



SAINT FINIAN'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

SPHE Policy

2023/2024

Whole School Plan for SPHE Social, Personal and Health Education

Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

The staff of St Finian'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 drafted during a number planning meetings and brought to the attention of the Board of Management and Parents. It was reviewed in 2023.

(b) Rationale

SPHE have been taught in St Finian's N.S. for many years through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Weaving Wellbeing, Relationships and Sexuality Education and through our involvement in the Creative School Initiative, Webwise and the Amber Flag for Mental Health. It has also been taught through integration with other subject areas such as Aistear, Physical Education, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Religion etc. However, we wish to formalise our teaching of SPHE and plan for it on a whole school basis.

Vision and Aims

(a) Vision:

St. Finian's N.S. 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. The SPHE curriculum in St. Finian's N.S. will support pupils to develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their decisions and actions both now and in the future.

SPHE in St Finian's NS will foster within our children self-worth and self- confidence and places a particular emphasis on developing a sense of personal responsibility for one's own behaviour and actions. Such intrapersonal development will increase the child's sense of self-efficacy and help him/her to be more in control of his/her own life.

This programme will help children to establish supportive relationships, to enjoy the company of others, and to resolve conflicts in appropriate ways. The SPHE programme will explore how children can learn from and with their peers and can assist in developing the skills and attitudes that children need in order to cope with pressure from their own age group

The SPHE programme will provide a context in which children are encouraged to act in ways that foster inclusiveness and to have regard for the heritage and perspectives of others. Through SPHE children can discover the role each person has to play in counteracting prejudice, discrimination and inequality as they may experience it in their own lives.

It is our belief, that while some aspects of the SPHE curriculum will be taught as a curricular subject area, other aspects will be covered throughout the school day, through integration with other curricular areas, and through the interchanges and initiatives (both in and outside of the classroom) that make up the lived experience and ethos of our school.

We recognise and encourage the role of parents/ guardians in the Social, Personal and Health Education of their children. Their involvement will be encouraged, and we acknowledge their right to withdraw their child from the 'sensitive' lessons in the **RSE** and **Stay Safe** programmes.

(b) Aims:

We endorse the **aims** of 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

Content of Plan

(a) Overview of the SPHE Curriculum

The curriculum is delineated at four levels

- (i) Junior & Senior Infant Class
- (ii) First & Second Class
- (iii) Third & Fourth Class, and
- (iv) Fifth & Sixth Class

Each level is divided into three strands: **Myself, Myself and Others, Myself and the Wider World**

Content of Plan

b) Curriculum

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 Finian's N.S. 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. This timetable has been created to reflect this approach.

Strand	Strand Focus
Myself:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personal development of the individual child, his/her health and care and respect for oneself. ● Fostering personal responsibility for actions and behaviour. ● Growth and development of the human body (including RSE 'sensitive' lessons).
Myself & Others:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of care and respect for other people. ● Communicating effectively with others. ● Resolving conflicts, empathy and assertiveness. ● Co-operating and working collaboratively with others.
Myself & the Wider World:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding what it means to belong to various communities that pupils live in. ● Care for the environment. ● Media awareness. ● Learning about cultures and traditions. ● Respect for the rights and contributions of cultural diversity.

Each strand is further subdivided into strand units, with learning objectives for each strand unit.

Strand	Strand Units
Myself:	Self-Identity (including the <i>Stay Safe</i> programme) Taking Care of my Body (including <i>RSE</i> 'sensitive' lessons) Growing and Changing (including <i>RSE</i> 'sensitive' lessons) Safety and Protection (including the <i>Stay Safe</i> programme) Making Decisions (This strand unit is for Third to Sixth only. Infants to Second complete the Safety issues section of <i>Safety and Protection</i> .)
Myself and Others:	Myself and My Family My Friends and Other People Relating to Others
Myself & the Wider World:	Developing Citizenship (Sub-unit, 'National, European and Wider Communities', is applicable only from Third to Sixth Classes.) Media Education

Aspects of all three major strands will be taught each year and strand units will be organised so that pupils will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE over a **two-year cycle** at their class level. Five strand units will be taught each year and all class levels will explore the same strand unit over a two month period, after which a new unit will be taught until all ten strand units have been covered over a two year period.

The following timetable for teaching the strands/strand units reflects this commitment across all class levels.

	Year 1	Year 2
Sept/Oct	Self Identity (including * <i>Stay Safe</i> programme)	Safety and Protection (including * <i>Stay Safe</i> programme)
Nov/Dec	Taking Care of my Body (including <i>RSE</i> 'sensitive' lessons)	Making Decisions (This strand unit is for Third to Sixth only. Infants to Second complete the Safety issues section of <i>Safety and Protection</i> .)
Jan/ Feb	Myself and My Family	My Friends and Other People

Mar/Apr	Growing and Changing (including RSE 'sensitive' lessons) Myself and My Family	Relating to Others
May/June	Developing Citizenship	Media Education

*Junior and Senior Infant teachers will start teaching the Stay Safe programme in November each year.

'**Making the Links**', a curricular guide to using materials from the **Stay Safe** programme, the **Walk Tall** programme and the **RSE** programme, will be used to select lessons that target the objectives of each strand unit. Additional resources from the PDST Well-being Portal including '*Breathe*' and '*A Guide to Using Picture Books to Promote Well-being*' will be used also.

The school has purchased 33 picture books which have been chosen to promote wellbeing. 6th class pupils will work with 1st class children for paired reading wellbeing time once per week. Children from 5th class will work with children from senior infants for paired wellbeing reading.

Stay Safe programme: To meet the requirements of the *DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017*, the *Stay Safe* programme will be taught in its entirety in classes First to Sixth under the strand units of '*Self Identity*' (Year 1) and '*Safety and Protection*' (Year 2). Junior and Senior Infant teachers will start teaching the programme in November each year.

RSE programme: RSE 'sensitive' lessons will be taught under the strand units '*Taking Care of my Body*' and '*Growing and Changing*' to all classes at the same level within a decided timeframe. Teachers will refer to the whole school RSE policy and plan to ensure that they are teaching suitable content and using appropriate terminology.

Mindful Moment: To further enhance the children's overall emotional well-being and to help combat feelings of anxiety (as noted by parents in DEIS REVIEW 2023), the practice of mindful breathing was introduced in our school in 2020.

Classes from Early Start to 6th participate in the guided mindful breathing and affirmations. During the guided breathing sessions, themes based on the seasons, the liturgical year, gratitude, kindness personal gifts, role models, sharing a problem, emotional regulation, managing 'bad thoughts' asking for help, caring for the Earth etc. are explored.

Contexts for SPHE

SPHE will be taught in St. Finian's NS through a combination of the following contexts:

Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

St.Finian's NS has created a positive atmosphere by:

- Building effective communication
- 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

Discrete time for SPHE

SPHE is allocated 1/2 hour per week on each teacher's timetable in St. Finian's NS. However, teachers may allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow for more in-depth exploration of a strand unit.

Integration with other subject areas and Linkage within SPHE

Teachers will endeavour to adopt an thematic approach to SPHE by integrating it with other subject areas such as Language, Geography, History, Religion, Visual Arts, Physical Education, etc.

Themes/Projects such as Healthy Eating Week, Friendship Week, Active Schools Week, Mindful Moment Reflections and Creative School Initiatives, etc. will also be explored.

Approaches and Methodologies

St. Finian's N.S. 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
- Co-operative games
- Use of pictures
- 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.

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

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Portfolios

Children with Additional Needs

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with special needs. The Special Education Needs Teachers in the SEN Team will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. St Finian'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.

Equality of Participation and Access

St Finian’s NS 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. Finian’s is a Catholic, co-educational school and we endeavour to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure that equal opportunities are given to all children to participate in discussion, debate, presentation, etc. We endeavour to provide SPHE education inclusively to children of all races, ethnicities, genders, religions and with disabilities or additional learning needs.

Organisation

Policies and Programmes that support SPHE

<i>Policies directly relevant to SPHE</i>	<i>Programmes that support SPHE</i>
Child Safeguarding Statement Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy Revised Stay Safe Policy Code of Behaviour Acceptable Usage Policy Health and Safety Statement Healthy Eating Policy Substance Use Policy Enrolment Policy	Stay Safe programme*(Taught to all classes) Friends for Life Mindful Moment Walk Tall ‘Grow In Love’ Catholic Schools’ Week Weaving Wellbeing Creative Schools Initiative Glanmore Lunches Movement breaks Yoga and Mile a day senior classes

Homework

SPHE homework, if prescribed in SPHE, will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class.

Teaching Resources

(PDST have developed a resource list, which is available on the SPHE page at www.pdst.ie. New resources are added to this from time to time.

Outside Speakers/Educational Talks

Outside speakers and educational talks will be arranged for classes, as appropriate, to reinforce aspects of SPHE.

Facilitators from **Accord** will visit the Sixth Classes every year to support the delivery of the RSE programme in these classes.

In all cases, where an outside speaker is invited to address pupils, the class teacher must remain in the classroom (as per Circular 22/2010)

Speakers are regularly invited to the school to address parents and teachers on topics relating to the SPHE programme i.e. *Revised Stay Safe, Cyber Safety etc.*

Programmes and Other Materials

Books for Pupil Books for Teacher Audio / Visual Posters Media & ICT

RSE Resource Materials, Walk Tall, Stay Safe, Making the Links, Tom's Flower Garden, Busy Bodies, various posters throughout the school

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. 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

Training opportunities will include the following areas and this training will support an effective implementation of the SPHE programme:

- Training in the Child Abuse Prevention Programme/ Stay Safe
- Training in the Substance Misuse programme /Walk Tall
- Training in the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme /R.S.E.
- PDST Advisor support and modelling of lessons
- Other facilitators from our staff and external

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.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing SPHE as St. Finian's N.S. 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.

Community Links

St. Finian's N.S. 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 such as the HSE Visiting Nurse, Visiting Gardaí, School Attendance Officer, New Parent, local business representative etc.

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.

Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

St. Finian'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 the Local Community.

(b) Timeframe

The plan will be implemented from March 2023 and revised every three years.

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 (Maureen Fitzpatrick) is responsible for co-ordinating this review.

(b) Timeframe

This plan will be reviewed in March 2026

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of St. Finian's N.S. ratified this plan on _____.

Signed _____

Date _____

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