

# **St. Joseph's National School**

## **Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Plan**

### **Introductory Statement**

This Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) plan was formulated in March 2014 in consultation with staff, Parents' Association and the Board of Management. The SPHE programme is taught in the context of all school policies and programmes including Health and Safety, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), Child Protection, Code of Behavior and Anti Bullying, Substance Use etc.

### **Rationale**

This Policy is a record of whole school decisions in relation to SPHE in line with the Primary Curriculum 1999. Its purpose is to guide teachers in adopting a consistent and coherent approach to the teaching and learning of SPHE in our school. It is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for SPHE to ensure appropriate coverage of all aspects of the curriculum from Infants to Sixth Class.

### **Vision**

SPHE is a lifelong process and as such begins before the child comes to school. In partnership with parents/guardians, the school provides opportunities for the individual child to develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that inform a child's decisions and actions now and in the future – enabling each child to respect him/herself, to relate to others, and become an active and responsible citizen.

### **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

In order to foster the personal development, health and well-being of each individual child, St. Joseph's National School, Granagh aims to provide a caring community, Catholic and inclusive, in which our pupils can learn to respect themselves and others. We wish to foster in them taking responsibility for their own actions and to help them become people who can contribute to and play a meaningful role in their community.

### **Aims**

The aims of the SPHE programme include:

- 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 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 of 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.

### **Approaches and Methodologies**

The following approaches and methodologies will be used:

- Talk and discussion
- Skills through content
- Collaborative learning and games
- Visualisations
- Group work
- Problem-solving (Circle Time/class meetings)
- Use of the environment
- Active learning and participation which includes drama and role play activities, co-operative games, use of pictures, photographs and visual images, written activities, use of media and information technologies and looking at children's work.

### **Teaching and Learning Contexts**

SPHE will be taught and learned in a combination of the following contexts:

1. Positive Atmosphere: We have created a positive atmosphere by:
  - Building effective communication
  - Catering for individual needs
  - Creating a health promoting physical environment
  - Enhancing self esteem
  - Fostering respect for diversity
  - Fostering inclusive and respectful language
2. School ethos: Children will experience a positive and health-promoting school environment in which their personal development, health and well-being is promoted, class rules will be negotiated at the start of the year, children will experience a sense of belonging to their own class group and the wider school community, share responsibility and develop a sense of commitment to common goals.
3. Discrete time: Half an hour each week or one hour per fortnight (to allow for more in-depth discussion of a particular topic) will be timetabled for SPHE.
4. Integrated themes: There is a strong cross curricular element to SPHE. Teachers will use a thematic approach to SPHE by integrating, as appropriate, with other curricular areas e.g. Language (Media Education), Religion (Making Decisions), Geography (Citizenship), History (Myself and my family), Physical Education (Safety and Protection) and Arts Education.
5. Focused whole-school activities: In September each year, healthy eating and exercise will be a major focus of SPHE lessons in all classes. Other scheduled whole school initiatives may include: Anti Bullying Week, Friendship Week, Global Citizenship Programme, Wellbeing Week and Active Week.

### **Curriculum Content**

Since SPHE is spiral in nature, the following content will be covered over a two-year period (**See Two-year Whole School Plan**). This approach will ensure that aspects of all three strands will be taught each year.

The full Stay Safe programme will be taught to all classes from Junior Infants every second year. The key principles will be revised in classes each alternate year. However aspects such as bullying, nutrition and keeping healthy will be revised each year. The RSE Programme will be taught to all classes from Junior Infants every second year, on the alternative year to the Stay Safe Programme. Parents will receive at least two weeks notification that these programmes will be taught, by way of an information leaflet on the Stay Safe/ RSE Programme.

There are three strands in the SPHE curriculum:

- **Myself**
- **Myself and others**
- **Myself and the wider world**

**Myself** deals with the personal development of the individual child and his/her health and well-being.

*Strand units:*

- Self-identity
- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and Protection
- Making Decisions (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>)

**Myself and Others** focuses on developing a sense of care and respect for other people and the facility for relating to and communicating effectively with others.

*Strand units:*

- Myself and my family
- My friends and other people
- Relating to others

**Myself and the Wider World** enables children to explore the various communities in which they live, to learn to operate competently and to understand what it means to belong and to share a sense of purpose.

*Strand units:*

- Developing citizenship
- Media education

Each class will follow the **Walk Tall Programme** which focuses on building self-esteem and dealing with feelings. The aims of the Walk Tall Programme are to give children the confidence, skills, attitudes and knowledge to make healthy choices in their lives.

### **Relationship and Sexuality Education**

The RSE Programme is taught to all classes every second year.

The lessons of the RSE Programme are arranged under three strands:

- **Myself**
- **Myself and Others**
- **Myself and the Wider World**

Each of the three areas is further subdivided into three-key concepts as follows:

- Understanding of self
- Understanding of family life
- Relationship with others

The above concepts will be developed in an age-appropriate manner from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

For further details see RSE Policy and Parents Information Leaflet on the RSE Programme.

### **The Stay Safe Programme**

The Stay Safe Programme is a personal safety skills programme which is taught to all classes every second year, with key aspects revised each year.

There are five modules discussed in the Stay Safe Programme:

- **Feeling Safe/Unsafe**
- **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

If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the Stay Safe and/or the RSE programmes, they are welcome to make an appointment to visit the school 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 if they wish to have their child withdrawn from the Stay Safe/ RSE programmes. The school will accommodate these children by providing supervision within another classroom.

For further details see Parent's Information Leaflet on the Stay Safe Programme.

### **Health Education**

We will provide a range of lessons dealing with the following topics:

- Diet and nutrition
- Exercise
- Personal Hygiene
- Mental well-being
- Substance misuse

### **Integration**

The planned provision for SPHE should not sit separately from other aspects of the school: it should be integral to a whole school approach that embodies the principles of personal and social development and active citizenship. Some of these will be dealt with during discrete SPHE time while others will be integrated with English involving all the strands and strand units, Science, Physical Education, Geography, Visual Arts, Religion, Drama.

### **Resources**

A wide range of materials and resources will be used including

- SPHE Primary Curriculum (1999)
- Grow in Love Religious Programme
- Flourish Programme
- Stay Safe ([www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie))
- Walk Tall ([www.walktall.ie](http://www.walktall.ie))
- Making the Links ([www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie))
- Busybodies ([www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie))
- RSE Resource Material

### **Special Needs/Sensitivities**

In line with the school ethos, this policy is sensitive to and respectful of the emotional, physical, cultural and learning needs of students. The sensitivities of individual students and their families will be considered when planning content, materials, activities and teaching methodologies.

### **Equality of Participation and Access**

Every child will have access to the full SPHE programme. The rights of parents/guardians with regard to their child's participation in the discrete timetabled sessions for Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) will be respected (ref. RSE policy) and for the Stay Safe Programme.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parental participation is an essential part of the SPHE programme. Prior to the Stay Safe and RSE Programmes being taught, parents will receive an information leaflet on the programme and information on the programmes content. As stated, parents/guardians will be given the option of withdrawing their child from a particular lesson if they so wish.

Teachers may include SPHE topics as part of homework, where appropriate. The Stay Safe worksheets may be used as homework so that parents/guardians are aware of what their

children are learning and have opportunities to personalise the programme for their own children in a way that is not possible within the class.

### **Assessment and Recording**

*Teachers may use a selection from the following assessment approaches:*

- Pupil self-assessment: participation in group work, whole group activities, personal folders with samples kept for particular reason
- Whole class displays of tasks undertaken
- Class sociometrics
- Teacher designed tasks which display a pupil's knowledge of particular SPHE topics e.g. food and nutrition, rules of road, care of environment, fact/opinion exercises etc.
- Group co-operation and decision-making tasks
- Role-play situations which demonstrate ability to cope, assertiveness, safety skills, problem-solving etc.
- Checklist of behaviours displayed by pupils during S.P.H.E./other activities.

### **Individual Teacher's Planning and Reporting**

In this school the teachers plan on both a long (yearly plans) and short-term basis (fortnightly plans). Teachers use the 2 Year SPHE school plan and the Curriculum documents to provide information on classroom planning. Teachers will provide Cuntas Miosuil to the principal outlining the activities.

### **Training and Development**

To support the successful implementation of the SPHE programme, training and up-skilling needs for staff will be identified on an on-going basis and training will be sourced and provided.

### **Community Links**

The school will link with other agencies in the wider community, including health professionals, to support the SPHE programme. Suitably qualified speakers may be invited to complement the work of class teachers. 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.

### **Child Protection**

The school follows the DES Child Protection Procedures, which are based on Children First, national Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The principal is the designated liaison person (DLP). Each teacher has a copy of our policy on display in his/her classrooms and a copy is available to parents via the website [www.granaghns.weebly.com](http://www.granaghns.weebly.com)

### **Success Criteria**

The school will take into account the following criteria when evaluating the SPHE programme:

- Happy school environment,
- High indicators of self care
- Respectful relationships
- Positive discipline and strong anti-bullying climate
- High levels of participation and interest in SPHE.

**Implementation**

SPHE is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. The role of the school is to support parents/guardians in this lifelong process. The school will seek to develop positive relations with all these parties.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The whole school community of B.O.M, staff and parents play a key role in the formation and implementation of the plan.

**Monitoring & Review**

This policy was ratified by the Board on Management on **04/05/2023**

This policy will be due for review in three years, that is, during the school year 25/26. It may be revisited sooner if the need arises.

Signed: David Leahy  
Chairperson, Board of Management.