

# Social, Personal and Health Education Plan

## St. Thomas' Senior School

### ■ **Introductory Statement and Rationale**

#### **(a) Introductory Statement**

This plan was formulated over a period of time. All teaching staff and principal were involved in the initial stages while the post holder with responsibility for SPHE and a representative group made up of teachers from all standards completed the plan. The plan was reviewed and revised in 2018/2019 with input from all staff but particularly Eithne O'Shea, Eimer O'Leary, Julie Mc Kenna, Andrea Flynn, Simon Brennan, Laura Daly and Bronagh Daly. The main responsibility for the curriculum planning in SPHE is with the current post holder Eimer O'Leary (SPHE). The focus group received direction from Gráinne Ní Ghrádaigh (Primary Development Support Team (PDST))

#### **(b) Rationale**

St Thomas' Senior School has adopted the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)'s Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines for SPHE. Aspects of SPHE are taught through various programmes such as PE, RE, SESE, Visual Arts, Drama and Music. The aim of this policy is to ensure the compliance of the school with the above guidelines.

Through the teaching of SPHE in our school each child will be enabled to develop a positive sense of self-esteem, enhance social and communication skills and equip him/her with the knowledge and ability to lead a healthy life

### ■ **Vision and Aims:**

#### **(a) Vision**

The SPHE programme should foster personal development, health and wellbeing of each child in St. Thomas' Senior School. SPHE will provide particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the child and to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. Through our SPHE programme children can develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their lives both now and in the future.

#### **(b) Aims**

The aims of Social, Personal and Health Education as stated in the Primary Curriculum are:

- 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 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.

## ■ Content of Plan

### Curriculum:

#### 1.0 Strands and Strand Units

Since SPHE is spiral in nature we will cover the following content at each level throughout the school over a two year period.

Month	Year One	Year Two
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 (Myself)	Growing and changing (Myself)
March/April	Making decisions (Myself)	Taking care of my body (Myself)
May/June	Media education (Myself and the wider world)	Developing citizenship (Myself and the wider world)

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. Teachers will familiarise themselves with the content objectives for their own class. This familiarity will be maintained if teachers change classes or if new teachers join the staff through the school plan.

#### 2.0 Contexts for SPHE

The SPHE programme is taught in this school in a combination of the following contexts:

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

#### Whole School Approach

- Restorative practise and circles in every class
- Friendship Week
- Grandparent's Day

- Well-Being week
- Monthly award systems at assembly
- Bronze/silver/gold awards in classes
- Active schools week
- Student council
- Check and connect
- After school clubs
- School Completion Project activities
- Lunchtime activities
- Holiday camps (Summer and Easter)
- Supporting teacher
- Care Team
- Home School Community Teacher
- School website
- Weekly newsletter
- School garden
- Anti-bullying monthly questionnaire
- Continuous Professional Development for staff
- Brain Calm

### **Classroom approach**

- Anti – bullying questionnaire
- Code of behaviour
- Ensuring the rules and sanctions are on display in the classroom
- Give respect, expect respect
- SPHE programme – including RSE and Stay safe
- Meeting the needs of all pupils
- Acknowledge individual children’s needs
- Positive classroom environment
- Friends for life programme
- Incredible years

### **Individual approach**

- Smile and greet each other
- Relationships
- Respect
- Check and connect
- Individual rewards/awards
- Nurturing environment

### **Building effective communication within the school**

#### **In-school:**

- Developing democratic processes and communication within the school so that all staff members are included and involved in development of policies and procedures

- E-mail/phones in classrooms
- Notice Boards – Staff Rooms
- Important information sent around to staff in memos.
- Children are involved in in-class decisions
- Children report bullying to class teacher/yard duty teacher

#### **Parents:**

- Notes i.e. homework journal
- Parent/Teacher Meetings – By appointment meetings also.
- Weekly memo home
- School Website
- Coffee/Tea sessions after religious/sacramental events/school events.
- HSCL co-ordinator

#### **Visitors:**

- Visitors are greeted upon arrival/offered tea/coffee
- Facilities/room provided for visitors.

#### **2.1.2 Catering for individual needs**

- Individual reward system in every class e.g. student of the week.
- Announcements made.
- School music groups/choir/sports teams/quizzes/school concert.
- Variety of teaching styles & activities – Activity based learning.
- General positive school climate with regard to reinforcing positive behaviour.
- Rainbows Programme.
- Special Education Teachers
- Access to Support Teacher (school based)
- Access to art therapist.
- Social skills training.
- School Completion Team
- Referral to outside agencies if necessary.
- Referral to school Care Team if necessary.
- Referral to the Designated Liaison person within the school if necessary.

#### **2.1.3 Creating a health-promoting physical environment**

- Well decorated & well maintained school
- Breakfast and Cookery rooms
- Playground markings for yard time activities.
- Children's work on display throughout school.
- Litter management by senior pupils.
- Recycling in classrooms.
- Newsletter/Intercom mentions achievements.
- Maintenance of school garden.

#### **2.1.4 Developing democratic processes**

- Pupils involved in drawing up class rules.
- Student Council to be established on a yearly basis.

- Code of Behaviour is widely publicised.
- Children act as litter wardens during lunch hours.
- Reading buddies/recycling campaign/vegetable garden.
- Job allocations in classrooms.
- Involvement in school activities for eg Green School Committee and school assembly.
- Children have activities each evening and take responsibility re. same for eg composting
- Children represent the school in a wide variety of activities e.g. sports, music, art, Write- A –Book, chess, quizzes.

### **2.1.5 Enhancing the self-esteem and well-being of members of the school community.**

- A reward system in place classes/displaying children’s work.
- Openness to change/photographs on display of winners/successes/a special visit/play in our school yard.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> class taken on tour of the school.
- New pupils – appointed ‘buddies’ to look after them.
- Welcome pack for new staff members on policy & procedures. Administration information available on server.
- Involvement in committees.
- Library promotes reading/swimming/computer room – participation in outside competitions.
- By organising/attending/training courses.
- Availing of DES support.
- Regular appraisal of staff efforts.
- Inclusion in any school publications.

### **2.1.6 Fostering respect for diversity**

- Anti-bullying policy exists and is practised by all staff members.
- Communicating school policies and practices to all parents and children.
- All children are offered opportunities to be included in teams, choirs, concerts, photo opportunities etc.
- Children have the opportunity to opt out of activities on Religious grounds.
- Resources are in place to cater for needs of S.E.N children.
- Integration of different social groups through organised games, activities, cooking etc.
- Social skills groups in action to help children who display anti-social behaviour or lack of personal discipline.

### **2.1.7 Fostering inclusive and respectful language**

- Refer to children by first name.
- Praise, encourage and affirm.
- Zero tolerance of racist/ offensive language.
- Promote minority cultures in a positive light.
- Being conscious of different family structures and units, respect them and refer to them in whole class situations.

### **2.1.8 Developing appropriate communication between home and school**

- Notice boards, posters etc.
- Parent Teacher meetings.
- Notes in homework journals

- Parents core group
- Collaboration for S.E.N. children for assessment/ IEP etc.
- Policy statement re homework journal – internet site
- Weekly newsletter
- School Website
- Parents invited to various school activities eg assembly, grandparents day, concerts, maths for fun, science for fun

### **2.1.9 Individual Planning and reporting**

- The school plan contains a timeframe for SPHE each year.
- Individual teachers plan their lessons in accordance with this.
- Records of the lessons taught are detailed in the teacher's Cuntas Míosúil.

### **2.1.10 Developing a school approach to assessment**

- Teacher and ISA observations (ongoing)
- Discussion with children formally/informally
- Open forum in Circle time and Social Skills group
- Teacher designated Tasks and Tests
- Portfolios
- Communication with parents via telephone
- Checklist at the end of the Stay Safe programme

### **2.2 Discrete time** will be used as follows:

- SPHE is time-tabled for a half hour per week or if required to allow for more in-depth exploration of a particular strand unit for one hour per fortnight.
- Additional discretionary time may also be used as necessary.

### **2.3 Integration with other subjects**

Teachers at all class levels will integrate SPHE with as many other curricular areas as possible.

Many aspects of SPHE can be dealt within the context of relevant subject areas such as:

- Religious Education
- SESE
- English
- Visual Arts
- Physical Education
- Drama
- Music
- IT- Digital learning
- Student council
- Skipping leaders
- Referee
- Dance leaders
- Play leaders

Teachers may integrate the themes of SPHE through other subjects as appropriate. Themes and projects will from time to time be used to link SPHE into the life of the school through various activities such as Wellbeing Week, Active Schools Week, Book Week, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Science Week, Maths Week. Grandparents' Day, seasonal activities and focussed events such as Anti Bullying campaigns may also be used.

### **3.0 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. A broad range of approaches and methodologies are suggested in the curriculum guidelines to realise the aim of involving children in their own learning. We will adopt the following approaches and methodologies:

- Active learning which includes drama activities, co-operative games, use of pictures, photographs and visual images, written activities, discussion, 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

### **4.0 Assessment**

Assessment is a central part of the everyday teaching and learning process of SPHE. It is essential to use a variety of techniques in assessing SPHE. These techniques should take cognisance of the styles of learning and the range of intelligences that are evident in the classroom and genuinely reflect the children's progress. If children are assessed in this way, the teacher will be able to plan and adapt learning experiences according to individual needs and ensure that the programme in SPHE is meaningful for all. In St. Thomas' Senior School, the tools that we use to assess SPHE are

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Learning logs

Much of the assessment in SPHE will occur in everyday teaching and learning in the classroom and while children are at play. This will be an informal type of assessment that is non-intrusive and non-threatening to the child. On some occasions formal tests or tasks designed by the teacher will also be helpful in determining the child's progress in some of the content.

Information from formal behavioural tests, carried out in conjunction with psychologists and other professionals, may further contribute to the overall assessment of the child. Where the assessment process is explored among the staff as a whole there will be a consistency and a continuity of approach for the children, the teachers and the parents. The communication of information regarding a child's progress can ensure that both home and school play a significant role in helping the child to learn.

## **5.0 Children with different needs**

Teachers support and ensure the participation of children with special needs in a variety of ways. In any one class there will be a broad range of abilities, interest levels and stages of maturity. The depth of exploration in the programme will have to take this diversity into account.

- All children are enabled to make an important contribution regardless of academic ability

The supporting teachers and class teacher support the inclusive model of education by including all pupils and can create specific lessons for children with special needs as necessary. These lessons will help cater for the individual needs of these children in line with our SPHE policy.

- Staff will liaise with trained professionals and outside agencies as appropriate when dealing with specific issues such as loss, bereavement if considered necessary

- In any programme that is developed for the class it will be essential that a balance is achieved between skill development, the fostering of values and attitudes and the acquisition of information.

- Children come from a variety of backgrounds, beliefs and understanding and can be at many different stages of their personal, social and health development. These factors influence the approaches taken to SPHE in the school.

- Activities will be adapted and modified as necessary to ensure all children can participate. All necessary arrangements will be in line with the schools' Health and Safety policy

- SPHE is spiral in nature. Similar content is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in school. This provides opportunities to consolidate and build on previous learning and allows for issues and topics to be adapted to suit individual children's needs, abilities and levels of maturity.

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

Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in discussion, debate, presentation. All children have access to services, facilities, and amenities in the school environment. All children are taught the SPHE programme, however parents/guardians retain the right to withdraw their child from the sensitive aspects of SPHE. If parents wish to withdraw their children they will need to put it in writing to the principal and outline the reasons for doing so. This will be centrally filed in the school.

## **■ Organisation**

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

The following policies related to SPHE issues have been drawn up in consultation with parents and the Board of Management.

- Child safe-guarding statement.
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti - Bullying
- Enrolment policy
- Relationships and sexuality education policy
- Substance misuse policy
- Health and safety policy
- Positive working relationships policy
- Acceptable usage policy
- Health and Safety Statement



## **7.1 Programmes**

- Active schools
- Green schools
- Digital schools
- Student Council
- Restorative Practice
- Incredible Years
- Friends for Life
- Alert Programme
- Roots of Empathy
- Brain Calm
- Re-tracking programme
- Heritage in schools

## **8.0 Homework**

If SPHE homework is prescribed, it reflects the active learning approach as described in the curriculum and reinforces the work done during the lesson.

## **9.0 Resources**

Resources for SPHE are organised and maintained by the post holder with responsibility for SPHE. They are selected in accordance with the NCCA Guidelines and include: Walk tall

- Stay Safe
- RSE
- Walk tall
- Quality Circle Time by Jenny Mosley
- Be safe.
- Visiting Speakers
- SPHE Curriculum Books
- “Making the Links” which includes all of the above mentioned
- Busy Body booklet
- Toms Flower Power book
- Picture books
- Different Families Same Love poster
- Respect guidelines
- Webwise teacher handbook
- Webwise Primary Programme
- Webwise Anti-Cyber Bullying Primary Pack (Web wise# My Selfie and the wider world)

All resources must be in accordance with school policies, in line with the principles of the SPHE programme, be bias free, be free of racial or gender stereotyping, well designed and be produced by a reputable agency.

## **9:1 Guest speakers**

### **10.0 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. Each teacher will prepare fortnightly plans for the teaching of all subjects including SPHE and will keep a Cuntas Miosuil of the work completed each month. Cuntas Miosuil will help evaluate and review the progress of the S.P.H.E programme.

### **11.0 Staff Development**

- Teachers have access to materials necessary for teaching SPHE.
- They are encouraged to share their skills/expertise at staff / standard meetings if they wish. Teachers can inform or upskill the staff at meetings and also by posting information relevant to SPHE on the school server.
- Any information on SPHE-related courses are circulated to staff and put on display in the staffroom. Teachers are encouraged to attend relevant courses. Some/all of the teaching staff has attended:
  - training in the Child Abuse Prevention Programme (Stay Safe),
  - training in the Relationships and Sexuality programme (R.S.E.)
  - training with the Walk Tall Programme (S.M.P.P.)
  - Child protection webinar – PDST and Tusla
  - Rainbows Training
  - Roots of Empathy programme
  - PDST advisor
  - DLP and DDLP training
  - Nurturing schools training
  - Alert training

### **11:1 Stay Safe programme**

Stay safe is fully implemented in our school once every two years under the strand unit Safety and protection; this is in-line with the circular 81/17 and child protection procedures for primary and post primary 2017. Home- links pages will be sent home for parents to discuss with their children and signed.

### **12.0 Parental Involvement**

All policies are drawn up in consultation with the parents.

- Letter will be sent home explaining the Stay Safe programme prior to implementation of the Stay Safe Programme.
- Relevant activity sheets from the programme may be sent home.
- Prior to the teaching of the RSE programme Busy Body/Tom's Power Flower booklets will be distributed to parents.
- Parents of all pupils will be invited to an information meeting regarding the ACCORD programme prior to its delivery to pupils.
- Our Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy are available to all parents when their pupil enrolls in our school.
- Our RSE policy is available on our school website.

## 13.0 Community Links

- Visits from local Historian/Garda/Health Worker.
- Health Board – provide health checks
- Health professionals give talks to parents/children around SPHE issues.
- **BRAINSTORM**

### ■ Success Criteria

- The success of the SPHE programme will be determined by the observation and monitoring of pupil performance and behaviour outside of the classrooms e.g. in corridors and in the yard, in pupil behaviour, in their social skills and in their general attitude.
- The success of the SPHE policy will also be judged by feedback from class teachers, parents/guardians, visitors to the school as well as from the pupils themselves. Feedback from teachers will be gathered through informal discussions on a day to day basis as well as by more formal discussions at staff meetings.
- Feedback from parents/guardians will be gathered at the weekly meetings of the Parents' Core Group organised in conjunction with the Home School Community Liaison Teacher. Feedback from parents/guardians will also be gathered at Parent Teacher meetings, as well as through informal discussions.
- The climate and atmosphere throughout the school will also be a factor in evaluating the success of the SPHE policy.
- The Cúntais Míósúil completed by each teacher will inform progress as to how well the procedures outlined in the policy are being followed.

### ■ Implementation and Review

- This plan will be implemented by the teachers and will be monitored by the whole school community. It will be necessary to review this plan on an ongoing basis and if the need arises to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school.
- Those involved in the review will be the teachers, pupils, parents.. The post holder with responsibility for SPHE will have responsibility for co-ordinating the review. This policy will be reviewed by the SPHE policy committee in 2021 and every two years thereafter. This policy will be reviewed if a need arises. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made to the policy by the SPHE committee.
- This plan was ratified by the board of management at a meeting .
- The ratified plan will be circulated to staff and will be made available to parents/guardians on request. It will also be made available on the school website.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson Board of Management)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Date \_\_\_\_\_