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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin
Galway and Roscommon
Education and Training Board

**Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS
- a Steiner education**



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Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum Policy for Infants to 6th Class

1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

1.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The staff of Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS formulated this school plan for SPHE, in consultation with our Board of Management and Parents Teacher Association, as we believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility and the contributions and involvement from the community will be essential to the effective implementation of the SPHE programme in the school. Parents have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible.

SPHE in our school endeavours to foster the personal development, health and well-being of each child. The curriculum encourages children to be aware of their rights as individuals while at the same time realising responsibility for their actions as members of their own family, the local community and the wider world.

The learning and teaching climate that prevails in the classroom, the methodologies and approaches used and the relationships that the children experience and witness in the school, all contribute to their social, personal and health development. Similarly, many of the themes and topics addressed in the various subjects have a social, personal or health perspective, as will many of the incidental happenings that occur in the everyday life of the school.

1.2 RATIONALE

The school reflects a safe and secure environment where children experience a sense of belonging and know that the concerns and contributions of parents, children and teachers are taken into account. A positive school climate and atmosphere nurtures self-confidence and self-worth and promotes respectful and caring relationships throughout the school. It therefore provides the context in which work carried out in a range of subjects, including SPHE, is lived out and makes sense. Our integrated approach allows for many aspects of SPHE to be dealt with in the context of relevant subject areas. Through a variety of learning experiences across the curriculum children work together, solve problems, make decisions, engage in dialogue and reflect critically. As children gain maturity discrete SPHE time provides for the teaching of some elements of the programme during designated class periods. This time can be used to develop and practise particular skills, deal with sensitive issues or explore issues that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum.

2 VISION, AIMS AND BROAD OBJECTIVES

2.1 VISION

Cuan na Gaillimhe is a developing school. At the time of writing we cater for children up to and including 3rd class and by September 2022 we will cater for children up to 6th class. Through our arts-rich approach, we cultivate knowledge, creativity and practical skills and deliver the Irish primary curriculum in an integrated and developmentally appropriate way with a strong emphasis on movement, music, art, handwork, drama, and outdoor learning. This allows the children a chance to develop their autonomy and independence alongside with exercising an awareness of being part of a group and wider contexts.

We acknowledge the importance of SPHE in the life of the school. SPHE plays an intrinsic part to the teaching and learning that occurs both formally and informally in our school and classrooms. We seek to implement the SPHE curriculum through the promotion of a positive school climate and atmosphere with the intent of fostering the health and well-being of all the members of the school community.

2.2 AIMS

The aims of Social, Personal and Health Education are:

- To promote the personal development and wellbeing 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

2.3 BROAD OBJECTIVES

Taking into account the varying abilities and circumstances of the children, the SPHE curriculum will encourage each child to:

- be self-confident and have a positive sense of self-esteem
- develop a sense of personal responsibility and come to understand his/her sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction
- develop and enhance the social skills of communication, co-operation and conflict resolution
- create and maintain supportive relationships both now and in the future
- develop an understanding of healthy living, an ability to implement healthy behaviour and a willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health
- develop a sense of safety and an ability to protect himself/herself from danger and abuse
- make decisions, solve problems and take appropriate actions in various personal, social and health contexts
- become aware of and discerning about, the various influences on choices and decisions
- respect the environment and develop a sense of responsibility for its long-term care
- develop some of the skills and abilities necessary for participating fully in groups and society
- become aware of the rights and responsibilities of the individual and the community

- begin to understand the concepts of personal, local, national, European and global identity
- appreciate and respect the diversity that exists in society
- promote the values of a just and caring society in an age-appropriate manner and understand the importance of seeking truth and peace

3 CONTENT OF PLAN

3.1 CURRICULUM

The school will follow the curriculum as laid down by the Department of Education.

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. Each of these strands is further subdivided into a number of strand units or topic areas that contain particular objectives.

3.1.1 STRANDS AND STRAND UNITS:

3.1.1.1 MYSELF

- (a) Self identity
- (b) Taking care of my body
- (c) Growing and changing
- (d) Safety and protection
- (e) Making decisions

3.1.1.2 MYSELF AND OTHERS

- (a) Myself and my family
- (b) My friends and other people
- (c) Relating to others

3.1.1.3 MYSELF AND THE WIDER WORLD

- (a) Developing citizenship
- (b) Media education

Aspects of all three major strand units will be taught in Cuan na Gaillimhe 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.

At Junior Infant level, the programme will be taught according to the approaches and methodologies adopted in this school at junior infant level which include learning through play, informal learning and use of story, in the context of a wholly integrated curriculum.

This timetable reflects the described approach in our school:

Strands	Strand units (year 1)	Strand units (year 2)
Myself	<i>Self-identity (Sept.–Oct.)</i>	
	<i>Taking care of my body (Jan.–Feb.)</i>	
	<i>Growing and Changing (March–April)</i>	
		<i>Safety and Protection (Jan–Feb)</i>
		<i>Making decisions (Mar–Apr.)</i> <i>*2nd–6th only.</i>
Myself and others	<i>Myself and My Family (Nov.–Dec.)</i>	
		<i>My friends and other people (May–June)</i>
		<i>Relating to others (Sept.–Oct.)</i>
Myself and the wider world		<i>Media Education (Nov–Dec)</i>
	<i>Developing Citizenship (May–June)</i>	

4 CONTEXTS FOR SPHE

SPHE will be taught in Cuan na Gaillimhe through a combination of the following three contexts:

4.1 POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

By promoting SPHE as an integral part of the school curriculum, we feel that the essence of SPHE is being allowed permeate in the school and affect the members of our school community. Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS cultivates 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

4.2 DISCRETE TIME FOR SPHE

SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher’s timetable. However teachers may allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow for more in-depth exploration of a strand unit.

We have a mixed class in our school and this informs our planning. While teachers’ planning reflects their classes there is equal emphasis on individual abilities. We may differentiate by learning objective, by support, resource, outcome, teaching style, task, and by pace. For children with specific social difficulties teachers work together to design specific programs to help the child with this.

4.3 INTEGRATION WITH OTHER SUBJECT AREAS AND LINKAGE WITHIN SPHE

Teachers will endeavour to adopt a thematic approach to SPHE by integrating it with other subject areas. Some of the opportunities to integrate SPHE throughout the curriculum are:

- language: using language precisely, acquiring appropriate vocabulary, developing communication skills; learning how to question, to predict, to be critical and to analyse; developing one's imagination and exploring emotions and feelings through the spoken and written word, examining the print media
- history: developing empathy, exploring changing influences on our lives, exploring myself and my family
- science: exploring: the way the body works, the constituents of different foods, the process of physical growth and development, learning to care for the environment
- geography: developing a sense of place, exploring local and national issues, learning to care for the environment
- mathematics: interpreting and representing data, measuring and estimating, comparing and recording, solving problems
- visual arts: creating and exploring images and pictures, expressing ideas, feelings and experiences in visual form, looking at and enjoying images in the environment
- physical education: choosing teams and playing games in a fair manner, understanding physical exercise as necessary for overall health and well-being, developing individual skills and talents, developing self-esteem and self-confidence, providing opportunities for co-operation and interaction, appreciating the importance of safety and learning how to act safely
- music: using music to explore moods and feelings, understanding the role of music in our heritage
- drama: using drama to recognise and manage feelings, to learn to trust and respect others in a group

5 APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS believe that the approaches and methodologies used in SPHE are crucial to the effectiveness of the programme. Active and collaborative 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
- song and movement
- use of pictures
- photographs and visual images
- written activities
- use of media
- information technologies and looking at children's work
- use of story and poetry-particular emphasis on narrative as well as read to explore concepts and attitudes to life
- use of the environment
- kinaesthetic approach
- watercolour painting – to explore concepts and feelings from the main lesson themes

6 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.

Cuan na Gaillimhe uses recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE. Teachers assess mainly through teacher observation, tasks and projects. Teachers will devise their own yearly scheme based on the Primary Curriculum and Guidelines – supplemented by the Stay Safe, Relationships and Sexuality Education, and Walk Tall programmes where appropriate.

7 CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with special needs. The special needs teacher and SNA will supplement and support the work of the class teachers where necessary, particularly in relation to behavioural or emotional issues relating to SPHE. Cuan na Gaillimhe CHS 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.

8 EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS is under the patronage of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRET B). The school welcome all children from the local communities that we serve and we endeavour to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure that equal opportunities are given to all children to participate in discussion, debate, presentation, etc. Through building on a positive atmosphere in our school by treating each other with respect and consideration we try to always live up to the ideals of good citizenship and genuine concern for the children in our care and the community in which we serve.

Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS recognises and values diversity, and believe all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment.

9 ORGANISATION

Policies and Programmes that support SPHE

- Code of Behaviour
- Admissions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Child Protection Statement

10 RESOURCES

The school has a variety of resources and programmes used throughout the school to support SPHE. For example:

- Curriculum and guidelines essential to SPHE are easily accessed [on PDST web site](#)
 - [Primary School SPHE Curriculum](#)
 - [Teacher Guidelines](#)
 - [PDST, Making the Links and Beyond](#), Revised Edition, Dublin 2018 is a clear planning aid and comprehensive guide to using materials from three programmes that support both planning and teaching of the SPHE curriculum; Walk Tall, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Stay Safe
 - [Stay Safe Programme](#)
- the only mandatory programme (Circular 65/2011). This programme is covered under the strand Safety and Protection of SHPE. Through using the PDST planning aid (Making the Links and Beyond) teachers can identify various other content objectives explored through Stay Safe topics.
- Walk Tall Programme
 - RSE Manuals
 - Fun Friends and Friends for Life Programme
 - Primary School curricular documents
 - Games children play – Kim John Payne
 - The Breathing Circle – Nell Smyth
 - Healing stories for challenging behaviour - Susan Perrow
 - An A-Z Collection of Behaviour Tales – Susan Perrow
 - Celebrating Irish Festivals. A Calendar of seasonal celebrations – Ruth Marshall
 - Songs and rhymes for Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter - A collection of 4 books of poems, songs and stories for young children
 - Busy Bodies
 - Quality circle time-Jenny Mosely

10.1 GUEST SPEAKERS

When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class teacher will remain in the classroom and make the speaker aware of this school plan and policies.

10.2 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 look after their own planning and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in SPHE.

10.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Teachers are encouraged to attend SPHE related courses and to share information/skills acquired at these courses with other members of staff during staff meetings.

10.4 INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY

It is our general practise to involve parents in activities and festivals throughout the year. Parents are an integral part of the school.

Guest speakers on Environmental issues, Health & Safety issues, Local Government, Gardaí, Fire Brigade and local people who contribute to making our area special are invited in on a regular basis. We endeavour to liaise with the members of the local community such as the NUIG Teddy Bear Hospital, Dental Hygienist, Health Nurse, Fireman, Vet, etc.

This plan and the curriculum documents are available for parents to inform them of the programme for SPHE.

11 SUCCESS CRITERIA

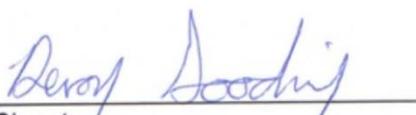
The success of this plan will be evaluated through teacher's planning and preparation, and if the procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed. We will also judge its success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this plan.

12 RATIFICATION

Cuan na Gaillimhe - CNS believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement the SPHE Primary Curriculum. Therefore, the teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, Parents and the Local Community.

This school plan was worked on and discussed by staff during March/April 2020 School Closure and presented to the Board of Management of Cuan na Gaillimhe –CNS on 27th April 2020. Once this plan has been ratified by Board of Management, it will be issued to all teaching staff and copies will be made available for inspection by parents/inspectors and other interested parties on request from school office.

Chairperson of the Board of Management



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As a growing school this plan will be reviewed as necessary to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school. The Deputy Principal is assigned the responsibility for co-ordinating a review of the plan.