

# Bennekerry N.S.

## SPHE - Social Personal and Health Education

### Introductory Statement and Rationale:

In 2013 it was decided to draw up a whole school plan in SPHE and RSE.

The plan is a record of whole school decisions in relation to SPHE in line with the Primary Curriculum of 1999. Its purpose is to guide the teachers in adopting a consistent and coherent approach to the teaching and learning of SPHE in our school. It is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for SPHE to ensure appropriate coverage of all aspects of the curriculum from Infants to Sixth Class. This plan was reviewed and updated by the staff during the school year 2018-19 as part of the School Self-Evaluation Process.

### Our School Philosophy:

Bennekerry NS is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While we are a school with a Catholic ethos, we also have due regard for all other religions. We endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils, respect for themselves, other people and property and to encourage them to become responsible citizens.

We will endeavour to encourage the children to examine and explore relationships in their lives and learn how to develop and enjoy friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect.

### Vision and Aims:

Our school values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. We recognise that SPHE is intrinsic to 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 to develop feelings of self-worth and self-confidence while encouraging their ability to relate to others in a positive way. The programme also 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 where possible.

### **We endorse the aims and objectives of the Curriculum for SPHE and in addition we emphasise the following:**

- To enable the children to develop an awareness of their responsibilities to others in a caring community.
- To enable the children to take greater control of their personal lives as individuals.
- To encourage the children to be active in determining their own learning.

### CONTENT OF THE PLAN: Strands and Strand Units

SPHE is planned in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE over a **two year period**. Teachers are familiar with the content objectives for each class level, and will endeavour to cover those strand units outlined in the plan.

Active learning is the principal teaching and learning approach recommended for SPHE.

The SPHE programme reflects a spiral approach, where similar aspects are revisited in different ways according to the age, stage of development and readiness of the child.

SPHE is intrinsic to the learning and teaching that occurs both formally and informally in the school and in the classroom. It is at the discretion of the teacher to adapt the plan to suit the social, personal and health needs of their class – e.g. a particular class might need additional work on friendship and bullying, self-identification etc,

### **Contexts for SPHE:**

SPHE will be taught through a combination of contexts.....

- Positive school climate and atmosphere.
- Discrete time.
- Integration with other subject areas.

### **Positive school climate and atmosphere:**

Teachers are aware of the importance of promoting a positive school climate.

### ***Our key messages are:***

- **We cater for the individual needs of the children.** Individual needs may be social, emotional, spiritual, physical and/ or intellectual. Through assessment, observation and discussion with parents we strive to identify and meet individual needs.
- **We provide opportunities to enhance the self-esteem of all members of the school community.** The staff is aware that their role in helping children to develop their self-esteem is to create an environment within the school that is as positive as possible for all concerned.
- **We aim to actively value diversity and to prioritise inclusive and respectful language.** 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.
- **We work to develop an effective communication system with the school and between school and home.**
- **We support a health-promoting physical environment.** Emphasis on healthy lunches, healthy lifestyle, road safety, water safety and regular fire drills are some of the areas promoted. 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 habits required for maintaining a clean environment.
- **We promote democratic processes in all levels of school life while balancing roles, rights and responsibilities.**
- Children experience and practice the democratic process by:
  - Negotiating the class rules at the start of the year
  - Sharing responsibility
  - Valuing the opinion of others
  - Experiencing a sense of belonging to their own class group and the wider school community
  - Developing a sense of commitment to common goals.

### **Discrete time:**

SPHE may be timetabled for ½ hour per week, one hour per fortnight or blocks of 1 – 2 hours per month at the discretion of the class teacher. Children who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching must be included for as much of the SPHE programme as possible. The discrete time is used to develop and practise particular skills, deal with sensitive issues or explore issues that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum.

### **Integration:**

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 Religion, English, Gaeilge, SESE, Visual Arts and Drama.

### **Approaches and methodologies:**

**Active learning is the principal learning and teaching approach used in the SPHE programme.**

The following active learning strategies are promoted for SPHE:

- 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 ...
- Other strategies as devised by the class teacher

### **Assessment:**

Children's progress in SPHE is assessed mainly through 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.

### **Children with special needs:**

The requirements of children with special needs will be taken into consideration when planning class lessons and related activities. Children who experience bereavement or loss, serious illness or other major personal situations are supported and consideration is given to meeting their individual needs in the most appropriate manner.

### **Equality of participation and access:**

We view the SPHE programme as playing a key role in ensuring equality of opportunities for all children.

### **Policies and programmes that support SPHE:**

SPHE links with other policies/ programmes used in the school – Stay Safe, Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying, Health and Safety Statement, Healthy Eating, Physical Education Curriculum and Green Schools. Teachers are expected to be familiar with these policies/programmes and ensure that the school's agreed policy is followed when addressing these issues.

### **Current Provision of SPHE in this school (These are resources which are drawn from)**

Stay Safe Programme

Walk Tall Programme

'Busy Bodies' booklet and on-line DVD

Tom's Power Flower

Talking to Your Child about Relationships, Sexuality and Growing Up

Weaving Well-Being

Small World

Grow in Love

The above programmes cover a lot of the topics which are dealt with in the SPHE programme and are currently being used in the school

## **Overview of STAY SAFE PROGRAMME**

### **Aim:**

To teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous.

### **Content:**

The lessons cover the following areas:

- Feeling Safe and Unsafe
- Friendship and Bullying
- Touches
- Secrets and Telling
- Strangers

Children participating in this programme will learn:

- To distinguish between safe and unsafe feelings
- What to do if lost
- What to do if the phone or doorbell rings when they are alone in the house
- The importance of friends in children's lives
- What to do if bullied
- Stay Safe Rules: Say No/ Get Away/ Tell
- Why not to bully others
- Appreciating normal, appropriate touches
- That unsafe touches should never be kept secret
- How to respond to inappropriate touches (Stay Safe Rules)
- Good and bad secrets
- That some secrets should not be kept
- Who and how to tell if in trouble
- About strangers and safety strategies

### **Request for withdrawal by parent of pupil:**

All parents will be given information about how to access the lessons online. If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the Stay Safe programme, they are welcome to visit the school to discuss their concerns with the Principal. Following this meeting the parents may request to have their child/ children withdrawn from class when sensitive areas are being taught in class. The request must be submitted in writing to the Principal and the parents are expected to make their wishes known each year to the new class teacher. A copy of the letter will be kept in the pupils file. In such circumstances, the onus will be on the parents to teach this area to their child/ children at home.

### **Child Protection:**

The school follows the DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, which are based on Children First, national Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The Principal is the designated liaison person (DLP). Each teacher has a copy of our Child Safeguarding Statement and it is available to parents on the school website. A hard copy can be obtained on request from the school secretary. Copies are also displayed throughout the school.

### **Resources**

A comprehensive selection of resources are available in the school.

### **Parental involvement**

SPHE is a shared responsibility between family and school. Copies of the school plan for SPHE are available on the website.

Parents will be made aware of content objectives that deal with 'sensitive' issues before teachers cover these in class and will be asked to discuss these topics with their child prior to the lessons in school. From time to time parents will also be encouraged to discuss and reinforce some of the content of the programme at home with their child.

**Community links:**

The school will liaise with the Health Promotion Unit of the Health Board and other agencies to assist, as appropriate, with the implementation of the school's programme for SPHE.

**Review:**

This policy and the plans for SPHE will be reviewed two years after implementation, from time to time according to Department of Education and Science curricular changes or recommendations or if the staff see it as an area of priority for modification.

This document was originally ratified by the Board of Management of Bennekerry National School at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014

It was amended and updated by the staff of Bennekerry N.S. as part of SSE in the school year 2018-19 and was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)