathy.

Adolescence is a time of important change and challenge for young people as they come to a clearer sense of their identity and gain a more secure sense of who they are. The lifelong process of ‘becoming your own person’ and gaining a secure sense of identity is a prime developmental concern in adolescence. All young people need knowledge and skills to help them develop a strong sense of self, make informed and healthy decisions, be able to take care of themselves and others, and manage life’s challenges.

SPHE at Coláiste Phádraig places a strong emphasis on the development of important life skills that young people need while growing up in a fast-changing and complex world. Specifically, it focuses on developing the core social and emotional skills of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills. These have been shown to determine how well people manage changing and challenging environments and can influence many important life outcomes.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of, and connects with, aspects of SPHE. It is of particular importance for young people at this stage of their lives as they reflect on questions such as ‘*what kind of person am I?*’ and ‘*what matters for me in*

relationships? As they continue to form their identity, they are making sense of life experiences, information, images and messages about relationships and sexuality from a range of informal sources such as their peers, family, the media, online world. Having the opportunity to think about and discuss relationships, sexuality and healthy sexual expression within a safe classroom setting and with a skilled teacher is vitally important.

Using critical and participative pedagogies, SPHE can provide a safe, supportive, and non-judgemental space where students' self-awareness and awareness of others can grow, and where they engage in reflection and dialogue, and identify actions they can take to protect and promote their own well-being and that of others. By affirming and developing young people's strengths and capacities as active agents in their own lives, SPHE can play an important role in enabling young people to find their voice and develop self-efficacy.

In junior cycle, *six indicators* have been identified as *central to students' well-being*. Teaching and learning within the SPHE classroom at Coláiste Phádraig can provide meaningful learning opportunities to foster all six indicators of well-being, helping students become more *Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware*. *SPHE is thereby a core pillar of Coláiste Phádraig's Well-being programme at Junior Cycle.*

Teaching and learning of SPHE at Coláiste Phádraig involves an approach that is inclusive in accordance with principles of equality, human rights, and responsibilities. This ensures that all students can see themselves, their families and their communities reflected across the learning and can learn to value diversity as a feature of humankind and as a source of enrichment. The teaching of SPHE at Coláiste Phádraig thereby will help to contribute to building a cohesive, compassionate, and fair society; one that is inclusive of all genders, sexualities, ethnicities, religious beliefs/worldviews, social classes, and abilities/disabilities.

(NCCA Social, Personal and Health Education Specification for Junior Cycle, 2023).

Aims:

Teaching and learning in SPHE at Coláiste Phádraig aims to help students to:

- build self-awareness and positive self-worth.
- develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions, and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives.

- feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others.
- enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society.

The short course in SPHE was first published in 2016 and was updated in 2023.

Note: Students starting first year in September 2023 will be studying the updated 2023 specification. All other students at Junior Cycle will be studying the 2016 specification. While there are common themes among these specifications, this policy will focus mainly on the most up to date 2023 specification.

Overview of the SPHE Short Course at Junior Cycle:

This Junior Cycle short course in SPHE is designed to enable students to develop a positive sense of themselves and a commitment to caring for themselves and others.

There are 4 *Strands* in this Junior Cycle SPHE Short Course (**2016**):

Strand 1: *Who Am I?* (This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and building self-esteem).

Strand 2: *Minding Myself & Others.* (This strand provides opportunities for students to reflect on how they can best take care of themselves and others).

Strand 3: *Team Up.* (This strand focuses on students learning about important relationships in their lives and building relationship skills).

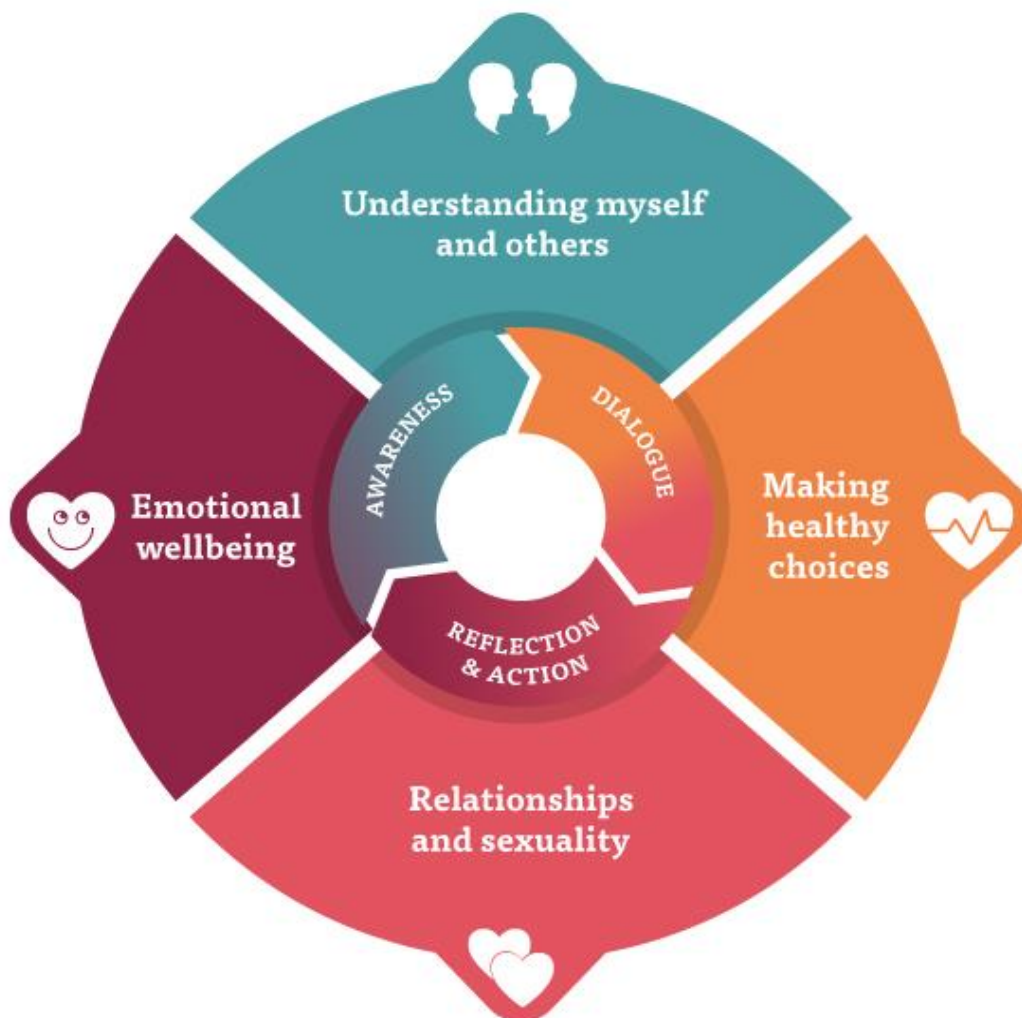
Strand 4: *My Mental Health.* (This strand focuses on building positive mental health, examining young people's experience of mental ill-health, and learning how to support themselves and others in challenging times).

Students following the **2016 SPHE Short Course Specification** are encouraged to keep a **personal learning diary**. The nature of a lot of students' learning in SPHE is concerned with attitudes, values and feelings which is personal to the student. Students at Coláiste Phádraig are encouraged to keep a personal learning diary for the duration of the short course, where

they can reflect privately on their learning in SPHE. To ensure that the SPHE classroom is a respectful and safe space for learning in SPHE, a class contract is drawn up at the start of each school year.

Overview of the SPHE Short Course at Junior Cycle (2023):

The **2023** junior cycle short course in SPHE is designed to support students in developing a positive sense of self and a capacity to care for themselves and others. It is designed around *four interconnected strands and three cross-cutting elements*.



Strand 1: *Understanding Myself & Others.* (This strand focuses on developing self-awareness and self-esteem and building some of the foundational skills and dispositions needed for healthy relationships and to thrive in life, including communicating and negotiating, listening, showing empathy, respecting difference, and self-management / self-regulation).

Strand 2: *Making Healthy Choices.* (This strand offers opportunities for students to consider how they can make healthy choices to support their well-being. It explores what being healthy might look like for a teenager, what helps or gets in the way of making healthy choices and how to access reliable information to support good choices. Students will also practice the skills needed for making healthy decisions and come to understand contextual factors, such as family, peer, media, and social pressures, which influence decisions).

Strand 3: *Relationships and Sexuality.* (This strand explores the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social aspects of relationships and sexuality through a positive, inclusive, rights and responsibilities-based approach. The focus is on family relationships, friendships, romantic and potential sexual relationships in the future).

Strand 4: *Emotional Well-being.* (This strand primarily focuses on nurturing emotional well-being and promoting positive mental health. It helps students develop problem solving and coping skills for dealing with the emotional ups and downs of life, explores how they can support themselves and others in challenging times and discusses where/how to find support, if needed).

The four strands are underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in SPHE.

These are:

- **Awareness** (Awareness is the ability to understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values, and behaviour. It includes understanding how different factors influence our sense of self and how we live our lives, including the influence of family, peers, the internet, gender, culture, and social norms. This element also includes an awareness that to be human is to be in relationships and that we all share a common humanity and dignity, have rights and responsibilities).

• **Dialogue** (Through dialogical teaching and learning students are facilitated to engage with a diversity of viewpoints; discuss and reflect on their own perspectives, values, and behaviours and those of others; enlarge their understanding of topics of relevance to their lives; and come to informed, thoughtful decisions based on their personal values, with due regard to their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. Respectful dialogue is aided by presuming a diversity of backgrounds, identities, cultures, and experiences in every classroom and seeing this as a resource for learning).

• **Reflection and Action** (This cross-cutting element focuses on students reflecting on what they have learned and coming to their own personal insights and conclusions in response to their learning. It enables students to consider how the learning can inform their choices, behaviour and relationships, and discerning what it means for their lives now or for the future. Learning in SPHE is a ‘praxis’; an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, nurtured by dialogue with others).

SPHE and Statements of Learning at Junior Cycle

Links between Junior Cycle SPHE and the Statements of Learning:

SOL 5: The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision-making.

Examples of related learning in SPHE: Students develop self-awareness, including an awareness of their personal values and how these values influence day-to-day decision making. They also gain understanding of and develop respect for values, beliefs and experiences that may be different from their own.

SOL 6: The student appreciates and respects how diverse values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making in SPHE.

Examples of related learning in SPHE: Students have opportunities to discuss the wider social and cultural context that influences their personal and inter-personal relationships and decision making around health and well-being.

SOL 11: The student takes action to safeguard and promote his/her wellbeing and that of others.

Examples of related learning in SPHE: Students learn how to make decisions to support their own and others' health and wellbeing. They gain information and develop skills and strategies to help them deal with relevant life challenges and learn where to seek support when needed.

Links between Junior Cycle SPHE and Key Skills.

The junior cycle curriculum focuses on 8 key skills:

- Being creative.
- Being literate.
- Being numerate.
- Communicating.
- Managing information and thinking.
- Managing myself.
- Staying well.
- Working with others.

Junior cycle SPHE at Coláiste Phádraig offers students opportunities to support and develop all key skills.

Key Skill	Key Skill Element	Student Learning Activity
Being creative.	Exploring options and alternatives.	Students explore and evaluate options in the context of decisions they make and consider possible outcomes and consequences. Thinking creatively and being open to the viewpoint and perspective of others is also encouraged.

Being literate.	Exploring and creating a variety of texts, including multimodal texts.	Students learn to express their learning in SPHE in a variety of ways for example: physically (drama / role play), digitally (PowerPoint presentation), paper-based (poster / journalling) data-based (bar-chart / graph) or through artistic presentation (drawing / doodling).
Being numerate	Gathering, interpreting, and representing data	Students consider research data relevant to their lives. In some instances, students may create their own surveys or questionnaires to investigate aspects of health and wellbeing relevant to young people.
Communicating	Listening and expressing myself	Students learn to express ideas and emotions clearly and respectfully and develop empathy by listening to different perspectives and experiences and showing concern for the feelings of others.
Managing information and thinking	Thinking creatively and critically	Students are encouraged to question assumptions (their own and others) and social norms. They are supported to reflect on their learning and prompted to review their learning, considering new information and insights gained.
Managing myself	Knowing myself.	Students learn more about themselves as they engage in decision-making activities and goal setting. They learn to be flexible, to organise themselves, to plan to achieve their goals and to develop a sense of balance in their lives.
Staying well	Being safe.	Students identify the likely consequences of risky and unhealthy behaviours and learn how to respond if their personal safety is threatened.

Working with others	Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict.	Through their learning students develop the foundational skills needed for healthy relationships, including skills for assertive and respectful communication.
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SPHE and Well-being at Colaiste Phadraig:

SPHE is a core pillar of our junior cycle Well-being programme at Coláiste Phádraig. SPHE (including RSE) encompasses 110 hours of the 400 hours dedicated to Well-being over the course of the three years of junior cycle.

The six indicators of well-being – *Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware* - describe what is important for young people and their well-being. SPHE at Coláiste Phádraig supports young people to develop all six indicators of well-being. The following images (Fig.1 & Fig.2) provide an overview of the six well-being indicators.

6 Key Indicators of Well-being (Fig. 1)



6 Key Indicators of Well-being (Fig. 2)



SPHE - Learning Outcomes at Junior Cycle.

Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, and values students should be able to demonstrate having completed their junior cycle SPHE course at Coláiste Phádraig. The learning outcomes set out in this policy apply to all students and represent outcomes for students at the end of their period of study.

The learning outcomes are numbered within each strand. The numbering does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes. Nor does it imply that the learning outcomes should be attended to sequentially. When planning for teaching and learning in SPHE at Coláiste Phádraig, teachers will work with a number of learning outcomes either from within one strand, or across different strands.

SPHE learning and teaching at Coláiste Phádraig also employs a *spiral approach*. This spiral approach allows students to revisit important themes over the course of their three junior cycle years at Coláiste Phádraig. This allows for deeper engagement relevant to the students' evolving needs and stage of development. In revisiting learning outcomes, it is important to ensure that there is a progression of learning. It is also equally important in the teaching of SPHE at Coláiste Phádraig, to consult regularly with students to ascertain how to plan teaching and learning that is responsive to students' particular needs, questions, and concerns. Such consultation will ensure that SPHE is relevant and responsive to the reality of students' lives in Coláiste Phádraig.

***Strand 1: Understanding Myself and Others – Learning Outcomes include:**

Students should be able to:

- 1.1 explore the physical, social, and emotional changes that happen during adolescence.
- 1.2 reflect on their personal strengths and values and how they bring these into relationships.
- 1.3 explore the range of influences and life experiences that can impact on self-image and self-esteem and identify ways to nurture a positive sense of self-worth.
- 1.4 recognise the factors and influences that shape young people's self-identity, such as family, peers, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnic background, dis/abilities, religious beliefs/worldviews.
- 1.5 reflect on gender equity and how gender stereotypes impact on expectations, behaviour, and relationships.
- 1.6 discuss experiences/situations of bias, inequality or exclusion, and devise ways to actively create more inclusive environments.
- 1.7 communicate in a respectful and effective manner and listen openly and sensitively to the views/feelings of others.

1.8 reflect on the meaning and importance of empathy and discuss ways that it can be expressed.

1.9 demonstrate self-management skills, including settling personal goals, delaying gratification, and self-regulation of thoughts, emotions and impulses.

***Strand 2: Making Healthy Choices – Learning Outcomes include:**

Students should be able to:

2.1 consider the multifaceted nature of health and well-being and evaluate what being healthy might look like for different adolescents, including how food, physical activity, sleep/rest and hygiene contribute to health and well-being.

2.2 investigate how unhealthy products such as nicotine, vapes, alcohol, and unhealthy food and drinks are marketed and advertised.

2.3 discuss societal, cultural, and economic influences affecting young people when it comes to making healthy choices, about smoking, alcohol and other addictive substances and behaviours, and how harmful influences can be over-come in real life situations.

2.4 demonstrate skills and strategies to help make informed choices that support health and well-being and apply them in real-life situations that may be stressful and/or involve difficult peer situations.

2.5 discuss the physical, social, emotional, and legal consequences of using addictive substances – immediate and long-term.

2.6 consider scenarios where, for example, alcohol, nicotine, drugs, food and electronic devices might be used to cope with unpleasant feelings or stress and discuss possible healthy ways of coping.

2.7 assess the benefits and difficulties associated with their on-line world and discuss strategies for dealing with a range of scenarios that might arise.

2.8 discuss how to share personal information, images, opinions and emotions in a safe, responsible and respectful manner, online and in-person.

2.9 explore why young people share sexual imagery online and examine the risks and consequences of doing this.

2.10 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information, supports and services about health and well-being.

***Strand 3: Relationships and Sexuality – Learning Outcomes include:**

Students should be able to:

- 3.1 reflect on the values, behaviours and skills that help to make, sustain, and end relationships respectfully with friends, family, and romantic/intimate relationships.
- 3.2 examine benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships - friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationship.
- 3.3 identify signs of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships.
- 3.4 appreciate the importance of setting healthy boundaries in relationships and consider how to show respect for the boundaries of others.
- 3.5 consider the importance of taking care of their reproductive health.
- 3.6 appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender are experienced and expressed in diverse ways.
- 3.7 explore the pressures to become sexually intimate and discuss ways to show respect **for** people's choices.
- 3.8 appreciate the importance of seeking, giving, and receiving consent in sexual relationships, from the perspective of building caring relationships and from a legal perspective.
- 3.9 explain the importance of safer sexual activity with reference to methods of contraception and protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health.

Links between RSE and Junior Cycle SPHE.

Schools are required to teach RSE as part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in each year of the Junior Cycle SPHE programme.

RSE is an integral part of Junior Cycle SPHE and Well-being curricula. It aims to help young people acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual, and social framework.

At this age, students are exposed to a lot of information about sex, sexuality, and relationships from a variety of sources. RSE provides the context within which students can learn about the physical, social, emotional, and moral issues related to relationships, sexual health, sexuality, and gender identity including where to source reliable information. (*Junior Cycle Well-being Guidelines, 2021*).

***Strand 4: Emotional Well-being – Learning Outcomes include:**

Students should be able to:

- 4.1 discuss the fluid nature of well-being and ways to nurture and protect it.
- 4.2 recognise and acknowledge their emotions and recognise the links between thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.
- 4.3 consider the impact of stress and draw upon a variety of techniques to help self-regulate emotions and cope with the day-to-day stresses of life.
- 4.4 discuss ways to support themselves and others in challenging times and where/ how/ when to seek support if needed.
- 4.5 explore how emotional well-being can be affected by factors within our control, such as, sleep, diet, exercise, substance use and online exposure, and factors beyond our control.
- 4.6 recognise different kinds of abusive or bullying behaviour that can occur online or in-person.
- 4.7 explain why noticing and responding to different kinds of abusive or bullying behaviour that can occur in-person or online is important and discuss appropriate responses including why, how, where, and when to report.
- 4.8 identify actions young people can take, without putting themselves at risk, in situations where they are aware of abusive behaviour or bullying happening and explore the barriers to standing up.

4.9 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information and services aimed at supporting young people's emotional well-being and mental health.

**SPHE 2023 specification.*

Junior Cycle SPHE - Assessment and Reporting at Coláiste Phádraig:

The junior cycle places a strong emphasis on assessment as part of the learning process. This approach requires a more varied approach to assessment in ensuring that the assessment method or methods chosen are fit for purpose, timely and relevant to the students.

Assessment in Junior Cycle SPHE will optimise the opportunity for students to become reflective and active participants in their learning and for teachers at Coláiste Phádraig to support this. The purpose of assessment and reporting at junior cycle SPHE is therefore, to support student learning.

At Coláiste Phádraig, we support a variety of approaches to assessment however, most assessment in SPHE will be formative in nature, and students will provide evidence of their learning through multiple means of expression. This may include oral, written, visual, digital, and art-based pieces. In these contexts, students, with their teachers and peers, will reflect upon and make judgements about their own and others' learning by looking at the quality of particular pieces of work, and they will agree the next steps in their learning based on feedback they give and receive. In this way, ongoing formative assessment can support the student in their learning journey and in preparing for the Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) related to this course.

Student progress and achievement in SPHE, both in ongoing assessments and in the specific Classroom-Based Assessment relating to this course, will be communicated to parents/guardians in interim reporting and in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Practical Considerations.

- Resources used will be stored within the school and shared amongst all SPHE teachers. Resources include the use of *Health & Wellbeing SPHE textbooks 1, 2 & 3*, (Anne Potts / Nodlaig O’Grady, Edco). Online resources also used will include those shared on the NCCA SPHE Toolkit – (www.curriculumonline.ie)
- SPHE (which includes RSE) encompasses 110 hours of the 400 hours dedicated to Well-being at Coláiste Phádraig over the course of the three years of junior cycle.
- From September 2023, first- and second-year students will be timetabled for two 40-minute class periods per week for SPHE. Third year students will be timetabled for one 40-minute class per week.
- From September 2023, first year students will follow the updated 2023 SPHE short course specification while all other students at junior cycle will follow the 2016 short course specification.

Policy Approval and Review.

Coláiste Phádraig’s SPHE Policy is reviewed on an on-going basis.

This policy can be viewed on the school website – www.colaiSTEPHADRAIG.ie

This policy has been approved by the school’s Board of Management.

Signed:_____.

(Chairperson, Board of Management).

Date:_____.

