

## St. Kevin's G.N.S.

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## St Kevin's G.N.S. S.P.H.E. Policy

Introductory Statement; The SPHE Policy was reviewed in 2023.

### Rationale

- To guide teachers in adopting a consistent and coherent approach to teaching SPHE in our school
- To assist them in their individual planning
- To ensure appropriate coverage of all aspects of the SPHE programme from Infants to Sixth Class

### Vision

Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to the 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 to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way thus preparing them to play a meaningful role in their communities.

### Aims

The aims of Social, Personal and Health Education are:

- to promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- to foster in the child a sense of care and respect for herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being
- To foster an inclusive ,caring and respective school environment
- 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.

### Broad 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 her sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction
- develop and enhance the social skills of communication, co-operation and conflict resolution
- create and maintain supportive relationships both now and in the future
- develop an understanding of healthy living, an ability to implement healthy behaviour and a willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health
- develop a sense of safety and an ability to protect himself/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.

## Content

The SPHE curriculum is spiral in nature and all content will be delivered developmentally throughout the child's time in the primary school.

In planning for teaching SPHE, we will ensure that over a 2 year period children will study elements from all the strand units.

We implement all three mandated programmes:

- Stay Safe
- Relationships and Sexuality Education.
- Substance Abuse (Walk Tall)

A checklist, for each class, will be completed, highlighting the strands covered, to ensure continuity as the class travels through the school.

The Stay Safe Programme is taught in all classes during the first term of the school year (September- December )Stay Safe is a mandatory programme which is taught under the strand Safety and Protection. The Stay Safe Programme will be taught every year.

The sensitive objectives of RSE fall within the strands Growing and Changing and Taking Care of my Body. Each year we welcome facilitators from Accord to the school. They support the work of the class teacher in the teaching of these strands in classes from fourth to sixth.

The Weaving Wellbeing Programme is taught in all classes from Second to Sixth . We use Mindful Matters from Junior Infants to First Class.

The importance of educating children about internet safety is recognised and is taught yearly with special emphasis on Safer Internet day. We recognise the importance of keeping abreast of new developments across social media platforms . We call on the help of outside agencies such as our Community Garda to help reinforce the key messages of internet safety. We also use resources such as Webwise to provide additional support.

## Contexts for SPHE

SPHE will be taught through a combination of contexts

- Positive school climate and atmosphere
- Discrete time
- Integration with other subject areas
- Designated school wide weeks/days eg Healthy Eating Week (3rd week in Sept) Friendship week (1st week in Oct), Safer Internet Day (Feb), Wellbeing Week (Feb) , Multi-cultural events January (Chinese New Year ) St Patrick's Day )March Active Week.

## Positive school climate and atmosphere

Teachers are aware of the importance of promoting a positive school climate. Our key messages are:

- We tend to the individual needs of the children. Individual needs may be social, emotional, spiritual, physical or intellectual. Through assessment, observation and discussion with parents/guardians and outside agencies, we strive to identify and meet individual needs. The following list outlines a number of the ways we cater for the needs of our pupils
  - *small group reading schemes*
  - *Literacy Planet*
  - *differentiated learning in the classrooms*
  - *movement breaks inside and outside the classroom*
  - *quiet zones in classrooms*
  - *sensory circuits and sensory equipment for children with behavioural and emotional difficulties.*
- The staff is aware that their role in helping children to develop their self-esteem is to create a positive environment within the school where everyone feels they belong and that they matter.
- ***This is done by treating each other with respect/greeting children in the morning/ encouraging and praising the pupils in their endeavours, 'catching them being good'/setting them up for success and praising them/ displaying their work/ positive reinforcement of good behaviour/ Ms Dignam's Golden Girls/ whole school singing and/or dancing activities/celebrating their birthdays/ using assembly to acknowledge***

***pupils' achievements in the wider community( eg twirlers, swimming, drama, dancing etc.).***

#### Intercultural Education.

- We actively value diversity and celebrate different cultures. Multicultural activities are held annually.
- We prioritise inclusive and respectful language. 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 between school and home. We employ the school website, Twitter , three newsletters each school year, email and the Aladdin Connect System to communicate with parents and guardians. Formal and informal parent/teacher meetings are effective means of communication. The parents/guardians of the next year's Junior Infants are invited in to meet the teachers in May.
- We support a health-promoting physical environment. Emphasis is placed on activity as an important component of a healthy lifestyle. P.E., The Active Walkway, Go Noodle, and active homework. Active after-school's activities are encouraged as well as activities at playtime.
- A Healthy Eating Week takes place at the beginning of each school year. Emphasis is placed on ensuring the children and families are aware of what is acceptable in a healthy school lunch. This kick starts healthy eating for the school year. The Healthy Eating Policy is on the website. Parents/guardians and children are reminded of our healthy eating policy at the beginning of each term.

Taking responsibility and pride in the school environment is encouraged through the children being actively involved in maintaining clean classrooms. While care of the school environment and garden is primarily the responsibility of the caretaker and B.O.M. the pupils are encouraged to play their part too.

There is a zero tolerance of bullying and children and families are encouraged to report any bullying issues to the class teacher who will deal with it as a matter of priority.

Classes are surveyed regularly to help uncover any issues in class. cf Anti-Bullying Policy

#### Discrete time

SPHE may be timetabled for ½ hour per week, one hour per fortnight or blocks of 1 – 2 hours per month where feasible or appropriate. Children who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching must be included for as much of the SPHE programme as possible. The 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. Content objectives dealing with RSE and child protection are addressed through discrete time.

### Approaches and Methodologies

Teachers know 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
- Use of 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 ...
- Circle Time

### 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.
- Emotional maturity
- The quality and presentation of work
- The participation and interest of the child in a variety of activities
- Teacher observation
- Feedback from home and staff members

## Children with different needs

The requirements of children with special needs will be taken into consideration when planning class lessons and related activities. As a number of our children have experienced bereavement, trauma or neglect, they are supported, and consideration is given to meeting their individual needs in the most appropriate manner.

cf Children with Disabilities in Plean Scoile

## Equality of Participation and Access

All children have equal access to services, facilities and amenities within the school.

- We recognise the diverse nature of our school community which comprises many nationalities. We are a Catholic school with a caring ethos. We are inclusive and celebrate the different cultural and religious backgrounds of the children.
- As an inclusive school, we strive to ensure that all the children in our care, particularly those with additional needs feel valued and that they belong in our school.
- We work to ensure that where possible every pupil has access to resources and facilities to help them fulfil their potential.
- We are also sensitive to the fact that our children are coming from a variety of family situations which may include families with a single parent, separated parents, same sex parents, a parent in prison, blended families, refugees from war zones or they may be living with carers or non-parent family members.
- We recognise that our older children may be becoming aware that they are LBGT+ and we aim to protect their self-esteem.
- We identify and provide for children who may be experiencing any kind of disadvantage.

cf Equality of Access and Participation Policy

## Organisation

### Policies and Programmes that support SPHE

The Relationships and Sexuality Education programme (RSE), the Stay Safe programme, the Walk Tall programme and the Weaving Well-Being programme are integral parts of SPHE and are taught as such.

- From September 2023 an outline of the SPHE programme will be given to families when their child enrolls in the school. The parents/guardians can request, in writing, that their child be withdrawn from certain topics.. A copy of this letter will be kept in the child's file as it will be necessary to contact the families who expressed concerns, each year.
- Provision will be made where necessary for parents/guardians who wish to withdraw their child from class on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of their education.
- Teachers will teach only the topics laid down for the class and will respond only to those questions on the programme for that year. If a child asks for information that is not in line with the curriculum content she will be encouraged to ask these questions at home. The guiding principles at all times for the teacher being the school ethos and the age and stage appropriateness of the pupils.
- Teachers will not answer personal questions about themselves or require the child to give information of a personal nature which they do not wish to share.

SPHE links to the following policies: RSE, Substance Use, Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, Anti- Bullying, Healthy Eating and Health and Safety Policies.

Teachers are invited to join our Care Team and expected to be familiar with our Amber Flag Initiative.

## Homework

The SPHE homework reflects the active learning approach as described in the curriculum and acts as a link between home and school.

## Resources

Each class teacher has a Walk Tall manual, a Stay Safe manual, an RSE manual , the relevant manual for either Weaving Wellbeing or Mindful Matters.



Anti-bullying posters and nutritional and food pyramid posters are on display on noticeboards throughout the school.

The Incredible Years and other books promoting positive behaviour, behaviour management, well-being etc are also available in the school.

An Acceptable Usage policy is in place to ensure children's safety when using the internet.

Guest Speakers: The community garda is available to talk about all aspects of safety, bullying and his/her work as a Garda etc. Other speakers may include the Community Nurse, Fire Brigade and speaker on Internet Safety. The class teacher remains with the class at all times during these visits.

### Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Each class teacher is furnished with a summary of SPHE content for their class and a timetable of when topics are covered over the year.

### Staff Development

- All teachers are trained in Child Protection
- Teachers are notified of courses related to the teaching of SPHE. Time is allowed at staff meetings to share skills/information acquired.
- Speakers are invited to speak to staff about SPHE related matters e.g. Behavioural Issues (NEPS), Internet Safety, The Anti-bullying Campaign (Maria Garvey- Helping Hands) and Staff Wellbeing (PDST).

### Parental/Guardian Involvement

The involvement of parents/guardians is seen as crucial and reflects the ethos of the school.

- They support our Healthy Eating policy by following guidelines for healthy lunches and are active during Healthy Eating Week.

- cultures are involved in our Multicultural Parents/guardians from different activities,
- Parents/guardians are made aware of sensitive areas covered in the SPHE programme and are given an opportunity to withdraw their children for these lessons.
- Parents/guardians are also notified when SPHE programmes are beginning and home/school links are maintained eg Stay Safe, RSE, Weaving Well-Being.
- Parents/guardians are invited to school concerts, school events and End of Year Celebrations.

### Success Criteria

Assessment by teachers and staff.

Is there an observable reduction in conflict situations, use of offensive language, bullying behaviour etc. among the students?

Children may be surveyed at the end of Weaving Wellbeing Programme to see what skills they have learnt that they feel will help them in their life.

Children's lunches will be surveyed at intervals to see if there is an improvement in healthy eating.

### Implementation

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff to read and become familiar with both the policy and their individual role in implementing it regardless of their role as a class or SEN teacher, as delivery of the SPHE policy in particular lends itself to being delivered by both groups of staff.

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

This plan was reviewed in 2023 and should be implemented in 2023-2024 school year.

## Review

This plan will be reviewed again in 2025. Questionnaires to teachers and possibly to students in senior classes and parents will be used in this review. Feedback is welcome at any time to the SPHE coordinator.

## Ratification

This school plan was formulated by the principal and staff and approved by the Board of management of St. Kevin's G.N.S, on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

Signed: 

Chairperson of the Board of Management