



**Whole School Plan  
for  
Social, Personal and Health Education**

**Introduction:**

*The staff of LETNS, reviewed this school policy for SPHE in May 2020. We believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility, and that contributions and involvement of pupils, parents and staff will be essential to the effective implementation of the SPHE programme in the school. It was reviewed by a middle management team and brought to the attention of the staff and Board of Management for additional comments and, subsequently, for approval and ratification. The policy was reviewed in May 2020. Staff training and an information meeting for parents, based on the revised Stay safe programme was held in the academic year 2017 - 2018.*

**Rationale:**

SPHE have been taught in our school for many years through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Relationships and Sexuality Education. It has also been taught through integration with other subject areas such as Ethical Core Curriculum, Physical Education, English, Religion, Geography, etc.

**Our Vision:**

SPHE in the Primary School fosters the personal development, health and well being of the child and helps him / her to create and maintain supportive relationships and to become an active and responsible member of society. (Ref: SPHE Teacher Guidelines). LETNS is an equality-based school which upholds the values of the Educate Together ethos, encapsulated in the motto “Learn Together to Live Together”.

Our school believes that the social, personal, health and well being of each and every member of the school community is important. We believe that education flourishes in an environment where good relationships are encouraged. We strive to promote a sense of belonging, which is nurtured in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance. We support a positive, democratic environment of discussion, listening and reviewing. We are happy to embrace the SPHE programme as a means of promoting and sustaining this vision for our children and our community.

**Aims:**

The aims of social, personal and health education are:

- to promote the personal 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 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 independent nature of the world.
- 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 independent nature of the world.
- to promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all aspects

**Broad Objectives:**

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the SPHE curriculum should enable the child to:

- be self confident and have a positive sense of self-esteem
- develop a sense of personal responsibility and come to understand her/his 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 and discerning about the various influences on choices and decisions
- begin to identify, review and evaluate the values and attitudes that are held by individuals and society and to recognise that these affect thoughts and actions
- 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 in society
- become aware of some of the individual and community rights and responsibilities that come from living in a democracy
- begin to understand the concepts of personal, local, national, European and global identity
- appreciate and respect the diversity that exists in society and the positive contributions of various cultural, religious and social groups
- promote the values of a just and caring society in an age-appropriate manner and understand the importance of seeking truth and peace. (Ref: SPHE Primary Curriculum)

**Content:**

As SPHE permeates all aspects of school life, the content outlined in the curriculum should be implemented in a combination of formal and informal approaches.

The content of the SPHE programme is presented in the following programmes:

**Strands:**

- *Myself,*
- *Myself and others*
- *Myself and the wider world.*

**Programmes:**

- *Stay Safe Programme is taught at all levels.*
- *Relationship and Sexuality Education programme is taught at all levels*
- *Walk Tall Programme is taught at all levels*
- *Weaving Well Being was introduced as a resource to support the delivery of SPHE to all classes, in 2019. (Positive Mental health programme)*

**Contexts for SPHE:**

SPHE is taught in our school through a combination of the following three contexts:

1. Positive School Climate and Atmosphere  
LETNS continually strive to create a positive atmosphere by:

- building effective communication
- building buddy systems across the school. (swimming, reading & yard buddies)
- 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
- programmes taught within the context of our school ethos
- developing appropriate communication
- developing a school approach to assessment

2. Discrete time for SPHE

SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher's timetable in LETNS. Teachers may also use additional time at their own discretion to cater for the needs of individual classes.

3. Integration

Integration with other subject areas and Linkage within SPHE will be developed throughout this programme. Teachers will endeavour to adopt a thematic approach to SPHE by integrating it with other subject areas such as Language (Media Education), Science (Living Things), Geography (Citizenship), History (Myself and my Family), Ethical Education (Human Rights), Visual Arts, Physical Education (Water Safety), etc. Themes/Projects such as Active week, out and about Week, Friendship Week, et cetera, will also be explored. Some themes may be explored by the whole school community through our school assemblies, student council meetings and celebrations for monthly values.

**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, pictures, meditation, the student council, photographs and visual images, discussion, written activities, the media and information and communication technologies, looking at children's work, circle time, guided reflective time, problem solving, decision making, engaging in dialogue etc. The plan also provides for cross-curricular learning experiences particularly in relation to Ethical Education

Confidentiality: While confidentiality within discussion groups will be encouraged, children should be informed that some information may have to be passed on at the discretion of the teacher to the appropriate person e.g. Principal, parents/guardians

**Assessment:**

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

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks
- Portfolios and projects
  
- Regular reviews of class and whole school procedures and goals

- Self-assessment

**Children with Special Needs:**

Teachers endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with special needs. The Special Educational Team supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. We liaise with trained professionals/appropriate agencies, where appropriate, when dealing with sensitive issues e.g., bereavement/separation to ensure that the children involved are fully supported. Parents are encouraged to mediate the information on certain topics with their own child, as appropriate.

**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.

LETNS is under the patronage of the LETNS Executive Committee, which is part of the Educate Together body. 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.

Parental participation is encouraged and valued. Students are included in the democratic process through activities and groups such as the Student Council, Green Team and Buddy Systems. Rules are agreed in a collaborative way within the classroom.

We encourage parents to share their interests and expertise through activities such as shared games, cooking, gardening, yoga, IT, crafts, drama, music, trips.

**Statements:**

Our plan takes into account the range of differences in the school so that all children will be given the opportunity to obtain maximum benefit from the programme.

Discreet time is used to deal with sensitive issues or explore issues that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum. This discreet time can be organised in blocked periods where appropriate. For example, delivering RSE lessons and Stay Safe lessons during a set period of time in the Spring Term.

**School / Home / Community Links:**

- Parental involvement is encouraged and promoted within the school and is outlined in our policy document *Parental Involvement*.
- Information meetings for parents held for junior infants.
- Information letters and e-mails are sent throughout the Year.
- Parent/teacher meetings
- Information on the Stay Safe and RSE programmes provided prior and during the teaching of the programmes.
- Lending library with DVD's and books for parents to support their child during RSE lessons.
- The involvement of the wider community is encouraged, e.g. visits from the local garda community liaison officer.

### **School Policies and Programmes Supporting SPHE:**

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Use of ICT Policy
- Mobile 'phone Policy
- Parental Involvement Policy
- Relationship and Sexuality Education
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Substance Use and Abuse Policy
- Learn Together Programme

**Homework:** Homework in this subject will usually be informal. The home-link in SPHE is very important and reinforcement by way of discussion is encouraged with parents/guardians. Homework will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class.

### **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. This planning will be in line with the school plan for SPHE. Each teacher will keep a Cúntas Míósúil and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in SPHE.

### **Staff Development:**

We fully encourage and will facilitate continuous staff training in the following areas:

- *Child Abuse Prevention Programme - Stay Safe*
- *Substance Misuse programme - Walk Tall*
- *Relationships and Sexuality Education programme - R.S.E.*
- *Child Protection training for DLP and Deputy DLP.*
- *Tusla – online child safeguarding training.*

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

### **Parental Involvement:**

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing SPHE as we believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility. Partnership with parents is essential in relation to the promotion of key life skills in the SPHE curriculum. Sample letters are available to send home in the 'Walk tall' programme informing of aims and themes.

**Community Links:**

We 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 new parent, Dental Hygienist, Health Nurse, Fireman, Garda, Sports clubs etc.

**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. We will know it has achieved its aims if the pupils:

- have increased knowledge, understanding and skills,
- are more aware of their attitudes and values
- are more respectful of themselves and others,
- relate to others in a positive way
- are more actively involved in the school and possibly local community
- feedback from parents and pupils
- happy atmosphere in school

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

We believe that the whole school community must be involved to successfully implement SPHE. Therefore the teaching staff implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, parents and the local community.

Each teacher is responsible for the implementation of the SPHE policy with his/her own class. However it is recognised that individual teachers have a right to opt out of teaching some parts of the RSE programme. In this case alternative arrangements will be made to ensure that the programme is taught to all classes.

Parents have a right to withdraw children from aspects of the RSE programme.

**Role of Visitors:**

Visitors to SPHE classes will deal with discussions in line with the aims of the programme and the ethos of the school. It is the duty of the teacher who organises the visit to ensure the suitability of the programme prior to the visit. Teachers will remain with the class for the duration of the visit. Principal must be informed in advance of all visiting speakers and the content of their presentation.

**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, BoM, DES.*

**Ratification and Communication**

Reviewed and Ratified by LETNS Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Tina Stallard, Chairperson

Mary Tuohy, Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***This policy will be reviewed again in 2023***