

To: Each School Steward

Information Notice

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) / Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Dear School Steward,

At its meeting of 21st and 22nd August, Standing Committee asked that I write to School Stewards regarding matters of concern relating to the teaching of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) / Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and set out some key principles and advice.

- (a) In the first instance, ASTI believes that no teacher should be assigned to teach this programme unless they wish and feel confident to teach it.
- (b) In no circumstances should a teacher be assigned to teach the programme without full and comprehensive training.
- (c) It is a matter of concern to ASTI that a substantial reduction in SPHE/RSE class sizes is not being implemented to support the programme.
- (d) ASTI acknowledges that the programme specification includes sensitive issues. In that context, teachers should only teach material they feel they are comfortable and competent to teach. It may be the case that in some instances, additional expertise and support may be required to address sensitive issues contained in the programme specification. This is a matter that should be notified and discussed with school management. Circular Letter 43/2018 outlines best practice guidance for schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators.
- (e) ASTI is mindful of concerns that resources used should present material in line with the programme specification as intended and designed. ASTI strongly advises teachers to use the resources available on the SPHE online Resource Portal – www.pdst.ie/post-primary/health-wellbeing/sphe and the NCCA Toolkit.

Please bring this notice to the attention of all ASTI members who teach Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) / Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in your school.

Kieran Christie
General Secretary
August 2024