



St. Ita's N.S.

Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) Policy

February 2019

S.P.H.E. will be taught in St. Ita's N.S to foster self-respect, identity, respect for others and self-confidence in each child. Our aim is to enable each child to live and learn harmoniously in school, at home and in the wider world.

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:

St. Ita's N.S. 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.
- 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.

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 in 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 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 him/her 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 recognize 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:

Strands and Strand Units:

Strands:

The 3 strands of the S.P.H.E. Curriculum are:

- Myself
- Myself and others
- Myself and the Wider World

Strand Units:

- Self-identity
- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection
- Making decisions
- Myself and my family
- My friends and other people
- Relating to others
- Developing citizenship
- Media education

Teaching Methods and Methodologies:

There are 6 basic methods for teaching S.P.H.E.

- Talk and discussion
- Learning through co-operation
- Active learning
- Learning from the environment
- Learning skills through the subject matter
- Problem solving

Content will be **differentiated** for children with different needs.

Content will be **integrated** with other areas of the curriculum.

30 minutes will be allocated for S.P.H.E. in **each class level, every week** on the classroom timetable.

The content objectives for **Stay Safe** and the **sensitive areas of the RSE** will be addressed **in each class each year** in accordance with the spiral nature of the curriculum.

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

Overview of Content for S.P.H.E. – 2 Year Cycle

<u>Months</u>	<u>Year 1</u> 2019-2020 2021-2022 2023-2024		<u>Year 2</u> 2018-2019 2020-2021 2022-2023	
	<u>Strand</u>	<u>Strand Unit</u>	<u>Strand</u>	<u>Strand Unit</u>
September/ October	Myself	Self-identity	Myself and others	My friends and other people
November/ December	Myself and others	Myself and my family	Myself and the wider world	Media Education
January/February	Myself	Safety & Protection <u>STAY SAFE PROGRAMME</u>	Myself	Safety & Protection <u>STAY SAFE PROGRAMME</u>
March/ April	Myself	(Infants – 2 nd) Safety & Protection (3 rd to 6 th) Making Decisions*	Myself and others	Relating to Others
May/June	Myself and the wider world	Developing citizenship <u>Revision of Sensitive Areas of Taking Care of My Body/Growing and Changing</u>	Myself	Taking care of my Body Growing and Changing

*Making decisions is only a strand unit from 3rd to 6th, 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 a standard 2 year plan will enable the teacher to achieve some of the content objectives of Making decisions through the Stay Safe Programme

2. Contexts for SPHE:

SPHE will be taught through a combination of contexts:

- Positive School Climate and Atmosphere
- Discrete Time.
- Integration with other areas.

School Climate and Atmosphere:

At the first staff meeting of the year all members of the school community are reminded of the importance of promoting a positive school climate. These key messages dealing with school climate and atmosphere are also referred to, as appropriate, during the year through newsletters, meetings with parents and on a regular basis in classes.

Our key messages are:

- We cater for the individual needs of the children. Individual needs may be social, emotional, spiritual, physical or intellectual. Through assessment, observation and discussion with parents we strive to identify and meet individual needs.
- We provide opportunities to enhance the self-esteem of all members of the school- community.
- 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. We will prioritise both racial and gender equality and respect for those with special needs. 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. Attention will be paid to encouraging everyone to express opinions and concerns and to respond to the opinions and concerns of others as a dimension of classroom work and general school life.
- We support a health promoting physical environment. Through our Health and Safety Policy we have set out how we promote health and safety awareness and how we intend to deal with unsatisfactory aspects of our environment. 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, our involvement in the Green Schools programme and through constant review and promotion of behaviour and habits required for maintaining a clean environment.

Informative healthy eating posters throughout the school create further emphasis of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

- 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.
- 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.
 - Caring for and promoting inclusion of others and learning that it's OK to be different.
 - 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 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.

Discrete Time:

SPHE is timetabled for 30 mins. per week.

Children who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching must be included in the SPHE programme each week.

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.

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. Teachers will include these in their short-term planning and will use the cúntas míosúil as a form of self-assessment for these and other objectives.

3. 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
- 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 cyber bullying
- Information and communication technologies.

4. 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.

Teacher-Designed Tasks and Tests

SPHE includes areas of knowledge and understanding that will need to be assessed at regular intervals. Specific tasks can be used to ascertain a child's ability to apply particular skills in different situations.

Portfolios and Projects:

Teachers may decide that children will keep personal folders of their work.

Self-Assessment

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

5. 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. The requirements of children with special needs will be taken into consideration when planning class lessons and related activities. Members of the Learning Support Team will positively support the work of the class teacher. The SNA supports particular children or groups as directed by the class teacher. 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.

6. 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 recognized by valuing and promoting the needs, interests, skills and talents of children with special needs.

7. Policies and Programmers that Support SPHE:

Policies/ Programmes

SPHE links with other policies/programmes used in the school- RSE, Stay Safe, Child Safeguarding Statement, Acceptable Use, Enrolment, Attendance, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Healthy Eating. Teachers are expected to be familiar with these policies and ensure that the school's agreed policy is followed when addressing these issues.

(1) Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.):

RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. In a school situation RSE, provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and to establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework, appropriate to their age.

RSE will be taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the philosophy framework of the school. Teachers will not teach any content outside the Religion programme used by the school or the DES curriculum. The teaching methods used in the school are child centered and reflect the age and stage of development of each child. The teachers will use the 'Busy Bodies' programme. Sensitive issues will be dealt with appropriately. Speakers may be brought in to teach areas of the programme if the teachers are not comfortable doing so.

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.

Dealing with Questions:

Teachers do not cover content outside that of the DES curriculum or the school's religion programme. At the same time teachers should answer questions sensitively, aware that there are children in our school from many social backgrounds. No child should be made feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when these issues are raised. Ground rules will be set before the lessons are taught. The teacher will tell the class that they will do their best to answer as many questions as possible but may not be able to answer every question. It is reasonable for the teacher to say that the children will learn further information as they get older.

Children, who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum taught, should be talked to individually and discretely, as soon as is possible, by the teacher and encouraged to seek answers from their parents. If a child poses such a question the parents will be informed and asked not to ignore it but to deal with it as they see fit.

Parental Concerns:

A letter is sent to all parents each year informing them that the RSE elements of the SPHE programme will be dealt with in each class in the coming weeks. If parents do not wish their children to be involved they must inform the school in writing. If parents are concerned about any aspect of the school's programme for the RSE elements of SPHE they should discuss their concerns with the Principal. Arrangements will be made so all parents to view and access the RSE programme and every effort will be made to accommodate their concerns.

Teachers Concerns:

If teachers are concerned about any aspect of the school's programme for the RSE elements of SPHE they should discuss this with the Principal. Every teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive areas of SPHE and in this event it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the sensitive areas of RSE are taught to that particular class. A swop with another teacher for the duration of these lessons or inviting in a specialist speaker may be deemed acceptable.

(2) STAY SAFE Programme

The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme for primary schools. It aims to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying. It helps to develop children's ability to recognize, resist and report situations of risk or abusive encounters.

The objectives of the programme are:

- To help children to identify an express safe and unsafe feelings.
- To teach children safety skills for dealing with common unsafe situations such as getting lost. To encourage children to value friendships and to teach them skills for making and keeping friends.
- To teach children safety strategies for dealing with bullying. To teach children that it is not acceptable to bully others.
- To encourage children to value and enjoy normal affection.
- To teach children how to deal with an unsafe or inappropriate touch. To teach the rule: 'Never keep secrets about touching'.
- To help children recognise the difference between a good secret and a bad secret.
- To help children identify the adults they could tell about a bad secret and to give them the opportunity to practice telling.
- To clarify for the children who strangers are.
- To give the children safety strategies for dealing appropriately with strangers.

Content:

The lessons cover the following topics:

1. Feeling Safe and Unsafe
2. Friendship and Bullying
3. Touches
4. Secrets and Telling
5. 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

The Stay Safe Programme is taught as part of a 2 year cycle. In accordance with DES Guidelines our school's policy is to teach the Stay Safe Programme in its entirety over each school year during Term 2 (January/February). Children are not segregated for Stay Safe lessons. All topics are addressed on a whole-class-basis.

Parental Concerns:

If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the Stay Safe programme, they are welcome to visit the school to view the curriculum and discuss their concerns with the Principal.

A teacher who is concerned about teaching a particular topic within the Stay Safe programme should talk to the principal about his/her concerns. Such concerns will be handled discreetly. The Principal will endeavour to accommodate such teachers. Resources outside the school profession will be availed of if considered appropriate.

(3) Child Safeguarding Statement:

St. Ita's N.S. follows the DES Child Protection, which are based on Children First Procedures for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The Principal Pat Coyle is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Joan Glynn is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person. Each teacher has copy of our Child Safeguarding Statement and a copy is on display in all classrooms. A copy is also available to parents on the school website. Each teacher also received a copy of the Children First National Guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children.

Resources:

Programmes, ICT, DVDs, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials

Resources to support the provision of SPHE will include the curriculum statement and teacher guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills, text books, DVDs, ICT, the internet, programmes which target specific issues and guest speakers.

Resources available within the school include:

- Walk Tall Programme

- RSE Programme
- Stay Safe Programme
- Be Safe
- Busy Bodies
- Webwise

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.

8. Individual Teacher's 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. The recording in the Cúntais Mhíosúla of work done will help to monitor progress and assist in future planning.

9. Staff Development:

Staff development will be promoted by:

Strands:

The 3 strands of the S.P.H.E. Curriculum are:

- 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, Special Needs
- Assistants and ancillary staff with the content and vision enshrined in policies relevant to SPHE.
- School support from a S.P.H.E./P.D.S. T advisor (Feb. 2019)

10. 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)

and the website carries links to related policies (Child Safeguarding Statement) and related sites (Accord schools programme; Stay Safe programme; Internet Safety website; DES; Busy Bodies).

11. 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 community Garda, medical persons, people of other cultures and backgrounds, members of local community groups has much to offer in supporting the SPHE programme. We will avail of the services of statutory bodies such as the HSE and An Garda Síochána, as required.

Home/ School/ Community Links:

- Newsletter circulated to all families each month containing relevant news on on-going school activities.
- An End of Year report is prepared for the Board of Management and all families receive a copy of same.
- S.P.H.E. homework is signed by teachers when necessary in order to ensure continuity between the school and home in relation to S.P.H.E. e.g. Stay Safe
- A letter is circulated to parents in Term 3 each year to make parents aware that the “sensitive issues” lessons will be completed during this term as part of the S.P.H.E. curriculum. Parents are requested to apply to the school in writing if they **do not wish** their child/ren to be part of same.

12. 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 and from the second-level schools attended by our past pupils. 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.

13. 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. The school principal will co- ordinate its progression.

Review:

In order to ensure optimal implementation of the SPHE Programme in our school this plan will be reviewed on a three 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.

15. 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.

Date for review: School Year 2021-2022

Signed: Monsignor Cathal Geraghty
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 10/07/2019

Signed: Patrick Coyle
Principal

Date: 10/07/2019