



SPHE Policy

This plan was formulated by the teaching staff of St. Paul's Senior National School. As teachers, we acknowledge the importance of S.P.H.E. in our school. This policy reflects that view and has been drawn up to benefit teaching and learning in our school, to conform to principles of learning outlined in the Primary School Curriculum and to review S.P.H.E. instruction in the school .

Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for SPHE

- 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

Implementing the SPHE Programme

This SPHE plan will be addressed under the following headings:

1. Strands and strand units
2. Contexts for SPHE
3. Approaches and methodologies
4. Assessment
5. Children with different needs
6. Equality of participation and access
7. Policies and programmes that support SPHE
 - 7.1 Stay Safe Programme
 - 7.2 Relationships and Sexuality Education & R.S.E. Programme
 - 7.3 Child Protection Policy
8. Homework
9. Resources
 - 9.1 Programmes and other materials
 - 9.2 Guest speakers
10. Individual teachers' planning and reporting
11. Staff development
12. Parental involvement

13. Community links
14. Success Criteria
15. Ratification and Review

1. Strands and Strand Units

- Active learning is the principal teaching and learning approach adopted for SPHE. The SPHE programme reflects a spiral approach, where similar aspects are revisited in different ways according to the age, stage of development and readiness of the child. SPHE is intrinsic to the learning and teaching that occurs both formally and informally in the school and in the classroom.
- SPHE will be planned in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE over a two year period ie 3rd/4th then 5th/6th. Some strand units should be chosen from each of the strands in any one year. The strand units not covered in year one will be included in the teacher's planning for the following year.
- Teachers are familiar with the content objectives for their own class

2. Contexts for SPHE

SPHE will be taught through a combination of contexts

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

Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

Teachers in this school will endeavour to create a positive school climate and atmosphere by:

- Building effective communication within the school ☒
- Catering for individual needs of the children
- Creating a health-promoting physical environment
- Developing democratic processes
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Fostering respect for diversity
- Fostering inclusive and respectful language
- Developing appropriate communication between home and school

Discrete Time

- This time will be used to develop and practise particular skills, deal with sensitive issues or explore issues that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum.
- Timetabled ½ hour per week
- Lessons will be timetabled by each individual teacher.
- Discretionary time will be used for SPHE as required.
- Teachers will ensure that pupils who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching will be included for as much of the SPHE programme as possible.

Integration

- At each class level, teachers will seek to integrate SPHE with other curricular areas.

- Content objectives will be addressed through meaningful integration with other subjects
- Integration will be reflected in the teacher's planning.

3. Approaches and Methodologies

Active learning is a key principle of the overall curriculum and is the principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE. The more the child is directly engaged in the learning process, cognitively, physically, emotionally and creatively, the more he or she is enabled to internalise what is learned. The following active learning strategies will be promoted in the school

- Drama activities
- Co-operative games
- Pictures, photographs and visual images- Stay Safe IWB
- Discussion: in pairs, small groups, with whole class
- Written activities: surveys, questionnaires, lists, check-lists, projects, worksheets ☒
Information and communication technologies
- Looking at children's work: portfolios, projects

A broad range of approaches and methodologies are suggested in the curriculum guidelines to realise the aim of involving children in their own learning. These approaches and methodologies will also be used for S.P.H.E.

- Talk and discussion
- Skills through content
- Collaborative learning
- Problem-solving
- Use of the environment

4. Assessment

Teachers will assess informally throughout the school year. Assessment tools will be used as follows:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks
- Work samples, portfolios, projects

Assessment information will be reported to parents at the Parent-Teacher Meeting, in the end-of-year report, and on other occasions, if necessary.

5. Children with Different Needs

Teachers will support and ensure the participation of children with special needs. All children will be enabled to make an important contribution regardless of academic achievement.

6. Equality of Participation and Access

- Equal opportunities will be given to boys and girls to participate in classes/activities
- Boys and girls will have equal access to and opportunities to experience all strands
- All children have access to services, facilities, or amenities in the school environment

7. Policies and Programmes that Support SPHE

7.1 Policies/Programmes

- SPHE links with school policies/programmes:
Policies: Child Protection, Enrolment, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying, Health and Safety Statement, Healthy Eating
Programmes: Walk Tall Programme, Stay Safe Programme, R.S.E. Programme Weaving Wellbeing

Overview of STAY SAFE PROGRAMME

Aim: To teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations that could be upsetting or dangerous.

Content: The lessons cover the following areas:

- Feeling Safe and Unsafe
- Friendship and Bullying
- Touches
- Secrets and Telling
- Strangers

Children participating in this programme will learn:

- To distinguish between safe and unsafe feelings
- What to do if lost
- What to do if the phone or doorbell rings when they are alone in the house
- The importance of friends in children's lives
- What to do if bullied
- Stay Safe Rules: Say No/ Get Away/ Tell
- Why not to bully others
- Appreciating normal, appropriate touches
- That unsafe touches should never be kept secret
- How to respond to inappropriate touches (Stay Safe Rules)
- Good and bad secrets
- That some secrets should not be kept
- Who and how to tell if in trouble
- About strangers and safety strategies

-7. 2 Relationships and Sexuality Education & R.S.E. Programme

The Relationships and Sexuality Programme which aims to (at age appropriate levels): promote and

understanding of and a healthy attitude to sexuality and relationships, promote a knowledge and respect for reproduction, promote a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life, enable the child to feel comfortable with his/her sexuality and that of others. The teaching methods used in the school are child-centred and reflect the age and stage of development of each child.

Overview of RSE programme:

Aims: In partnership with the home our aims are

- To promote self-esteem.
- To promote respect for the rights of others, encouraging tolerance and understanding of differences between people.
- To foster responsibility in decision-making.
- To help children develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality leading to a healthy attitude to it and to relationships.
- To help pupils think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
- To learn about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others.
- To promote knowledge and respect for human love.

The development of relationships is an integral part of all curricular subjects. Aspects of RSE are taught during SPHE, Religion, Science, implementation of the Code of Behaviour, etc. An integrative approach towards RSE ensures that the children encounter RSE in a holistic manner rather than in isolation.

For 5th/6th classes the BOM approved the Accord Schools Programme and 5th/6th classes participate in an RSE workshop with Accord tutor – class teacher will be present with the class at all times. Accord facilitators have been selected and trained by ACCORD to deliver this programme to 5th/6th class pupils. Facilitators are Garda vetted and work in accordance with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011) and Safeguarding Children, Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2009).

Request for withdrawal by parent of pupil: If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the RSE or Stay Safe programmes, they are welcome to examine the content of the programmes and discuss their concerns with the principal. Following this meeting if parents wish to have their child/ren withdrawn when sensitive issues are being taught, they are requested to submit this in writing to the Principal. Parents will be expected to make their wishes known each year to the new class teacher. Efforts will be made by the school, using the resources it has, to accommodate these children by providing supervision within another classroom.

-7.3 Child Protection:

The school follows the DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, which are based on Children First, national Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The principal is the designated liaison person (DLP). The vice principal is the deputy designated liaison person (DDL). Each teacher has a copy of our policy on Child Protection and a copy is available to parents, through the secretary, if they request one. All teachers have a copy of our Child Safeguarding Policy and are aware of the DLP and DDL. All teachers are also aware that they are a mandated person.

8. Homework

SPHE homework if prescribed in SPHE will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class. 'Acts of Kindness', 'Practicing Gratitude' and 'Mindfulness' may be given as part of homework at designated time of year.

9. Resources

-9.1 Programmes and other materials

A comprehensive selection of resources is available for teaching all strand units including Walk Tall, Stay Safe programme, Relationships and Sexuality (DES), Mindful Matters, Circle Time and Weaving Wellbeing.

-9.2 Guest speakers

Suitably qualified speakers may be invited to compliment the work of class teachers (e.g. Accord Fire Safety talks, Water safety talks, personal safety talks from the Gardaí etc). They will be briefed on school policy as related to their subject matter. A class teacher will be present at all times when a guest presenter is working with a class. We ensure that they are garda-vetted in advance

10. Individual teachers' planning and reporting

This revised plan in SPHE, the curriculum documents together with PDST resources will inform and guide teachers in their long-term and short-term planning. Each teacher will keep a Cuntas Míósúil which will inform progress and help to guide the evaluation process when it's due for review.

11. Staff development

To support the successful implementation of the SPHE programme, training and upskilling needs for staff will be identified on an on-going basis and training will be sourced and provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend SPHE-related courses and will share information/skills acquired at these courses with other members of staff during staff meetings or Croke Park Hour Professional Development workshops.

12. Parental involvement

SPHE is a shared responsibility between family and school. Copies of the school plan for SPHE are available from the office. Parents will be made aware of content objectives that deal with sensitive issues before teachers cover these in class and will be asked to discuss these issues with their child prior to the lessons in school- for example Accord give a relationships and sexuality talk/workshop to 5th and 6th class pupils.

13. Community links

St Paul's SNS Ayrfield believes that the local community has a very important role to play in supporting the programme in SPHE and endeavour to liaise with the members such as the Dental Hygienist, Health Nurse, Fireman, Vet, New Parent, library, community-based projects etc.

14. Success Criteria

The success of this plan will be evaluated through teacher planning and preparation, and if the procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed. We will also judge its success if the pupils have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this plan.

15. Ratification and Review

Ratification and Review This policy was discussed and ratified by the board of management in June 2024. It will be due for review in 2027/2028 school year or as particular needs are identified.

This plan was ratified by:

_____ on _____

Chairperson, Board of Management