



## Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál SPHE Policy

### **Social, Personal & Health Education Policy Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál**

#### **Introductory Statement**

The staff of Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál, 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 drafted during an in-school planning day in 2003 and firstly reviewed in April 2008 with the assistance of the SPHE cuiditheoir from the Primary Curriculum Support Program.

It has been reviewed in 2012 and again in 2019

It has been brought to the attention of the Board of Management and parents for approval and ratification.

#### **Rationale**

Aspects of SPHE have been taught in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál for many years through various programmes and initiatives such as Walk Tall, Stay Safe, Relationships and Sexuality Education and have also been taught through integration with other subjects such as Physical Education, Religion & SESE. However, we wish to formalise our teaching of SPHE and plan for it on a whole school basis to ensure compliance with D.E.S. guidelines. The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other relevant persons on the provision of the effective teaching of SPHE in our school.

#### **Vision:**

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál endeavours to facilitate the development of our pupils in all aspects - academic, social, emotional, physical, moral and spiritual through close communication between all parties involved i.e. teachers, parents, B.O.M. and ancillary staff. Through an SPHE programme that is planned and consistent throughout the school, children can develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their decisions and actions both now and in the future. Since SPHE has a moral and a spiritual dimension, its development and implementation are influenced significantly by the Catholic



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ethos and characteristic spirit of our school. We hope to instil and nurture positive life skills in an atmosphere of honesty and respect.

In Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál SPHE should enable children to:

- live a healthy lifestyle
- develop a respect for themselves and others
- respect cultural diversity
- develop good citizenship skills and actively participate in their communities
- acquire good decision-making skills and provide them with the knowledge and values to inform their decisions

### **Aims:**

The children in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál 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



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### **Parental Involvement:**

Parental involvement is considered an integral part in effectively implementing SPHE as we believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility. This plan and the curriculum documents are available for parents to inform them of the programme for SPHE, and they are welcomed as committee members on the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy.

Parents are informed at enrolment of the school's SPHE policy including the use of Stay Safe/RSE/Walk Tall programmes and give signed consent. The content of these programmes/policies are made available to any parent who wishes to view them.

As a DEIS school we plan for and encourage parental involvement in all areas and we encourage and support parents to be fully involved in their child's education. In SPHE this may include parents visiting classes to support SPHE content (parents working in the community as dental hygienists, nurses, doctors, carers etc.), HSCL teacher working with parents to understand content of SPHE curriculum, outline of SPHE topics spoken about at September class meetings for parents and regular contact between school and home.

### **Strands and Strand Units:**

The curriculum is delineated at four levels

- infant classes,
- first and second classes,
- third and fourth classes,
- fifth and sixth classes

It is divided into three strands:

- Myself,
- Myself and others
- 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.

In Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál we will teach aspects of all three major strand units 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.



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We have created this timetable to reflect this approach:

Strands	Strand Units (Year 1)	Strand Units (Year 2)
Myself	<i>Self-identity (Sept.–Oct.)</i>	<i>Safety and Protection (Jan-February)</i>
	<i>Taking care of my body (Jan.-Feb.)</i>	<i>Making Decisions (March-April)</i>
	<i>Growing and Changing (March-April)</i>	
Myself and others	<i>Myself and My Family (Nov.-Dec.)</i>	
		<i>My friends and other people (Nov-December.)</i>
		<i>Relating to others (Sept.-Oct.)</i>
Myself and the wider world		
	<i>Developing Citizenship (May-June)</i>	<i>Media Education (May-June.)</i>

**Note:** Teachers may use a certain flexibility when teaching these strand units as long as they are covered in the appropriate year. Year 1 will be school years beginning with an odd number (eg. 17/18)



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## Contexts for SPHE:

SPHE will be taught in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál through a combination of the following three contexts:

### 1. Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

We create a positive atmosphere by:

- building effective communication within the staff and between school and home (regular staff & ISM meetings, September class meetings, PT meetings, contact on yard each evening between teachers & parents, HSCL activities, Parent's Council, Class blogs etc.)
- catering for individual needs by working within the NEPS model for school support.
- creating a health-promoting physical environment. The school has a healthy –eating policy and is part of the Hot lunch scheme. We expose the children to a wide range of extra-curricular activities and link in with community sporting groups.
- developing democratic processes – staff, parents and children welcomed and supported to contribute to all areas of school life. Parents input sought through questionnaires/focus groups for SSE
- enhancing self-esteem – Positive behavior policy, KOAR Values initiative, DEIS plan targets in all areas to address wellbeing, Monthly assemblies & certs, Principal's office for good news, calls home for good news, attendance & punctuality drives.
- fostering respect for diversity – children from different cultures and backgrounds given opportunities to share their experiences
- fostering inclusive and respectful language
- developing a whole school approach to assessment including student self assessment

### 2. Discrete time for SPHE

SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher's timetable in our school. This time may be blocked or divided (eg 1 hour per fortnight) at each teacher's discretion to allow for more in-depth exploration of a strand unit.

### 3. Integration with other subjects and linkage within SPHE

Integration with other subject areas and linkage within SPHE is encouraged. Teachers will endeavour to adopt a thematic approach to SPHE by integrating it with other subject areas such as Language (Media Education), Geography (Citizenship), History (Myself and my Family), Religion (Decisions), Visual Arts, Physical Education (Water Safety), etc. Themes/Projects such as Healthy Eating



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Policy, Healthy Heart Week, Green Schools Programme, Lenten Campaign, etc. will also be explored.

### **Approaches and Methodologies:**

We believe that the approaches and methodologies used in SPHE are crucial to the effectiveness of the programme. Active learning is the principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE, therefore we will endeavour to teach SPHE using a variety of strategies which include:

- drama activities
- role play
- use of story
- co-operative games
- circle time
- pair, group and class discussion
- use of pictures
- use of photographs and visual images
- written activities
- use of media
- information technologies and looking at children's work

### **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.

We use the following recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Portfolios and projects
- Self assessment

### **Children with Different Needs:**



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Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with additional needs. The learning support and resource teachers will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. We will liaise with trained professionals/appropriate agencies when dealing with sensitive issues to ensure that the children involved are fully supported.

### **Equality of Participation and Access:**

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál recognises and values diversity, and believe all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment. Ours is a mixed-sex school and we endeavour to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure that equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in discussions, debates and presentations. Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál is under Roman Catholic school management and promotes a Catholic ethos within the school. We endeavour to provide support for members of Newcomer families, children with English as an Additional Language, children with disabilities and families with literacy difficulties. Our DEIS plan which is reviewed every 3 years ensures we are supporting the most vulnerable families on our target list in line with DES guidelines

### **Policies and Programmes in our school that support SPHE:**

- Code of Behaviour
- Enrolment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Stay Safe Programme
- Substance Use Policy
- KOAR Values Initiative
- Weaving Well-Being programme (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>)
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- RSE Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Risk Assessment
- DEIS plan
- SSE – wellbeing area chosen for 2022/2023
- Roots of Empathy (2 teachers and SCP personnel trained)
- Rainbows programme (6 staff members trained)
- Life Skills programme delivered by SCP staff to 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> classes



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Reviewing above policies / programmes to familiarize new staff with agreed responsibilities to be led by ISM team.

### **KOAR Values Programme**

This is a merit system to promote social skills within the school. Individuals or classes are awarded points when they exhibit **K**indness, **O**bedience, **A**ttentiveness, and **R**espect. (KOAR – linked to InchiCORE’) Emphasis is on catching children being kind. Rewards are earned on a weekly basis and granted to the class who have earned most points in the week. The monthly winning class will be acknowledged and rewarded at school assembly.

### **Homework:**

Homework in this subject will usually be informal. However if prescribed in SPHE, homework will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class. Homework in SPHE may be used as a way to communicate with parents content covered in a particular area.

### **Resources:**

Books for Teacher	Posters	Media & ICT
Walk Tall Stay Safe Be Safe R.S.E. Books Making the Links All around Me What a Wonderful World Look Around Weaving Well-Being (pupil workbooks also used)	Various posters on range of topics	Busy Bodies DVD and online content

### **Guest Speakers:**

Guest speakers may be used to enhance the work being done by the class teacher in SPHE. When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class





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teacher will remain in the classroom. The speaker will be made aware of this school plan and attached policies.

### **Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting:**

This plan in SPHE and the curriculum documents will inform and guide teachers in their long and short term planning in SPHE. This planning will be in line with the year grid on page 3 of this plan. Each teacher will keep a Cuntas Míósúil and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in SPHE.

### **Staff Development:**

The staff has attended training in the following areas and this training will support an effective implementation of the SPHE programme:

- training in the Stay Safe programme
- Children First training
- training in the Walk Tall programme
- training in the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme /R.S.E.
- Roots of Empathy training
- Rainbows training
- SCP staff trained in Life Skills programme

Our school will access extra training/support in particular areas as required. 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.

**Human Resources/Community Links**



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The following are members of the local community and from wider afield who can support the SPHE curriculum in very significant ways. The JLO Garda & community guard, crossing warden, health nurse, local Drugs Task Force, Kavanagh House, firefighter, local sports clubs, vets, CANAL community partnership, SCP staff and local historians. All can visit the classroom, work with the teacher, and reinforce what has been taught. There are many other people whose involvement we would also welcome.

The teacher will acquaint the visitor with the aims and objectives of the SPHE curriculum as they pertain to the visit.

Check out in advance what will be covered by the visitor and set out limitations if necessary.

During the visit the teacher will be present at all times.

### **Success Criteria**

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. We will know it has achieved its aims if we as a community:

- have increased knowledge, understanding and skills,
- are more aware of their attitudes and values
- are more respectful of ourselves and others,
- relate to others in a positive way
- are more actively involved in the school and possibly local community

These will be evaluated through

- feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- our behaviour towards one another
- the happy atmosphere in our school

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**



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Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement SPHE. Therefore the teaching staff and ancillary staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, parents and the local community. (Each teacher is responsible for teaching the SPHE programme with his/her class. SNAs work under the guidance of the class teacher. The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál will support and facilitate the school approach to SPHE as it is being developed and approve and review this approach within the context of the overall school plan. In conjunction with both the teacher's representative on the BOM and the Home/ School/ Community Liaison Teacher, the principal will liaise between the Board of Management and the staff, and between members of the community and the staff. Mr Davis will coordinate and support the implementation of this policy throughout the school as part of his role as Deputy Principal on the ISM team.

### **Review**

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum. The teachers, pupils, parents, post holder, BoM and others are responsible for coordinating this review.

**Timeframe:** This policy will be reviewed in January 2023 at a staff meeting

### **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál ratified this plan in May 2019. This plan is available to view at the school by the parents on request.



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# Appendix

### Resources

The following are SPHE resources in use in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál:

- Walk Tall
- R.S.E.
- Stay Safe
- Making the links
- Weaving Well-Being
- Circle Time DVD
- Busy Bodies DVD

From time to time additional resources will be added following the application of the following criteria:

### Criteria for choosing resources

Is the chosen resource :

- in accordance with school policies? / in line with the principles of the SPHE curriculum?
- sufficiently flexible to take into account the children's present knowledge and to allow the teacher to link this with the new learning?
- appealing to children and to the teacher?
- up-to-date?
- accompanied by clear instructions on how it could be used effectively in the class?
- free of bias?
- produced by a reputable agency?
- devoid of racial or sexual stereotyping?
- in keeping with the aims and objectives of the class programme in SPHE?



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- reflective of active methods of learning?
- well-designed and durable?

### Use of special-focus programmes

Many programmes are available, both national and regional, that may be relevant and useful for SPHE. They deal with issues such as the prevention of substance misuse, celebrating difference, the prevention of child abuse, consumer education, and relationships and sexuality education. It is essential that any special focus programmes used in school, comply with the principles of the SPHE curriculum.

### Regional Health Authorities

Health Promotion Centres can support specific aspects of SPHE in the school through the provision of information, training and resources.

### Use of various forms of media

Recorded extracts from advertisements, programmes, videos and compact discs will be necessary to examine the influence of the media and the techniques they employ. In this context the daily newspaper, when it is explored with the children, can also be an invaluable resource in the classroom.

The availability of a range of information and communication technologies offers further possibilities for children to examine methods of communication and information retrieval. Support services for this area, including lists of educational web sites and ideas for using the internet and word-processing programs in the classroom, are all available to schools and can guide and help the teacher in using these technologies to support SPHE. Equally, many computer simulation and adventure programs can provide an interesting medium for exploring some aspects of the SPHE curriculum.

## Provision for Training and Staff Development



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On a regular basis staff training needs will be audited and support may be sought from the Board of Management or Dublin West Education Centre.

The following training has been undertaken by various members of staff:

- Stay Safe training
- Walk Tall training
- First Aid
- Inservice training in SPHE Curriculum
- In Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál all teachers are facilitated and encouraged to share their knowledge and particular expertise with the staff both informally and formally at staff Meetings and School Planning Days.