



Scoil Náisiúnta
Baile Átha Cliath 7
Ag Foghlaim le Chéile

Dublin 7 Educate Together
National School

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Social, Personal and Health Education Whole School Policy

Roll number: 20131D
School Patron: Educate Together

May 2020

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Introductory Statement

This plan was developed by the teaching staff of Dublin 7 Educate Together in 2018. It was initially worked on by a small group of teachers, before being brought to the whole teaching staff during Croke Park hours to be finished. This plan will form the basis of each teacher's long- and short-term planning in SPHE and so will influence teaching and learning in individual classrooms. It will also inform new or temporary teachers of our approaches and methodologies in this subject area. It was reviewed in 2020.

Rationale

This plan was devised in line with the 1999 Primary School Curriculum. The staff of D7ET acknowledge the importance of SPHE. SPHE is being taught to all classes with the aid of different resources and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Relationships and Sexuality Education. SPHE is also taught through integration with other subjects, especially Learn Together. Through SPHE, we seek to develop positive self-esteem, social and communication skills, appropriate expression of feelings, and safety and protection skills in each child in our care. The opportunity to develop these skills will be provided through a structured programme.

This plan was drafted:

- To benefit teaching and learning in our school.
- To contribute to the holistic development of children.
- For cross curricular purposes.

The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff.

Vision

SPHE provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child, to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. 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 (SPHE Teacher Guidelines, p.2).

D7ET is an equality-based school which upholds the values of the Educate Together ethos. We value the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. Through our SPHE programme, we wish to assist children develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The programme encourages children to be aware of their rights as individuals while at the same time accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and the wider community.

Aims

We endorse the aims of the 1999 SPHE curriculum:

- 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.

Curricular Planning

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 that contain particular objectives.

The SPHE curriculum reflects a spiral approach, where similar aspects are revisited in different ways according to the age, stage of development and readiness of the child. SPHE is intrinsic to the learning and teaching that occurs both formally and informally in the school and in the classroom.

SPHE will be planned in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE over a two-year cycle. The plan for each class level, as laid out in Appendix 1, ensures that each curricular objective will be met over this period. Every teacher is familiar with the strands and strand units, content objectives for their own class levels and for each other's class levels. This is to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school.

The Stay Safe Programme

The Stay Safe Programme will be taught during the first term to senior infants, second class, fourth class and sixth class. Parents and guardians will be given advance notice of the programme being taught.

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Sensitive lessons will be taught school-wide during the second term of each year. These lessons are summarised in Appendix 2. We teach all content to boys and girls together; we believe that this promotes understanding and empathy. Parents will be given advance notice of these lessons being taught. There will be an information evening held at the start of term 2 for parents/guardians of 5th class children every year to outline the specific content of the RSE programme. An RSE instructor

from the Drumcondra Education Centre may be invited to give the talk, or it may be delivered by the school's SPHE coordinator.

After both the Stay Safe Programme and sensitive RSE lessons have been delivered, class teachers will complete a checklist to confirm their completion. These checklists will be stored centrally by the principal. If for any reason a class teacher is unable to teach these lessons, they must inform the principal or the SPHE coordinator. Alternative arrangements will be made for these lessons to be taught.

Contexts for SPHE

SPHE will be taught in D7ET through a combination of the following contexts:

Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

D7ET is committed to creating a positive atmosphere through the fulfilment of our mission statement. Our school community is committed to fostering a school environment that is:

- A place where we are welcomed and in turn are welcoming to others.
- A place where we are treated with respect and in turn treat others respectfully.
- A place where we feel happy and safe.
- A place where we are encouraged to achieve our full potential.
- A place where our self-esteem and self-confidence can flourish.
- A place of quality teaching and learning.
- A place where a love of learning is nurtured.
- A place where we can be ourselves and in turn allow others to be themselves.

Discrete Time for SPHE

SPHE is allocated 30 minutes per week on each teacher's timetable in D7ET. For some topics, teachers may allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow for more in depth exploration of a topic. At infant level, some of this time may be included in integrated play.

There may be periods of time, e.g. in the event of a critical incident, for which SPHE needs to take precedence over other subjects and be allocated more than 30 minutes per week.

Integration with Other Subjects

Teachers will endeavour to adopt a thematic approach to SPHE by integrating it with other subject areas such as Learn Together, Literacy, SESE, PE, etc. Whole school events, such as Friendship Week, Intercultural Day, Active Week, Arts Week and Learn Together assemblies 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
- co-operative games

- use of pictures
- photographs and visual images
- written activities
- use of media
- stories and poems
- classroom discussion
- group work
- art activities
- reflection
- circle time
- guest speaker

When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class teacher will remain in the classroom (as per Circular 22/2010) and make the speaker aware of this school plan and attached policies.

Assessment

In D7ET, assessment in this subject is based on:

- Willingness to participate in activities
- Interest, enthusiasm and attitudes of children
- Skill level
- Willingness to cooperate with other pupils in structured activity

Assessment takes place on an on-going basis through:

- Teacher observation.
- Teacher-designed tasks.
- Self-assessment by students.
- Portfolios and projects

The information gained from such assessment is used to determine whether the individual or group is ready to proceed to the next task or skill level. Feedback on the areas assessed where relevant are communicated to parents and guardians at parent-teacher meetings and on end of year report cards.

Children with Additional Needs

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with special needs. Support teachers will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. D7ET may 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

We recognise and value diversity, and believe all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment. Our ethos is based on the four principles of Educate Together i.e. co-educational, equality-based, democratic and child-centred. We will endeavour that all children will be given appropriate support to ensure equality of access and participation in the SPHE programme.

Policies Which Support SPHE

Policies which support SPHE include

- Child Protection
- Anti-Bullying
- Substance Use
- Acceptable Use (currently being updated)
- Code of Behaviour
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Healthy Eating
- Critical Incident
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Homework
- Special Educational Needs

Homework

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

Resources

Resources which support the teaching in of SPHE in our school include

- The Walk Tall Programme
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Manuals
- Stay Safe
- The SALT Programme
- Fun Friends
- Weaving Well-Being
- Busy Bodies

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

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. This training will support an effective implementation of the SPHE programme.

Parental Involvement

The involvement of parents / guardians is considered an integral part to effectively implementing SPHE as D7ET believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility. Parents / guardians have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible.

Parents / guardians are welcome to view the school plan on request and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns at any time during the year.

They will be informed in advance of the Stay Safe lessons and sensitive RSE lessons being taught. This will give them an opportunity to meet with relevant teachers if they so wish. It also gives them the opportunity to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire.

There will be an information evening held at the start of term 2 for parents/guardians of 5th class children every year to outline the specific content of the RSE programme.

Parents / guardians may be invited to get involved in SPHE lessons, e.g. to bring in a baby when a class is learning about new life, or to share their culture on Intercultural Day.

Following discussion with the principal and class teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from a sensitive aspect of the SPHE curriculum, they should state in writing their reasons for doing so and this will be centrally filed.

Community Links

D7ET 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 dental nurse, Gardaí, etc.

Implementation

The principal in cooperation with staff and the SPHE coordinator will be responsible for the implementation of this programme and the upkeep of resources.

Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school. The whole staff is responsible for co-ordinating this review. Those involved in the review may include teachers, pupils, parents, SPHE coordinator, BoM and DES inspectors.

Ratification and Communication

This policy has been made available to school staff and is readily accessible to parents via the school website / on request.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management at regular intervals.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on May 26th, 2020

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Fionnuala McHugh' in a cursive script.

Fionnuala McHugh

Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Mary Meaney' in a cursive script.

Mary Meaney

Chairperson, Board of Management