



# Ashbourne Educate Together National School

## SPHE Policy

### Social Personal & Health Education

#### Introductory Statement

This policy was updated by the staff of Ashbourne ETNS in June 2023. It was drafted by the school principal and staff and brought to the attention of the Board of management and parents for consideration, approval and ratification. Therefore the involvement of all these bodies will contribute to an effective implementation of the SPHE programme in the school.

#### Rationale

The school opened in September 2012. SPHE has been taught in Ashbourne ETNS on a whole-school basis through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Relationships and Sexuality Education. It has also been taught through integration with other subject areas such as Physical Education, Learn Together, Geography, etc.

Our goal is to optimise the effectiveness of SPHE teaching in the school and put a clear structure on the SPHE plan for the whole school to ensure compliance with DE guidelines. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff.

#### Vision and Aims

##### Vision

Ashbourne ETNS is a multi-denominational school which upholds the values of the Educate Together ethos encapsulated in the motto "Learn Together to

Live Together". SPHE in Ashbourne ETNS should promote self-awareness and understanding by helping children to name and manage their own feelings, to recognise and appreciate individual abilities and to cope with change of various kinds.

SPHE should help children establish supportive relationships, to enjoy the company of others and to resolve conflicts in appropriate ways.

## Aims:

The children in our 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 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.

## Curriculum Planning:

### **1. Strands and Strand Units:**

The curriculum is split into 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. We will teach aspects of all three major strand units 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. Ashbourne ETNS have created this timetable to reflect this approach.

<b>Strands</b>	<b>Strand Units (Year 1)</b>	<b>Strand Units (Year 2)</b>
<b><i>Myself</i></b>	Self- Identity	Safety and Protection
	Taking Care of my Body	Taking Care of my Body (all classes to revise the Stay Safe lessons on <i>Touches, and Secrets and Telling</i> )
	Growing and Changing	
	Safety and Protection (the <u>full implementation</u> of the Stay Safe Programme)	Making Decisions (3rd-6th)
<b><i>Myself and Others</i></b>	Myself and my Family	My Friends and Others
		Relating to Others
<b><i>Myself and the Wider World</i></b>	Developing Citizenship	Media Education

## **2. Contexts for SPHE:**

We will teach SPHE using a combination of the following contexts:

## **1. A positive school climate and atmosphere**

Ashbourne ETNS has created a positive atmosphere by:

- Building effective communication within the school
- Prioritising wellbeing of our students
- Catering for individual needs
- Creating a health-promoting physical environment
- Developing democratic processes
- Enhancing the self-esteem and well-being of members of the school community.
- Fostering respect for diversity
- Fostering inclusive and respectful language
- Developing appropriate communication between home and school
- Developing a school approach to assessment

## **2. Discrete time for SPHE**

SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher's timetable. Teachers may manipulate this time at their own discretion 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, Geography (Citizenship), History (Myself and My Family), Learn Together (Human Rights), Visual Arts, Physical Education (Water Safety). Themes/projects will also be explored. Some themes will be explored by the whole school community through assemblies and school initiatives.

## **3. Approaches and Methodologies:**

Ashbourne ETNS believes that the approaches and methodologies used in SPHE are crucial to the effectiveness of the SPHE programme. Active learning and language development are the principal learning and teaching

approaches recommended for SPHE, therefore we will endeavour to teach SPHE using a variety of strategies which include:

- Drama activities
- Cooperative games
- Use of pictures
- Photographs and visual images
- Games
- Use of Media
- Use of interactive whiteboard & digital devices
- Looking at children's work
- Circle Time
- Guided Reflective time

A broad range of approaches and methodologies are suggested in the curriculum guidelines to realise the aim of involving children in their own learning.

- Talk and discussion ( Language Development/ Oral Language)
- Skills through content
- Collaborative learning
- Problem solving
- Use of the environment

## **4. Assessment and record keeping**

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. The primary emphasis in this area is on informal assessment.

We use the following informal assessment tools:

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

## **5. Children with different needs**

Teachers are familiar with the NCCA guidelines for teachers of students with different needs. We do our best at all times to endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to ensure that every child has equal opportunities in learning. We use the following techniques to cater for individual difference:

- To use a mixture of whole-class teaching and focused group work
- To set tasks of various complexities
- To plan topics so that opportunities are provided for alternative investigation work
- To use a range of questions
- To use a wide range of communication skills
- To give individuals and groups the direction, stimulus and encouragement they need as the children are engaged in activities
- Use focused vocabulary and phrases to assist EAL learners
- Visuals
- Social stories

The Special Education Team will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. Ashbourne ETNS will liaise with trained professionals/appropriate agencies, where appropriate, when dealing with sensitive issues such as bereavement or loss to ensure that children involved are fully supported. Parents could be encouraged to mediate the information on certain topics with their own child.

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

Ashbourne ETNS recognises and values diversity, and believes that all children are entitled to access the services, facilities or amenities that are available in the school environment. Our school is co- educational and we endeavour to ensure that equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in all areas of the SPHE programme. We are multi denominational- we celebrate diversity and we ensure that every child is

made to feel valued, that their opinion matters. No child should ever be made to feel like an outsider. Our school is democratically run- everyone has a voice, this will be encouraged through our SPHE programme. Our school is child centred. We understand that every child's needs are different and we aim to ensure that all children's needs are being met.

## **7. Policies and programmes that support SPHE**

### **Policies**

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- RSE Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Digital Device Policy
- Anti- bullying Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- SSE & SIP- focusing on Wellbeing 2023 onwards
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Nurture Policy

### **Programmes**

- Active School Flag
- Green Flag
- Amber Flag
- Friendship Week/ Anti- Bullying Week
- Fun Friends Programme
- Learn Together Programme

- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Restorative Practice

## 8. Homework

Homework in this subject will usually be informal. However if prescribed in SPHE, homework will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class.

## 9. Resources

Books for Pupils	Books for Teachers	Posters	Media & ICT
-Worksheets from Stay Safe/ Walk Tall / RSE Education Packs/ Be Safe	-Walk Tall -Stay Safe -Be Safe -RSE Manuals -Making the Links -Gender Equality Matters -We All Belong -All Together Now -Healthy Bodies -Zeeko Internet Safety Guide -My Selfie & the Wider World -Breathe-Self Regulation and Relaxation Techniques for Children	Various posters to be displayed throughout the school	-Busy Bodies -Learn Together-Resource Bank -PDST -Webwise -HTML Heros -Be Internet Awesome



## **10. Guest Speakers**

If 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, ethos and the attached policies.

## **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 in SPHE.

## **12. Staff Development**

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

- Training in Stay Safe
- Training in Walk Tall
- Training in the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme /R.S.E.
- PDST Advisor support
- Child Protection
- Nurture Training

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.

## **13. Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing SPHE as we believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility. This

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

## **14. Community Links**

Ashbourne ETNS believes that the local community has a very important role to play in supporting the programme in SPHE and we endeavour to liaise with members such as the Dental Hygienist/Health Nurse/ Fireman/Vet/New Parents/Gardaí/ Local Sports Clubs, Tusla.

## **15. Success Criteria**

The success of this plan will be evaluated through teachers 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 if 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

## **16. Implementation**

### **A) Roles and Responsibilities**

Ashbourne ETNS believes that the whole 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.

Each teacher is responsible for the implementation of the SPHE policy with his/her own class.

Roles 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 to the programme and the school. Teachers will remain with the class for the duration of the visit and the Principal must be informed in advance of all visiting speakers and the content of their presentation.

**B) Timeframe**

The plan has been implemented since September 2012 and was most recently updated in May 2023.

## **17. 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. We will review the policy in 2025. The whole staff is responsible for coordinating this review.

Those involved in the review may include- teachers, pupils, parents, postholders, Board of Management and others.

**B) Timeframe**

This Plan will be reviewed in May 2025.

## **18. Ratification & Communication**

The Board of Management ratified this plan on the 29th August 2023

Signed:

Signed:

*Roel Gildea*

*Jah nt*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 29/08/23

Date: 29/08/23

This Plan is available for parents to view at the school.