

## ■ Title

Monastery C.B.S. Tipperary Town,  
Social, Personal and Health Education Policy,  
March 2015

## ■ Introductory Statement

The original plan for Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) /Relationship and Sexuality Education (R.S.E) was developed by staff in 2002. Many developments have taken place since then and this policy required a review and revisions based on our school experiences since then. This policy was reviewed in Term 2, 2014/2015.

## ■ Rationale

The plan is a record of whole school decisions in relation to S.P.H.E. in line with the Primary Curriculum 1999. Its purpose is to guide the teachers in adopting a consistent and coherent approach to the teaching and learning of S.P.H.E. in our school. It is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for S.P.H.E. to ensure appropriate coverage of all aspects of the curriculum from Second Class to Sixth Class. Various programmes are used within the school including Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE. S.P.H.E also integrates with many other subjects e.g. P.E. and S.E.S.E...etc

In 2014 we decided to review our S.P.H.E. policy, as part of an overall review of school policies.

## ■ Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

In order to foster the personal development, health and well-being of each individual child, the Monastery C.B.S. aims to provide a caring community, Catholic and inclusive, in which our pupils can learn to respect themselves and others. We wish to foster in them taking responsibility for their own actions and to help them become people who can contribute to and play a meaningful role in their community.

## ■ Aims

We aim to

- promote the development and well-being of the child
- foster in the child a sense of care and respect for themselves and others and appreciate the dignity of every human being
- enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of their lives now and in the future
- to develop a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life
- teach skills of personal decision-making, problem solving and foster self-confidence in the context of social relationships
- enable each child to respect human and cultural diversity and appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

## ■ Curriculum Planning

### Content:

#### Strands and Strand Units

S.P.H.E. is planned in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in S.P.H.E. over a two-year period.

Our school decided the five strand units that we wish cover in each year of the two year cycle. Some topics or strand units are chosen from each of the strands in any one year with the exception of R.S.E. which is taught each year.

We selected strand units from each of the three strands to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum -knowledge, values, attitudes, skills. The topics or strand units not covered in year one are included in the teacher's planning for the following year. Please see attached overview of content for S.P.H.E over two years.

#### Contexts for S.P.H.E.

To achieve the above aims, S.P.H.E. will be taught through a combination of contexts:

- 1. Positive school climate and atmosphere
  - 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
  - whole school activities e.g. sporting activities, Green schools

- 2. Discrete class time: 1/2 hour per week or 1 hour per fortnight
- 3. Integration with other subject areas:
  - Negotiating the class rules at the start of the year
  - Sharing responsibility
  - Valuing & respecting the opinion of others
  - Experiencing a sense of belonging to their own class group and the wider school community
  - Developing a sense of commitment to common goals.

### ***Discrete time***

S.P.H.E. may be timetabled for ½ hour per week or 1 hour per fortnight. 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 dealing with R.S.E. and child protection (Stay Safe) are addressed through discrete time.

### ***Integration***

At each class level, teachers should seek to integrate S.P.H.E. with other curricular areas. Many aspects of S.P.H.E. can be dealt with in the context of Religion, English, Gaeilge, S.E.S.E., Visual Arts, and Drama.

### **Approaches and methodologies**

S.P.H.E. skills and attitudes are “caught” by the children within the school environment, as outlined in the above section.

Teaching will start from and build upon the children’s current knowledge, understanding, skills, language, experience, concerns and interests. Wherever possible, contexts for learning will be relevant to the children and make use of actual situations and current issues.

The following active learning strategies are promoted for S.P.H.E.:

- Drama activities
- co-operative games
- pictures, photographs and visual images
- discussion in pairs, small group, with whole class
- written activities – surveys, questionnaires, lists, checklists, projects, worksheets
- Media studies
- information on communication technologies

## **Assessment**

Children's progress in S.P.H.E. is assessed mainly through teacher observation:

Progress can be evaluated by monitoring classroom and school behaviour, achievements and developments. Such as:

- The ability of the child to co-operate and work in groups or to work independently
- The informal interactions between the child and adults and between the child and other children
- Physical and emotional maturity
- Positive attitudes displayed towards themselves and towards others
- The quality of presentation of work
- The participation and interest of the child in a variety of activities
- Confidence and competence at taking on responsibilities in the school life e.g. the Green schools committee, school teams

. The following general assessment approaches will be used:

- Teacher Observation
- Teacher-designed Tasks
- Projects and Folders

## **Children with different needs**

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the programme will be developmental, accessible and be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils.

As maturity is not always determined by chronological age, teachers have to be alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of each individual pupil. Teachers will have to be aware of, and take into account, the variety of existing pupil knowledge, the different attitudes and beliefs and the pupils' capacity to understand the issues. This will be particularly important in relation to children with special educational needs where physical development may outstrip emotional maturity.

The requirements of children with special needs will be taken into consideration when planning class lessons and related activities. Children who experience bereavement or loss, serious illness or other major personal situations are supported and consideration is given to meeting their individual needs in the most appropriate manner.

## **Equality of participation and access**

The Monastery C.B.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.

## **Organisational Planning**

### **Policies and programmes that support S.P.H.E.**

S.P.H.E. links with other policies/ programmes used in the school – Substance use(Walk Tall), Stay Safe, Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, Curriculum documents, Health and Safety statement, Healthy Eating and Care of the Environment e.g. Green schools. Teachers will access and utilise various texts for resource material.

### ***Relationships and Sexuality in Education and Stay Safe Programme.***

R.S.E. is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. In a school situation R.S.E., provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and to establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework, appropriate to their age. R.S.E. will be taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the Philosophy framework of the school. Teachers will not teach any content outside the R.S.E. programme used by the school or the DES curriculum. The teaching methods used in the school are child centred and reflect the age and stage of development of each child. Sensitive issues will be dealt with appropriately.

## **Overview of R.S.E. Programme**

### **Aims:**

In partnership with the home our aims are:

- To provide opportunities for our pupils to learn about relationships and sexuality, imparted in a loving and caring way, within a wholesome environment

- To help them think and act in a moral caring and responsible way

- To learn about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others.

The development of relationships is an integral part of all curriculum subjects. Aspects of R.S.E. are taught during S.P.H.E., Religion, Science, implementation of the Code of Behaviour etc. An integrative approach towards R.S.E. ensures that the children encounter R.S.E. in a holistic manner rather than in isolation.

**Content:**

Please see attached overview of content for R.S.E.

**Dealing with Questions:**

Teachers do not cover content outside that of the DES curriculum or the school's religion programme. Topics excluded include contraception, abortion etc. Answers to questions must be in line with the Catholic Church's teaching i.e. sexual intercourse will be discussed within the context of loving and committed relationship. At the same time teachers should answer questions sensitively aware that there are children in our school from many social backgrounds. No child should be made feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when these issues are raised.

Children, who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum taught, should be talked to individually and discretely, as soon as is possible, by the teacher and encouraged to seek answers from their parents.

**Overview of Stay Safe Programme****Aim:**

To teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous.

**Content:**

The lessons cover the following areas:

- Feeling Safe and Unsafe
- Friendship and Bullying
- Touches
- Secrets and Telling
- Strangers

Children participating in this programme will learn:

- To distinguish between safe and unsafe feelings
- What to do if lost
- What to do if the phone or doorbell rings when they are alone in the house
- The importance of friends in children's lives
- What to do if bullied
- Stay Safe Rules: Say No/ Get Away/ Tell
- Why not to bully others
- Appreciating normal, appropriate touches

That unsafe touches should never be kept secret  
How to respond to inappropriate touches (Stay Safe Rules)  
Good and bad secrets  
That some secrets should not be kept  
Who and how to tell if in trouble  
About strangers and safety strategies

**Request for withdrawal by parent of pupil or teacher:**

If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the R.S.E. they are welcome to visit the school to examine the content of the programme and discuss their concerns with the teacher. Following this meeting if parents wish to have their child/ren withdrawn when sensitive issues are being taught, they are requested to submit this in writing to the Principal. Efforts will be made by the school, using the resources it has, to accommodate these children by providing supervision within another classroom. Teachers cannot be held responsible for taught “R.S.E. language” used in school.

A teacher who is concerned about teaching a particular topic within the R.S.E. or Stay Safe programme should talk to the principal about his/her concerns. Such concerns will be handled discreetly. The B.O.M. will endeavour to accommodate such teachers. Resources outside the school profession will be availed of if considered appropriate.

***Timetable:***

Teachers will decide the timetabling of R.S.E. and a letter will be sent to parents of senior pupils (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>) prior to the commencement of these lessons.

***Child Protection:***

The school follows the DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, which are based on Children First, national Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. Pat O’Halloran (principal) is the designated liaison person (DLP). Each teacher has a copy of our policy on Child Protection and a copy is available to parents, through the secretary, if they request one.

**Resources/ DVDs**

A comprehensive selection of resources is available for teaching all strand units including *Walk Tall, Stay Safe programme, Relationships and Sexuality..etc.* Such resources (including dvds) are available from C.Farrell.

From time to time the school may invite guest speakers into the school on relevant topics. The class teacher will remain in the room at all times.

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

Planning and implementation of the S.P.H.E. programme is the responsibility of the class teacher, in consultation with the Principal, Learning Support and Resource teachers where necessary.

Each teacher plans and accounts for their work using a school template based on the school plan. The teacher prepares fortnightly plans and at the end of each month each teacher completes the Monthly Report.

### **Staff Development**

Staff development will take place on a whole-school, group or individual basis depending on identified needs, concerns, interests and opportunities. From time to time facilitators visit the school to address the whole school or to meet with individual teachers. Teachers may attend relevant courses provided by D.E.S. and agencies/professionals.

### **Parental Involvement**

S.P.H.E. is a shared responsibility between family and school.

Parents and guardians will be consulted about the Stay Safe Programme in 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> class, with the R.S.E. programme in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class as the lessons are planned for delivery. Copies of the school plan for S.P.H.E. are available from the office.

### **Community Links**

**The school will liaise with the Health Promotion Unit of the Health Board and other agencies to assist, as appropriate, the school's programme for S.P.H.E.**

Visitors are a valuable resource. Members of the community may, from time to time, be invited into the school e.g. fireman & guard. The children may also become involved in local activities relating to S.P.H.E. topics. When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class teacher will remain in the classroom and ensure the S.P.H.E. policy is adhered to.

Visits to places of worship, local government and business premises, sports centres, health centres, libraries, museums, environmental centres, places of natural beauty, galleries, theatres, etc. can greatly enrich the S.P.H.E. Programme.

### **■ Success Criteria**



That each child develops their values, attitudes and knowledge in an age appropriate way. That the curriculum helps to give children the knowledge, skills, and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active, responsible citizens in a rapidly changing world.

## ■ Implementation

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The principal had overall responsibility for this Whole School Plan. Each teacher has the responsibility of delivering the programme to the children in her/his care.

### **Timeframe**

The implementation of the S.P.H.E. programme is ongoing and the Whole School Plan for the school will be ratified in June 2015.

## ■ Review

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The principal has overall responsibility for the reviewing and redrafting of the Whole School Plan. Each teacher will contribute his or her views at whole school staff meetings.

### **Timeframe.**

This plan was reviewed by staff in March 2015 and the Parents' Association will be consulted in May prior to Ratification by the Board of Management. It will be reviewed again in three years time or in line with changes in related legislation/guidelines.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Monastery C.B.S. Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_