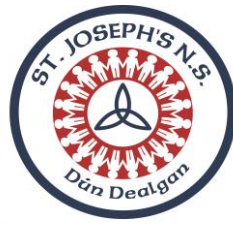


ST. JOSEPH'S N. S.  
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*Nurturing excellence in education*

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# SPHE / RSE Policy



# SPHE Policy and Curriculum Plan

## Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

### Introductory Statement and Rationale

#### Introductory Statement

The policy and plan was formulated with the Board of Management, senior management, the SPHE coordinator, teachers, parents, and ancillary staff.

#### Rationale

It was decided to focus on this area for development to benefit teaching and learning in our school, to conform to principles of learning outlined in the Primary School Curriculum and to review the existing plan for SPHE, to inform the whole school, new teachers and temporary teachers.

### Vision and Aims

#### Vision

Our vision is to relate the plan to the school's characteristic ethos in order to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child.

#### Aims

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 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, cooperation 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/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.

## **This SPHE plan will be addressed under the following headings**

### **Curriculum planning**

- 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**

### **Organisational planning**

- 7. Policies and programmes that support SPHE**
- 8. Homework**
- 9. Resources**
- 10. Individual teachers' planning and reporting**
- 11. Staff development**
- 12. Parental involvement**
- 13. Community links**
- 14. Ratification**

## **Curriculum Planning: SPHE**



This document is intended for the 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.

In engaging in curriculum planning, St. Joseph's NS will be mindful of the need to

- adopt a pace of curriculum development which is both challenging and realistic and which takes cognisance of the particular circumstances of the school
- take account of the national plan for the implementation of the Primary School Curriculum
- achieve a balance in developing all the curricular areas while giving priority to the achievement of targets in literacy and numeracy
- address both maintenance and development as essential components of the process - this approach will ensure that gains made in one curricular area are maintained when another curricular area is being developed
- ensure that the whole-school planning process links with and influences teaching and learning in individual classrooms
- monitor the implementation of the plan and, in particular, the achievement of targets in terms of learning outcomes for pupils, and communicate progress to the Board of Management and parents.

## **1. 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)**





| <b>Strands</b>           | <b>Strand Units (Year 1)</b><br>(Year 1 – Junior Infants, 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> ) | <b>Strand Units (Year 2)</b><br>(Year 2 – Senior Infants, 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> ) |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Myself</b>            | Self-identity (Sep/Oct)   |   |
|                          |   | Taking care of my body (Mar/Apr)  |
|                          |   | Growing and Changing (Jan/Feb)  |
|                          | <b>Safety and Protection (Jan/Feb)</b><br><b>StaySafe</b>   | <b>Safety and Protection (Jan/Feb)</b><br><b>StaySafe</b>   |
|                          | Making decisions [3 <sup>rd</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> Class]<br>(Mar/Apr)  |   |
| <b>Myself and others</b> |   | Myself and my family (Sep/Oct)  |

|                                   |                                       |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                   | My friends and other people (Nov/Dec) |                                  |
|                                   |                                       | Relating to others (Nov/Dec)     |
| <b>Myself and the wider world</b> |                                       | Developing Citizenship (May/Jun) |



|  |                             |  |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
|  | Media Education (May/ June) |  |
|--|-----------------------------|--|

| Stay Safe<br>Topic      | Number of Lessons        |                                     |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                         | J. Infants<br>S. Infants | 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> |
| Feeling Safe and Unsafe | 3                        | 3                                   | 3                                   | 3                                   |
| Friendship and Bullying | 3                        | 5                                   | 6                                   | 6                                   |
| Touches                 | 2                        | 2                                   | 2                                   | 2                                   |
| Secrets and Telling     | 1                        | 1                                   | 1                                   | 1                                   |
| Strangers               | 1                        | 1                                   | 1                                   | 1                                   |

## 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

- 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 (*See Parental involvement section of this plan*)
- Developing a school approach to assessment (*See Assessment section of this plan*)

### 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
- **Timetabled ½ hour per week, one hour per fortnight or blocks of 1 – 2 hours where feasible or appropriate.**

### 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 such as Aistear (infants), Irish, English, Maths, Geography, History, Religion, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Music and Science. Themes / Projects such as the healthy heroes breakfast club, the KiVa anti-bullying programme, student council, sport and well-being projects etc may also be explored.

### 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 are promoted in the school

- Drama activities
- Cooperative 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
- Information and communication technologies
- Looking at children's work: portfolios, projects ...
- Other relevant activities

A broad range of approaches and methodologies will be used to realise the aim of involving children in their own learning.

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

### 4. Assessment

- Assessment is a central part of the teaching and learning process in SPHE. Assessment of and Assessment for learning provides information on the pupils progress and on the effectiveness of the curricular programmes and the teaching methods.
- Assessment methods include teacher observation (ability of pupils to cooperate and work in groups / work independently, participation and interest of the pupil in a variety of activities, particular interests





and attitudes displayed by the child, level of social and personal responsibility displayed by the child and the child's ability to verbalise on social and emotional matters) and teacher designed tests and tasks, both oral and written including portfolios (in SPHE / SESE copy), projects and self-assessment by pupils.

## **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
- Adapt and modify activities so that all children in the class can participate with assistance from class/learning-support/resource teachers and special needs assistants (SNA).
- Specific or sensitive issues which need to be considered in meeting the individual needs of children *e.g. bereavement or loss, disability, illness...*

## **6. Equality of participation and access**

*(Refer to school's Equality Policy)*

Provision required, where necessary, for the following:

- Members of the Traveller community
- Children experiencing any form of disadvantage
- Children with disabilities
- Families with literacy problems
- Families for whom English is not the first language

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

### **Policies/Programmes**

SPHE links with school policies/programmes – Substance Use, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall Programme, Child Protection Policy, Admission Policy, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement, Healthy Eating Policy, Care of the Environment, Inclusion Policy, HSE Health Promoting Schools, Healthy Heroes, Well-being, KiVa Anti-bullying, Aistear and the Incredible Years Programme.

### **Stay Safe Programme**

(Refer to SPHE curriculum documents, Stay Safe Programme, Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES)

### **Child Protection**

This 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.



*(Reference: Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, 2001, DES and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011).*

The Board of Management designated a senior member of staff to have specific responsibility for child protection. This Principal Dr. Roz Brady is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the school and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is the Vice Principal Mr. Shane McEntee.

## **8. Homework**

Refer to the school's Homework Policy - SPHE homework, if prescribed, reflects the active learning approach as described in the curriculum.

## **9. Resources**

- SPHE Teacher Guidelines
- SPHE Curriculum
- PDST website and PDST Making the Links and Beyond book
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Teachers
- Making the Links Book
- Stay Safe Programme
- RSE Programme
- Wall Tall Programmes
- Road Safety Authority primary school programme
- Incredible Years & small group dina programmes in infant classes
- KiVa Anti - Bullying
- HSE Mighty Mouth Dental Hygiene Programme (senior infants and 3rd classes)
- Interactive Whiteboard, iPads, ICT and Internet,
- DVDs and CDs,
- Textbooks,
- Supplementary Materials

### **9.2 Guest speakers**

- The class teacher is responsible for his / her class and should remain with the class at all times
- Parents will be made aware of all presentations and invited to some of these presentations

## **10. Individual teachers' planning and reporting**

- The whole school plan and the curriculum documents for SPHE provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short-term planning as distributed by the S.P.H.E co-ordinator Tess Hughes.



- This is to be recorded in the Cuntas Míosúil and stored by Senior Management.

## **11. Staff development**

Teachers will have access to current research, reference books, resource materials, websites dealing with SPHE. The SPHE Co-ordinator takes responsibility for monitoring developments. All staff have attended training in the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children: Certification :renewed bi-annually. The SPHE Coordinator has availed of SPHE / Stay Safe / RSE / HSE Health Promoting Schools and KiVa Anti-Bullying Training.

Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss issues related to SPHE as necessary.

## **12. Parental involvement**

- Parents will have the opportunity to contribute to the development and implementation of SPHE in the school and to give feedback at the draft policy stage.
- The parents are made aware of the content of the SPHE programme for their child through the different policies of Substance Use, Child Protection, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), Nutrition and they are available on the school website.

## **13. Community links**

- Members of the local community play a role in supporting the SPHE programme including the local fire safety and gardai.
- The Health Promotion Unit of the local Health Board plays a role through the Health Promoting Schools Project including the health promoting schools coordinator and the dental nurse.

## **14. Success criteria**

### **How will we know that the plan has been implemented?**

- Teachers' written preparation (yearly schemes / fortnightly plans / monthly plans should have explicit reference to SPHE learning objectives and outcomes) based on this plan
- Procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed
- Self-assessment for teachers; "Have I covered the agreed strand units?"

### **How will we know that the plan has achieved its aims? What are the indicators?**

- Feedback from teachers/parents/pupils/community





- Inspectors' suggestions/report
- Feedback from second level schools

**How has the plan enhanced pupil learning?**

Feedback from teachers, parents and children

**Implementation**

The SPHE Co-ordinator will co-ordinate the progress of the plan, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report to staff on findings.

**RSE Policy**

This policy statement is an approved approach to the teaching of RSE in St. Joseph's NS. It was developed in 2012 by the RSE Policy Committee. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to the material covered in the RSE programme within the SPHE curriculum.

**School Philosophy**

St. Joseph's NS is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Armagh. It is managed by a Board of Management, elected according to the procedures agreed by the Partners in Education. The school has a Catholic ethos and this ethos is a guiding principle in the formulation and implementation of this RSE Policy. This ethos recognises the value and dignity of each pupil and all those working in the school community, and aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person, including:

- a) relationship with God
- b) relationship with family
- c) relationship with teachers
- d) relationship with self
- e) relationship with others



f) relationship with the environment.

This ethos also acknowledges the cultural and religious values of all the pupils attending the school. The school recognises that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we support them in that role.

In the area of RSE, above all, the schools' role is subsidiary to that of the parents. We support and compliment their work.

### **Definition of RSE**

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes, which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework. (p. 5 NCCA curriculum and guidelines for RSE). RSE is the formal approach to educating children in:

- Relationships with others – parents, siblings, friends and the community in general
- Respect for themselves and others
- Physical development – bodily functions and changes, and personal hygiene
- Emotional development – maturing in society
- Parenting, personal and social skills and relationships
- Sexuality in context – part of a loving relationship.

### **Relationship of RSE to SPHE and Religion**

Social, Personal and Health Education contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people. This happens in the context of their emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth, as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development.

The key characteristics of this programme are that SPHE is a lifelong process and is a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community. The main strands of the SPHE programme are:

- Myself
- Myself and Others



- Myself and the Wider World

It is clear that the Relationships and Sexuality Programme is correctly defined as being an integral part of the programme outlined above. Sexually sensitive issues will be covered within the strand units:

- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection.

As stated previously, the content of all lessons will be governed by the schools' Catholic ethos as taught in the Grow in Love programme.

## **Appendix A**

### **RSE - Sensitive Areas**

#### **Junior Infants**

New Life – mention of baby in the womb.

#### **Senior Infants**

My Body – specific names for male and female sex organs – vagina, penis, womb.

#### **First Class**

New Life – New baby. Baby joined to mother by umbilical cord – mention breast feeding.

#### **Second Class**

Birth of baby through vagina. Mention umbilical cord and breast feeding.

#### **Third Class**

As for second class, but in more detail.

#### **Fourth Class**



Language around baby's development in womb, i.e., fertilised egg, cord. Pictures of foetuses (in RSE manual) to be used

### **Fifth and Sixth Classes**

Menstruation in the context of hygiene and growth from a girl to a woman.

Boys and girls development – puberty.

How does new life begin? (6<sup>th</sup> class only)

Biological facts as follows: (6<sup>th</sup> class only)

- What journey does the egg make?
- What journey does the sperm make?
- Where do they meet?
- What happens when they meet?
- Optional videos : Fifth class – Growing
- Sixth class – Busy Bodies.

| <b>Class</b>            | <b>Strand / strand Unit</b>                                       | <b>Content Objectives</b><br><i>Consult curriculum for complete objectives in Growing &amp; changing and Taking care of my body</i>   | <b>Language</b>  | <b>Pages in RSE Resource Book</b>  | <b>Pages in Walk Tall</b>                           | <b>Supplementary resources</b>   |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| Junior / Senior Infants | <b>Myself</b><br>Growing & changing<br><br>Taking care of my body | <b>Growing &amp; changing</b><br>Become aware of new life and birth in the world<br>Develop and awareness of human birth<br><b>Taking care of my body.</b><br>Name parts of male & female body using anatomical terms   | Womb, breastfeeding, penis, vulva                            | New Life p68<br>My Body p147<br>Caring for new life p137<br>At the beach or swimming pool p153                                 | Our Amazing Bodies p94 (Senior Infant book)         | Anatomically correct dolls<br>Picture books of new baby<br>Visit of baby to class  |
| First / Second Class    | <b>Myself</b><br>Growing & changing<br><br>Taking care of my body | <b>Growing &amp; changing</b><br>Begin to understand that reproduction, birth, growth and death are all part of new life cycles.<br><b>Taking care of my body.</b><br>Name the parts of the male & female body using appropriate anatomical terms & identify some of their function | Penis<br>Vulva<br>Vagina<br>Womb<br>Breastfeeding<br>Urethra | The Wonder of new life p59 /151<br>How my body works p67 / 161<br>Growing means changing p77/171<br>A visit to the Doctor p164 | Our Amazing Bodies p37 (2 <sup>nd</sup> class book) | Picture books of going to the Doctors<br>Tom's Power Flower<br>Books / activities on Life cycles<br>Birth and new life in nature |



|                             |   |  |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Third / Fourth Class</b> | <b>Myself</b><br>Growing & changing<br><br>Taking care of my body | <b>Growing &amp; changing</b><br>Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male & female body<br>Realise that changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable & natural and that being different is normal<br><b>Taking care of my body</b><br>Recognise & discuss how feelings & emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place during puberty<br>Discuss the stages & sequence of development of human baby from conception to birth | Revise above<br>Umbilical cord<br>Changes in puberty<br>Menstruation              | Preparing for new life p69<br>The wonder of new life p169<br>As I grow and change p93<br>Growing and changing p195    | As I grow and change p175 (3 <sup>rd</sup> class book)<br>Changing and growing p140 (4 <sup>th</sup> class book)<br>The Wonder of New Life p150 | Body Systems<br>Picture books on growing and changing             |
| <b>Fifth / Sixth Class</b>  | <b>Myself</b><br>Growing & changing<br><br>Taking care of my body | <b>Growing &amp; changing</b><br>Understand sexual intercourse & birth within the context of a loving & committed relationship<br><b>Taking care of my body</b><br>Identify & discuss the physical changes that occur in boys & girls with the onset of puberty understanding that these take place at different rates for everyone<br>Understand the reproductive system of both male & female adults   | Revise above<br>Wet dreams<br>Busy Bodies language<br>Semen<br>Sexual intercourse | My body grows & changes p81<br>The wonder of new life p92<br>Caring for new life p103<br>Different kinds of love p141 | My Amazing body p345 (5 <sup>th</sup> class book)<br>Creation p121 (6 <sup>th</sup> class book)   | Busy Bodies<br>Power points recap<br>Question Box<br>Puberty Quiz |

## Timeframe

Yearly, this provides the plan co-ordinator/school with the opportunity to report on findings and to take feedback from staff.

## Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school.

## Roles and Responsibilities

During the month of June each year, a team will review the policy and plan.

## Those involved in the review

BOM / Senior Management  
 S.P.H.E Co-ordinator  
 Teachers and staff



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**Principal:** Dr. Rosalyn Morris  
**Chairperson:** Sr. Joan Watters  
**Registered Charity:** 20129132

Pupils / student council  
Parents

### **Ratification and Communication**

The SPHE policy and plan was revised and amended by BOM / Senior Management, S.P.H.E co-ordinator, teachers and staff, parents and pupils.

It was reviewed and amended by the Board of Management on March 5<sup>th</sup> 2019.

It was reviewed and amended by the Board of Management on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2022.

**Signed:** *Sr. Joan Watters R.S.M.*

**Sr. Joan Watters**      **6/12/22**

**Signed:** *Dr. Rosalyn Morris*

**Dr. Roz Morris**      **6/12/22**