



## **Holy Family National School SPHE Policy**

### **Introductory Statement**

The staff of Holy Family National School 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 school.

### **Scope:**

The policy applies to all pupils, parents, staff members and visitors to our school.

### **Rationale:**

The area of SPHE is regarded in the school to be a very important curricular subject. It is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing wellbeing, beliefs and values about child protection, substance use, sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.

### **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:**

Holy Family NS is a Roman Catholic School which aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. This school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

### **Mission Statement**

Holy Family aims to create a secure, caring and creative environment for all its children.

### **Aims/Objectives:**

- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

### **Child Protection:**

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment.
- Provide a personal safety skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school.
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community.
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and staff.

### **Substance Use:**

- To arrange the safe administration and storage of medicines/medical substances where necessary at school.
- To make a contribution in the area of education and prevention through the SPHE programme.
- To support parents who are the child's primary educators in addressing drug misuse.
- To minimise the dangers caused to children by drug misuse and drug mis-users within the school community.

### **RSE:**

- To offer children an opportunity to learn about their own development and about their own friendship and relationships with others.
- To develop and foster a sense of wellbeing.
- To develop positive self-image including a positive sense of self awareness, self esteem and self worth.
- To promote respect for themselves and for others and to develop personal skills which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships.
- To develop strategies that enable pupils to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- To help children to think and to act in a moral, caring and responsible way and to value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood.
- To develop and promote a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life.

### **Policy/Content**

Stay Safe Programme, Social Personal and Health Education Programme, Walk Tall.  
 Safety and Protection Programme.  
 Relationship and Sexuality Education Programme, RSE.

### **Procedures**

- This curriculum includes strands and units pertaining to RSE and Substance Use.
- The Stay Safe Programme is however taught every year in one block of time throughout the school. (As recommended by Child Protection Procedures, 2017).
- Parents will be advised in advance of the lessons being taught in RSE relating to "Growing & Changing" and "Taking Care of my Body". Teachers may choose to use a question box at their discretion. Parents have the option to withdraw their child from these lessons but only in consultation with their child's current class teacher and alternative arrangements will be made. Parents are asked to inform class teachers every year if their child will be opting out of these lessons. Parents are also asked to put this request in writing, stating the reasons for their children's withdrawal from the content.
- All concerns/discussions involving child protection/child welfare issues will be reported to the DLP (Sarah-Jane Lewis).

### **Contexts for SPHE**

SPHE will be taught in Holy Family National School through a combination of the following contexts:

#### **Positive School Climate and Atmosphere**

Holy Family National School has created a positive atmosphere by:

- Building effective communication
- Catering for individual needs
- Creating a health promoting physical environment
- Developing democratic process
- Enhancing self esteem
- Fostering respect for diversity
- Fostering inclusive and respectful language
- Developing appropriate communication
- Developing a school approach to assessment

#### **Discrete Time for SPHE**

SPHE is allocated half hour per week on each teacher's timetable. However, teachers may allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow more in-depth exploration of a strand unit.

#### **Integration with Other Subject Areas.**

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, Anti-Bullying, religious Celebrations may also be explored.

#### **Approaches & Methodologies**

We believe that the approaches and methodologies used in SPHE are crucial to the effectiveness of the programme. Active learning is the principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE., therefore we will endeavour to teach SPHE using a variety of strategies which include:

- Drama activities such as role play
- Circle Time
- Co-operative games
- Use of pictures
- Photographs and visual images
- Written activities
- Use of media
- Information technologies and looking at children's work

### **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 the effectiveness and suitability of the programme and the teaching methods being used. Teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, portfolios and projects are the informal tools for assessment of SPHE.

### **Children with Additional Needs**

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation with children with SEN. The Special Education Teachers will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. The school will liaise with trained professionals/ appropriate agencies when dealing with sensitive issues such as bereavement/loss to ensure that the children involved are fully supported. The school will avail of the school support services of SESS and PDST to address the new Stay Safe Programme in our Specialist Unit for Autism.

### **Equality of Participation and Access**

Holy Family National School 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. We endeavour to ensure that equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in discussion, debate and presentation.

### **Continuity**

Due to the changeable multigrade school context at Holy Family National School. Each teacher will place a list of themes covered in their class file to be forwarded to the next class teacher.

### **Resources**

- Stay Safe
- Walk Tall
- RSE
- Busy Bodies DVD
- Friends for Life
- Fun Friends
- Incredible Years Programme
- Wellbeing in Primary Schools, HSE.

### **Policies that support SPHE**

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Admission Policy
- Health & Safety

### **Homework**

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

### **Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing SPHE at Holy Family National School. We believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility. This plan and the curriculum documents are available to parents to inform them of the programme for SPHE.

### **Success Criteria**

The success of this plan will be evaluated through the teacher's planning, preparation and consistency of delivery. Learning outcomes and pupil achievement will also contribute towards evaluation of success criteria.

### **Implementation/Review**

This policy will be reviewed in March 2026.

### **Ratification**

Signed: *Very Rev Canon Ramon Munster (Chairperson)*  
[Sarah-Jane Lewis](#) *(Principal)*

Date: 25/5/21

