

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

2025/2026

2026/2027

Headford Primary School



Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

Introductory Statement

Headford Primary is a newly amalgamated primary school (Sept 2024) under Catholic Patronage. It is now a coeducational mainstream school with classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

The staff of Headford Primary formulated this school plan for SPHE, in consultation with our Board of Management and our Parents/Guardians, 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.

Rationale

Aspects of SPHE have been taught in our schools through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, R.S.E and Walk Tall. It has also been taught through integration with other subjects such as P.E., Religion, Geography etc. However, we wish to formalise our teaching of SPHE and plan for it on a whole school basis.

In developing this plan, the school seeks:

- To benefit teaching and learning in our school
- To conform to principles of teaching and learning outlined in the curriculum
- To review the existing work in SPHE
- To establish a formal structure for teaching SPHE.

Vision and Aims

Vision

We strive to ensure that each child through positive learning experiences will be stimulated to achieve their full potential, face life confidently, find fulfillment and be respectful in an ever changing world. We aim to foster the personal development, health and wellbeing of each individual child. To help him/her create positive supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society.

Aims

In line with our school ethos, Social, Personal and Health Education will provide opportunities for the individual child to develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform his/her decisions and actions now and in the future enabling them to respect and relate to themselves and others and become an active and responsible citizen in society.

Headford Primary 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. 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. The parents/guardians have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children so their role will be encouraged as much as possible.

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for SPHE

- *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*

Shared responsibility

SPHE does not begin or end in school. Children's understanding of the world, their own role and place in society and ways of behaving are significantly influenced by the family and the home environment. While this continues throughout their lives, other factors, such as the media, friends, peers and individual experiences, become increasingly influential.

An SPHE programme is most effective when it is based on a consistency in approach and where the responsibility is shared by parents, teachers, children, board of management, health professionals and relevant members of the community. This partnership approach helps to ensure that children are provided with a consistent experience in SPHE and are able to make connections between life at home, in the school and in the community.

Content of Plan

Curriculum: Strands and strand units

SPHE is planned so that children receive a comprehensive programme over a two-year cycle. Teachers have allocated strand units from each of the strands to each class. This ensures that the strand units not covered in one year are included in the programme of work for the following year.

The content objectives for some of the more sensitive areas of the RSE elements of SPHE may be addressed in discrete time.

The curriculum is delineated at 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.

Headford Primary 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. Headford Primary have created this timetable to reflect this approach:

	J1, 1 st , 3 rd , 5 th	SI, 2 nd , 4 th , 6 th
Strand	Strand Units (Year 1) 2025/2026	Strand Units (Year 2) 2026/2027
Myself	<i>Self-identity</i>	
	<i>Safety and Protection (Jan-Feb)-Stay Safe</i>	<i>Growing and Changing</i>
	<i>Taking care of my body</i>	<i>Making Decisions</i> <i>*This strand unit is for third to sixth only. Infants to second complete the Safety Issues section of Safety and Protection</i>
Myself and others	<i>Myself and my family</i>	<i>Relating to others</i> <i>My friends and other people</i>
Myself and the wider world	<i>Developing Citizenship</i> <i>Media Education</i>	<i>Developing Citizenship</i>

*Sensitive areas in RSE will be taught through the strand units Taking care of my Body & Growing and Changing. Parents are informed when RSE is to be taught. See RSE policy. For 2025/2026 year pupils in 6th will cover RSE topics.

*Stay Safe will be taught through the strand unit Safety & Protection pitched at the senior level of class group. Parents are informed before Stay Safe is taught (Text-a-parent and/or note/email/Aladdin connect to parent/guardian). If parents/guardians withdraw their child from Stay Safe they must give a notice in writing to their class teacher. (9 lessons for Infants, 13-5th/6th). Arrangements will be made to group classes only for the sensitive lessons in Stay Safe & RSE. Junior/Senior Infants, First/Second, Third/Fourth, Fifth/Sixth) which may be supported by the SEN team.

However this timetable does not preclude a teacher from selecting a strand already taught the previous year should the need arise because of a particular incident or event.

Contexts for SPHE

SPHE will be taught through a combination of the following contexts

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

Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

Headford Primary has created a positive atmosphere by:

- building effective communication
- catering for individual needs
- creating a health-promoting physical environment
- developing democratic processes
- 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 1/2 hour per week on each teacher's timetable in Headford Primary. However teachers may allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow for more in depth exploration of a strand unit.

Integration with other subject areas and Linkage within SPHE

Teachers will aim 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.

Approaches and methodologies

Headford Primary believes 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 aim to teach SPHE using a variety of strategies which include

- Drama activities
- Mindfulness 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 ...

Assessment

Assessment is a central part of the everyday learning and teaching process in SPHE. Many of the benefits of SPHE do not emerge or are not evident until long after the child has left primary school. Assessment in SPHE refers to the aspects of the programme that can be realistically assessed during the child's time in school.

Assessment includes teacher-child discussion about progress, difficulties and strengths. A variety of techniques are used in assessing SPHE. This helps the teacher to plan and adapt learning experiences according to individual needs and ensure that the programme in SPHE is meaningful for all.

The tools that are recommended for SPHE assessment are

- teacher observation(Appendix 2 SPHE curriculum pg 73)
- teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Assessment Folders/ Portfolios/Projects/Worksheets

Children with different needs

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage the participation of children with special needs. The learning support and resource teachers may supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. Our school will liaise with trained professionals when dealing with sensitive issues such as bereavement or loss to ensure that the children involved are fully supported.

Equality of participation and access

Our school recognises and values diversity, and believes all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment. Ours is a mixed school and we endeavour to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure that equal opportunities are given to all. Our school is under Roman Catholic Management and we endeavour to provide for members of the Travelling Community, Children with disabilities, families with literacy difficulties, children who are learning English as a second language etc.

Policies and programmes that support SPHE

The following policies in our school support SPHE

Child Safeguarding Statement

Bi Cinealta

R.S.E Policy

Substance Use Policy

Code of Behaviour

Enrolment Policy

Health and Safety Statement

Anti Bullying Policy

Homework Policy

Assessment Policy

Internet Acceptable Usage
Healthy Eating
Mindful Matters
Smart Moves
Stay Safe
Road Safety Awareness
Food Dudes

Homework

(Refer to school's Homework Policy)

If homework is prescribed in SPHE in our school it will reflect the work already done in class.

Resources

The following resources which support SPHE are available in our school

SPHE Curriculum

Walk Tall....Revised Edition

RSE Dolls

Making the links....Revised Edition

R.S.E. Manuals

Stay Safe programme....Revised Programme

Bí Folláin CD

Action for Life

Be Safe

All around me

The nuts and bolts of co-operative learning

Busy Bodies dvd

Trocaire packs

School Enrichment Programme

Tintean Slán

Busy Breaks

IWB & Internet

Relevant Circulars • 0022/10 (SPHE) • 0065/2011 (Child Protection) • 0045/2013 (Anti-Bullying)

Guest Speakers (to include Past Pupils, Former Staff Members, Members of the Community)

(All speakers must be supervised by class teacher)

Individual teachers' planning and reporting

This plan in SPHE and the curriculum documents inform and guide teachers in their long and short term planning in SPHE. Teachers may use Making the Links (Revised Edition) in their planning. Each teacher also keeps a cuntas míosúil and this will inform our needs and progress when evaluating and reviewing our progress in SPHE. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that their class is divided into the appropriate groupings for the sensitive lessons in both RSE & Stay Safe. (Junior & Senior Infants, First & Second, Third & Forth, Fifth & Sixth). Class teacher must be present during all sensitive Stay Safe & RSE lessons.

Staff development

The staff has previously attended two days in-service on SPHE provided by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme.

The DLP and deputy DLP have attended training on the Child Protection Guidelines Information is given to all staff regarding courses offered in aspects of SPHE.

Staff have received as copy of this policy.

Copy of overview of curriculum content timeframe available in Staff Room and copy provided to each staff member.

Input by all staff in this new revision of SPHE policy.

Staff members previously attended Stay Safe, Walk Tall PDST seminar.

New Revised programmes in school.

Parental involvement

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implement SPHE as we believe SPHE is a shared responsibility. This plan and the curriculum documents are available for parents to inform them of the programme for SPHE. We value the contribution of our parents. They were invited to review the policy before it was ratified. Parents are informed prior to RSE & Stay Safe Lessons.

Community links

We believe 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 vet, Guards, the dentist, public health nurse, new parent, Former members of teaching staff, past pupils etc.

Success criteria

The success of this plan will be evaluated through teachers planning and preparation. We will also judge if the children have been able to achieve the aims outlined in the plan.

Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

The teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board, Parents and local community.

(b) Timeframe

This plan will be fully implemented by November 2025.

This plan was reviewed in October 2025 and will be implemented once ratified. (BOM meeting, 20th Oct 2025)

Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school. Aoife Corbett will co-ordinate this review.

(b) Timeframe

The plan will be reviewed in the 2027/2028 school year or before if necessary.

Ratification and Communication

This plan has been ratified by the Board and is available on file. (20/10/2025)

Signed Raymond Foleky

Date 20-10-2025

This plan is available to view at the school by the parents on request.

Websites:

PDST	<u>www.pdst.ie</u>
SDPS	<u>www.sdps.ie</u>
NCTE	<u>www.ncte.ie/internetsafety</u>
DES	<u>www.education.ie</u>
NCCA	<u>www.ncca.ie</u>
INTO	<u>www.into.ie</u>
IPPN	<u>www.ippn.ie</u>
Stay Safe	<u>www.staysafe.ie</u>
Webwise	<u>www.webwise.ie</u>
TUSLA	<u>www.tusla.ie</u>
Think u know	<u>www.thinkuknow.ie</u>

Dear Parents,

We are planning to teach a personal safety education programme called Stay Safe over the next few weeks. In accordance with the DES Child protection procedures for Primary and Post primary schools (2011) and circular 0065/2011, all primary schools must fully implement the Stay Safe programme.

The aim of the Stay Safe Programme is to teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous. It deals initially with common situations which most children will experience at some stage or other, e.g. getting lost or being bullied. The programme also teaches children the safety skills necessary to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse, and emphasises the importance of telling a trusted adult about any problems they have.

The Stay Safe Programme is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential to the success of the programme. It is important that parents are aware of the content of the Stay Safe lessons and are able to discuss the lessons with their children. Your child may bring home worksheets which will inform you of the topics being covered in class and how you can reinforce the messages at home.

You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm. A parent's guide is also downloadable at <http://www.staysafe.ie/PDFs/Parents/Stay-Safe-Parents-Guide.pdf> Please contact the school if you wish to discuss the programme further or if you have any concerns. The programme contains sensitive issues and we advise you to review the content. This programme has been revised and will be taught next week in all classes.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Ms. McNelis (Principal)

The Stay Safe Programme is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. We will be covering the following Stay Safe Topics in all classes over the next few weeks.

You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm.

Stay Safe Topics

1. Feeling Safe and Unsafe
2. Friendship and Bullying
3. Touches
4. Secrets and Telling
5. Strangers



SPHE Two Year Plan

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