



St Patrick's Loreto Primary School

Social, Personal and Health Education

Whole School Plan

Summary of the SPHE Whole School Plan	
General	Through the provision of learning experiences in the area of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), we hope to enable each child 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.
Curriculum Planning	<p>The 1999 SPHE Curriculum will underpin all teaching and learning of SPHE.</p> <p>SPHE is allocated 30 minutes discreet teaching time per week.</p> <p>The main programmes used in St Patrick's for the teaching of SPHE/RSE are Walk Tall (Revised 2016), RSE and Stay Safe.</p> <p>Stay Safe is taught in Senior Infants, 1st Class, 3rd Class and 5th Class in the second or early in the third term.</p> <p>Teachers will refer to the SPHE Whole School Plan (Appendix 2) to support their planning for the delivery of the strands and strand units. Strand units have been chosen in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme of SPHE over a two-year period.</p>
Organisational Planning	<p>Please see Appendix 1 for a yearly glance grid of SPHE strands and strand units to be covered by year group.</p> <p>Please see Appendix 2 for specific content objectives for each year group.</p> <p>Please see Appendix 3 for Resources.</p> <p>Parents will be informed before sensitive lessons are taught.</p>
Roles and Responsibilities	The staff of St. Patrick's believe that the whole school community must be involved to successfully implement SPHE. This includes Principal, Deputy Principal, ISL Team, teachers, SNAs, parents, students, community and the Board of Management.
Implementation	This policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended in the academic year 2027/2028 or sooner if required.
Whole School Plan	See Appendix 1 and 2

Introductory Statement

This plan was formulated following a review of the 2014-15 SPHE plan, in consultation with staff, pupil representatives and the Board of Management. In St. Patrick's we are committed to the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development of each child in our school. Through the provision of learning experiences in the area of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), we hope to

- enable each child 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

Rationale

The SPHE curriculum has been taught in St Patrick's Loreto PS for many years through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Relationships and Sexuality Education and through our involvement in the Health Promoting Schools initiative. It has also been taught through integration with other subject areas such as Physical Education, Religion, Geography, Art, Music etc. We wish to outline clearly our formal whole school plan for the teaching of SPHE. Its purpose is to guide teachers in adopting a consistent and coherent approach to the teaching and learning of SPHE in our school. It is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for SPHE to ensure appropriate coverage of all aspects of the curriculum from Infants to Sixth Class.

Our Mission Statement and Vision for SPHE

St. Patrick's Loreto Primary School seeks to foster a welcoming environment in which the dignity of every child will be valued, respected and equally cherished.

Our aim is the pursuit of excellence through a holistic education based on Gospel values. We strive to develop children's self-esteem and to motivate them to achieve their full potential in a spirit of friendship and belonging.

We recognise that SPHE is an intrinsic part of the learning and teaching that occurs both formally and informally in the school and in the classroom. Through SPHE we wish to assist the children to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence, and enhance their wellbeing while encouraging the ability to relate to others in a positive way.

Aims:

The children of St Patrick's Loreto PS should be enabled to achieve the aims outlined in the SPHE curriculum, which include:

- to promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- to foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being
- to promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects
- to enable the child to make informed decisions 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

Principles which underpin the SPHE Curriculum:

- SPHE is a lifelong process which begins before the child comes to school and will continue long after he / she has left school
- SPHE is a shared responsibility. Parents, teachers, health workers and members of the wider community all have a responsibility for the social, personal and health education of the child
- SPHE aims to develop a set of skills, attitudes, values and understanding based on the needs of the child
- SPHE is spiral in nature. Similar content is revisited at different stages throughout the child's time in school
- SPHE is developed in a combination of contexts for learning – both formally (discrete time) and informally (positive school climate and integrated learning). It is cross curricular in its implementation
- SPHE requires the children to be engaged in activity-based learning which will give them increased ownership of and responsibility for their own learning

The SPHE Curriculum:

1. Strands and Strand Units

The curriculum is delineated at four levels—infant classes, first and second classes, third and fourth classes, and fifth and sixth classes—and is divided into three strands: Myself, Myself and others, and Myself and the wider world.

Each of these strands is further subdivided into a number of strand units or topic areas that contain particular objectives. An overview of content in relation to individual strands and strand units for each class is detailed in Appendix 1. A more comprehensive outline of content objectives to be taught in each class is available on the Whole School Plan in Appendix 2. It is proposed to cover all strand units comprehensively within a two-year cycle. A whole school approach will be adopted in the teaching of these strand units and all units will be given parity of esteem. It is envisaged that this approach will facilitate the involvement of all members of the school community.

Strand	Strand Unit
Myself	Self-Identity (including Making Decisions Infants-2 nd) Taking care of My Body Growing and Changing Safety and Protection Making Decisions (3 rd to 6 th)
Myself and Others	Myself and My family My Friends and Other People Relating to Others

Myself and the Wider World	Developing Citizenship Media Education
-----------------------------------	---

2. Stay Safe

'All primary schools are required to fully implement the Stay Safe programme. The Stay Safe programme for primary schools plays a valuable role in helping children develop the skills necessary to enable them to recognise and resist abuse and potentially abusive situations'. (Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools Circular 36/2023).

The Stay Safe programme is a mandatory programme to be taught in the context of the Safety and Protection strand unit in the SPHE programme. All of the content objectives, including those relating to the sensitive areas of Stay Safe will be covered in discrete time **in its entirety in one block , during the second term or early in the third term** in the following class groupings: **Senior Infants, First Class, Third Class and Fifth Class** as reflected in the Whole School Plan in Appendix 2.

3. Contexts for SPHE

In our school S.P.H.E. will be taught through:

- the creation of a positive school climate and atmosphere which fosters the health and well being of all the members of the school community
- the allocation of discrete teaching time of 30 minutes per week
- the implementation of a cross curricular approach where teachers at every class level will seek to link SPHE to all relevant curricular areas

Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

St Patrick's Loreto PS is committed to ensuring:

- effective communication within the school
- catering for individual needs
- the provision and maintenance of a health promoting physical environment
- opportunities are created which enhance self esteem
- fostering respect for diversity
- the use of inclusive and respectful language
- developing appropriate communication between home and school
- developing a coherent whole school approach to assessment
- the promotion of democratic processes in/at all levels of school life while balancing rights, roles and responsibilities.

See Appendix 4 for further details.

Discrete Time for SPHE

SPHE is usually timetabled for 30 minutes per week, however one hour per fortnight or blocks of 1 – 2 hours per month may be timetabled where feasible or appropriate. 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 addressed by the RSE, Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes are addressed through discrete time. Children who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching must be included for as much of the SPHE programme as possible. In circumstances where children from another class are present in a classroom when sensitive content/Stay Safe is about to be discussed, the visiting children will be reassigned to another class for the duration of the lesson.

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 Religion, English, Drama, SESE, Visual Arts and PE. Whole school themes will also be explored each year during the HPS led Be Well Week and other whole school initiatives such as Green School Activities and Seachtain na Gaeilge.

4. Approaches and methodologies

In offering learning experiences in the area of SPHE, 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
- Circle Time
- Skills through Content
- Collaborative learning
- Problem-solving
- Use of the Environment

5. Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to improve the learning experiences of the child in SPHE and it plays a role in evaluating the SPHE programme. Assessment in this curricular area cannot be seen in isolation, as it will be directly related to the assessment in other subjects and to any assessment that may take place of the school climate and atmosphere. Assessment will be undertaken in a practical and balanced way within the school. The primary emphasis is on informal assessment but at times this will be complemented by formal techniques such as behavioural tests, pupil profiles and set criteria reference tests. Thus assessment may have a diagnostic role.

Assessment will be used formatively to modify content and delivery in response to pupils' differing abilities and needs in order to optimise the potential for learning of each pupil. The information will be gleaned from the child's work during the discrete SPHE time, from the child's informal learning and everyday interactions and from the learning and teaching in other subjects. The outcomes of assessment, including teachers' awareness of strengths and needs of individual pupils, contribute to the picture of the pupil's overall development (summative assessment), and may be used to inform teaching and learning, or to update pupils, parents and other teachers on progress.

Assessment will be carried out in accordance with the guidelines in the Curriculum Statement Pg. 70 – 77. The approaches include:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Conferencing – formal and informal discussions with children, parents, other teachers
- Open forum in Circle Time
- Collation of portfolios of pupils' work
- Records of pupils' engagement and achievement in project activity
- Displays and presentations of work
- Pupil self-assessment / reflection

It is acknowledged that there are limitations associated with assessment in SPHE. In many instances the real impact of the learning in SPHE will take place long after the child has left primary school. In the same way, the achievement of many of the objectives of the curriculum will be dependent on the emotional, social and intellectual maturity of the child; therefore the rate of progress can vary considerably from child to child. Difficulty also arises in assessing the effects of personal, social and health messages on an individual child, on her/his thought processes and on the manner in which she/he internalises the learning.

6. Children with Different Needs

In planning for and providing learning experiences in the area of SPHE, teachers will take account of

- children with different learning needs
- children for whom English is not a first language
- children who may have been personally affected by specific issues

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with special needs.

The SEN teachers will collaborate with class teachers to support and supplement the work done in the classroom where necessary. Specific targets and strategies may be incorporated in a SSP or Behaviour Plan as is appropriate.

St Patrick's Loreto PS will liaise with trained professionals/appropriate agencies when dealing with sensitive issues such as bereavement or loss to ensure that the children involved are fully supported.

7. Equality of Participation and Access

St Patrick's Loreto PS recognises and values diversity, and believes all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment. St Patrick's Loreto PS is under Roman Catholic school management, and we endeavour to provide for members of Travelling community, children with disabilities, families with literacy difficulties, children who are learning English as a second language, children who are experiencing homelessness or living in Direct Provision. We view the SPHE programme as playing a key role in ensuring equality of opportunities for all children.

8. Organisation

The school's S.P.H.E. programme enables us to build on existing good practice and to work with home and the community in implementing a school-based programme. In our school there are many aspects of S.P.H.E. covered already through the positive school climate and atmosphere we endeavour to cultivate, where the aims of the programme are modelled and through existing school policies which inform that approach. These policies include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSE Policy/Enrolment • Code of Behaviour • Anti-Bullying Behaviour • Health and Safety • Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment • SEN Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of Medication • Substance Misuse • Acceptable Use Policy • Pupil Attendance • Critical Incident Management Plan • Healthy Eating Policy
---	---

Programmes that are used to support SPHE include, but are not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Promoting Schools • Be Safe • Global Citizen • Cyber Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends for Life • Zippy's Friends • Roots of Empathy • Zones of Regulation
---	--

9. Homework

Homework, if prescribed, will reflect the active learning approach as described in the curriculum and reinforce information already taught during class e.g., Stay Safe Home school links.

10. Resources

Within the context of its ethos, the school is committed to the provision, collation and organisation of resources that will assist both the parents and teachers in teaching the programme.

Each class grouping has access to the relevant RSE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe manuals. The post holder for Wellbeing will assume responsibility for the acquisition, storage and maintenance of resources. Teachers should acquaint themselves with all resources/materials prior to their use and reference should be made to p.103 of the Teacher Guidelines for sample criteria for choosing resources.

See Appendix 3 for list of resources/references including the PDST list of resources: [SPHE Resources 2015.pdf \(pdst.ie\)](#)

11. Guest Speakers

When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class teacher will remain in the classroom (as per Circular 42/2018) and make the speaker aware of this school plan and attached policies.

12. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Each teacher should have a long and a short-term plan Teachers should refer to the school plan and to the curriculum documents for information and guidance on planning.

Short-term plans should detail:

- learning objectives and content to be addressed
- teaching strategies and learning experiences
- resources to be used
- linkage and integration
- differentiation approaches
- assessment approaches
- reflection

Due to the spiral nature of the SPHE curriculum, collaboration between teachers is essential in ensuring that there is development and progression in addressing similar themes at differing class levels.

Monthly progress records or cuntais mhíosúla, should provide a clear overview of the SPHE content addressed and the learning achieved by pupils. They will be used as a review document to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the SPHE curriculum.

13. Staff Development

Training opportunities will support an effective implementation of the SPHE programme. Teachers are encouraged to attend SPHE related courses and will share information/skills acquired at these courses with other members of staff during staff meetings. Appropriate and relevant courses and seminars will be brought to the staff's attention. Areas of need will be identified through school self-evaluation and facilitation will be arranged to address such needs.

14. Parental Involvement

SPHE is a shared responsibility between family and school. Parents will have access to the policy via the school website. Hard copies will be available from the office. They are also welcomed as committee members of the Health Promoting Schools initiative.

Parents will be informed that the Stay Safe Programme and RSE are implemented in the school at enrolment. They will receive an outline of the topics to be covered in RSE/Stay Safe and will be able to familiarise themselves with the content of the RSE/Stay Safe lessons at <https://pdst.ie/primary/health-wellbeing/RSE> or www.pdst.ie/staysafe.

It is best practice to advise parents of the content of lessons dealing with sensitive issues prior to lessons being taught, so they may discuss the issues in advance with their child. If parents wish to opt their children out of any of the sensitive aspects of the SPHE programme in any given class they must provide a written statement to inform the school of their decision.

15. Community Links

St Patrick's Loreto PS believe that the local community has a very important role to play in supporting the programme in SPHE and endeavour to liaise with the members of the community, such as:

- Parish/school links for sacramental preparation
- Involved in Community Games, basketball and hockey leagues
- Liaise with local sports clubs

- Liaise with local services such as Primary Care, CDNT 5, SPECS
- Involved in Green Schools programme
- School visits from local Garda/ historian/health workers/lollipop lady
- Facilitate health checks and immunisation programmes by the HSE
- Liaise with Túsla: Meitheal, TESS, Social Work where appropriate

SUCCESS CRITERIA

This plan is successful if it makes a difference to the teaching and learning of SPHE in our school. The success of this plan will be evaluated through teacher's planning and preparation, and if the procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed. We will also judge its success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this plan.

Success indicators include:

- If teachers' preparation is based on the core curriculum and on this plan
- If the cuntas míosúil reflects this planning and learning objectives achieved
- If procedures outlined in this plan are consistently followed

Indicators that the plan has achieved its aims will be based on:

- Feedback from teachers/parents/pupils/community
- Inspectors' report/suggestions
- Feedback from secondary schools

IMPLEMENTATION

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

St Patrick's Loreto PS believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement SPHE.

- Board of Management – ratify plan and support implementation
- Principal/Deputy Principal – oversee implementation and support staff
- Class teachers – follow school plan and implement SPHE accordingly
- SEN team – be aware of content of plan, follow procedures, support learning/language needs of pupils where appropriate
- S.N.A.s – The role and responsibility of the special needs assistant (SNA) in relation to SPHE is to support and assist the special needs child reach their full potential.
- Parents – awareness of content of school policy and support SPHE through involvement in homework, reinforcing Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying policy etc.
- Pupils – co-operate and participate in class lessons

The role of the post holder is to:

- Support and monitor the implementation of the SPHE curriculum in consultation with the ISL team
- Encourage and accept feedback on the policy
- Co-ordinate the review of the policy
- Report to staff on findings
- Acquire, store and maintain resources
- Update staff on relevant issues, CPD opportunities

(b) Timeframe:

The plan will be implemented in the 2024/2025 school year.

REVIEW

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school. The post holder for Wellbeing is responsible for co-ordinating this review.

Those involved in the review will include:

Principal and Deputy Principal

ISL Team

Teachers

Pupils

Parents

Post holders/plan co-ordinator

BoM/DE/Others

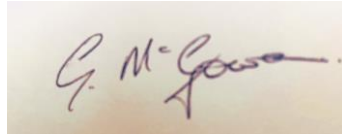
(b) Timeframe:

This plan will be reviewed in its entirety in 2027/2028 unless a need arises that has to be addressed. Incidental feedback will be taken by the post holder at intervals in the intervening period.

The post holder will co-ordinate the review. In the absence of a post holder with responsibility for SPHE, the Deputy Principal will take responsibility for the review.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

This revised school policy was formulated by the Principal, Deputy Principal and staff and approved by the Board of Management of St Patrick's Loreto Primary School on 16th April 2024.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature appears to be 'G. M. Gowan' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chairperson of Board of Management:

This plan is available to view at the school by the parents on request or on the school website.