

Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy – Mayo Abbey National School

Introductory Statement

We, in Mayo Abbey NS understand that the nature and purpose of SPHE in line with our school mission statement should endeavour to develop, promote and foster in each child an appreciation, understanding and respect for their personal, social and health education.

The staff of Mayo Abbey NS formulated this school policy for SPHE, in consultation with our Board of Management and our parents/guardians, as we believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility and their contribution and involvement will be essential to the effective implementation of the SPHE programme in the school. It was drafted under the guidance of the Principal, and brought to the attention of the Board of Management and parents/guardians and other stakeholders.

Rationale

Aspects of SPHE have been taught in Mayo Abbey NS for many years through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Friends for Life, Zippy's Friends and Relationships and Sexuality Education. It has also been taught through integration with other subject areas such as Physical Education, Religion, Geography, etc. Our teaching of SPHE is planned for on a whole school basis.

Vision

Mayo Abbey NS values the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring school community. We recognize 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. Parents/ guardians have the primary role in the Social, Personal and Health Education of their children so their involvement will be encouraged as much as possible.

Aims

The children of Mayo Abbey 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.

Content of Plan Curriculum

1. Strands and Strand Units: The curriculum 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. Mayo Abbey 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. Mayo Abbey NS has created the timetable below to reflect this approach:

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September/October	Self-Identity (Myself)	Myself and my family (Myself and others)
November/December	My friends and other people (Myself and others)	Relating to others (Myself and others)
January/February	Safety and Protection (Myself)	Growing and changing (Myself)
March/April	Making decisions (Myself)	Taking care of my body (Myself)
May/June	Media Education (Myself and the wider world)	Developing citizenship (Myself and the wider world)

2. Contexts for SPHE: SPHE will be taught in Mayo Abbey NS through a combination of the following contexts:

2.1 Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

Mayo Abbey NS has created a positive atmosphere by:

- building effective communication
- catering for individual needs
- developing democratic processes
- enhancing self-esteem
- fostering respect for diversity
- fostering inclusive and respectful language
- developing appropriate communication
- developing a school approach to assessment.

2.2 Discrete time for SPHE

SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher's timetable in Mayo Abbey NS. However, teachers may allocate additional time to allow for more in-depth exploration of a strand unit.

2.3 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, History, Religion, Visual Arts, Physical Education, etc. Themes/Projects such as Healthy Eating Week, Friendship Week, Healthy Heart Week, Lenten Campaign (Trócaire), etc. may also be explored.

3. Approaches and Methodologies: Mayo Abbey NS believe that the approaches and methodologies used in SPHE are crucial to the effectiveness of the programme. Active learning is the principle learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE, therefore we will endeavour to teach SPHE using a variety of strategies which include: information technologies and looking at children's work, co-operative games, use of pictures, photographs and visual images, drama activities, written activities, use of media and ICT.

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. Mayo Abbey NS uses the following recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE:

- teacher observation
- teacher-designed tasks and tests
- projects.

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. Mayo Abbey 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: Mayo Abbey 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. Opportunities are given to all children to participate in discussion, debate, presentation, etc. Mayo Abbey NS is under Roman Catholic school management, and we endeavour to provide for the diversity of our school community (for example but not limited to; Members of Travelling community, Children with disabilities, Families with literacy difficulties, Children who are learning English as a second language).
7. Organisation: Policies and Programmes that support SPHE:

Policies

Child Protection
Anti-Bullying
Relationships and Sexuality Education
Substance Use
Code of Behaviour
Enrolment
Health and Safety
Healthy Eating
Internet Acceptable Usage

Programmes

Stay Safe
Walk Tall
Active School Flag
Green Flag
Friends for Life
RSE Programme
Be Safe (Water/ Fire/ Road Safety Programme)

8. Homework: SPHE homework, if prescribed, will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class.
9. Resources: Stay Safe Programme, Friends for Life, Green Schools Programme, RSE programme (this list is not prescriptive nor exhaustive).
Programmes and Other Materials:
Books for Pupil: Relevant Worksheets
Books for Teacher: RSE Manuals, Walk Tall, Stay Safe, Zippys Friends, Friends for Life
Audio / Visual: Stay Safe
Posters: Various posters throughout the school
Media & ICT: Relevant websites and webinars
Guest Speakers (in-person/webinar):
When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class teacher will remain in the classroom (as per Circular 22/2010) and will ensure that the speaker has the relevant Garda Vetting and is aware of this school policy and attached policies.

10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting:

This policy 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 Míósúil and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in SPHE.

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

- 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.
- training in the Friends for Life Programme
- PDST Advisor support and modelling of lessons
- other 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.

12. Parental Involvement: Parental involvement is considered an integral part of effectively implementing SPHE as Mayo Abbey NS believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility. This policy and the curriculum documents are available for parents/ guardians to inform them of the programme for SPHE.

13. Community Links: Mayo Abbey 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 Public Health Nurse, Firefighter, Community Garda, etc.

Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be evaluated through teacher's planning and preparation and we will also judge its success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this policy.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities:

Mayo Abbey 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/ Guardians and the Local Community.

Timeframe:

The plan will be implemented from March 2023.

This plan is available to view at the school by parents/ guardians on request and on the school webpage.