



Whole School Plan for

SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education

■ Title

Social, Personal and Health Education Whole School Plan

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

The Commons N.S. is a primary school under Catholic patronage. It is a co-educational mainstream school with classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class with a current enrolment of 73 pupils as of 30/09/2023.

The staff of The Commons N.S. 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 the school. It was originally drawn up during an in-school planning day, with the assistance of a local cuiditheoir from the Primary Curriculum Support Program, and brought to the attention of the Board of Management and Parents.

It was revised by the school staff in September 2023 to reflect current Educational thinking, recent Department of Education initiatives and priorities post Lockdown and updated SPHE resources. It will be brought to the attention of the all parents/guardians through the school website and they will be given an opportunity to make any observations they wish. It will then be brought to the B.O.M. for final ratification after which it will be available to the whole community.

(b) Rationale

Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) is a distinct subject on the school curriculum and is currently taught in the Commons N.S. using approved educational programmes such as ... Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Relationship & Sexuality Education, Mindful Matters and Weaving Wellbeing. SPHE is also integrated with other subject areas such as Aistear, Physical Education, Art, Music, Religion, Geography etc

- R.S.E. (including the sensitive lessons) will be taught at all class levels each year in the context of the SPHE & RSE policy.
- The Stay Safe Programme of personal safety skills will be taught as a unit of lessons every two years.
- R.S.A. – Seatbelt Sheriffs.
- Incredible Edibles Programme
- Weaving Wellbeing... Will be taught by SET team to 5th & 6th class pupils each year.
- Building Bridges.
- Conflict Management
- Brain Calm
- Drug & Alcohol Awareness Programme for 6th Class annually

This updated plan will ensure that there is an integrated and co-ordinated whole school approach to the teaching of SPHE across all class levels from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. It will also guide teachers in planning for the teaching of SPHE and for the assessment of teaching and learning in S.P.H.E.

■ Vision and Aims

(a) Vision:

The SPHE curriculum in The Commons N.S. will support pupils to develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills to inform their decisions now and in the future. Through the teaching of SPHE pupils will be assisted to develop feelings of self worth and self confidence and will be taught to relate to others positively. They will be taught to be aware of their rights as individuals while accepting responsibility for their actions as members of the school and wider community.

(b) Aims:

The children of The Commons N.S. 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 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 several strand units or topic areas that contain particular objectives.

Overview of SPHE Curriculum	
Strand	This strand looks at:
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal development of the individual child, his/her health and care and respect for oneself. • Fostering personal responsibility for actions and behaviour. • Growth and development of the human body (inc RSE sensitive issues)
Myself & Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of care and respect for other people. • Communicating effectively with others. • Resolving conflicts, empathy, assertiveness. • Co-operating and working collaboratively with others.
Myself & the wider world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding what it means to belong to various communities that pupils live in. • Caring for the environment. • Media awareness. • Learning about cultures and traditions. • Respect for the rights and contributions of cultural diversity.

Each stand is further subdivided into strand units or subtopics with learning objectives for each unit. The Commons N.S. will teach aspects of all three major strands each year and strand units will be organized so that pupils will receive a comprehension programme in SPHE over a two-year cycle at their class level. The following timetable for teaching the strand/strand units reflects this approach.

SPHE Curriculum	
Strand	Strand Units
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Identity • Taking Care of my body • Growing & changing (includes R.S.E.) • Safety & protection (includes Stay Safe) • Making decisions
Myself & Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myself and my family. • My friends and other people. • Relating to others
Myself & the wider world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Citizenship • Media Education.

The Commons N.S. 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. The Commons N.S. have created this timetable to reflect this approach:

2. Contexts for SPHE:

SPHE will be taught in The Commons N.S. through a combination of the following contexts:

1. Positive School Climate and Atmosphere

The Commons N.S. 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

Strand	Strand Units (Year 1)	Strand Units (Year 2)
Myself	<i>Self-identity (Sept.–Oct.)</i>	<i>Safety and Protection (Jan-Feb)-Stay Safe</i>
	<i>Taking care of my body(Jan-Feb)</i>	<i>Making Decisions (March-April)</i> <i>*This strand unit is for third to sixth only. Infants to second complete the Safety Issues section of Safety and Protection</i>
	<i>Growing and Changing (Mar-April)</i>	
Myself and others	<i>Myself and My Family (Nov.-Dec.)</i>	<i>My friends and other people (May-June)</i>
		<i>Relating to others (Sept-Oct.)</i>
Myself and the wider world	<i>Developing Citizenship (May-June)</i>	<i>Media Education (Nov-Dec.)</i>

2. Discrete time for SPHE

SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher's timetable in The Commons N.S. However teachers may allocate more time to allow for more indepth exploration of a strand unit.

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, Drama, etc. Themes/Projects such as Healthy Eating Week, Friendship Week, Agri-Awareness, Healthy Heart Week, Lenten Campaign, etc. will also be explored.

2 Approaches and Methodologies:

The Commons N.S. 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 (circle time, think-pair-share etc.)
- co-operative games
- use of pictures
- photographs and visual images
- written activities
- use of media
- information technologies and looking at children's work

3 Assessment:

Assessment is a central part of the everyday learning and teaching process in SPHE.

Assessment of and assessment for learning provides information on the pupil's progress and on the effectiveness of the curricular programmes and the teaching methods.

The following assessment practices will be used for SPHE.

Teacher Observation:

- Ability of pupils to cooperate and work in groups/independently.
- Participation and interest of the pupil in a variety of activities.
- Personal Interests and attitudes displayed by a child.
- Level of social and personal responsibility displayed by the pupil.
- The pupil's awareness of the difficulties of others and his/her willingness to help.
- Ability to verbalize on social and emotional matters.

Teacher – Designed tasks and tests:

Formal tasks, both written and oral, to determine progress in specific areas of SPHE as identified by the teacher.

Portfolios of Pupil's work:

Each pupil from 1st-6th will keep all relevant activities in their personal portfolio folder/

- Weaving – Wellbeing booklet for each pupil.
- Mindful Matters introduced from 1st – 6th class.
- Stay safe pupils' booklet for each pupil.

The Commons N.S. uses the following recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE:

- *Teacher observation*
- *Teacher-designed tasks and tests*
- *Portfolios and projects*

4 *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. The school 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.

5 *Equality of Participation and Access:*

The Commons N.S. 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-sex* school and we endeavour to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure that equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in discussion, debate, presentation, etc.

Organisation:

6 *Policies and Programmes that support SPHE:*

<i>Policies</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Protection & Safeguarding• Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures• Relationships and Sexuality Education• Substance Use• Code of Behaviour• Admissions• Health and Safety• Healthy Eating• Internet Acceptable Useage

<i>Programmes</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walk Tall Programme• Health Promoting Schools• Food Dudes• Weaving Wellbeing Programme• SMART-Safe and Secure Online

- Stay Safe Programme
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness Programme
- Braincalm Programme
- Garda Schools Programme
- R.S.A. Seatbelt Sheriff
- Incredible Edibles Programme
- Mindful Matters

7 Homework:

SPHE homework, will reflect the active learning approach and will reinforce information already taught during class. Stay Safe weekly worksheets/booklets are sent home when the programme is being taught and parents are asked to read and discuss the lessons with their children.

8 Resources:

(PDST have developed a resource list, which is available on the SPHE page at www.pdst.ie. New resources are added to this from time to time.)

9.1 Programmes and Other Materials:

Books for Pupil	Books for Teacher	Audio / Visual	Posters	Media & ICT
Weaving Wellbeing. RSA pack. Stay Safe booklet. Mindful Matters.	RSE Manuals Walk Tall Stay Safe Bi Follain Making the Links Braincalm Conflict Management Manual	Busy Bodies Food Dudes Incredible Edibles	Various posters on relevant SPHE topics throughout the school	Relevant websites and Apps etc.

9.2 Guest Speakers:

Outside speakers and Educational talks eg; Dental Nurse, Accord, Digital Safety Workshops ,Garda Schools Programme, Drug & Alcohol Awareness Workshops (6th Class) etc. will be arranged for classes as appropriate to reinforce aspects of SPHE. When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class teacher/ a member of the school personnel will remain in the classroom (as per Circular 22/2010) c/f Child Safeguarding & protection Policy 2018 and make the speaker aware of this school plan and attached policies.

9 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.

10 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.*
- *PDST Advisor support and modelling of lessons*
- *Training for teaching of other aspects of SPHE, eg. Weaving Wellbeing, Braincalm etc.*

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.

11 Parental Involvement:

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing SPHE as The Commons NS believes that SPHE is a shared responsibility. This plan and the curriculum documents are available for parents to inform them of the programme for SPHE. Each year parents are sent an information pack in advance of the teaching of Stay Safe (February) and RSE(May/June).As the need arises talks/presentations on other aspects of SPHE relevant to parents may be arranged, eg. Anti-Bullying, Digital Safety,etc. Parents are also notified of SPHE initiatives through the school website, notes home or text-a-parent as relevant

12 Community Links:

The Commons NS believe that the local community has a very important role to play in supporting the programme in SPHE and endeavours to liaise with the members such as the Dental Hygienist, Health Nurse, Fireman, Garda Liaison Officer, Vet, New Parent, etc.

■ **Success Criteria**

The success of this plan will be evaluated through following the:

- Implementation of the objectiveness of the SPHE Curriculum-Teacher Planning and Assessment.
- Availability and relevance of the Teaching Resources to support the teaching of SPHE.
- Participation of pupils and involvement of parents in the various SPHE programmes e.g. Stay Safe, RSE.
- Teacher observation of behaviour/attitudes and learning.
- Positive school climate and atmosphere.
- Effective communication between all partners in the School Community.

■ Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

- **B.O.M.** has overall responsibility for the implementation of all aspects of the SPHE curriculum.
- **Principal and Deputy Principal** oversee the teaching and learning of SPHE and support the staff in implementing the programme and in accessing professional development as relevant.
- **Teachers** must teach and implement the SPHE curriculum as outlined and must adhere to current Child Protection policies and procedures.
- **Pupils** should co-operate and participate in SPHE lessons and assignments as required.
- **Parents** should inform themselves of the SPHE school plan and support children's learning in SPHE.
- **Timeframe:** This Whole School Plan for SPHE will be implemented once it's ratified by the B.O.M.
- **Review:** This plan will be updated as necessary to comply with curricular and legislative developments.

The Commons N.S. 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 and the Local Community.

(b) Timeframe:

The plan will be implemented immediately.

■ Review

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SPHE curriculum in the school. The Principal is responsible for co-ordinating this review.

Those involved in the review will include:

Teachers

Pupils

Parents

Post holders/plan co-ordinator

BoM/DES/Others

(b) Timeframe:

This plan will be reviewed in September 2025

■ **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management of The Commons NS ratified this plan at its meeting on 3/10/2023

Signed _____

Date _____

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

Appendix 1

SPHE CURRICULUM – Curriculum planning

2-year plan:

Year 1 - (Odd year)			Year 2 - (Even Year)		
Date	Strand	Strand Unit	Date	Strand	Strand Unit
September/October	Myself	Self Identity	September/October	Myself & Others	Relating to Others
November/December	Myself & Others	Myself & my Family	November/December	Myself and the Wider World Myself	Media Education Making Decisions (3 rd to 6 th)
January/February	Myself	Safety & Protection* (Stay Safe) + Internet Safety	January/February	Myself	Safety & Protection* (Stay Safe) + Internet Safety
March/April	Myself	Growing & Changing** Taking Care of My Body**	March/April	Myself	Growing & Changing** Taking Care of My Body**
May/June	Myself and the Wider World	Developing Citizenship	May/June	Myself & Others	My Friends & Other People

Appendix 2

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE): RSE is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge and understanding and of developing attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. In a school situation RSE, provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and to establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework, appropriate to their age. RSE will be taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the philosophy framework of the school. Teachers will not teach any content outside the Religion programme used by the school or the DES curriculum. The teaching methods used in the school are child centred and reflect the age and stage of development of each child. Sensitive issues will be dealt with appropriately.

The RSE programme (in particular the lessons with sensitive content) will be taught annually immediately after the Easter break.

Overview of RSE

PROGRAMME Aims:

In partnership with the home our aims are:

- To promote self-esteem.
- To promote respect for the rights of others, encouraging tolerance and understanding of differences between people.
- To foster responsibility in decision-making.
- To help children develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality leading to a healthy attitude to it and to relationships.
- To help pupils think and act in a moral caring and responsible way
- To learn about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others.
- To promote knowledge and respect for human love.

The development of relationships is an integral part of all curricular subjects. Aspects of RSE are taught during SPHE, Religion, Science, implementation of the Code of Behaviour etc. An integrative approach towards RSE ensures that the children encounter RSE in a holistic manner rather than in isolation.

Content to be addressed during discrete time for the sensitive areas of RSE

Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st/2nd class

- Naming parts of the body including parts of the male and female body using appropriate anatomical terms.

3rd/4th classes

- Sequence of development of the human baby from conception to birth.

5th /6th classes

- Changes in male and female bodies as they grow.
- Puberty.
- Reproductive system of male and female.
- Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth.

In The Commons N.S. children will be segregated (i.e. 5th from 6th and boys from girls) for RSE lessons where appropriate.

RSE lessons containing sensitive content

Junior and Senior Infants

- New life p67 – Junior Infants (an opportunity to mention the anatomically correct names for the body)
- Caring for New Life p137 – Senior Infants
- My Body p147 – Senior Infants

First and Second Class – RSE lessons with sensitive content

- The wonder of new life p59 and p151 – first and second class
- How my Body works p67 – first class
- When my body needs special care p161 – second class

Third and Fourth Class – RSE lessons with sensitive content

- The wonder of new life p169
- As I grow I change p93
- Growing and Changing p195
- Preparing for new life p69

Fifth and Sixth Class – RSE lessons with sensitive content

(Fifth class lessons need to be repeated/revised in sixth class)

- My Body grows and changes p81
- The wonder of new life p93
- Caring for new life p103
- Different kinds of love p141
- Making healthy decisions p113
- Relationships and new life p199
- A baby is a miracle p209

Dealing with Questions: Teachers do not cover content outside that of the DES curriculum or the school's religion programme. At the same time teachers should answer questions sensitively, aware that there are children in our school from many social backgrounds. No child should be made feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when these issues are raised. Ground rules will be set before the lessons are taught. The teacher will tell the class that they will do their best to answer as many questions as possible but may not be able to answer every question. It is reasonable for the teacher to say that the children will learn further information as they get older.

Children, who ask questions in class on content outside the curriculum taught, should be talked to individually and discretely, as soon as is possible, by the teacher and encouraged to seek answers from their parents. If a child poses such a question the parents will be informed and asked not to ignore it but to deal with it as they see fit.

Parental Concerns: If parents are concerned about any aspect of the school's programme for the RSE elements of SPHE they should discuss their concerns with the Principal. Arrangements will be made to allow the parents to view and access the RSE programme and every effort will be made to accommodate their concerns. Before teaching the RSE lessons with sensitive content, a detailed outline of the programme to be covered will be sent to the parents of the pupils prior to the lessons being taught via email. There is also an information booklet on RSE in the downloads section of the school website.

Teachers' Concerns: If teachers are concerned about any aspect of the school's programme for the RSE elements of SPHE they should discuss this with the Principal. Every teacher has the right to opt out of teaching the sensitive areas of SPHE and in this event it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the sensitive areas of RSE are taught to that particular class.

Appendix 3

STAY SAFE Programme: The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme for primary schools. It aims to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying. It helps to develop children's ability to recognize, resist and report situations of risk or abusive encounters.

The objectives of the programme are:

- To help children to identify and express safe and unsafe feelings.
- To teach children safety skills for dealing with common unsafe situations such as getting lost.
- To encourage children to value friendships and to teach them skills for making and keeping friends.
- To teach children safety strategies for dealing with bullying.
- To teach children that it is not acceptable to bully others.
- To encourage children to value and enjoy normal affection.
- To teach children how to deal with an unsafe or inappropriate touch.
- To teach the rule: 'Never keep secrets about touching'.
- To help children recognise the difference between a good secret and a bad secret.
- To help children identify the adults they could tell about a bad secret and to give them the opportunity to practice telling.
- To clarify for the children who strangers are.
- To give the children safety strategies for dealing appropriately with strangers.

Content:

The lessons cover the following topics:

- 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

Immediately after the Stay Safe programme or in conjunction with the Stay Safe programme the children will be taught about **Internet Safety**. Programmes such as 'Play and Learn; Being Online', 'HTML Heroes' and 'My Selfie and the Wider World' will be some of the resources used for these lessons.

In The Commons N.S. the Stay Safe Programme is taught annually in each class. Children are not segregated for Stay Safe lessons. All topics are addressed on a whole-class-basis.

Parental Concerns: If parents are concerned about the more sensitive aspects of the Stay Safe programme, they are welcome to visit the school to view the curriculum and discuss their concerns with the Principal. A teacher who is concerned about teaching a particular topic within the Stay Safe programme should talk to the principal about his/her concerns. Such concerns will be handled discreetly. The Principal will endeavour to accommodate such teachers. Resources outside the school profession will be availed of if considered

appropriate. There is an information booklet on the Stay Safe programme in the downloads section of the school website.