



SPHE Policy

(a) INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

The staff of Darver N.S formulated this school plan for S.P.H.E, 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 through staff consultation and collaboration during a whole staff meeting. It was then sent to all parents for their submissions. It was presented to the Board of Management for discussion and ratification on 7th April 2022. It is communicated annually to parents through our school website and termly newsletters. This plan is to be viewed as a working document. It is constantly being updated and amended.

(b) RATIONALE

Aspects of SPHE have been taught in Darver N.S for many years through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Relationships and Sexuality Education and through our involvement in the Health Promoting Schools Initiative. It has also been taught through integration with other subject areas such as Physical Education, Religion, SESE, English, Art and Drama. The specific teaching of the subject of SPHE is formalised in this

policy. This plan is a record of our good practice in this subject area and also conforms to the principles of the curriculum statements on SPHE.

(c) VISION STATEMENT

The staff of Scoil Dairbhre, through the SPHE programme hope to provide each pupil with the opportunity to grow and develop as healthy rounded individuals. We aim to give each child the basic training needed so that he/she will grow to be an integrated member of the community and a self-reliant individual. Through the SPHE programme the children may develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their actions and decisions in these areas of their lives both now and in the future.

AIMS

- to promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- to foster in the child a sense of care and respect for him/herself and in others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
- to promote the health of the child and provide the 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

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 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.

1. CURRICULUM

Since the SPHE programme is spiral in nature we will cover the following content at each level throughout the school over a two-year period.

The below timetable reflects our approach:

Strands	Strand Units Year 1 (Stay Safe)	Strand Units Year 2 (RSE)
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Self-identity ❖ Safety and Protection ❖ Making decisions (3rd-6th) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Taking care of my body ❖ Growing and changing
Myself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ My friends and other people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Myself and my family ❖ Relating to others
Myself and the wider world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Media education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Developing citizenship

As part of our two-year S.P.H.E planning the Stay Safe programme will be taught in the opposite year to the RSE programme. We will follow the outline below:

Year 1 (Stay Safe)	Year 2 (RSE)
2022 / 2023	2021 / 2022
2024 / 2025	2023 / 2024
2026 / 2027	2025 / 2026
2028 / 2029	2027 / 2028
2030 / 2031	2029 / 2030

2. CONTEXTS FOR TEACHING/LEARNING SPHE

SPHE will be taught in Darver NS through a combination of the following contexts. A positive school climate and atmosphere will be developed and nurtured. The following strategies will be adopted:

1. **Building effective communication within the school**

- In school:
 - ❖ E-mail/phones in classrooms
 - ❖ Notice boards – staff room
 - ❖ Staff whatsapp group
 - ❖ Children are involved in in-class decisions
 - ❖ Children report bullying to class teacher/yard duty teacher
- Parents:
 - ❖ Emails / Notifications through the Eolas app
 - ❖ Notes i.e. homework journal
 - ❖ Parent-teacher meetings
 - ❖ By appointment meetings
 - ❖ Tea/coffee sessions after religious/sacramental events/school events
 - ❖ Parents' Association guest speakers/courses for parents, fundraising events
- Visitors
 - ❖ Visitors are greeted upon arrival/offered tea or coffee
 - ❖ Facilities/room provided for visitors
 - ❖ Invited to staff room for breaks

2. **Catering for individual needs**

- ❖ Individual reward system in every class
- ❖ Announcements
- ❖ School band/choir/sports teams/quizzes/school concerts
- ❖ SET withdrawal timetable coordinated with class teachers to ensure fairness
- ❖ Variety of teaching styles and activities used – active learning
- ❖ General positive school climate with regard to reinforcing positive behaviour
- ❖ Rainbows programme
- ❖ Friends for Life/Fun Friends programmes
- ❖ Special Education Teachers
- ❖ In-class support in addition to withdrawal
- ❖ Access to Counsellor (school based)
- ❖ Social skills training

3. **Creating a health-promoting physical environment**

- ❖ Beautifully decorated and well-maintained school
- ❖ Playground markings for yard time activities
- ❖ Playhouses on the yard for play time
- ❖ Children's work on display throughout the school
- ❖ Litter management by senior students
- ❖ Recycling in classrooms
- ❖ Newsletter mentions for achievements
- ❖ Active Parents' Association involvement in decisions – surveys carried out

4. **Developing democratic processes**

- ❖ Pupils involved in drawing up classroom rules
- ❖ Code of Behaviour is widely publicised
- ❖ Reading buddies/recycling campaign/butterfly garden
- ❖ Job allocation in classrooms
- ❖ Involvement in school activities both during school and outside of school hours
- ❖ Children represent the school in a wide range of outside school initiatives/competitions: sports, music, art, quizzes, write a book
- ❖ Assemblies
- ❖ Active School Flag committee

5. **Enhancing self-esteem and well-being of members of the school community**

- ❖ Reward systems in place in classrooms
- ❖ Displays of children's work
- ❖ Photographs on display of winners/success/achievements/special occasions
- ❖ Weekly library to promote reading and choice in reading material
- ❖ Swimming classes for 3rd-6th classes once a year
- ❖ New pupils appointed buddies to assist in settling in
- ❖ Google drive folder for new staff members including all relevant policies

- ❖ Staff social nights
- ❖ Involvement of staff in committees
- ❖ Organisation of and attending of training courses for staff
- ❖ Availing of DES support
- ❖ Regular appraisal and recognition of staff efforts
- ❖ Inclusion of student and staff work in the newsletter

6. Fostering respect for diversity

- ❖ Anti-bullying policy exists and is implemented by all staff
- ❖ Communication of school policies and practices to all staff, parents and children
- ❖ All children are included in all school activities such as teams, choirs, concerts, photo opportunities etc.
- ❖ Resources are in place to cater for the needs of minorities e.g. SET hours, SNA access
- ❖ Integration of different social groups through organised games, activities, cooking etc.
- ❖ Teachers voluntarily run the “Rainbows” programme to cater for children in need
- ❖ Social skills groups in action to help children who display anti-social behaviour, a lack of personal discipline or who are finding social norms difficult.

7. Fostering inclusive and respectful language

- ❖ Refer to children by their Christian name
- ❖ Praise, encourage and affirm
- ❖ Zero tolerance for racist/offensive language
- ❖ Awareness e.g. children go to Ms. X – not to a slow class, traveller class etc.
- ❖ Promote minority cultures in a positive light and develop awareness through teaching about different cultures
- ❖ Being conscious of different family structures and units – showing respect at all times and refer to them in whole class discussions

8. Developing appropriate communication between home and school

- ❖ Termly newsletters shared with parents through email/the Eolas app/school website
- ❖ Notice boards and posters in the school
- ❖ Parents' Association
- ❖ Collaboration for children with additional needs for assessment/support plans
- ❖ Involvement of parents in school decisions through surveys
- ❖ School email address and principal's email address regularly shared with parents to foster open communication
- ❖ Parental communication policy outlines how to communicate appropriately with the school

9. **Developing a school approach to assessment**

- ❖ Teacher and SNA observations (ongoing)
- ❖ Discussion with children formally and informally
- ❖ Open forum in Circle Time and Social Skills groups
- ❖ Teacher designed tasks and tests
- ❖ Portfolios of student's work
- ❖ Communication with parents via email, telephone and face-to-face meetings

10. **Discrete time for SPHE**

SPHE is allocated 30 minutes per week on each teacher's timetable at Darver NS. However, teachers may alternatively allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow for more in-depth exploration of a strand unit.

11. **Quiet Time**

Teachers will incorporate quiet time into their classrooms through Drop Everything and Read time, Quiet Time during art activities, mindfulness and prayer. This will give the children time to slow down, reflect, think and enjoy the quietness in their classrooms.

12. **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 Physical

Education, Religion, SESE, English, Art, Drama and Play. Themes/Projects such as Healthy Eating Week - Food Dudes, Active Schools Week, Wellbeing Week, Gardening, Friendship Week, Agri-Awareness Week, Healthy Heart Week, Lenten Campaign etc. may also be explored.

3. APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The methodologies to be used in the implementation of the S.P.H.E. programme will include the following:

- Active learning which includes drama activities, co-operative games, use of pictures, photographs and visual images, written activities such as surveys, questionnaires, projects and worksheets, discussion and use of media and information and communication technologies.
- Story and Picture Books
- Looking at children's work
- Circle time
- Aistear
- Collaborative learning
- Problem-solving
- Musical performances
- Assemblies
- Use of the environment
- The development of an outdoor classroom to include our school garden and vegetable, herb & fruit patch

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 teaching methods being used. The primary emphasis in this area will be on informal assessment but at times this will be complemented by formal techniques, such as behaviour tracking/plans, pupil profiles (Primary Classroom Planners) and set criteria reference tests for certain aspects. The informal tools to be used will be:

- a) Teacher observation
- b) Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- c) Portfolios and projects

Discussion will take place between parents and teachers regarding the assessment of individual children at parent-teacher meetings, to ensure a more realistic picture of the child's overall progress, strengths and weaknesses. Input from the inspectorate is welcomed at all times and any recorded feedback from the inspectorate will be valued by all the partners involved in this plan.

5. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

All children are given the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the full range of experiences offered in SPHE. In planning for SPHE our school takes account of the range of differences in the school so that all children are given the opportunity to obtain maximum benefit from the programme. Teachers will adapt and modify activities and methodologies where necessary to encourage participation by all children. Special Education Teaches will supplement the work of class teachers where necessary. Darver NS will liaise with trained professionals/relevant agencies when dealing with sensitive issues such as bereavement or loss to ensure that the children are fully supported.

6. EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

Darver NS recognises and values diversity and believes all children are entitled to access the service, facilities and amenities that are available in the school environment. Our school is a mixed-sex school and we endeavour to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure that equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate and engage in all SPHE activities. Darver NS is under *Roman Catholic Patronage*. Children with disabilities, families with literacy difficulties, children

who are learning English as a second language are all catered for.

7. POLICIES & PROGRAMMES THAT SUPPORT S.P.H.E. CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

- (7.1) Code of Behaviour
 - Admissions Policy
 - Anti-Bully Policy
 - Healthy Eating Policy
- (7.2) Substance Use Policy (In development)
- (7.3) Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy (RSE)
- (7.4) Stay Safe Programme
- (7.5) Children Protection Policy
- (7.6) Safety Statement
- (7.7) Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

8. HOMEWORK

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

9. RESOURCES

The following programmes are available in our school as resources:

- SPHE Curriculum
- Grow in Love
- Stay Safe Programme
- R.S.E Manuals
- Walk Tall
- Making the Links (PDST)
- PAWS - Primary Aquatics Water Safety

- RSA - Road Safety
- HSA and Farm Safe Schools
- Fire Drill Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Posters
- Interactive resources using the iPads, computers and interactive whiteboard
- Newspapers / Magazines

Resources are distributed among the teachers and extra resources are available online when required.

Guest Speakers

When 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 and attached policies.

The Parents Association may organise speakers on relevant topics for parents. These topics may include but are not limited to:

- Substance Abuse
- Healthy Eating
- Aspects of Child Development
- R.S.E
- Transition from primary to secondary school

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

11. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Some staff have attended training in the following areas and this training will support the effective implementation of the SPHE programme:

- ❖ Training in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2017 (Children First)
- ❖ Training in the Stay Safe programme
- ❖ Training in the Substance misuse programme / Walk Tall
- ❖ Training in Relationships and Sexuality Education programme (RSE)
- ❖ Rainbows programme training
- ❖ Friends for Life/Fun Friends training
- ❖ Wellbeing in the Classroom
- ❖ Mindfulness in the Classroom

Staff will undertake any relevant training when available/applicable and will always seek to remain up-to-date with any changes to the SPHE curriculum / teaching of SPHE.

12. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Darver NS believe SPHE is a shared responsibility and as such parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing the SPHE curriculum. This plan and the curriculum documents are available for parents to inform them of the programme for SPHE and they are welcomed as school stakeholders to contribute to the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy and Substance Use Policy. They are also welcomed as school stakeholders to participate and contribute to the Health Promoting Schools initiative.

13. COMMUNITY LINKS

Darver NS believe that the local community has a very important role to play in supporting the SPHE programme and endeavour to liaise with community members and invite them into the school community. Children are involved in the community in the following ways:

- ❖ Church/choir singing
- ❖ Carol singing at Christmas time
- ❖ Community games/Cumann na mBunscoil
- ❖ Environmental awards
- ❖ Visits from local historians/Gardaí/firemen/vets/Health nurse/Dental Hygienist/Parish Priest/Grandparents

- ❖ HSE – provide health checks and can be involved in giving talks to children and parents on topics connected to SPHE

14. **SUCCESS CRITERIA**

The success of this plan will be measured by observing pupil behaviour both individuals and the group. We will judge its success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this plan. We hope to help children become more confident, resilient and self-reliant. In the overall context we hope to encourage an atmosphere conducive to co-operative, harmonious learning. We will be seeking feedback through parent-teacher meetings, community groups and secondary schools.

15. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Darver NS believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement the SPHE programme. Therefore, the teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, Parents and the Local Community, under the guidance of the Post Holder, Jane O'Hare. It will be regularly reviewed and updated and may be discussed at staff meetings throughout the school year.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on _____ and will be communicated annually to the parent-body on the school website and through termly school newsletters. Parents can receive a copy of the plan by contacting the school secretary.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

School Principal & Secretary, Board of Management

Date _____