

S.P.H.E Policy

Introductory Statement

“Social, Personal and Health Education, (S.P.H.E) as part of the curriculum, supports the personal development, health and well-being of young people and helps them create and maintain supportive relationships”.

RATIONALE

This policy was devised in the school year 2017/2018. The initial draft was reviewed by a policy subcommittee before whole staff consideration and input. The plan was also circulated to the Parents' Association for consideration and comment. The revision of the existing SPHE policy was required as the school became a Co-Educational vertical school in September 2013 and consequently the SPHE policy needed to provide curricular direction for this subject for Infants and 1st class. It is necessary to provide clear guidelines for teachers to ensure consistency throughout the school. This policy will serve to inform necessary changes to reflect and benefit current teaching and learning practices in our school.

VISION

It is our hope in St. Mary's Primary School that through the SPHE programme we will educate and positively influence our pupils to grow up as happy, healthy and well-balanced individuals who can therefore become responsible citizens and members of their communities.

Aims:

In this policy we endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for SPHE:

- To promote the personal development and wellbeing of the child.
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
- To foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
- To develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.

- To enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

Curriculum Planning:

As SPHE is spiral in nature the same content will be planned and taught at each level over a two year period ensuring that the child receives a comprehensive and balanced programme over the cycle. There are **5** units to be covered **each** year which are chosen from each of the 3 strands ie. **Myself, Myself & Others and Myself & The Wider World.**

The following table is an overview of the content for our school over two years ie.

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September/October	Self-identity (Myself)	My friends and other people (Myself and others)
November/December	Taking care of my body (Myself)	Relating to others (Myself & Others)
January/February	Safety and protection (Myself)	Safety and protection (Myself)
March/April	Growing and changing (Myself)	Making decisions * (3rd to 6th) (Myself)
May/June	Developing citizenship (Myself and the wider world)	Media education (Myself and the wider world)

Contexts for SPHE:

SPHE will be taught in a variety of contexts:

- Positive school atmosphere and climate
- Discrete time
- Integration with other subject areas

Positive school atmosphere and climate:

- Effective communication within the school and between home and school.
- Catering for individual needs of children i.e. in class, Learning Support and Resource.
- Creating a health-promoting physical environment.
- Enhancing self-esteem.
- Fostering respect for diversity.
- Fostering inclusive and respectful language

- Developing democratic processes.
- Developing a school approach to assessment.

Discrete Time:

SPHE may be time-tabled in classes for ½ hour per week / one hour per fortnight or blocks of 1-2 hours where feasible or appropriate. This is particularly important for any sensitive issues or those that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum e.g. Stay Safe, Relationships & Sexuality Education and Healthy Eating lessons etc. Teachers should endeavour to plan so that children going for supplementary teaching in Learning Support or Resource are also accommodated as far as possible in these lessons.

Integration:

At each class level teachers will seek to integrate SPHE with other curricular areas. Some aspects of SPHE can be dealt with in the context of relevant subject areas.

Approaches and Methodologies:

Active learning is central to the SPHE programme and the recommended approach for teaching and learning. This can be promoted through the following:

- Drama activities
- Co-operative games
- Discussion-pairs, small groups or with whole class
- Written activities: worksheets, questionnaires, lists/checklists, surveys and projects
- ICT
- Media studies
- Looking at children's work eg. portfolios, projects etc.
- Talk and discussion.
- Problem-solving
- Collaborative learning
- Use of the environment

Assessment:

Assessment in SPHE is more informal than in some other subject areas and includes some of the following methods:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks for lesson
- Teacher designed tests
- Projects
- Presentation of children's work
- Content of worksheets assigned

Information regarding a child's abilities, strengths and progress in SPHE can be shared with the pupil through discussion of work with the class teacher and with parents at meeting

Children with special needs:

Children in St. Mary's P.S with learning difficulties or special needs can be accommodated separately for specific programmes such as Stay Safe and for the sensitive areas of RSE which provide different materials. This can occur with the help of Resource teachers or Special Needs Assistants as necessary in consultation with the class teacher.

Equality of participation and access:

We recognise and value the diverse community that exists in our school community and we endeavour to provide equal opportunities for all girls and boys to have access to the services, facilities and amenities that our school environment provides.

Policies and Programmes that support SPHE at St Mary's:

- RSE Policy
- Healthy Eating Lunch Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Stay Safe Programme
- Green Flag Initiative
- Acceptable Use Policy
- SEN Policy
- Homework Policy
- Zippy's Friends
- Get Up Stand Up
- Friends for Life
- Fun Friends

Relationships and Sexuality Education(RSE)

This is an integral part of the SPHE programme from Junior Infants to 6th Class.

Stay Safe Programme:

This anti-bullying programme is taught in its entirety annually from Senior Infants to 6th Class in a six/seven-week period (Jan-Feb) and parents are informed beforehand.

Child Protection:

The school follows the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures which are based on Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. Our designated liaison person (DLP) with specific responsibility for child protection is Mrs. Bernie Mc Veigh. The school will follow the guidelines outlined in this policy.

Zippy's Friends

Positive mental health programme for Junior Level of Primary School (**up to 2nd Class**). It is a skills based programme based on the principle of teaching young children how to deal with difficulties so they can develop skills to cope with problems that may occur in adolescence and adulthood. It teaches them how to cope with everyday difficulties, to identify and talk about their feelings and to explore ways of dealing with them. Ms Leech and Ms O Reilly have been trained to deliver Zippy's Friends in Sept 2023.

Assembly:

Regular assemblies in St. Mary's P.S provides an opportunity to communicate and promote positive ideas and attitudes to pupils while also acknowledging their achievements, thus fostering their self-esteem and maintaining a positive school atmosphere.

Friends for Life

Training has been provided to the school by NEPS in Friends for Life and the teachers trained to date are Triona Ní Bhaoill, Therese Aherne and Caitríona McVeigh. Ms Ní Bhaoill and Ms Aherne will deliver the Fun Friends and Friends for Life programme in 2nd and 4th Classes during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Homework:

This may include active learning approaches such as research, observation, reading newspapers, listening to/watching the news, interviewing someone, projects etc.

Reference: Teacher Manuals and Supplementary Books

- Teacher Guidelines
- Making the links(now only available online)
- Walk Tall Programme/Misneach Infants-6th Class (also on CD and online)
- Stay Safe Programme(also online)
- Stay Safe Programme(Special needs version)
- RSE Programme-Junior Infants-6th Class (also online)
- Be Safe! (Road, Fire, Water safety- National Safety Council)
- Action For Life - Irish Heart Foundation
- Busy Bodies Programme (HSE)
- The Friendship Formula – Alison Schroeder (LDA)
- 101 Games for Social Skills (Jenny Mosley & Helen Sonnet)
- 101 Games for Better Behaviour (Jenny Mosley & Helen Sonnet)
- 101 games for Self Esteem (Jenny Mosley & Helen Sonnet)
- Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom – Jenny Mosley
- Circle Time
- Health Links Series- Jun.Infants -6th Class. (Prim-Ed)
- Conflict Resolution Series -Lower/Middle/Upper Primary (Prim- Ed)
- Values Education Series (Developing Self-esteem & Citizenship (Prim-Ed)

Guest Speakers:

From time to time as appropriate guests may be invited by individual teachers or by the school to speak to a class/classes or parents as a particular area or topic is being covered. These may include:

- Garda Síochána
- Doctor/Nurse
- Dentist
- Fireman
- Cyber Safety (parents & children.)
- County Council-Green Flag Representative
- Drugs/ Alcohol Garda Unit

Parents will be notified of guest visits in advance when deemed necessary. Teachers will discuss content of presentations with the facilitator prior to any visit and brief them if required. They will also remain with their class for the duration of any presentations.

Individual Teacher's Planning:

This policy will provide a reference guide for teachers' long and short-term planning for SPHE each year. It outlines the framework of content to be covered and the approaches and methodologies and resources used in the school. This framework was revised in October 2023

Staff Development:

Teachers will be informed of any further professional development courses available in related areas that may be useful to class teaching. New skills/expertise/ideas or programmes etc. will be shared with teachers at staff or curriculum planning meetings. Teachers have received First Aid and Health and Safety training and also attended a workshop. All staff are aware of fire safety procedures and we also have regular fire drills for the whole school.

Parental Involvement:

Parents will be aware of the SPHE curriculum at St. Mary's accessing the policy through the school website. They will receive notes in Junior Infants to 6th Class regarding the RSE and Stay Safe programmes. Related policies are also communicated in the school handbook.

Community Links:

The local community provides the opportunity to utilise expertise that may support the SPHE programme e.g. Health Promotion Unit of the HSE, Good to Talk in providing courses or initiatives from time to time for teachers and students.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each teacher has responsibility for implementing this school plan within their classroom. The principal is responsible for ensuring all teachers are aware of the plan and use it within their classrooms.

The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by:

- The Board of Management of St. Mary's Primary School
- The Principal
- The parents/guardians of St. Mary's Primary School
- The Post Holder of Science
- The teachers and staff of St Mary's Primary School

Ratification and Review:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in February 2019 and was reviewed in October 2023. It was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 25th October 2023

Signed 
Chairperson BOM

Date 25/10/23

Websites for SPHE Reference:

- www.curriculumonline.ie
- www.ncca.ie
- www.ppps.ie
- www.ippn.ie
- www.staysafe.ie
- www.healthpromotion.ie
- www.education.ie
- www.scoilnet.ie
- www.teachnet.ie
- www.into.ie
- www.seomraranga.ie
- www.primaryresources.co.uk
- www.childrensrights.ie
- www.rsa.ie
- www.3mireland.ie
- www.colgate.com
- www.foodtimeline.org
- www.pcsp.ie
- www.ncte.ie.internetsafety
- www.webwise.ie
- www.watchyourspace.ie
- www.ndc.ie
- www.agriaware.ie
- www.moocrew.ie
- www.irishheart.ie