

Social, Personal and Health Education Policy

Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

The Staff of St. Peter's N.S. formulated this school plan for SPHE, in consultation with our Board of Management and our parents, as we believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility and their contributions and involvement will be essential to the effective implementation of the SPHE programme in the school. It was brought to the attention of the Board of Management and Parents for approval and ratification.

The plan was reviewed in September 2024 by staff and ratified by the Board of Management. The previous plan was reviewed by the staff in September 2021 in line with recommendations from the PDST.

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 and Aims

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, self-confidence and resilience 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 children in St. Peter's N.S. 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 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.

(Curriculum Statement Page 9)

Content of Plan

SPHE Curriculum

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.

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. St. Peter's N.S. will teach aspects of all three major strands each year and strand units will be chosen in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE over a two year period.

Stay Safe

Stay Safe is a mandatory programme which is taught under the strand Safety and Protection. It has been decided by the staff that due to the importance of the Stay Safe programme **it will be taught every year.**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

RSE is an integral part of Social, Personal and Health Education and must be taught in this context. It seeks to provide children with opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of relationships and human sexuality, through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

The sensitive objectives of RSE fall within the strands of **Growing and Changing** and **Take Care of my Body. These sensitive lessons must be taught.**

Welcome to Wellbeing/Weaving Wellbeing

The **Welcome to Wellbeing/Weaving Wellbeing** is the programme used throughout the school. Welcome to Well-Being is a 3-level well-being programme for Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First Class. It is based on Positive Psychology, which is the science of wellbeing and is designed to be implemented as part of the SPHE curriculum. The programme aims to enhance young children's wellbeing and resilience through developing specific skills including emotional intelligence and regulation, boosting positive emotions and enhancing social skills and self-confidence. Weaving Well-Being is the first Irish-designed positive mental health programme of its kind which aims to enhance wellbeing in children from 2nd to 6th class within the framework of the SPHE curriculum.

SPHE Timetable:

St. Peter's N.S. has created a timetable to reflect our approach to teaching SPHE (See Appendix A)

Term 1	Welcome to Wellbeing/Weaving Wellbeing lessons will be taught in all classes from Senior Infants to 6th class during this term. *Junior Infants will complete these lessons at a later stage at the discretion of the class teacher.
Term 2	Stay Safe lessons will be taught across all classes during this term.
Term 3	RSE lessons will be taught in all classes this term.

Strands	Strand Units (Year 1)		Strand Units (Year 2)	
	2025/2026	2027/2028	2024/2025	2026/2027
	2029/2030	2031/2032	2028/2029	2030/2031
Myself	Self-Identity		Safety and Protection	
	Taking care of my body		Making Decisions – *This strand unit is for 3 rd to 6 th only.	
	Growing and Changing			
Myself and Others	Myself and My Family		My friends and other people	
			Relating to others	
Myself and the Wider World	Developing Citizenship (May - June)		Media Education	

** Strand Unit Growing and Changing in 5th + 6th Class; topics may be covered by outside speaker.

** Please refer to Oide (PDST) Publication 'Making the Links' for information on resources and strands/strand units. This resource can be accessed here:

<https://www.staysafe.ie/PDFs/MakingTheLinks.pdf>

**Please note the specific language to be taught when teaching each class, this can be found attached as appendix B.

2. Contexts for SPHE:

SPHE will be taught in St. Peter's N.S. through a combination of the following three contexts:

Positive school climate and atmosphere

St. Peter's N.S. has created a positive atmosphere by:

- ❖ Our school values of Kindness, Respect and Belonging
- ❖ Use of Restorative Practice
- ❖ Building effective communication e.g. regular contact with parents. In/ formal parent- teacher meetings,
- ❖ Catering for individual needs
- ❖ Creating a health-promoting physical environment

- ❖ Developing democratic processes
- ❖ Enhancing self-esteem
- ❖ Fostering respect for diversity
- ❖ Fostering inclusive and respectful language
- ❖ Developing appropriate communication
- ❖ Developing a school approach to assessment
- ❖ Children are involved in in-class decisions

Discrete time for SPHE

- ❖ SPHE is allocated half an hour per week on each teacher's timetable in St. Peter's N.S. Occasionally we will block teach areas of the curriculum when we deem it suitable.

Integration with other subject areas and linkage within SPHE.

- ❖ Physical Education
- ❖ Language
- ❖ SESE
- ❖ Visual Arts

Approaches and Methodologies

St. Peter's N.S. believes that the approaches and methodologies used in SPHE are crucial to the effectiveness of the programme. Active learning is the principle learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE, therefore we will endeavour to teach SPHE using a variety of strategies which include:

- ❖ 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

Assessment

Assessment is a central part of the everyday learning and teaching process in SPHE. It can provide valuable information on the child's progress and on the effectiveness and suitability of the programme and the teaching methods being used. The primary emphasis in this area is on informal assessment.

St. Peter's N.S. uses the following recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE:

- Teacher observation; Teacher's observation is a particularly suitable and effective technique for assessing this area of the curriculum (curriculum statement p72)
- Teacher observation might focus on:
 - the ability of the child to co-operate and work in groups or to work independently.

- o The informal interactions between the child and adults and between the child and other children.
- o The quality of presentation of work.
- o Particular interests or aptitudes displayed by the child.
- o The participation and interest of the child in a variety of activities.
- o The level of personal or social responsibility exhibited by the child.
- o The reliability of the child in carrying out established routines.
- o The perseverance of the child in carrying out a task.
- o The child's awareness of the difficulties of others and his willingness to help.
- o The questions the child asks and the responses the child makes to questions and suggestions made by the teacher.
- o Various behaviour, for example shyness, leadership ability, level of self confidence, the tendency to be anxious, sense of fair play, assertiveness, aggression, readiness to take risks and meet challenges.
- o Physical and emotional maturity.
- o The ability of the child to engage in assessing his/her progress and reflecting on his/her learning.

Differentiation

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with special needs. The SEN team will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. There may be a need to reinforce the material taught or the class teacher may judge that the child is not ready to receive the information outlined in the course materials. Where feasible, the special needs assistant will support the child in taking part in group activities and in the learning process. St. Peter's N.S. 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 e.g. the HSE, NEPS, COPE, CAMHS, TUSLA. We try to ensure that all pupils are present and in the mainstream room for the formal SPHE lessons.

Equality of Participation and Access

St. Peter's N.S. 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. Peter's N.S. is under Roman Catholic management.

Organisation

Policies and Programmes that support SPHE:

- a) Policies / Programmes / Guidelines
 - ❖ Code of Behaviour
 - ❖ Enrolment Policy
 - ❖ Health and Safety Policy
 - ❖ Anti-Bullying Policy
 - ❖ Critical Incident Policy
 - ❖ Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

- ❖ GDPR
- ❖ Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- ❖ Risk Assessment
- ❖ Child Protection Guidelines

Communication with parents

At the start of a school year a letter (See Appendix C) is sent to all parents informing them of the Stay Safe and RSE programme. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss the programme content with class teachers.

Homework

The SPHE homework e.g. relevant Wellbeing/ Stay Safe/ RSE activities. reflects the active learning approach as described in the curriculum and acts as a link between home and school.

Resources

The most important resource for SPHE in our school is the school community, pupils, staff, parents, management. Other members of the community may assist us in the implementation of our SPHE programme are Public Health Nurses, Dental Nurses, Gardaí etc. All resources will be selected in accordance with the criteria laid down on page 103 of the Teacher Guidelines.

Programmes and Other Materials

- ❖ Welcome to Wellbeing/Weaving Wellbeing Programme
- ❖ Stay Safe Programme
- ❖ Walk Tall (Revised 2017)
- ❖ Relationships and Sexuality program (RSE)
- ❖ My Selfie + the Wider World
- ❖ Be Safe
- ❖ Web Wise
- ❖ Lift off programme by Amnesty International

Success Criteria

The success of this plan will be evaluated through teacher's planning and preparation, and is dependent upon the procedures outlined in this plan having been consistently followed. We will also judge its success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this plan. Other success criteria might include the following: atmosphere of the school, feedback from parents, quality of social interactions, positive changes in behaviours and attitudes e.g. litter, language used, etc.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

St. Peter's N.S. believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement SPHE. Therefore the teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, Parents and Local Community.

Timeframe

The original plan was implemented by 2010, updated in 2021 and updated now in 2024.

Review

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. Those involved in the review will include: Teachers, Pupils, Parents, BOM, DES, Others

Timeframe

This plan has been reviewed in February 2019 and will be reviewed regularly.
This plan has been reviewed by the staff in September 2021.
This plan has been reviewed by the staff in September 2024.

Ratification and Communication

This school plan for SPHE was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 11/09/2024.

Signed: Barry O'Flynn
(CHAIRPERSON OF
BOM 11/09/24)

Signed: [Signature]
(PRINCIPAL
11/09/24)

APPENDIX A: SPHE Timetable:

St. Peter's N.S. has created a timetable to reflect our approach to teaching SPHE-

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	Taking care of my body		Making Decisions – <i>*This strand unit is for 3rd to 6th only.</i>	
	Growing and Changing			
Myself and Others	Myself and My Family		My friends and other people	
			Relating to others	
Myself and the Wider World	Developing Citizenship (May - June)		Media Education	

** Strand Unit Growing and Changing in 5th + 6th Class; topics may be covered by outside speaker.

** Please refer to Oide (PDST) Publication 'Making the Links' for information on resources and strands/strand units. This resource can be accessed here:

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**Please note the specific language to be taught when teaching each class, this can be found attached as Appendix B.

Appendix B: Social Personal and Health Education/ Relationships and Sexuality Education Vocabulary

The purpose of this document is to outline for the teaching staff and parents of the school the specific vocabulary to be used in each of the classes and the objectives they relate to in the SPHE curriculum.

Social, Personal and Health Education 'provides 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' (SPHE guidelines p.2).

To alleviate any concerns you may have, we have compiled a list of specific vocabulary which is used in each of the classes and the objectives they relate to in the SPHE curriculum. We expect that this factual information is delivered to the children in a sensitive, healthy and relaxed manner, with the view to awaken in each child a sense of wonder of themselves and others. It is important to note that the curriculum is spiral in nature and all terms introduced in one year will be revised and used again in later classes.

Junior and Senior Infants

The theme of new life is dealt with, which relates to nature and family eg; New life in Spring, pets and family (JI RSE teaching materials p.68-76).

Vocabulary introduced; born womb

Taking care of my Body covers personal hygiene and self awareness (SI RSE teaching materials P.148-156)

Vocabulary introduced: penis vagina vulva breasts breastfed

Relevant Objectives from the SPHE curriculum:

The child should be enabled to;

Develop and awareness of human birth

that the baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born-(SPHE curriculum Infants p.18)

name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms(SPHE curriculum Infants p. 17)

First, Second and Third Classes

The themes include new life and How my Body Works (1st class RSE teaching materials p.68-75).

Vocabulary introduced; urine urethra

The Wonder of New Life, When my body needs special care (2nd class RSE teaching materials P.162-169)

Vocabulary introduced: vagina anus

Relevant Objectives from the SPHE curriculum:

To name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st and 2nd classes SPHE curriculum Infants p. 27)

Appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world (SPHE curriculum 1st and 2nd classes p.28)

Fourth Class

Themes include 'The wonder of new life' and 'Growing and Changing' which deals with all the stages of pregnancy and birth and encourages children not to take these daily miracles for granted (respect). RSE Teaching Materials (p.170-181 & 196-205)

Vocabulary introduced: Pregnancy umbilical cord navel scan
Little seed nine months in the womb

Relevant Objectives from the SPHE curriculum:

The child should be enabled to;

Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth (SPHE Curriculum 3rd and 4th class p.41)

5th and 6th Classes

Themes developed include fertilised egg menstruation hormones cells periods
pubic areas pubic hair perspiration ovaries fallopian tubes uterus cervix
testicles scrotum sperm production erection wet dreams conception
adolescence responsibilities

Lesson 1 Emotional changes

Lesson 2. Expressing feelings

Lesson 3 Physical changes in boys and girls

Lesson 4 Reproductive system of males and females

Lesson 5 Importance of loving committed relationships, how intercourse takes place

Lesson 6 Different kinds of love

Lesson 7 Busy bodies DVD

Relevant objectives from the SPHE curriculum

The child should be enabled to

Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth

Understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body

Identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these changes take place at different rates in everyone.

Female-hormonal changes, changing body shape, development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, onset of menstruation(periods)

Male-hormonal changes, physical growth, enlargement of the testicles and penis, appearance of pubic, underarm and facial hair, breaking of the voice, beginning of sperm production, onset of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)

Understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults

Understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship

Discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent

Appendix C: Letter to Parents sent annually in September

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The *Stay Safe* and *Relationships and Sexuality Education* programmes are part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. Cooperation between parents/guardians and teachers is essential to the success of these programmes. It is important that parents/guardians are aware of the content of the lessons and are able to discuss lessons with their children. With this in mind, as we prepare to commence these programmes over the coming weeks, please find information on both below:

Welcome to Well-Being/Weaving Well-Being:

Welcome to Well-Being is a 3-level well-being programme for Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First Class. It is based on Positive Psychology, which is the science of wellbeing and is designed to be implemented as part of the SPHE curriculum. The programme aims to enhance young children's wellbeing and resilience through developing specific skills, including emotional intelligence and regulation, boosting positive emotions and enhancing social skills and self-confidence. Weaving Well-Being is the first Irish-designed positive mental health programme of its kind, which aims to enhance wellbeing in children from 2nd to 6th class within the framework of the SPHE curriculum.

Stay Safe:

The aim of the Stay Safe programme is to teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous. It deals initially with common situations which many children will experience at some stage or another (e.g. getting lost or being bullied). The programme also teaches children the safety skills necessary to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse and emphasises the importance of telling a trusted adult about any problems they have. You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at http://www.staysafe.ie/parent_ss_les.htm and http://www.staysafe.ie/teachers_dlssp.htm.

Relationships and Sexuality Education:

The sensitive elements of the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme that will be covered with your child in the forthcoming term are summarised below. It is important that you talk to your son/daughter about these topics so your child will feel prepared for the content of the programme. During all lessons the anatomically correct names for body parts will be used. In addition, a resource for parents is available at <https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/RSE%20in%20Primary%20School%20Parent%20Tips.pdf>.

Junior Infants to 2nd Class-

Taking Care of My Body: Caring for one's body, respect for one's body and that of others, hygiene, being able to name parts of male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms.

Growing and Changing: Understanding growth and change, exploring feelings, becoming aware of new life and birth and understanding a baby's needs.

3rd to 6th Class-

Taking Care of My Body: Understanding health and personal hygiene. For 4th Class: understanding physical changes for boys and girls (puberty). For 5th/6th Class: understanding physical and other changes at puberty, understanding the male and female reproductive system.

Growing and Changing: Identifying and discussing feelings, having a positive sense of self. For 3rd/4th Class children: recognising how feelings are influenced by puberty and being able to discuss the development of the human baby during pregnancy. For 5th/6th Class children: understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth in the context of a committed, loving relationship.

Please contact the school office or class teacher if you wish to discuss these programmes further.

Kind regards,

Duncan