



## **Newtown N.S. SPHE Plan**

### **Introductory Statement**

Newtown National School is a primary school under Catholic Patronage. It is a co-educational mainstream school with classes from Junior Infants to 6th Class and in 2020 we established an ASD class.

The original whole school plan for SPHE was developed by the school staff in 2006. Many developments have taken place since then and renewals followed over the years.

The staff of Newtown National School 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.

### **Rationale**

Aspects of SPHE have been taught in the school for many years through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Zippy's Friends, Friends for Life, etc. and through our involvement in the Health Promoting Schools Initiative (eg Food Dudes). It has also been taught through integration with other subject areas such as Physical Education, Religion, SESE etc. We wish to update and formalise our current practice in the teaching of SPHE and plan for it on a whole school basis.

### **Vision and Aims**

#### **Vision:**

Newtown National School values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic in the learning and teaching that occurs both formally and informally in the school and in the classroom. 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. 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.

## Aims:

Newtown National School endeavours 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

## Content of Plan

### Curriculum:

Strands and Strand Units:

The curriculum is delineated at four levels—Junior and Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Class, and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class—and the curriculum 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.

Newtown National School will teach aspects of all three major strand units each year. We have decided to follow a two year programme using *Making the Links* as our Reference Base to ensure that the children will receive broad and extensive programme in SPHE in Newtown NS over the two-year period.

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September / October	<i>Self-identity (Myself)</i>	<i>Myself and my family (Myself and others)</i>
November / December	<i>My friends and other people (Myself and others)</i>	<i>Relating to others (Myself and others)</i>
January / February	<i>Safety and protection (Myself)</i>	<i>Growing and changing (Myself)</i>
March / April	<i>Making decisions* (Myself)</i>	<i>Taking care of my body (Myself)</i>
May / June	<i>Media education (Myself and the wider world)</i>	<i>Developing citizenship (Myself and the wider world)</i>

**Year 1** : Begins September 2019, 2021,2023,2025,2027

**Year 2:** Begins September 2020, 2022, 2024,2026, 2028

This pattern will continue for subsequent years ensuring pupils receive a comprehensive SPHE Programme over a two-year period.

Teachers can also use some of the following programmes to supplement their teaching in the strand units of SPHE. Using their own discretion teachers can decide to prioritise a programme based on the needs that arise with their individual class grouping at a particular time or due to incidences that arise. Programmes can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Webwise
- Be Safe
- Zippy's Friends
- Friend's for Life

### **Through the year - Invisible Preparation & Reflection:**

Invisible preparation is continuous and unrecorded; whereby teachers draw on their experience, their knowledge of the children and their families, the local environment, the learning culture in their setting as well as their beliefs about teaching and learning in making decisions about their practice. The ongoing reflection about children's learning and development often takes place intuitively before, during and after the learning take place. Invisible preparation involves purposeful engagement with the curriculum and its supports to ensure high quality learning experiences are provided to our pupils.

### **Contexts for SPHE:**

SPHE will be taught in Newtown National School in the following contexts

#### \*Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

We work on this by:

\*Building effective and essential communication among all members of our school community: staff to staff, parent, pupils, Board of Management and vice versa.

We pay attention to encouraging the expression of opinion and developing listening systems. Examples of this include

#### Staff to Staff

- ❖ This school recognises the importance of a positive school culture and climate. We are guided by DES documents such as the Well Being Guidelines for Primary Schools, the Teaching Council Professional Conduct Guidelines and The Working Together Document.
- ❖ Staff notices will be posted in the staffroom/email/ - General Notices, Notices and information from the Department of Education and Skills, Notification re: Professional Development Courses; Information from the INTO, FORSA and other relevant Union Bodies.
- ❖ Staff meetings will be held termly, and staff are encouraged to help create the agenda in advance of the meeting.

- ❖ During Croke Park hours
- ❖ Meetings for teachers to liaise between different teachers dealing with the same child are facilitated.
- ❖ Liaison between teachers and SNAs will be facilitated.
- ❖ Staff will be notified of Circulars relevant to whole staff through email or notice on staff notice board
- ❖ Regular notices to staff from Principal via email and updates on staff noticeboard.
- ❖ End of year handover meeting involving all teachers and principal who work with child as well as new teacher who will have the child next year.

#### Staff Member - Parent

- ❖ Annual Parent - Teacher Meeting held in February. Opportunity for parental input.
- ❖ Appointments - Parents are welcome to make representations on behalf of their children at any stage during the school year.
- ❖ Multi staff parent meetings are facilitated when the need arises
- ❖ Teacher and Principal emails - this can be used as a medium of communication between class teacher and home and Principal and home
- ❖ Parent Association- very active PA who correspond regularly with the principal, contribute to policy formation, annual presentation at PA AGM by Principal
- ❖ School Newsletters
- ❖ Annual School Calendar
- ❖ School Website
- ❖ School Facebook

#### Pupil - Staff Member / Staff Member-Pupil

- ❖ Listening all the time - informally
- ❖ Children reminded in Stay Safe Programme that teachers will listen
- ❖ Explain how things are organised and the reasons for this
- ❖ Student Council
- ❖ School Assemblies

#### Board of Management - Staff / Parents / Pupils

- ❖ School Policies and Procedures
- ❖ Newsletters
- ❖ Agreed B.O.M. Reports
- ❖ Annual Report
- ❖ Seminars / Meetings
- ❖ Parent Association

#### Parent-Parent

- ❖ Parents' Fundraising Committee Notifications in School Newsletter as necessary
- ❖ Social Occasions such as Table Quiz / Family Fun Run / School Fun Day / Santa Gathering

### **\*\*Catering for individual needs.**

Our school are very conscious that children have individual and different needs and as a staff we

- Identify the specific needs of children - social, intellectual, motor, emotional etc and cater for many and various learning styles.
- Discuss access to S.E.T.
- Involve and seek help of parents.
- Encourage peer work, group work, co-operative learning.
- Use of ICT.
- Purchase resources to meet specific needs of specific children
- Cater for difference by addressing differing academic abilities.
- Work from the premise that no one size fits all.
- Focus on strengths - on abilities rather than disabilities.
- Effort is recognised and praised above achievement.
- Broad based curriculum
- Link in with local community etc. so opportunities to meet different needs are addressed

### **\*\*Creating a health-promoting physical environment**

We have a healthy eating policy which promotes a healthy school lunch. Other ways we promote are

- Lunches eaten inside under supervision of teacher.
- Waste is brought home to ensure parents know what their child eats and reusable lunch boxes and bottles are promoted.
- Playground rules are built around the health, safety and wellbeing of children and lovely playground signs encourage this
- Playground supervision
- Code of Behaviour promotes positive behaviour to create a safe school - physically, emotionally, and socially.
- Bullying is addressed in the Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour and we use the Restorative Justice questions
- Individual & Team Games which promote physical fitness are encouraged, promoted and developed -skipping, football, soccer, athletics, illustrated games with yard markings in playgrounds
- Organised games/ leagues at lunchtime
- Senior pupils teaching play to junior pupils
- Buddy benches

### **\*\*Developing democratic processes**

Involve many voices from the school community

## **\*\*Enhancing self-esteem**

Structures to foster the child's sense of self-worth;

- Positive re-enforcement
- Affirming effort rather than the end result
- Showing interest and giving encouragement
- Differentiation - pitching work at appropriate level for each child.
- Appraising group work
- Changing groups
- Variety of competitions
- Co-operative groups
- Good relations
- Social outings
- Caring induction of new staff and children
- Being informed on school related matters.
- Student Council - voice is valued

## **\*\*Fostering respect for diversity**

Integration of children with special educational needs in all areas of school life.

- Inclusion of ASD pupils into mainstream classes and reverse integration
- Integration of UEAL pupils into school community
- Appropriate Teaching Methodologies which recognise the diversity of intelligences.
- Teaching resources to reflect inclusion and diversity
- Gender Equity on school committees, teams, representatives
- Commitment to learning from others with different viewpoints and abilities.
- Commitment to resolving conflict without discord - school yard / class setting
- Belief that each individual is important.
- Society, Culture and History - gaining knowledge of pupils' own society, culture and history, families, cultures and histories of other pupils.

## **\*\*Fostering inclusive and respectful language**

Teachers/Pupils Awareness - use and accept only respectful language.

- Use First names of children (Teacher to Pupil: Pupil to Pupil)
- Inappropriate language in school is discouraged.
- Non-acceptance of "put downs"
- School/ individual classes deal with any name calling etc immediately (non-acceptance, S.P.H.E. lessons, discussion, role play).

## **Discrete time for SPHE**

SPHE is allocated  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour per week on each teacher's timetable in Newtown National School. However, teachers may organise a longer time to allow for more in-depth exploration of a strand unit.

## Integration and Linkage

Integration with other subject areas and Linkage within SPHE is ongoing and forms part of not only discrete lessons but also the hidden curriculum.

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

Themes/Projects such as Healthy Eating Week, Friendship Week, Autism Acceptance Week, Friendship Fridays, Active Week, Road Safety, Guest Speakers 'An Garda Síochána' etc. are and will also be explored.

### **Approaches and Methodologies:**

Newtown National School believes 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
- art activities
- photographs and pictures
- visual images
- use of media
- ICT
- written activities and poetry

### **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.

Newtown National School uses the following recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Portfolios and projects
- Standardised tests for ASD Class

### **Children with Special Educational Needs:**

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with special educational needs. The S.E.T. team will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. Newtown National School 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:**

Newtown National School recognises and values diversity, and believes all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment. Newtown National School is a mixed- school and we endeavour to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure that equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in discussion, debate, presentation, etc. We endeavour to provide for children with disabilities, families with literacy difficulties, children who are learning English as a second language etc.

## **Organisation:**

Policies and Programmes that support SPHE:

Policies include

- Anti-Bullying
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Child Protection
- Code of Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Admissions policy
- AUP (Acceptable Use Policy)

## **Programmes in use/used in Newtown National School**

- Active School Flag
- Green Flag
- Stay Safe programme
- Road Safety RSE
- Webwise programmes and workshops on cyber bullying (funded by PA)
- Inclusion Programme (2022 - 2023)
- Zones of Regulation (2022 - 2023)
- Food Dudes Healthy Eating Programme
- Oral Hygiene Programme (Dental service)
- Friends for Life
- Zippy's Friends
- Webinars by outside agencies

## **Guest Speakers:**

Outside speakers and educational talks such as Dental Nurse, Digital Safety Workshops, Road Safety, Fire Safety etc will be arranged for classes as appropriate to reinforce aspects of SPHE. In all cases where an outside speaker/s is invited to address pupils, the Class Teacher must remain in the classroom (as per Circular 22/2010) and personnel are vetted c/f Child Safeguarding



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

Our SPHE Whole School Plan and the DES Curriculum documents inform and guide teachers in their long- and short-term planning for SPHE. Each Class Teacher records SPHE objectives and content in their short- and long-term planning and in their Cuntais Míósúil. Teacher designed assessments and observation and feedback from pupils and parents will inform progress when evaluating and reviewing teaching and learning 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*

Teachers are encouraged to attend SPHE related courses during the school year and as summer courses and information/skills acquired at these courses is shared with other members of staff during staff meetings etc. As the need arises talks/presentation on other aspects of SPHE relevant to parents may be arranged i.e. Anti - Bullying/Digital Safety etc. Parents also are notified of SPHE initiatives etc through the school website and by email communication as relevant and through the National Parents Council of Ireland.

### **Child Protection**

The school DLP is Bridie O'Sullivan (Principal) and the DDLP is Roisin Malone (Deputy Principal). Both the DLP and the DDLP attend Child Protection Training each time it is offered by PDST.

### **Parental Involvement:**

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing SPHE and in Newtown NS we believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility. The SPHE plan and the curriculum documents are available for parents to inform them of the programme for SPHE. As the need arises talks/presentation on other aspects of SPHE relevant to parents may be arranged i.e. Anti-Bullying/Digital Safety etc. Parents also are notified of SPHE initiatives etc by email communication as relevant. Many of the worksheets covered in class over the year are signed by parents and parents are encouraged to speak with their children on many of the topics covered.

### **Community Links:**

Newtown National School works closely with its local rural community and believe it has a very important role to play in supporting the programme in SPHE. Newtown National School liaises with the local community to support teaching and learning in SPHE. The school links with local and national agencies to support the delivery of SPHE at all class

levels and invites representatives of professions i.e. Garda, Nurse, Fireman etc to speak with the pupils on occasion.

### Success Criteria

The success of this plan will be evaluated through evaluation of the following:

- \*\* Implementation of the objectives of the SPHE Curriculum - Teacher Planning and Assessment
- \*\* Availability and relevance of the Teaching Resources to support the teaching of SPHE
- \*\* Participation of pupils and involvement of parents in the various SPHE programmes i.e. Stay Safe
- \*\* Teacher Observation of Behaviour/Attitudes and Learning
- \*\* Positive School Climate and Atmosphere
- \*\* Effective Communication between all partners in the School Community.
- \*\* Amount of bullying cases arising

### Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

Newtown National School believes that the whole school community must be involved to successfully implement SPHE.

- \*\* The school Board of Management has overall responsibility for the implementation of all aspects of the SPHE curriculum.
- \*\* The Principal and Deputy Principal oversee the teaching and learning of SPHE and support staff in implementing the programme and in accessing professional development as relevant.
- \*\* Teachers: must teach and implement the SPHE curriculum as outlined and must adhere to current Child Protection policies and procedures.
- \*\* Pupils: should co-operate and participate in SPHE lessons and assignments as required.
- \*\* Parents should inform themselves of the SPHE school plan and support children's learning in SPHE and support the teaching by signing worksheets and discussing topics as they arise.

(b) Timeframe:

The whole school plan continues its implementation each year

### Review and Ratification.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Newtown National School on 5 May 2022. It will be reviewed every four years (next due date is 2026 or as and when it is deemed necessary by staff.

Signed Chairman B.O.M.: Gemy Boyle

Signed Principal: Baird @ Sullivan