

Merlin Woods Primary School Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Whole School Plan

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

“Social Personal and Health Education, as part of the curriculum, supports the personal development, health and well-being of young people and helps them create and maintain supportive relationships”

This plan, drafted in January 2021, is a revision of our previous policies for SPHE, which were formulated since November 2011. SPHE is a shared responsibility between community, home and school, and parent contributions and involvement is essential to the effective implementation of the SPHE programme in the school. With this in mind communication between staff, parents, pupils and management has been instrumental in the development of this policy.

(b) Rationale

Following on from a school self evaluation in the area of SPHE, it was decided to review our current plan, to update and make any necessary changes to reflect and benefit current teaching and learning practices in our school.

■ Vision and Aims

(a) Vision:

The vision and mission statement of our school is centred around integrated links of **Commitment, Community and Collaboration**, as outlined further in the front of our Plean Scoile. It is our hope that through the SPHE programme we will educate and positively influence our pupils to grow up as happy, healthy and well balanced individuals who can therefore become responsible citizens and members of their communities.

(b) Aims:

The children of Merlin Woods Primary School should be enabled 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 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 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:

1 **Strands and Strand Units:**

As SPHE is spiral in nature the same content will be planned and taught at each level over a two year period ensuring that the child receives a comprehensive and balanced programme over the cycle. There are 5 units to be covered each year which are chosen from each of the three strands: Myself, Myself and Others, Myself & The Wider World. In Merlin Woods Primary School we recognise the importance of the Stay Safe Programme and have opted to teach this in its entirety every year.

Merlin Woods Primary School have created this timetable to reflect this approach:

Strands	Strand Units Year 1 (Where September falls in an even year ie: September 2020, September 2022, September 2024)	Strand Units Year 2 (Where September falls in an odd year ie: September 2021, September 2023, September 2025)
Myself	<i>Self-identity/Making Decisions (Sept.-Oct.)</i>	<i>Safety and Protection (Jan-Feb)</i>
	<i>Safety and Protection (Jan-Feb)</i>	<i>Making Decisions/ Taking care of my body (Mar-April)) * This strand unit is for third to sixth only. Infants to second class complete the safety Issues section of Safety and Protection</i>
	<i>Growing and Changing (Mar-Apr)</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>Developing Citizenship (May-June)</i>	<i>Media Education (Nov-Dec)</i>

Please see Appendix 1 for detailed breakdown of the Strand Units

2 **Contexts for SPHE:**

SPHE will be taught in Merlin Woods Primary School through a combination of the following three contexts:

1. **Positive School Climate and Atmosphere**

Merlin Woods Primary School has created a positive atmosphere by:

- building effective communication, eg School booklet with policies, colourful fun termly newsletters, regular notes and texts home, principal being “visible” in the morning and home time, parental and pupil input on policy making.
- catering for individual needs, eg meeting with parents of children with different needs, setting differentiated homework, team teaching, inclass support and withdrawal, including a “challenge group” for stronger pupils.

- creating a health-promoting physical environment, eg bringing out PE equipment regularly for yard play time, regular reminders for pupils to wash their hands after using the toilet, robust healthy eating policy
- developing democratic processes, eg making decisions with parents, such as Christmas celebrations, and with pupils, such as Golden Time, student council
- enhancing self-esteem, eg taking photographs of school events and class teaching and learning, and displaying these across the school, SPHE Noticeboard
- fostering respect for diversity, eg inviting parents of different nationalities in to talk to pupils, yellow flag activities
- fostering inclusive and respectful language, eg using positive language in class rules, "Friendship Week", utilising restorative practice
- developing appropriate communication, eg developing listener/speaker skills and group work in Aistear
- developing a school approach to assessment, eg using the Primary School Assessment Kit, regular Assessment *for Learning*.

2. Discrete time for SPHE

SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher's timetable in Merlin Woods Primary School. However on occasion, teachers may block more SPHE time to develop themes in more detail, such as Positivity Day, Friendship Week, Healthy Eating Week, Agri-Awareness, Healthy Heart Week, Lenten Campaign, etc. Teachers of the middle to senior classes may also allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow for more indepth exploration of a strand unit. This is particularly important for any sensitive issues or those that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum e.g. Stay Safe, Relationships and Sexuality Education and Healthy Eating Lessons.

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 such as Language, Geography (My local area and Community), History, Religion, Visual Arts, Physical Education, etc, for example using the Big Book "Where's my Teddy, Freddy?" to explore feelings and emotions.

3 Approaches and Methodologies:

Merlin Woods Primary 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
- cooperative games
- use of pictures
- Discussion pairs, small groups or with whole class
- photographs and visual images
- written activities
- use of media
- information technologies
- looking at children's work

Teachers may access resources for each methodology in folders on the school computer.

4 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.

We use the following recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE:

- *Teacher observation, eg jotting observations down on post-its during Aistear play sessions, Teachers may use the list on pg 73 of the SPHE Curriculum.*
- *Teacher-designed tasks and tests*
- *Portfolios and projects, eg pupils each have their own scrap book to gather samples of work.*
- *Pupil Self Assessment, eg Two Stars and a Wish, Traffic Light System*
- *Pupil Teacher Conferencing, cf National Assessment Guidelines, pg 24*

See our School Assessment Policy for further details.

5 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 learning support and resource teachers will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. Merlin Woods Primary 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 (eg HSE, Barnardos). Also the school will seek professional advice in the event of a school crisis e.g NEPS

6 Equality of Participation and Access:

Merlin Woods Primary 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. Ours is a mixed-sex 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. Merlin Woods Primary School is under Roman Catholic school management, and we endeavour to provide for ALL members of the local community.

Organisation:

7 Policies and Programmes that support SPHE:

7.1 Policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Enrolment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Homework Policy

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Substance Use Policy
- RSE Policy

7.2 Programmes

- Stay Safe Programme
- RSE Programme
- Restorative Practice
- Fun Friends
- Friends for Life
- Zippy's Friends
- Incredible years
- Mind Up
- Nurture Room
- Green Flag Programme
- Whole School Reward System
- Food Dudes
- Healthy Schools Initiative
- Assembly and Class Rewards

8 Homework:

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

9 Resources:

9.1 Programmes and Other Materials:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay Safe resource pack ● RSE packs ● Walk Tall packs ● "School Works" and photo pack ● "Working Together for Positive Behaviour" ● Webwise – internet safety ● Emotion colour cards ● Bí Folláin-media ed. ● Busy Bodies ● Making the Links - PDST document ● 101 Games for Social Skills (Jenny Mosley) ● 101 Games for Better Behaviour (Jenny Mosley) ● 101 Games for Self Esteem (Jenny Mosley) ● Restorative Practice ● Books by Louise Shanahan on Mindfulness, Yoga and Wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach any subject" ● "Spraoi le chéile" ● Busy Breaks - Irish Heart Foundation ● Action for Life – Irish Heart Foundation ● Aistear manual ● School photographs ● Amnesty and Trócaire packs-developing citizenship ● Teacher Guidelines ● 'Be Safe!' (Road Fire Water – National Safety Council) ● Quality circle time in the Primary classroom (Jenny Mosley) ● Mind Up ● Mindfulness in the Classroom CDs ● Cosmic Kids Yoga in the Classroom ● Zones of Regulation, Room 14 ● Weaving Wellbeing |
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9.2 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 attached policies where relevant. Samples of guest speakers: Gardaí, doctors, parents from other countries talking about their culture., Dentist, Vet, An Taisce Representative, Internet Safety Speaker

10 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. "Making the Links" will be used by all staff in their planning. Each teacher will keep a Cuntas Míósúil and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in SPHE.

11 Staff Development:

The staff have attended training in the following areas when offered and this training will support an effective implementation of the SPHE programme:

- *training in the Child Abuse Prevention Programme/ Stay Safe*
- *training in Incredible Years*
- *training in the Substance Misuse programme*
- *training in the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme /R.S.E.*
- *training in Circle work*
- *Aistear*
- *training in teaching methodologies, eg Using Puppets in the Infant Classroom*
- *training in First Aid*
- *training in Rainbow Support - Supporting Children with Bereavement, staff are beginning training on this when it resumes*

- *All staff have taken part in Fire Safety training and we also have regular fire drills for the whole school*

- *training in Nurture Rooms*

- *training in Restorative Practice*

- *training for Weaving Wellbeing*

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 or Croke Park Hour Professional Development workshops.

12 Parental Involvement:

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing SPHE as SPHE is a shared responsibility. This plan and the curriculum documents are available for parents to inform them of the programme for SPHE, and they are welcomed to help inform policy such as RSE and Healthy Eating Policies. Parents receive a SPHE leaflet in September each year outlining the curriculum and its importance. The SPHE Policy and further information on the various programmes are made available on the school website for parents. Parents are encouraged to promote the SPHE curriculum at home.

13 Community Links:

Merlin Woods Primary School believes 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 Hygienist, Health Nurse, Fireman, Vet, New Parent, etc.

14 Unforeseen Closures:

Should a forced closure take place due to unforeseen circumstances e.g Covid 19 virus, SPHE lessons (Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RSE) will be taught virtually where possible. Where lessons, due to their sensitive nature, cannot be taught virtually they must be taught on the resumption of face to face teaching. Teacher's planning will reflect lessons omitted and should be communicated to a new teacher should the class be moving on.

(The sensitive lessons for RSE are taught every year at all class levels.

Therefore, upon reopening, these lessons which may have been missed due to school closure, are to be taught as a priority.)

■ 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.

Things we will look for

1. The happy, healthy atmosphere in the school
2. The quality of interactions pupil/teacher, pupil/pupil, teacher/teacher, home/school
3. A positive change in certain attitudes and behaviours,
4. The type of language used and how it is used

■ Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

Merlin Woods Primary School 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.

■ 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. Paula O'Connor and Elaine O'Malley are responsible for co-ordinating this review with staff.

Those involved in the review will include:

Teachers

Pupils

Parents

*Post holders/plan co-ordinator
BoM/DES/Others*

(b) Timeframe:

This plan will be reviewed in 3-5 years.

■ **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School ratified this plan on February 2021. This plan is available to view at the school by the parents and is available on the downloads section of our school website.