



ST. DAVID'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

Whole School Plan for

SPHE

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

(a) Introductory Statement

Many developments have taken place since the original plan for SPHE was developed and this policy required a review and revisions based on our school experiences to date. This SPHE plan was reviewed again in 2025 with some changes made, incorporating Wellbeing and Mindfulness which is our current SSE and Improvement topic (in line with the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023). Within the updated primary curriculum, SPHE is part of the curriculum area of Wellbeing.

The staff of St David's NS 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. It was drafted by the principal in consultation with the staff and brought to the attention of the Board of Management and Parents.

(b) Rationale

It was decided to focus on this area for development to benefit teaching and learning in our school, to conform to principles of learning outlined in the Primary School Curriculum and to review the existing plan for SPHE, to inform the whole school, new teachers and temporary teachers. We also wanted to reflect the introduction of Wellness and Mindfulness following the guidelines in Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023).

VISION AND AIMS

(a) Vision:

Our vision is to relate the plan to the school's characteristic ethos in order to foster the personal development, health and well being of the individual child. 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.

(b) Aims:

The children of St David's NS 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 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

(c) 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 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
- 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.

CONTENT OF PLAN

Curriculum:

This SPHE plan will be addressed under the following:

1. Strands and Strand Units:

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: 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.

St David's NS will teach aspects of all three major strands 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. St David's NS have created this timetable to reflect this approach.

Strand	Strand Units (Year 1 - Even Years)	Strand Units (Year 2 - Odd)
Myself	<i>Self-identity (Sept-Oct.)</i>	
	<i>Making Decisions Nov-Dec)</i> <i>*This strand unit is for third to sixth only. Infants to second complete the Safety Issues section of Safety and Protection</i>	<i>Safety and Protection (Jan-March)-Stay Safe</i>
	<i>Growing and Changing (May- June)</i>	
Myself and others	<i>Myself and My Family (March-April)</i>	<i>My friends and other people (September- Oct)</i>
		<i>Relating to others (Nov-Dec.)</i>
Myself and the wider world	<i>Developing Citizenship (Jan-Feb)</i>	<i>Media Education (May-June)</i>

2. **Programmes incorporated with SPHE:**

Stay Safe Programme:

All primary schools are required to fully implement the Stay Safe programme. The Stay Safe programme for primary schools plays a valuable role in helping children develop the skills necessary to enable them to recognise and resist abuse and potentially abusive situations'. (Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, P. 67).

The Stay Safe programme will be taught in St David's NS in its entirety as part of the two year cycle of SPHE. All teachers will outline this clearly in their individual planning documents. Refer to St David's NS stand alone **Stay Safe Policy**

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE):

RSE 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 RSE, 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. RSE will be taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the philosophy framework of the school. Refer to separate school policy on RSE

Substance Abuse Prevention Policy:

The aim of this policy is the welfare, care and protection of every member of the school community in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Refer to separate school policy

KiVa Anti-Bullying Programme:

KiVa is an evidence-based antibullying program that has been developed in the University of Turku, Finland, with funding from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The program promotes empathy towards victimized peers, raises awareness of the role the peer group plays in the bullying process and provides safe strategies to support and help the victims. The effectiveness of KiVa has been proven scientifically through a large national randomized and controlled trial as well as several different studies. KiVa offers a wide range of concrete tools and materials for schools to tackle bullying.

Wellbeing and Mindfulness:

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023. Refer to attached plan <https://assets.gov.ie/24725/07cc07626f6a426eb6eab4c523fb2ee2.pdf>

Child Protection:

St David's N.S. adheres to the DES Child Protection Procedures, which are based on Children First Procedures for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The acting principal, Ms Louise Gillespie, is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Ms Kelly Delaney (Acting Deputy Principal) is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person. Each teacher has a copy of an updated policy on Child Protection and a

copy is available to parents, through the school website. Refer to St David's NS Child Protection policy.

2. **Contexts for SPHE:**

SPHE will be taught in St David's NS through a combination of the following contexts:

- **Positive School Climate and Atmosphere**

St David's NS has created a positive atmosphere by:

- **building effective communication within the school and between school and home -**
Attention will be paid to encouraging everyone to express opinions and concerns and to respond to the opinions and concerns of others as a dimension of classroom work and general school life.
- **catering for individual needs –**
Individual needs may be social, emotional, spiritual, physical or intellectual. Through assessment, observation and discussion with parents we strive to identify and meet individual need.
- **creating a health-promoting physical environment –**
Through our Health & Safety policy and our PE programme we have set out how we promote health and safety awareness and how we intend to deal with unsatisfactory aspects of our environment. We are a Health Promoting School which has brought about emphasis on healthy lunches, healthy lifestyle and mind. Road, water, farm safety and regular fire drills are some of the areas promoted also. Taking responsibility and pride in the school environment is encouraged through our involvement in the Green Schools programme and through constant review and promotion of behaviour and habits required for maintaining a clean environment. Playground markings for yard time activities, children's work on display throughout school and the school garden also promote a healthy physical environment
- **developing democratic processes –**
Children experience and practice the democratic process by:
 - *Negotiating the class rules at the start of the year.*
 - *Sharing responsibility.*
 - *Valuing the opinions of others.*
 - *Experiencing a sense of belonging to their own class group and the wider school community.*
 - *Develop a sense of commitment to common goals.*
 - *Children on the Healthy Schools Committee*
 - *We have agreed that we will prioritise care in our own behaviour as adults and in our expectations of children. We will help children to learn to care for each other through actively building relationships within each class. We will seek to build identity, security and belonging, competence and purpose through:*
 - *Discussion, promotion of and valuing difference.*
 - *Agreeing ground rules for responsible behaviour and clarifying values on an ongoing basis.*
 - *Caring for and promoting inclusion of others and learning that it's OK to be different.*
 - *Promoting inclusive and respectful language.*
 - *Promoting support and co-operation.*
 - *Respecting individual strengths.*
 - *Supporting individual needs through teacher support.*
 - *Supporting individual needs of children in times of family or individual personal crises (children who suffer serious illness and need to be in hospital or out of school for long periods; children who suffer bereavement, especially bereavement in the immediate family; engaging exterior services e.g. NEPS, CAMHS).*
 - *Create meaningful differentiated learning opportunities.*
 - *Celebrating the wide range of children's strengths at assemblies.*
 - *Communicating regularly about learning and general development with the home.*
- **enhancing self-esteem**

By promoting: • A sense of identity. • A sense of belonging • A sense of security. • A sense of purpose. • A sense of competence.

- **fostering respect for diversity**
- **fostering inclusive and respectful language –**
We will prioritise both racial and gender equality and respect for those with special needs. We believe that children learn to respect themselves and others through experiencing respect in their own lives and through witnessing respect being shown to others.
- **developing appropriate communication**
- **developing a school approach to assessment**

- **Discrete time for SPHE**

At present, SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher's timetable in St David's NS. However teachers may allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow for more indepth exploration of a strand unit. ***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. To use this time effectively it may be more appropriate for the teacher to organise it in block periods and use it as required rather than confining the time to a set period in each week – i.e. Timetabled ½ hour per week, one hour per fortnight or blocks of 1 – 2 hours where feasible or appropriate.

Under the revised primary curriculum framework, SPHE will be incorporated in the curricular area of Wellbeing. Wellbeing as a time allocation of 2hr 30 mins a week for the Infant classes and 3 hours a week for 1st class – 6th class. This time is to be divided between SPHE and PE.

- **Integration with other subject areas and Linkage within SPHE**

At each class level, teachers should seek to integrate SPHE with other curricular areas. Many aspects of SPHE can be dealt with in the context of relevant subject areas

3. **Approaches and Methodologies:**

Active learning is a key principle of the overall curriculum and is the principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE. The more the child is directly engaged in the learning process, cognitively, physically, emotionally and creatively, the more they are enabled to internalise what is learned. The following active learning strategies are promoted in the school

- Drama activities
- Co-operative games
- Pictures, photographs and visual images
- Discussion: in pairs, small groups, with whole class
- Written activities: surveys, questionnaires, lists, check-lists, projects, worksheets
- Media Studies
- Information and communication technologies
- Looking at children's work: portfolios, projects ...
- Circle Time.
- Other relevant activities

- Use of external speakers/visitors who are specialists in their own fields. Dental nurse visits to classroom to discuss healthy eating, healthy drinking, cleaning teeth and regular visits to the dentist. Facilitator to talk to pupils about safe use of the internet and social media (parents talks on safety on internet and prevention of cyberbullying),

A broad range of approaches and methodologies will be used to realise the aim of involving children in their own learning.

- Talk and discussion
- Skills through content
- Collaborative learning
- Problem-solving
- Use of the environment

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.

St David's NS uses the following recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE:

Teacher observation:

- 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
- The quality of presentation of work
- The participation and interest of the child in a variety of activities.

Teacher-designed tests and tasks:

SPHE includes areas of knowledge and understanding that will need to be assessed at regular intervals. Specific tasks can be used to ascertain a child's ability to apply particular skills in different situations.

Portfolios and Projects:

Teachers may decide that children will keep personal folders of their work.

Self-Assessment by Children:

Children are encouraged to engage in assessing their own progress in SPHE and to reflect on their learning

5. Children with Different Needs:

- Teachers will support and ensure the participation of children with special needs
- All children will be enabled to make an important contribution regardless of academic achievement
- Adapt and modify activities so that all children in the class can participate with assistance from class/special education teachers and special needs assistant (SNA).
- Specific or sensitive issues which need to be considered in meeting the individual needs of children e.g. bereavement or loss, disability, illness... St David's NS 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.

6. **Equality of Participation and Access:**

St David's NS 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 school(boys and girls) 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.

7. **Organisation:**

Policies and Programmes that support SPHE:

<i>Policies</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Safeguarding Statement• Bí Cineálta• Relationships and Sexuality Education• Substance Use• Code of Behaviour• Enrolment• Health and Safety• Healthy Eating• Internet Acceptable Useage• Stay Safe

<i>Programmes (may be used)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food Dudes• Green Flag• Weaving Wellbeing• Walk Tall• Busy Bodies• PrimeEd self esteem• Executive functioning activities• KiVa Anti-Bullying• Stay Safe

8. **Homework:**

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

Children are encouraged to discuss work done in school at home with their parents.

Worksheets begun at school are often finished as homework to enable parents to engage with the topics covered

9. **Programmes and Other Materials:**

Books for Pupil	Books for Teacher	Audio Visual	Posters	Media & ICT
Weaving Wellbeing Worksheets KiVa Workbooks	RSE Manuals Walk Tall Stay Safe Making the Links Weaving Weebeing PrimeEd self-esteem Circle Time KiVa Programme	Busy Bodies	Various posters throughout the school	Webwise Oide

10. **Guest Speakers:**

When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class teacher will remain in the classroom (as per Circular 42/2018) and make the speaker aware of this school plan and attached policies. : For some topics such as nutrition, oral health care, hygiene, etc. we may occasionally avail of external personnel to enhance the learning that is ongoing in the classroom. We have engaged the services of an external facilitator to assist in the delivery of the sensitive sections of the RSE/ SPHE programme in 5th/6th and cyber bullying.

11. **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 keep a Cuntas Míosúil and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in SPHE. Teachers will record clearly the Strands and Strand Units of SPHE taught.

12. **Staff Development:**

Training opportunities will include the following areas and this training will support an effective implementation of the SPHE programme:

- *training in Child Protection*
- *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.*
- *Oide Advisor support*

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. Development also promoted by:

- Increasing our stock of resources.
- Allocating time at staff meetings in order to discuss issues relevant to SPHE

13. Parental Involvement:

Since parents are the primary educators of their children, we welcome their support of teachers in implementing the SPHE Programme and in the formulation of policies relevant to SPHE. Parents are consulted through the Parents' Association committee when policy is being revised. The updated policy is placed on the school website when completed and the website carries links to related policies (ie Child Protection policy) and related sites (Stay Safe programme; Internet Safety website).

Parents/carers will be informed that the Stay Safe Programme and RSE are implemented in the school. If parents wish to opt their children out of any of the sensitive aspects of the SPHE programme they must provide a written statement to inform the school of their decision.

In advance of teaching the Stay Safe and RSE programmes parents will be notified and will be able to familiarise themselves with the content of the lessons on the school website and at www.Oide.ie/staysafe

14. Community Links:

St David's NS 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 Nurse, Fire Brigade, Gardaí, Paramedics, Water Safety, Bike Safety, Local County Council representatives, Heritage Officers, Dental Hygienist, New Parent 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. Indications of success will come through positive feedback from the main stakeholders in our school community- teachers, parents, pupils and the local community and from the second-level schools attended by our past pupils. We will also judge its success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

St David's NS 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.

(b) Timeframe:

The plan will be implemented immediately : March 2025.

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. The principal is responsible for co-ordinating this review. Those involved in the review will include:

- Teachers*
- Pupils*
- Parents*
- Post holders/plan co-ordinator*
- BOM/DES/Others*

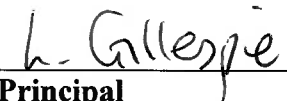
(b) Timeframe:

This plan will be reviewed in three years unless a need arises that has to be addressed.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Board of Management of St David's N.S. ratified this plan on 1/4/25.

Signed 
Chairperson of Board of Management


Principal

Date: 1/4/25

This plan is available to view on the school website and at the school by the parents on request.