



*Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál
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S.P.H.E Policy (with Stay Safe Programme attached)

Introductory Statement:

The original plan for SPHE was developed by staff, at a staff meeting in 2004. Many developments have taken place since then and this policy required a review and revisions based on our school experiences to date. This policy was reviewed in September 2018.

Rationale:

- To foster the personal development, health and well-being of all the children in our care.
- To help them to create and maintain positive and supportive relationships.
- To help them to become active and responsible members of society.
- To help them develop a framework of values, attitudes and skills which will enable pupils to make informed and responsible choices now and in the future.
- To benefit from the teaching and learning experiences of the S.P.H.E Curriculum.
- To conform to the principles of learning outlined in the Primary School Curriculum.

Vision:

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. We provide a safe, caring school environment where every child is cherished and helped to achieve their maximum potential intellectually, spiritually, physically and emotionally. We recognize that SPHE is intrinsic to the holistic learning and teaching that occurs both formally and informally in the school and in the classroom. Through our SPHE programme we wish to assist children develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The programme encourages children to be aware of their rights as individuals while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and the wider community. Parents have the primary role in the Social, Personal and Health Education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible.

Aims:

We endorse the aims of Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum for Primary Schools:

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- 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 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 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.

Objectives:

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the SPHE curriculum should enable the child to:

- Be self-confident and have a positive sense of self-esteem.
- Develop a sense of personal responsibility and come to understand his/her sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction.
- Develop and enhance the social skills of communication, co-operation and conflict resolution.
- Create and maintain supportive relationships both now and in the future.
- Develop an understanding of healthy living, an ability to implement healthy behaviour and a willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health.
- Develop a sense of safety and ability to protect himself/herself from danger and abuse.
- Make decisions, solve problems and take appropriate actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Become aware of, and discerning about, the various influences on choices and decisions.
- Begin to identify, review and evaluate the values and attitudes that are held by individuals and society and to recognise that these affect thoughts and actions.
- Respect the environment and develop a sense of responsibility for its long-term care.
- Develop some of the skills and abilities necessary for participating fully in groups and in society.
- Become aware of some of the individual and community rights and responsibilities that come from living in a democracy.

- Begin to understand the concepts of personal, local, national, European and global identity.
- Appreciate and respect the diversity that exists in society and the positive contributions of various cultural, religious and social groups.
- Promote the values of a just and caring society in an age-appropriate manner and understand the importance of seeking truth and peace.

1. Curriculum Planning - Strands and Strand Units:

SPHE is planned so that children receive a comprehensive programme over a two-year cycle. Teachers have allocated strand units from each of the strands to each class. This ensures that the strand units not covered in Year One are included in the programme of work for the following year. In some cases it may be necessary to revise specific objectives from the previous year. The content objectives for the sensitive areas of the RSE will be addressed in discrete time in both classes at a particular level, year two serving to revise the content covered in Year One.

2. Contexts for SPHE

SPHE will be taught through a combination of contexts:

1. Positive School Climate and Atmosphere.
2. Discrete Time.
3. Integration with other subject areas.

1. Positive School Climate and Atmosphere:

At the first staff meeting teachers are reminded of what cycle Year 1 or Year 2 is in use for the upcoming school year, and what months wellbeing/antibullying etc. are to be implemented.

WELLBEING AND MINDFULNESS

- **Sept:** “All about Me” – topic used to get to know children.
 - **Oct:** Anti-bullying topic in S.P.H.E
 - **Nov:** Remembrance of “Holy Souls” – quiet, reflective meditations/ Grow in Love prayer time can be used in Infants to 1st class
 - **Jan:** Motivation Month for Mindful Eating, promotion of Healthy lunches/ideas for lunchbox fillers.
 - **Feb:** “Fight the blues Month” with deep breathing and relaxation techniques on accompanying CD
 - **Mar/Apr:** Lenten good deed a day
 - **May:** Go Noodle: Energising activities, eg. Zumba Kids/raise the Roof/Kids Bop/Maximo/Pump it Up.
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- The staff is aware that their role in helping children to develop their self-esteem is to create an environment within the school that is as positive as possible for all concerned. The five building blocks of self-esteem, as outlined in the curriculum, have been adopted as our approach to self-esteem development. They are:
 - A sense of identity.
 - A sense of belonging
 - A sense of security.
 - A sense of purpose.
 - A sense of competence.

- We aim to actively value diversity and to prioritise inclusive and respectful language for all. We believe that children learn to respect themselves and others through experiencing respect in their own lives and through witnessing respect being shown to others.
- We work to develop an effective communication system within the school and between the school and home.
- We support a health promoting physical environment. Through our Health and Safety Policy and Active School programme. Emphasis on healthy lunches, healthy lifestyle, road, water, farm safety and regular fire drills are some of the areas promoted. Taking responsibility and pride in the school environment is encouraged through our litter prevention programme. The playground and pitches for lunch time activities also promote a healthy physical environment. Informative healthy eating posters and activities are displayed on our Active School board.

We promote democratic processes in all levels of school life while balancing roles, rights and responsibilities. Children experience and practice the democratic process by:

- Negotiating the class rules at the start of the year.
- Sharing responsibility. Valuing the opinions of others.
- Experiencing a sense of belonging to their own class group and the wider school community.
- Develop a sense of commitment to common goals.
- Election of Active School committee & Student Council.

We have agreed that we will prioritise care in our own behaviour as adults and in our expectations of children. We will help children to learn to care for each other through actively building relationships within each class. We will seek to build identity, security and belonging, competence and purpose through:

- Discussion, promotion of and valuing difference.
- Agreeing ground rules for responsible behaviour and clarifying values on an ongoing basis.
- Learning anger management skills in the classroom in order to be able to apply them on the playground and at home.
- Caring for and promoting inclusion of others and learning that it's OK to be different.

- a. Our Buddy System and Student Council
- b. Roots of Empathy programme
- c. Our Active School committee

- Promoting inclusive and respectful language.
- Promoting support and co-operation.
- Respecting individual strengths.
- Supporting individual needs through teacher support.
- Supporting individual needs of children in times of family or individual personal crises (children who suffer serious illness and need to be in hospital or out of school for long periods; children who suffer bereavement, especially bereavement in the immediate family; engaging exterior services e.g. NEPs, CAMHS, Rainbows to assist in this difficult area). Create meaningful differentiated learning opportunities.
- Celebrating the wide range of children's strengths throughout the school.
- Communicating regularly about learning and general development with the home.

2. Discrete Time

SPHE may be timetabled for 30 mins per week, one hour per fortnight or blocks of 1-2 hours per month where feasible or appropriate. Children who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching must be included for as much of the SPHE programme as

possible. This discrete time is used to develop and practise particular skills, deal with sensitive issues or explore issues that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum. It has been agreed that content objectives dealing with RSE and Child Protection are addressed through discrete time

3. Integration

At each class level, teachers should seek to integrate SPHE with other curricular areas. Many aspects of SPHE can be dealt with in the context of English, Gaeilge, PE, SESE, Visual Areas, Religion and Drama. Teachers have identified the objectives that can be acquired through cross-curricular work.

4. Approaches and Methodologies

Teachers are in agreement that active learning is the principal learning and teaching approach used in the SPHE programme. The following active learning strategies are promoted for SPHE:

- Drama activities.
- Co-operative games.
- Pictures, photographs and visual images.
- Discussion: in pairs, small groups, with whole class.
- Written activities: surveys, questionnaires, lists, check-lists, projects, worksheets.
- Media Studies.
- Use of external speakers/visitors who are specialists in their own fields
- Dental nurse visits to classroom to discuss healthy eating, healthy drinking, cleaning teeth and regular visits to the dentist.
- Local Garda to talk to pupils about safe use of the internet and social media

- Engaging experts for both pupils and parents talks on safety on internet and prevention of cyberbullying
- Information and communication technologies.

5. Assessment

Children's progress in SPHE is assessed mainly through:

Teacher observation:

- The ability of the child to co-operate and work in groups or to work independently
- The informal interactions between the child and adults and between the child and other children
- Physical and emotional maturity
- The quality of presentation of work
- The participation and interest of the child in a variety of activities.

Self-Assessment by Children:

Children are encouraged to engage in assessing their own progress in SPHE and to reflect on their learning.

6. Children with different needs:

The SPHE programme aims to meet the needs of all children in the school. This will be achieved by teachers varying the pace, content and methodologies to ensure learning for all pupils. Evidence of this differentiated approach will be recorded in teacher's planning documentation. Children who experience bereavement or loss, serious illness or other major personal situations are supported and consideration

is given to meeting their individual needs in the most appropriate manner eg: Incredible Years Programme.

7. Equality of Participation and Access:

We view the SPHE programme as playing a key role in ensuring equality of opportunities for all children. The programme at each class level will be flexible so that the learning requirements of all children may be addressed. We provide an equal educational experience for both boys and girls as we recognise that stereotyped expectations of gender roles can inhibit children's educational achievements. Children with special needs will be included in all activities. Diversity within our school community will be recognised by valuing and promoting the needs, interests, skills and talents of children with special needs.

8. Policies and Programmes that support SPHE:

Policies/ Programmes

SPHE links with other policies/programmes used in the school-

- Substance Abuse Prevention Policy
- RSE
- Stay Safe
- Child Safe Guarding statement & Risk Assessment
- Enrolment
- Attendance
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Health and Safety
- Healthy Eating

Criteria for selecting resources include:

- Conformity with the aims and objectives of the class programme in SPHE and the general principle of the SPHE Curriculum.
- Freedom from bias, racial or sexual stereotyping.
- Compliancy with existing school policies.
- Appealing to the pupils and teacher and be reflective of collaborative, active methods of learning.
- Suitability and trustworthiness of guest speakers, notwithstanding the fact that the class teacher is responsible for his/her class and should remain with the class at all times for the duration of the visit of the guest speaker.

Materials purchased with school funds remain the property of the school.

Guest Speakers:

For some topics such as nutrition, oral health care, hygiene, RSE, etc. we may occasionally avail of external personnel to enhance the learning that is ongoing in the classroom. Before the visit the teacher must agree with the visitor the aims and objectives of the lesson(s) to be covered and a detailed discussion of the content to be delivered will also take place. Parents will be made aware of these speakers through the homework journal, school text system or preparatory work done by the teacher beforehand.

9. Individual Teachers Planning and Reporting:

The SPHE Curriculum Documents will inform the planning of content, approaches and methodologies employed by individual teachers. Coverage of the strand units each year will be as outlined in this plan.

10. Staff Development: Staff development will be promoted by:

- Availing of in-service training, summer courses, conferences and seminars where possible.
- Sharing and exchanging skills, expertise and experience.
- Increasing our stock of resources.
- Allocating time at staff meetings in order to discuss issues relevant to SPHE.
- Familiarising members of the Learning Support Team, Resource Teachers, Special Needs Assistants and ancillary staff with the content and vision enshrined in policies relevant to SPHE.

11. Parental Involvement:

Since parents are the primary educators of their children, we welcome their support of teachers in implementing the SPHE Programme. Their consent is sought prior to teaching the more sensitive issues of the SPHE programme. The updated policy is placed on the school website when completed.

12. Community Links:

We value the contribution which members of the local community can make towards furthering the aims and objectives of SPHE in our school. The local Garda, medical persons, people of other cultures and backgrounds, members of local community groups and the media have much to offer in supporting the SPHE programme. We will avail of the services of statutory bodies such as the HSE and An Garda Siochana, as required.

13. Success Criteria:

Success achieved will depend on thorough preparation of teachers' work and consistently following procedures outlined in the plan. Indications of success will come through positive feedback from the main stakeholders in our school community- teachers, parents, pupils and the local community. However, in many

situations, success can only be measured in the medium and long-term by the way in which children mature and live their lives.

14. Implementation:

This plan has been formulated by the staff of our school. It will be supported, developed and implemented by teaching and non-teaching staff members alike.

15. Review:

In order to ensure optimal implementation of the SPHE Programme in our school this plan will be reviewed on a four year basis. Those involved in the review will include teachers and the Board of Management. The Principal and the staff will be responsible for the co-ordination of this review.

16. Ratification and Communication:

Following ratification by the Board of Management, this plan will be circulated to all staff members. A copy of the plan will be available to parents and guardians on the school website.

Signed: Breda Hickey Date: 4/10/18

Breda Hickey, Chairperson, B.O.M.

Date for review: October 2022