

**Social,  
Personal and  
Health  
Education.  
(S.P.H.E.)**

## **Introduction**

This SPHE Policy for St. Joseph's NS was updated by the principal, senior management, teaching and ancillary staff. This plan is for the information of those who work in the school, the Board of Management, parents, Department of Education and Skills and any other interested parties in the school community.

## **Vision**

Our vision is to relate the plan to the school's characteristic ethos in order to foster the personal development, health and wellbeing of the individual child. In line with our school ethos, Social, Personal and Health Education will provide opportunities for the individual child to develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform his/her decisions and actions and in the future enable him/her to respect and relate to himself/herself and others and become an active and responsible citizen in society.

## **Aims**

The SPHE 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 will be involved in the SPHE education of their children as much as possible.

St. Joseph's NS hopes to achieve the following aims by introducing this plan. We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for SPHE:

- To promote the personal development and wellbeing of the child.
- To foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself 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 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 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 an ability to protect himself 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.

## **Curriculum Planning**

This document is intended for whole school planning for St. Joseph's NS for SPHE in the context of the primary School Curriculum (1999). The relevant curriculum documents are the SPHE Curriculum and the Teacher Guidelines for SPHE. For the purposes of linkage and integration other curriculum documents will be accessed.

The planning will be used in a variety of ways

- as an overview of a whole school development plan for SPHE
- as a guide for a school in reviewing its current practice
- as a means of drawing previous decisions in relation to SPHE into a coherent unit
- as a strategy for addressing identified priorities in relation to SPHE while maintaining a coherent overall approach to the subject.

## **Strands and strand units**

Active learning is the principal teaching and learning approach recommended 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 is planned in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE over a two-year period. The strand units not covered in year are included in the teacher's planning for the following year to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum. It is essential that a balance is achieved between skill development, the fostering of values and attitudes and the acquisition of information.

**Overview of content for SPHE over two years:  
(as in Making the Links Planning Book, P.9)**

Month	Year 1 – Junior Infants, 1st, 3rd, 5th	Year 2 – Senior Infants, 2nd, 4th, 6th
September/October	Self-Identity (Myself)	Myself and my Family (Myself and Others)
November/ December	My Friends and Other People (Myself and Others)	Relating to others (Myself and Others)
January/ February	Safety and Protection Stay Safe Programme (Myself)	Growing and Changing Booster Stay Safe Lessons RSE (Myself)
March/ April	Making Decisions (Myself)	Taking Care of my Body RSE (Myself)
May/ June	Media Education (Myself and the Wider World)	Developing Citizenship (Myself and the Wider World)

\*Making decisions is only a strand unit from 3rd – 6th, Juniors – 2nd may complete the Safety Issues section of Safety and protection at this time. Due to the increased amount of lessons in the Stay Safe Programme from 3rd to 6th class, placing the strand unit Making decisions after the Safety and protection in the two-year plan will enable the teacher to achieve some of the content objectives of Making decisions through the Stay Safe Programme.

**Stay Safe Programme**

The Stay Safe Programme is a mandated two-year programme that we have decided to teach on the “odd years” – JI, 1<sup>st</sup> class, 3<sup>rd</sup> class and 5<sup>th</sup> class. “Booster lessons” of the sensitive topics will be taught on the even years. Stay Safe is a mandatory programme (Circular 65/2011) which is to be completed under the strand Safety and Protection of SPHE and must be taught exactly as outlined in the Stay Safe Programme. This will be taught in January/February under the Safety and Protection Strand. Parents should be informed that teachers are about to commence teaching this programme and can be directed to the lessons online [www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

Relationships and Sexuality Education seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

In St. Joseph's we seek to promote the overall development of the child which involves the integration of Relationships and Sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development within the context of our Catholic ethos.

RSE is a component of the SPHE curriculum and the sensitive lessons must be taught. The sensitive objectives of RSE fall within the *Taking care of my body* and *Growing and changing* strand units. The RSE programme however covers strands, strand units and objectives across the curriculum encompassing other areas of SPHE.

The RSE Programme is a resource that can be used to help deliver RSE and this will be delivered in the *even years* – SI, 2<sup>nd</sup> class, 4<sup>th</sup> class and 6<sup>th</sup> class. This will be taught in January - April under the Growing and Changing and Taking Care of my Body Strand units. Parents should be informed that teachers are about to commence teaching this programme and can be directed to the lessons on the PDST website. More information can be found in our RSE policy.

### **Teaching/Learning contexts.**

SPHE will be taught through a combination of contexts

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

We will maintain a **positive school climate** and atmosphere and adopt strategies such as

- Building effective communications within the school.
- Catering for individual needs.
- 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:**

Time to 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

Time tabled ½ hour per week.

### **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 relevant subject areas.

### **Approaches and Methodologies**

We will adopt the following approaches and methodologies:

- **Active learning** which includes drama activities, co-operation games, use of pictures, photographs and visual images, written activities, use of media and information technologies and looking at children's work.
- Talk and Discussion
- Skills through Content.
- Collaborative learning.
- Problem solving.
- Use of the environment

## **Special Needs/Sensitivities**

Consideration is taken for the range of abilities and different family circumstances in planning our S.P.H.E. so that every child is given the opportunity to obtain max benefit from the programme.

## **Policies and programmes that support SPHE**

SPHE links with school policies/programmes – Substance Use, Walk Tall, RSE, Stay Safe, Child Protection, Admission, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying, Health and Safety Statement, Healthy Eating, Care of the Environment and Inclusion Policy Stay Safe Programme (Refer to SPHE curriculum documents, Stay Safe Programme, Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES) Child Protection

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

We, the Principal and teaching staff, believe the SPHE is a shared responsibility between, school, health professionals and the community. We see ourselves supporting the home in this lifelong process and will seek at all times to develop positive relations with all these parties. The plan will be supported, developed and implemented collaboratively by all members of the teaching staff. Specific roles are as follows:

- B.O.M. → ratify plan & support implementation.
- Parents → be aware of content of school plan & support SPHE through involvement in homework, contact from teachers
- Principal and Leadership Team → oversees implementation and supports staff.
- Teachers → follow school plan and implement SPHE accordingly.
- Pupils → Co-operate and participate in class lesson.
- Other staff → be aware of contents of this plan and follow procedures re. same.

## **Timeframe**

The staff will endeavour to implement the SPHE curriculum comprehensively in a spiral nature before the pupils graduate from this school.



**Review**

This school plan was formulated by the principal and staff and approved by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's and will be reviewed every two years or as required.

We will evaluate our teaching of SPHE at staff meetings. We will check that all teachers are using the available resources to cover the full S.P.H.E. Curriculum.

**Ratified by BOM on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021.**

**Review Date June 2023**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson BOM**

## Appendix 1 - Sample Stay Safe Email for Parents

Dear Parent,

We are planning to teach a personal safety education programme called Stay Safe over the next few weeks. The aim of the Stay Safe programme is to teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous. It deals initially with common situations which most children will experience at some stage or other, e.g. getting lost or being bullied. The programme also teaches children the safety skills necessary to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse and emphasises the importance of telling a trusted adult about any problems they have.

The Stay Safe programme is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential to the success of this programme. It is important that parents are aware of the content of the Stay Safe lessons and are able to discuss the lessons with their children. Your child may bring home worksheets which will inform you on the topics being covered in class and how you can reinforce the messages at home.

You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at [www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm](http://www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm).

Please contact me if you wish to discuss the programme further.

Thanks,

Class Teacher