



Primary School
Curriculum

Curaclam na
Bunscoile

Social, Personal & Health Education

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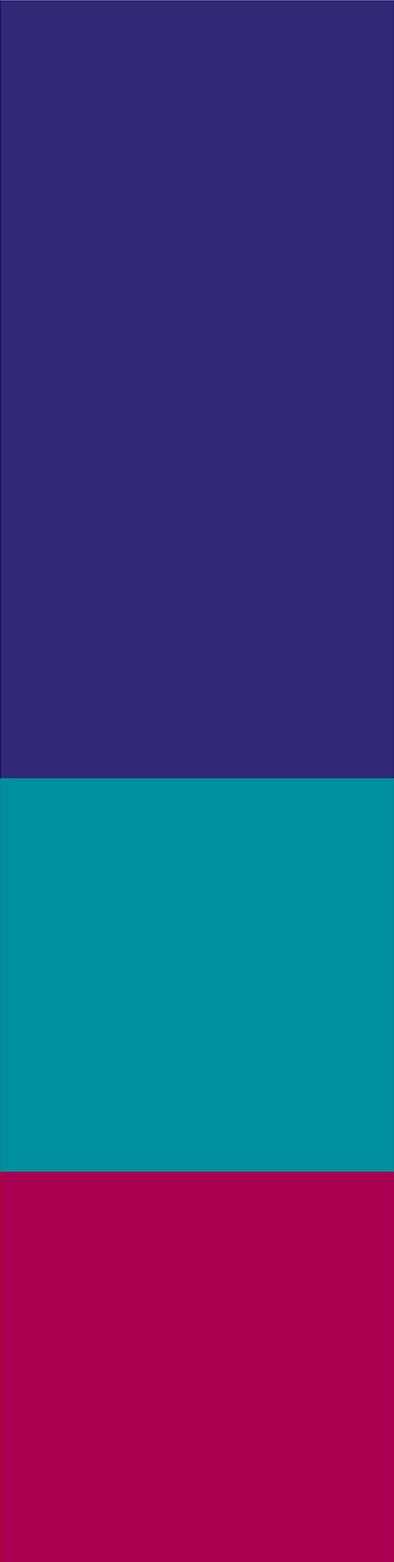
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Social, Personal and Health Education

Curriculum

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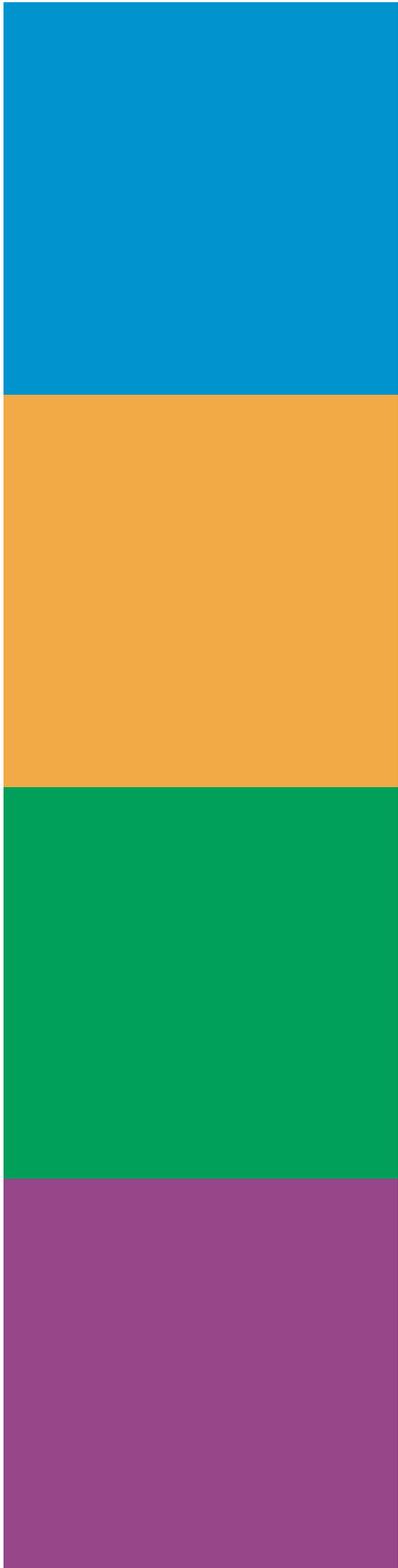
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Introduction

Social, personal and health education

Social, personal and health education (SPHE) provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child, to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. Through an SPHE programme that is planned and consistent throughout the school, children can develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their decisions and actions both now and in the future. Since SPHE has a moral and a spiritual dimension, its development and implementation are influenced significantly by the ethos or characteristic spirit of the school.

The learning and teaching climate that prevails in the classroom, the methodologies and approaches used and the relationships that the children experience and witness in the school, all contribute to their social, personal and health development. Similarly, many of the themes and topics addressed in the various subjects have a social, personal or health perspective, as will many of the incidental happenings that occur in the everyday life of the school. There are also particular issues that are intrinsic to SPHE that need to be explored and examined in some detail.

An effective and meaningful SPHE programme will cater for all these dimensions by providing learning opportunities in a combination of three ways: in the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere, through discrete time (a specific time on the timetable) and through an integrated approach across a range of subject areas. Implementation in this way will enable the teacher to adopt a coherent approach to the programme, take cognisance of the learning experience in the home and make use of the most appropriate learning and teaching strategies.

As children progress through an SPHE programme, they will encounter a wide range of issues. These will include substance misuse, relationships, sexuality, child abuse prevention, prejudice and discrimination. The SPHE curriculum is structured in such a way that these issues are not explored in isolation; rather the emphasis is on building a foundation of skills, values, attitudes and understanding relevant to all these issues, with specific information provided where necessary.

The SPHE curriculum

SPHE promotes intrapersonal development by helping children to recognise, understand and accept themselves as unique individuals who feel valued and loved. It provides particular opportunities to nurture self-worth and self-confidence, helping the child to set and assess his/her own goals and to be able to manage his/her own behaviour. SPHE enables the child to build a sense of self-efficacy which in turn can increase his/her sense of personal control, promote self-awareness and enable self-directed learning. An SPHE programme particularly contributes to the development of personal attributes and skills, such as learning how to manage feelings, how to resolve conflicts and how to cope with new and demanding situations.

The ways in which children live and behave in the early years of life will have a significant influence on their health and well-being in future years. SPHE ensures that health messages are planned, implemented and reinforced and provides clarification of some of the misinformation that children may receive. It also aims to enable children to develop a sense of personal responsibility for their own health and for the decisions and the choices they make in relation to their behaviour and actions.

As part of their social development children need to learn to appreciate other people in their lives and to know how to create and maintain positive, healthy relationships. An SPHE programme can significantly contribute to interpersonal development by helping children to acquire a range of communication skills and to understand the ways in which they can show respect, care and consideration in their dealings with others. In school, children can learn how to develop and sustain relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility and can begin to understand the importance of trust and honesty in human interactions.

Children also need to learn that personal motives should be balanced with a sense of social responsibility. SPHE plays an important role in developing an understanding of the democratic way of life and individual and group rights and responsibilities. It provides opportunities for children to learn about, and actively participate in, the various communities to which they belong and to develop a sense of a shared commitment. It can also help them to value and take pride in their national, European and global identities and come to an understanding of what it means to be a citizen in the widest sense.

Diversity and difference characterise the society in which children live. However, prejudice and discrimination are all too often a feature of human relationships. A respect for and an appreciation of human and cultural diversity can and should be promoted at every level of the primary school. Through SPHE children can become aware of some of the prejudices and attitudes that fail to respect the dignity of others. They are given opportunities to develop an understanding of their own culture and traditions and equally to acquire a growing appreciation of the positive contributions made by different groups in society. As children learn to understand and practise equality, justice and fairness in school situations they will be enabled to challenge prejudice and discrimination as they experience it in their own lives both now and in the future.

Children live in an age in which they are bombarded daily with information from a variety of sources. They are also under increasing commercial pressure where marketing techniques are employed widely to appeal to even the very youngest child. SPHE encourages children to become more discerning in their use of the media and to learn about and become aware of the techniques and strategies used in advertising and in the media in general.

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. Close consultation between the partners will be an essential element in the planning process and in regular reviews of the programme. 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.

The strands of the curriculum

The curriculum is presented in three strands: *Myself*, *Myself and others* and *Myself and the wider world*. These are consistent throughout the primary school and provide a basis for the SPHE and the civic, social and political education (CSPE) curricula at post-primary level.

The strands are presented at four levels, outlining the content that could be covered at each stage of the child's time in school. Because the child's development proceeds unevenly, the content and associated exemplars should be used in a *flexible* manner. They are a guideline from which a suitable programme can be developed, one that can have maximum effect because it is made to suit individual schools and sets of circumstances.

The curriculum is drawn up in a spiral manner, that is, where similar content is revisited at each level but the processes, approaches and information adopted reflect the needs of children at a particular time and at their various stages of readiness.

Myself is concerned with the personal development of the individual child and his/her health and well-being. An exploration of the elements of this strand can foster self-awareness and understanding and enable children to care for and respect themselves. The content also allows for the development of a variety of personal and self-management skills and the fostering of a sense of personal responsibility for their own actions and behaviour. The strand *Myself* also contributes to children establishing ways of thinking, feeling and acting that can help to promote and maintain health and well-being both now and in the future.

Myself and others focuses on developing a sense of care and respect for other people and the facility for relating to and communicating effectively with others. It helps to foster the qualities and dispositions in the children that will help them to live and work with others and to act in socially responsible ways. They are given opportunities to learn and practise a wide range of communication skills, including the ability to resolve conflicts, to empathise, to be assertive, to co-operate and to work collaboratively with others.

Myself and the wider world enables children to explore the various communities in which they live. They can learn how to operate competently in society and to understand what it means to belong and to share a sense of purpose. In exploring this strand they are encouraged to develop a sense of social responsibility and an appreciation of the interdependent nature of the world in which they live. The work in this

strand also includes exploring the need to care for the environment and to keep it in trust for future generations. Children are given opportunities to learn about their own culture and traditions and are encouraged to respect the rights and contributions of culturally diverse people and groups.

This strand also promotes media awareness and helps children to examine and explore various forms of media. Using media techniques and becoming familiar with information technologies in a structured way can help children to benefit from the technology, thus fostering critical media usage.

Approaches and methodologies

The methodologies and approaches used in the classroom are crucial to the child's social, personal and health development. As active participants in their own learning, children can make sense of what is being learned, make informed judgements and construct new meanings. It is more likely that children will develop a sense of ownership over what they have learned and be able to transfer it to different situations when they have been actively involved in the learning process. While independent learning is fostered, it is equally essential that children are given opportunities to interact with others and with their environment and to learn to co-operate with their peers.

For active learning to take place, the school should provide a supportive and caring environment, in which the child is encouraged to participate in his/her own learning and in which each contribution is valued and appreciated. The role of the teacher will be central to the use of effective active learning and teaching techniques in the classroom. He/she will need to structure activities and guide and direct the work in such a way that a child can participate in a real and meaningful way and can develop a sense of responsibility for his/her own learning.

A wide variety of active learning strategies should be used in implementing SPHE in order to take account of the individual needs and the wide range of objectives in the curriculum. These strategies could include play, discussion and drama activities, co-operative games, multimedia programmes, accessing the internet and e-mail, exploring television, video extracts or photographs, carrying out surveys or interpreting data. As part of any learning and teaching strategy in SPHE children should be encouraged to critically reflect on their work and explore possibilities for transferring what they have learned to situations in their own lives.

Children with special needs

All children should have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the full range of experiences offered in SPHE. In planning for SPHE account should be taken of the range of difference in the school so that all children will be given the opportunity to obtain maximum benefit from the programme.

SPHE and Language

SPHE provides a context in which children are given opportunities to develop and enhance their language skills and to increase their vocabulary related to the social, personal and health aspects of their lives. In asking appropriate questions, giving opinions, exploring ideas, or making responses, children can become increasingly fluent in their use of language and can improve many of the skills they may have learned in other areas of the curriculum. Such confidence and competence in using language will be particularly significant in enabling children to access critical information relating to their own health and well-being, both now and in later years. This facility can also contribute to building positive relationships by enhancing communication and fostering genuine understanding.

The exploration of language and its usage in relating to others is central to any SPHE programme. Children should become aware of the power and the influence of language. When used positively, language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner can hurt, diminish or demean. Children need to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationships and in their everyday interactions.

Language is also powerful because it both creates and reflects a culture. Through SPHE children can begin to appreciate the connection between language and identity. A planned programme throughout the school also provides children with opportunities to explore the language used in various media and to recognise the values, attitudes and viewpoints being promoted and fostered.

SPHE and information and communication technologies

ICTs can support the learning and teaching of SPHE in the classroom. Children can develop self-confidence and motivation through using and becoming familiar with computers. Other aspects of SPHE such as learning to take turns, to share and to co-operate can be developed as children use computers in a planned and appropriate manner. Computers can also be particularly helpful in enhancing children's decision-making skills and in helping them to become discerning and judicious users of various technologies.

Children can use computers in SPHE to gather information on specific topics or to collate and present data. While there are many CD-ROMs available on health and social issues, the internet also provides a wealth of up-to-date information and can indicate further avenues of investigation. Exploring the internet, and using e-mail or video conferencing can enhance children's sense of global citizenship and foster a wide range of communication skills.

Assessment

Assessment in SPHE guides the teacher in improving the learning experiences for the child and in continually refining and developing the programme to suit individual needs, interests and abilities. It can be particularly helpful in enabling children to see how they are progressing and to recognise and appreciate their own achievements. As many of the benefits or outcomes of SPHE do not emerge or become evident until long after the child has left primary school, the assessment relates to that which can be effectively assessed during his/her time in school. The section on assessment outlines the extent to which the progress of the child in SPHE can be determined, the most appropriate tools for this purpose and the way in which it can be managed in the primary school.

Aims

The aims of social, personal and health education are

- 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.

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.

Planning content for all classes

Structure

The content of the SPHE curriculum is presented in three strands, *Myself*, *Myself and others* and *Myself and the wider world*. The divisions within each strand are referred to as strand units, and some of the objectives are illustrated with exemplars. These exemplars are in italic type and should be considered merely as suggestions.

Implementing SPHE in the school

It is recommended that SPHE be provided in a combination of three ways within the school:

- *a positive school climate and atmosphere* fosters the health and well-being of all the members of the school community. It reflects a safe and secure environment where children experience a sense of belonging and know that the concerns and contributions of parents, children and teachers are taken into account. A positive school climate and atmosphere nurtures self-confidence and self-worth and promotes respectful and caring relationships throughout the school. It therefore provides the context in which work carried out in a range of subjects, including SPHE, is lived out and makes sense
- *discrete SPHE time* provides for the teaching of some elements of the programme during designated class periods. This time can be used to develop and practise particular skills, deal with sensitive issues or explore issues that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum. To use this time effectively it may be more appropriate for the teacher to organise it in block periods and use it as required rather than confining the time to a set period in each week
- *an integrated approach* allows for many aspects of SPHE to be dealt with in the context of relevant subject areas. Through a variety of learning experiences across the curriculum children work together, solve problems, make decisions, engage in dialogue and reflect critically. Some subject areas also provide the most appropriate context for exploring particular aspects of SPHE: for example, developing a sense of care and respect for the environment could be fostered through science and history, while safety in water could be appropriately explored through physical education.

A broad and balanced programme

It is recommended that in planning an SPHE programme the teacher would choose some content from *each* of the three major strands in any one year. The selection could consist of two or three strand units from the Strand *Myself* and at least one strand unit from the strand *Myself and others* and from *Myself and the wider world*. Alternatively, the selection could consist of a range of topics taken from all three strands. It is envisaged that the content not covered in year one, would be included in the teacher's planning for the following year.

It is important that planning takes place at both a school and class level to ensure that the programme reflects a spiral approach, where similar aspects are revisited in different ways according to the age, stage of development and readiness of the child. It is also essential that the content chosen for every class includes a balance between learning skills, fostering and exploring attitudes and developing understanding. Planning for SPHE will always be informed by the ethos of the school and developed within the context of the school plan.

In addressing sensitive issues it will be necessary to take into account the different levels of emotional and physical development of the children and to adapt the programme accordingly. It will be particularly important in multi-class situations to seek co-operation from other teachers or make alternative arrangements, so that individual needs are met.

Infant classes

Overview

infant classes

Strands

Strand units

Myself

- Self-identity
 - Self-awareness*
 - Developing self-confidence*
 - Making decisions*
 - Taking care of my body
 - Knowing about my body*
 - Food and nutrition*
 - Growing and changing
 - As I grow I change*
 - New life*
 - Feelings and emotions*
 - Safety and protection
 - Personal safety*
 - Safety issues*
-

Myself and others

- Myself and my family
 - My friends and other people
 - Relating to others
-

Myself and the wider world

- Developing citizenship
 - My school community*
 - Living in the local community*
 - Environmental care*
 - The sub-unit 'Environmental care' is developed in detail in SESE science and geography*
- Media education

Strand: Myself

Strand unit Self-identity

The child should be enabled to

Self-awareness

- discuss and appreciate all the features that make a person special and unique
name, size, hair colour, sex, fingerprints, birthday
- begin to understand, appreciate and respect personal abilities, skills and talents
being a friend, being co-operative, playing games
- recognise and record personal preferences
things I like and things I don't like
- become aware of his/her immediate world through the senses

Developing self-confidence

- express own views, opinions and preferences
- become more self-reliant and independent
taking responsibility for own personal belongings
asking relevant questions to seek clarification
beginning to reflect on his/her own learning and experiences
accepting that making mistakes and trying again are part of the learning process
attempting new tasks with courage
learning to save money
- begin to learn how to cope with various changes as they occur
moving to a new class, losing a friend

Making decisions

- identify some everyday choices made by himself/herself and those that are made by others
- begin to develop some awareness of factors that may influence decisions or choices taken.

Strand unit Taking care of my body

The child should be enabled to

Knowing about my body

- appreciate the need, and understand how to care for his/her own body in order to keep it healthy and well
regular exercise and activity, adequate sleep and rest, balanced diet, correct posture
- respect his/her own body and that of others
- name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms
- explore and discuss the different things the body can do
move, feel, think, grow, heal
- recognise and practise basic hygiene skills
personal hygiene practices
hygienic eating habits
developing basic skills in dressing himself/herself and caring for clothes
taking proper care of teeth
- realise that each individual has some responsibility for taking care of himself/herself

Food and nutrition

- become aware of the importance of food for growth and development
food provides energy for work and play, food helps to protect against illness, food helps us to grow
- explore food preferences and their role in a balanced diet
treats, snacks, fruit, vegetables, foods that are unhealthy for some people and not for others
- discuss and explore some qualities and categories of food
fruit, vegetables, foods that can be eaten at breakfast, foods that are grown, food that comes from animals
- realise the importance of good hygiene when preparing food to eat.

Strand unit Growing and changing

The child should be enabled to

As I grow I change

- identify some of the factors that promote growth
food, love, warmth, exercise, rest, sleep, affirmation, natural light
- realise that growth and change are part of the process of life and are unique to each individual
 - physical*
increase in shoe size, need to cut hair and nails frequently
 - social*
interacting with others, sharing, arguing, talking, playing together
 - intellectual*
drawing, writing, reading, questioning, things I can do for myself
 - spiritual*
fostering wonder and imagination through the senses, beginning to reflect, availing of quiet time
- recognise that the ability to take responsibility for himself/herself and others increases as he/she grows older

New life

- become aware of new life and birth in the world
new growth in springtime
baby animals being born
- develop an awareness of human birth
that a baby grows and is nurtured in the mother's womb until ready to be born

- identify what babies need to help them to grow and develop

love, regular food and water, warmth, nappy changing, careful bathing, medical check-ups

Feelings and emotions

- name a variety of feelings and talk about situations where these may be experienced
 - feelings*
happiness, love, joy, excitement, surprise, fear, loss, jealousy, pain, loneliness
 - experiences*
when it's my birthday, when I try something new, the day I started school
- explore the variety of ways in which feelings are expressed and coped with
 - hugging or cuddling when expressing affection*
 - becoming red in the face when embarrassed*
 - crying when upset or afraid*
- begin to be sensitive to the feelings of others and to realise that the actions of one individual can affect the feelings of another
- explore and discuss occasions that can promote positive feelings in himself/herself
making a new friend, receiving an invitation, being affirmed.

Strand unit Safety and protection

The child should be enabled to

Personal safety

- explore appropriate safety strategies
 - knowing how and when to seek help,*
 - knowing who to ask, people I can trust and tell*
 - not wandering off on his/her own*
 - knowing when to say 'yes' and 'no' to friends or adults in different situations, e.g. taking lifts*
 - knowing own name, address and telephone number*
 - identifying local landmarks*
- identify situations and places that are safe and those where personal safety might be at risk
 - being in a supervised playground, going on an outing with family*
 - going into unfamiliar places*
 - feeling unsafe with people, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes him/her feel uncomfortable)*
- realise how other people can persuade him/her to engage in unsafe behaviour
- explore how accidents might be prevented at home, in school, on the farm, or in the water
 - items in the home or school environment that are unsafe to play with*
- realise that many substances used at home or in school are dangerous and that permission should be sought before exploring the contents
 - never touch, taste or smell unknown substances*
- identify some of the substances or things that are put onto the body and their associated functions
 - plasters, ointment, cream or lotions*
- explore occasions when medicines, injections or pills are needed and the safety rules that apply when taking medicine.

Safety issues

- identify people who are responsible for safety in the community and learn and practise safety strategies for crossing the road, using the bus or being a pedestrian
 - crossing the road with an adult*
- realise and understand that rules are necessary in order to protect people and keep them safe
 - tidying away own school bag, lining up without running,*
 - following school code of hygiene*

Strand: Myself and others

Strand unit Myself and my family

The child should be enabled to

- identify and name the people who constitute a family and appreciate that all family units are not the same
sibling, parent, guardian, grandparent, relative
- realise that he/she belongs to a family and that each person has a place and role within a family
- explore the things that families do together
talking, eating, working, travelling, shopping, playing, participating in leisure activities together
- realise how families take care of, support and love each other
- explore and acknowledge many of the things that can be learned in the home.

Strand unit My friends and other people

The child should be enabled to

- identify, discuss and appreciate his/her own friends
- discuss and examine the different aspects of friendship
talking together, spending time together, helping each other, sharing with each other, trusting each other
- identify and appreciate friends at school and how they can help and care for each other
*recognising and including the lonely child at playtime
being fair and equitable when working and playing with others*
- discuss and appreciate all those considered special, both within and outside the family circle
parent, grandparent, sister, brother, neighbour, teacher
- recognise and appreciate differences in people and know how to treat others with dignity and respect
- recognise and explore bullying behaviour, who is involved and the effects on different people
the bully, the child being bullied, the onlookers, the family of the victim
- know that bullying is always wrong and know what should be done if one is being bullied or sees it happening to someone else.

Strand unit Relating to others

The child should be enabled to

- listen and respond to the opinions and views of others
- use verbal and non-verbal behaviour to perform social functions
 - introducing others, expressing thanks, making requests*
- practise care and consideration, courtesy and good manners when interacting with others
 - giving and taking turns in listening and speaking*
- resolve conflicts with others
 - learning:*
 - to listen to others*
 - to apologise and to accept apologies*
 - to compromise and to forgive.*

Strand: Myself and the wider world

Strand unit Developing citizenship

The child should be enabled to

My school community

- recognise the name of his/her own school and the people who contribute to the life of the school
- realise that each person is important and has a unique and valuable contribution to make to the class
- recognise the importance of sharing and co-operating and being fair in all activities in the class and school

learning and understanding how to work and play together in a group, taking turns

- realise and understand the necessity for adhering to the class and school rules
- explore and respect the diversity of children in the class and school

Living in the local community

- recognise and appreciate people or groups who serve the local community and how their contribution enhances the quality of life of others

local credit union, parent and toddler groups, sports clubs

- recognise and become familiar with the rules within a group or wider community, those who safeguard these rules and the importance of obeying the rules in order to keep people safe
- suggest ways of helping other people at home, in school and in the local community

being aware that some people in the community may be in need

- recognise that each person has an important contribution to make to the life of the community
- begin to become aware of local identity and to participate in and enjoy celebrating local events

caring for the local environment

Environmental care

- appreciate the environment and realise that each individual has a community and individual responsibility for protecting and caring for the environment.

The sub-unit Environmental care is developed in detail in SESE geography and science.

Strand unit Media education

The child should be enabled to

- realise that he/she receives information from many different sources
pictures, posters, other people, books, newspapers, cards, television, internet
- identify favourite television programmes, videos and video games and indicate reasons for preference
- explore popular stories, books and rhymes and discuss some of the characters and their appealing traits
- begin to use and explore the various kinds of information technology available
- begin to explore and talk about the difference between advertisements and programmes
what is real and imaginary, the content of advertisements and favourite programmes.

First
and second
classes

Overview

first and second classes

Strands

Strand units

Myself

- Self-identity
 - Self-awareness*
 - Developing self-confidence*
 - Making decisions*
 - Taking care of my body
 - Knowing about my body*
 - Food and nutrition*
 - Growing and changing
 - As I grow I change*
 - New life*
 - Feelings and emotions*
 - Safety and protection
 - Personal safety*
 - Safety issues*
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Myself and others

- Myself and my family
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Myself and the wider world

- Developing citizenship
 - My school community*
 - Living in the local community*
 - Environmental care*
 - The sub-unit 'Environmental care' is developed in detail in SESE science and geography*
- Media education

Strand: Myself

Strand unit Self-identity

The child should be enabled to

Self-awareness

- develop an appreciation of and talk about personal strengths, abilities and characteristics
- recognise and appreciate the similarities and differences between people
- identify and talk about personal preferences, dreams for the future and hopes
- become aware of his/her immediate world through the senses

Developing self-confidence

- become more independent and self-reliant
 - taking responsibility for personal belongings*
 - asking for help when needed*
 - reflecting on his/her learning and experiences*
 - assessing his/her progress*
 - appreciating that making mistakes is part of the learning process*
 - saving money, looking after school clothes*

- explore different ways of coping with change
 - seeking clarification, taking time to adjust*
- express personal opinions and preferences and acknowledge those of others and comment on them

Making decisions

- recognise and reflect on choices that are made every day
- discuss the factors that may influence personal decisions or choices
- realise that being involved in decision-making demands more personal responsibility
 - beginning to realise that more opportunities to make choices will be given as the trust of others is earned and maintained.*

Strand unit Taking care of my body

The child should be enabled to

Knowing about my body

- appreciate the need and understand how to care for the body in order to keep it strong and healthy
regular sleep and rest, a balanced diet, regular exercise, quiet time, relaxation, correct posture
- recognise the importance of treating the body with respect and dignity
- explore the various things the body can do
see, hear, move, breathe, make energy, feel, think
- name parts of the male and female body, using appropriate anatomical terms, and identify some of their functions
- develop and practise basic hygiene skills
discussing and exploring the effects of poor personal hygiene
practising and learning about hygienic eating habits
practising effective dental care
- realise that each individual must take some responsibility for self-care
- become aware of how infection spreads easily and the importance of adhering to a code of hygiene
- recognise and examine some of the substances that are taken into the body and the purpose and function of each one

Food and nutrition

- explore the importance of food for promoting growth, keeping healthy and providing energy
- appreciate that balance, regularity and moderation are necessary in the diet
the food pyramid, the need for a balanced diet, the importance of having an appropriate intake of liquids, food that is unhealthy for some people and not for others
- identify some of the foods that are derived from plant and animal sources
- recognise and practise good hygiene when dealing with food.

Strand unit Growing and changing

The child should be enabled to

As I grow I change

- begin to recognise the physical, emotional, social and spiritual factors that promote growth
 - love, food, warmth, shelter, communication, friendship, sleep*
- realise that growth takes place in many different ways and is unique to each individual
 - physical*
 - growing out of clothes and shoes*
 - social*
 - making new friends, joining clubs, playing or engaging in sports together, an increasing ability to communicate*
 - intellectual*
 - improving mental skills and abilities*
 - spiritual*
 - becoming more reflective, enjoying quiet time for longer periods, experiencing wonder through the senses*
- realise that growing up brings increased responsibility for himself/herself and others
 - making own lunch, putting away school clothes, helping to feed a younger child*

New life

- begin to understand that reproduction, birth, life, growth and death are all part of a life cycle
- appreciate what is necessary in order to provide and care for new-born babies in both the animal and human world
 - love, regular feeding, nappy changing, careful bathing, medical check-ups*
- realise the various roles parents and other family members have in providing for new-born babies
 - love, time, energy, talking to baby, money, patience*

Feelings and emotions

- name and identify a wide range of feelings and talk about and explore feelings in different situations
 - when I changed classes, when my brother/sister was born, when I got glasses for the first time*
 - when I attempted something new*
 - when I was excluded*
- realise and explore the various ways feelings can be expressed and dealt with and choose which are the most appropriate and acceptable
 - affection*
 - shaking hands, hugging*
 - anger*
 - crying, telling someone that I am angry*
 - loss*
 - crying, remaining quiet, asking for help*
 - hurt*
 - isolated, angry, seeking an apology*
- identify people with whom he/she can discuss feelings and emotions
- become aware of and be able to choose healthy ways of feeling good about himself/herself
- explore the various feelings that change as one grows
 - what made me laugh when I was younger*
 - the things I was afraid of when I was younger*
 - the things that I find funny or that make me cry now*
- recognise that individual actions can affect the feelings of others.

Strand unit Safety and protection

The child should be enabled to

Personal safety

- recognise and explore situations where children feel safe and those where safety might be at risk
 - getting lost, being left alone*
 - coming in contact with unsafe or unknown substances*
 - being with people who make me feel unsafe*
 - inappropriate or unsafe touches, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that causes worry or makes me feel uncomfortable)*
- discuss and practise appropriate strategies for dealing with these situations
 - being assertive, telling a trusted person, making a telephone call, asking for help, knowing when to tell a secret, knowing how to seek help, distinguishing between real and imaginary dangers, adhering to rules made by others, recognising local landmarks*
 - recognising people who are responsible for keeping him/her safe*
- explore how other people can persuade him/her to engage in unsafe behaviour and how this may be counteracted
- identify risky behaviour and examine its positive and negative consequences
 - smoking, trying a new activity or game*

Safety issues

- develop and practise strategies for keeping safe when travelling
 - being familiar with the rules for travelling in car or bus, on bicycle*
 - crossing the road with an adult*
 - obeying those responsible for safety in the community*
- become familiar with and understand the need to adhere to safety rules that apply in school, at home, on the farm, in water, for his/her own safety and that of others
- recognise places where it is safe to play and understand the importance of adopting responsible and equitable behaviour when playing
- recognise how accidents might be caused and what can be done in order to prevent accidents happening
 - not playing with dangerous equipment or machinery, wearing protective headgear*
- recognise and explore occasions when medicines are needed
 - reasons for taking medicine, feelings experienced before and after taking the medicine, who administered the medicine, the safety rules that apply when taking medicine*
- distinguish between substances in the home or school that are safe and those that are dangerous and seek permission before exploring them
 - fertilisers, alcohol, detergents.*

Strand: Myself and others

Strand unit Myself and my family

The child should be enabled to

- identify and talk about those who live at home and recognise that homes and families can vary
personal names, sex, physical description, characteristics
- recognise his/her role and place in the family unit and the contribution made by each member to the family
- appreciate his/her own family and identify ways in which members of families can help, support and care for each other.
- explore many of the things that are learned in families, both practical and otherwise.

Strand unit My friends and other people

The child should be enabled to

- discuss personal friends and why he/she enjoys being with them
- identify, explore and discuss qualities and skills associated with friendship
*spending time together
talking, playing, travelling together
forgiving each other, trusting each other
being sensitive to the feelings of one's friends*
- explore how friends can influence personal actions and decisions
adopting a healthy eating option, isolating a classmate, welcoming a newcomer, taking a risk, persuading one to smoke, using inappropriate language
- know how to treat people with dignity and respect
calling people by their proper name, respecting the personal belongings of others, practising care and consideration, courtesy and good manners when interacting with others
- recognise and explore bullying behaviour, who is involved and the effects on different people
the bully, the child being bullied, the onlookers
- know that bullying is always wrong and what should be done if one is being bullied or sees it happening to someone else.

Strand unit Relating to others

The child should be enabled to

- distinguish between verbal and non-verbal behaviour and know how they are used in performing social functions
 - introducing oneself and others*
 - expressing concern and appreciation*
 - expressing thanks, asking questions, offering help*
- listen, hear and respond to what is being said by others
 - accepting compliments and affirmations received*
- express and record experiences, opinions, feelings and emotions in a variety of ways
 - through:*
 - oral language, drama and improvisation*
 - drawing, painting, music*
- explore and practise how to handle conflict without being aggressive
 - listening to and thinking about the other person's point of view*
 - presenting his/her own point of view clearly*
 - seeking to persuade and compromise*
 - apologising and/or accepting apology*
 - practising using assertive behaviour when dealing with others.*

Strand: Myself and the wider world

Strand unit Developing citizenship

The child should be enabled to

My school community

- explore what it means to belong and recognise some of the different groups to which he/she can belong
family, class, school, village, town, city, club, parish
activities that promote belonging
projects, games, concerts, book time
- recognise and write the name and location of his/her own school and identify those who constitute the school community
- discuss and appreciate how the positive contributions of each person can make the class or school a better place for everyone
- be involved in making the classroom rules and recognise the importance of adhering to these rules for the safety of all
- engage in group activities in the class and learn how to share, co-operate, listen to, work and play together
exploring issues of sexual equality that may arise with friends and others
practising fairness when playing or working together, taking turns

Living in the local community

- begin to appreciate how people depend on each other in many aspects of life
some people in the community may be in need or require special attention
- develop a sense of belonging to his/her own local community
recognising, participating in and enjoying the celebration of local events
- be aware of and appreciate the diversity of cultures and people in the local community, recognise their contributions and be aware of how differences can enrich his/her experiences
- develop an awareness of people in other places
other communities, other towns, other countries
- identify those who have special responsibilities for looking after people in the community and the importance of the contribution of each individual to community life

Environmental care

- appreciate the environment and realise that there is a community and individual responsibility in caring for and protecting the environment.

The sub-unit Environmental care is developed in detail in SESE geography and science.

Strand unit Media education

The child should be enabled to

- become aware of and learn about the different ways in which information can be communicated
 - print, radio, television, internet, CD-ROM*
- begin to distinguish between fact and fiction in stories or situations in different media forms
 - television, comic or magazine, story book, video*
 - creating new or different endings to familiar stories or rhymes*
 - identifying favourite television programme, favourite video, favourite song*
 - exploring the content of various programmes, advertisements, videos, CDs*
- discuss and explore advertising that is specifically aimed at children
 - identifying:*
 - the difference in content between advertisements and programmes, favourite advertisements, the purpose of the advertisement.*

Third
and fourth
classes

Overview

third and fourth classes

Strands

Strand units

Myself

- Self-identity
 - Self-awareness*
 - Developing self-confidence*
 - Taking care of my body
 - Health and well-being*
 - Knowing about my body*
 - Food and nutrition*
 - Growing and changing
 - As I grow I change*
 - New life*
 - Feelings and emotions*
 - Safety and protection
 - Personal safety*
 - Safety issues*
 - Making decisions
-

Myself and others

- Myself and my family
 - My friends and other people
 - Relating to others
 - Communicating*
 - Resolving conflict*
-

Myself and the wider world

- Developing citizenship
 - My school community*
 - Local and wider communities*
 - Environmental care*
 - The sub-unit 'Environmental care' is developed in detail in SESE science and geography*
- Media education

Strand: Myself

Strand unit Self-identity

The child should be enabled to

Self-awareness

- recognise, describe and discuss individual personality traits, qualities, strengths, limitations, interests and abilities
- explore the factors that influence his/her self-image
 - how I feel about my own body and my abilities, advertising and media images, comments from other people*
- identify realistic personal goals and targets and how these can be achieved in the short or long term
- realise that each person has a unique contribution to make to various groups, situations and friendships
- identify personal preferences, dreams for the future, and hopes

Developing self-confidence

- enhance his/her own learning
 - asking for help when needed*
 - saying 'I don't understand', asking questions to seek clarification when required, reflecting on his/her own learning and experiences*
 - taking an active role in a project or event in the class or school, recognising that making mistakes and learning from them is an important part of growing up*
- express personal opinions, feelings, thoughts and ideas with growing confidence
 - taking into consideration the views, opinions and feelings of others*
- become more confident in coping with change and with situations that are unfamiliar
 - joining a new club, making new friends, moving house, teams and games*
- become increasingly responsible and autonomous
 - saving money, taking care of his/her own sports gear, tidying his/her own room, asserting his/her rights, being able to make a complaint and seek redress.*

Strand unit Taking care of my body

The child should be enabled to

Health and well-being

- understand and appreciate what it means to be healthy and to have a balanced life-style
 - having energy, being in good form, feeling enthusiastic, having a positive outlook, having a balanced diet, having friends, having good posture*
- realise that each individual has some responsibility for his/her health and that this responsibility increases as he/she gets older
 - not remaining in wet clothes, eating a proper lunch, taking regular and appropriate exercise, balancing work and play, having correct posture*
 - protecting skin from dangerous sun rays*
- begin to develop strategies to cope with various worries or difficulties that he or she may encounter
 - disappointments, peer pressure, bullying, illness*
- be aware of the dangers in using tobacco or alcohol and explore the reasons why people may choose to smoke or drink
- know and understand the meaning of the word 'drug' and when it is appropriate or inappropriate to take drugs
 - learning that drugs are substances that change the way the body, and often the mind, works; all medicines are drugs but not all drugs are medicines*
- identify and categorise a variety of substances that are taken into or onto the body into those that are helpful or harmful, legal or illegal
 - nicotine, food, alcohol, liquids, nose drops, sprays*

- recognise and discuss some people who are concerned with health and welfare
 - doctor, nurse, speech therapist, pharmacist, optician, chiroprapist, dentist*

Knowing about my body

- realise the importance of caring for and treating his/her own body, and that of others, with dignity and respect
- understand the physical changes taking place in both the male and female body
 - growing height and weight, increasing strength*
 - growing from boy to man, growing from girl to woman*
- realise that these changes do not occur at the same time but nonetheless are predictable and natural and that being different is normal
 - accepting his/her own body image*
 - being sensitive to the patterns of growth and development in himself/herself and other people*
- recognise and practise good personal hygiene, know how it is maintained and understand its importance in social interaction
- understand and explore the relationship between health and hygiene
 - the transmission of bacteria and viruses, the spread of infection and disease*
- recognise the adverse effects of sexual stereotyping and realise that these effects can become more exaggerated as the physical differences between males and females are more apparent

Food and nutrition

- differentiate between a healthy and an unhealthy diet and appreciate the role of balance and moderation
 - identifying the nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet*
 - exploring how diet promotes growth, performance and development*
- recognise the wide choice of food available and categorise food into the four main food groups and their place on the food pyramid
 - bread, potatoes, cereals*
 - fruit and vegetables*
 - milk, cheese, yoghurt*
 - meat, fish and alternatives*
- examine the dietary needs of his/her own age group and other groups in society
- explore some factors that influence the consumption of different food products
 - presentation and packaging, shelf life, advertising, imported or home-produced, price, consumer demand*
- discuss and examine the importance of proper food hygiene.

Strand unit Growing and changing

The child should be enabled to

As I grow I change

- realise that growing and changing are continuous throughout life
- identify the skills and abilities acquired and the interests and pursuits taken up in recent years
developing sporting skills, playing chess, reading, developing critical thinking abilities, making new friends, joining clubs
- recognise the emotional changes that have taken place since infancy
when I need something—what I did then and now
when I am afraid—what I did then and now
- recognise and discuss how feelings and emotions are affected by the physical changes that take place at puberty*
smiling when hurt or angry, being withdrawn when afraid
- recognise how spiritual development has taken place in recent years
becoming more reflective, using and appreciating quiet time, becoming more aware through exploring the senses, continuing to use his/her imagination and to wonder
- begin to appreciate the need for space and privacy in life
the need for personal boundaries, having opportunities for uncluttered space, having opportunities to work individually
- recognise how independence and responsibilities are continually increasing
choosing own reading materials
doing jobs for self and parents
being trusted

Birth and new life

- discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby, from conception to birth*
- identify the care that needs to be taken while waiting for a baby to be born
diet, rest, love, support and role of other family members, medical interventions
- develop an appreciation of the wonder of a new-born baby

**Developed and implemented in the context of the school ethos and school plan*

Feelings and emotions

- talk about and reflect on a wide variety of feelings and emotions and the various situations where these may be experienced and how they may be expressed

'highs' and 'lows': sports event, prizegiving, moving away, not winning a prize, not being chosen for a team

- identify strong feelings and learn how to express and cope with these feelings in a socially appropriate manner

love, embarrassment, shyness, success, happiness, excitement, frustration, jealousy, anger, rage, loss, resentment, 'being put down'

seeking help at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner, naming and discussing the feeling, pausing, taking appropriate action

- identify and recognise the difference between needs and wants and come to realise that some rewards or experiences may be or should be postponed until later

will I buy something with my money now or will I save for something more expensive later?

- explore how feelings can influence one's life

recognising how an individual action can affect the feelings of another

beginning to recognise how real feelings can sometimes be hidden from others.

Strand unit Safety and protection

The child should be enabled to

Personal safety

- explore the rules and regulations that exist in school, at home and in society and the importance of adhering to these rules for keeping himself/herself and others safe
 - realising that individual action can keep others safe or can threaten safety*
- identify people, places and situations that may threaten personal safety
 - bullies, large gatherings*
 - being touched inappropriately, being asked to keep a difficult secret (one that is worrying or makes him/her feel uncomfortable)*
- begin to assess the consequences of risky behaviour
 - smoking a cigarette, tasting alcohol, climbing a wall*
- begin to realise that as independence increases, responsibility for personal safety increases, and that a strategy for keeping safe with people has to be developed and adhered to by each individual
 - being assertive*
 - realising how and when to get help*
 - telling people who are trustworthy*
 - becoming familiar with emergency services and how to contact them*
 - telling someone where he/she is going at all times*
 - adhering to rules about unsafe places*
 - not accepting bribes from anyone or taking lifts from unauthorised people.*

Safety issues

- be aware of potential travel hazards and the need for responsible behaviour when travelling
- adopt responsible behaviour at play and know the appropriate safety measures to take while playing
 - situations*
in the water, at home, in the school yard, while visiting friends
 - safety measures*
wearing protective headgear
- explore and examine how accidents are caused, identifying ways in which some of these can be prevented and the appropriate action to be taken if an accident or emergency occurs
 - at home, in school, on the farm, at the seaside*
- identify items or substances in the home or school that may be dangerous if not used properly and devise a safety strategy for dealing with them
 - never touching, tasting or smelling unknown substances*
 - never transferring substances into other containers*
 - always asking a responsible adult before using any substance, learning about correct means of storage*
- explore and examine the use of medicines
 - where medicines are obtained, the different ways in which medicines are taken, the positive benefits of taking medicine, the dangers of misusing medicine*
- identify some potential risks to health and safety in the environment
 - traffic, ultraviolet light, polluted water, smoke.*

Strand unit Making decisions

The child should be enabled to

- become aware of and think about choices and decisions that he/she makes every day
- explore and discuss the factors that influence personal decisions and choices and the different levels of thought involved in making a decision
 - personal wishes and desires*
 - impulse*
 - values and beliefs*
 - wishes and directions of parent or teacher*
 - social constraints*
 - peer and media influences*
- discuss why and how adults can make decisions and set boundaries for young people
 - because they care for and love them*
 - because they want to keep them safe*
 - because they know how to keep them healthy*
- recognise that opportunities to exercise choice can increase as responsibilities are accepted and as the trust of others is earned
- recognise and explore the risks and the consequences of making a particular decision
- learn and begin to devise a simple decision-making strategy
 - pausing and thinking*
 - identifying the important facts and/or the moral questions about the problem*
 - considering the possible solutions and consequences*
 - weighing up the advantages and disadvantages*
 - implementing the decision*
 - reflecting on the choice or decision*
- recognise and explore how the views, opinions, expectations and responses of others can influence personal decisions or actions
 - affirming, expressing sympathy, including others, isolating people, bullying, smoking, truancy, drinking alcohol*
- make individual and group decisions.

Strand: Myself and others

Strand unit Myself and my family

The child should be enabled to

- explore and discuss different kinds of families, recognising that families vary in structure, in the way they communicate and in the way family members spend their time
single-parent, two-parent, step-parent, adoptive, foster, others
- recognise that each member has a place and role in the family and contributes to the effective functioning of the family unit
helping to mind younger children
helping to keep the home tidy
sharing and co-operating with each other
- explore how belonging to a family means that family members love, protect, provide and care for each other
- understand that families often undergo planned or unplanned changes that may be pleasant or difficult
moving house, the arrival of a new baby, the death of one member, unemployment, new job, separation, illness
- identify the behaviour that is important for harmony in families
forgiveness, understanding, love, empathy, listening, respect, sharing, trust, spending time, adhering to family rules, honesty, accountability
- compare and contrast life-styles of families in urban and rural areas, in different countries, and in different cultures within and outside Ireland.

Strand unit My friends and other people

The child should be enabled to

- appreciate the need for and the importance of friendship and interacting with others
- explore the different aspects of friendship
 - loyalty, respect, genuine communication, trust, keeping promises, forgiveness, resolving conflict, honesty, what he/she values in each other, why he/she enjoys each other's company*
- examine different types of friendship
 - same-sex friendships*
 - 'best friend'*
 - boy-girl friendships*
 - groups of friends*
 - befriending someone in a difficult situation for a short time*
- begin to cope with disharmony in, or loss of, friendships
- acknowledge that friends often circulate in groups, which can be healthy or unhealthy
 - inclusive, friendly, supportive*
 - teasing, taunting, being pressured*
- practise and recognise the importance of care and consideration, courtesy and good manners when interacting with others
- respect and show consideration for the views, beliefs and values of others
 - being just and fair when dealing with others*
 - exploring the role of assumption, rumour, fact and opinion when deciding about other people*
- recognise, discuss and understand bullying
 - why people bully, the behaviour that constitutes bullying, the consequences of different types of bullying, learning that bullying is always wrong, the role of the onlooker in a bullying situation, being threatened or bribed by a bully*
- explore and examine ways of dealing with bullying.

Strand unit Relating to others

The child should be enabled to

Communicating

- recognise and explore various verbal and non-verbal means of communicating
laughing, talking, hugging, fighting, crying, ignoring
- listen carefully and reflectively to others
listening to the experiences and views of others
reflecting on what has been said in a different way
commenting on the views expressed and on the views of others
- use language, gestures and other appropriate behaviour to perform social functions
expressing tenderness, gentleness, concern
presenting one's own opinion to an individual or a group
resisting the opinions and requests of others in a polite and firm way, expressing disagreement
- examine the power of persuasion in relating to others and identify times when it can be used positively and negatively
- give and receive compliments and constructive criticism in different situations
- recognise and explore how language can be used to foster inclusiveness

Resolving conflict

- identify reasons for conflict in different situations
children 'putting each other down', taunting each other, name-calling
- identify and discuss various responses to conflict situations and decide on and practise those that are the most appropriate or acceptable
pausing and taking action, using assertive behaviour, finding a compromise
listening to and thinking about the other person's point of view, apologising and/or accepting apologies.

Strand: Myself and the wider world

Strand unit Developing citizenship

The child should be enabled to

My school community

- identify the people who constitute the school community and the role of individuals in contributing to the life of the school
- be aware of the importance of mutual respect and sensitivity to the different values and attitudes held by others
- play a role in deciding on classroom rules and discuss and examine the importance of adhering to the school code of behaviour and discipline
- develop and practise leadership roles and learn to work together in different group situations
 - assisting others in achieving their goals and enlisting the help of others in achieving own goals, taking part in the school savings scheme*
- discuss and explore the concepts of sharing and co-operating and the ways in which they can be put into practice in an effective manner
 - practising justice and fair play in everyday interactions*
- explore the various ways in which the school promotes a sense of belonging
 - celebrating the achievements of individuals, groups and teams within the school*
- examine the traditional roles that may be assigned to boys and girls in school because of their sex and become aware of ways of counteracting this stereotyping
- explore and recognise the rights and responsibilities of both adults and children in the school community
 - children have the right to feel safe and to take action, they should not infringe on the rights of others*

Local and wider communities

- realise what it means to belong to a group
supporting others, setting goals and targets, recognising the strengths of others, adhering to democratic rules and regulations, respecting the views of everyone, having rights and responsibilities
- recognise how each person has both an individual and a communal responsibility to the community
being a good neighbour and a good citizen, being aware of and taking action to help those who may be in need
- appreciate the diversity of people or groups within communities and the importance of mutual respect, empathy and understanding for living together in peace and harmony
- examine how justice, fairness and equality may or may not be exemplified in a community
exploring discrimination against particular groups, racism, recognising stereotyping of any kind and exploring how it can be counteracted
- explore some of the issues and concerns in the local or national community
consequences, possible solutions, role of each individual
- discuss the role of leaders and organisations that serve the community at different levels and the influence that they have
mayor, credit union, sports clubs
- become aware of his/her own culture and recognise traditions, festivals and celebrations that are unique to the locality, region or country
language, music, folklore, literature, national flag and anthem
celebrate local or national achievements and accomplishments
- begin to develop an awareness of the lives and culture of some people in the European Union

Environmental care

- appreciate and respect the environment and learn that there is an individual and community responsibility in caring for the environment and protecting it for future generations.

The sub-unit Environmental care is developed in detail in SESE geography and science.

Strand unit Media education

The child should be enabled to

- explore the different ways in which information can be transmitted and learn to be discerning and selective about this information, with particular regard to language, behaviour, authenticity and attitudes

- discuss and explore television, radio, videos, computer games, the internet (worldwide web and e-mail) and other media

identifying favourite programmes and the reasons for their popularity

measuring the amount of time spent watching television, listening to music, playing computer games, exploring the internet, reading comics, books or magazines

exploring alternative leisure pursuits

sorting and classifying television

programmes, videos, magazines and comics into different categories

- become aware of advertising and its purpose and nature

advertising intends to persuade, messages can be biased

- begin to explore some of the techniques that are used in marketing and advertising

children's clubs, free toys with certain products, associating a particular pop star or character with a certain product, bonus points with certain food items, creating beauty ideals, appealing to one's wants rather than one's needs

- explore and examine some issues that are frequently raised in the media, the way they are portrayed and the accuracy of these presentations

family life, relationships, school, body images, community life, language, communication

distinguishing between fact and fiction, recognise various inequalities that may be encountered.

Fifth
and sixth
classes

Strand: Myself

Strand unit Self-identity

The child should be enabled to

Self-awareness

- recognise and appreciate that each person is a unique individual and that this individuality is expressed in many different ways
through the clothes we wear, interests and activities pursued, life-style, beliefs, personal attitudes and principles held
- reflect on his/her experiences and the reasons for taking different courses of action
- identify realistic personal goals and targets and the strategies required to reach these
- accept his/her own body image and explore some of the factors that affect his/her self-image and beliefs about himself/herself
peer pressure, advertising, idols and heroes

Developing self-confidence

- develop further the ability to express personal opinions, thoughts and ideas and listen to, respect, think about and comment critically and constructively on the views of others
- enhance skills to improve learning
recognising where he/she is successful, realising that making and acknowledging mistakes can provide opportunities for learning
taking initiative, organising, planning, displaying or executing a project independently or as part of a group, reflecting on ways to improve learning on own achievements
- take increasing personal responsibility for himself/herself
being part of a savings scheme, caring for own belongings, taking responsibility for his/her homework
- become more independent and autonomous
making complaints and seeking redress, developing his/her interests and trusting his/her judgements, knowing and asserting his/her rights.

Strand unit Taking care of my body

The child should be enabled to

Health and well-being

- recognise and examine behaviour that is conducive to health and that which is harmful to health

healthy behaviour:

balancing work and relaxation, being usefully occupied, having friends, taking adequate exercise, having a balanced diet, correct posture

using prescribed substances appropriately

- recognise causes of personal worry and identify appropriate coping strategies
- distinguish between legal and illegal substances, identifying those that are most commonly used, and examine and understand the effects they can have

alcohol, nicotine, prescribed and non-prescribed substances, cannabis

- explore some of the reasons why people smoke, drink alcohol, misuse any kind of substances or take drugs that have no medical use

peer pressure, influence of advertising, to feel good, to impress others, to make one feel grown up

- explore the role of personal choice, risk factors and the influence of others when choosing to use non-prescribed substances

danger of experimentation leading to addiction

- explore and examine attitudes towards the misuse of substances and towards those who misuse substances of any kind
- identify and discuss the roles of various people who are concerned with the health of others

nurse, doctor, chiropodist, speech therapist, dietician, paediatrician, dentist

- realise that there is a personal and communal responsibility for the health and well-being of himself/herself and others

identifying practical ways of taking care of himself/herself and of promoting a healthy life-style

examining some of the strategies adopted in the community for promoting health and for protecting people from ill-health.

Knowing about my body

- recognise the importance of treating his/her body and that of others with dignity and respect
- identify and discuss the physical and other changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty and understand that these take place at different rates for everyone
 - female*
 - hormonal changes, changing body shape*
 - development of breasts, appearance of pubic hair, onset of menstruation (periods)*
 - male*
 - hormonal changes, physical growth*
 - enlargement of testicles and penis*
 - appearance of pubic, underarm and facial hair*
 - breaking of the voice, beginning of sperm production*
 - onset of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)*
- understand the reproductive system of both male and female adults
- realise how increased activity or involvement in physical activities can require increased attention to body care
- recognise some physical disabilities and how they can affect people's lives
- become aware of some communicable diseases and explore how diseases and infections are spread
 - some communicable diseases*
 - chickenpox, rubella, HIV infection, hepatitis*
 - infections are spread through*
 - air, body fluids, direct contact, poor hygiene and sanitation*
- identify and be aware of the different ways in which the body may be protected against disease and infection
 - external organs: nose, skin*
 - immune system: formation of antibodies, white blood cells, natural and artificial immunity, immunisation programmes*
 - life-style factors: diet, hygiene, rest.*

Strand unit Taking care of my body

The child should be enabled to

Food and nutrition

- appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
- realise and accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet
 - exploring and examining the food pyramid*
- recognise some of the important nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet and the food products in which they are found
 - macro-nutrients: protein, carbohydrate, fat*
 - micro-nutrients: vitamins and minerals*
- explore the factors that influence food choices
 - cost, advertising, demand, peer pressure, advertising and packaging, value for money, time for shopping and for cooking, ideal body images*
- explore and examine some of the illnesses particularly associated with food intake or special health conditions
 - coeliac, diabetic, anorexia, bulimia, the dietary needs of different age groups and individuals*
- become aware of the importance of hygiene and care in the preparation and use of food
 - using before sell-by date, reading contents, not chopping cooked foods and uncooked foods on the same board.*

Strand unit Growing and changing

The child should be enabled to

As I grow I change

- identify and discuss the changes that are experienced in growing from child to adult
 - changing interests and leisure activities*
 - developing a widening circle of friends*
 - increasing personal independence*
 - increasing personal and community responsibility*
 - coping with transfer from primary to post-primary school*
- explore patterns of development and growth, comparing present development with that at earlier stages: physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual
- appreciate the need for individual space and privacy as he/she is growing and developing
 - space and time to engage in favourite pastimes, a place to be quiet or to be alone or undisturbed.*

Strand unit Growing and changing

The child should be enabled to

Birth and new life

- understand sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed, loving relationship
- discuss and explore the responsibilities involved in being a parent and the emotional and physical maturity required to be a parent

*preparing for the birth of the baby
taking care of offspring from birth onwards
emotional, psychological and practical
provisions*

Feelings and emotions

- acquire the ability and confidence to identify, discuss and explore a range of feelings, especially those that are difficult to express

*joy, anger, grief, exhilaration, frustration,
'highs' and 'lows'*

- discuss and practise how to express and cope with various feelings in an appropriate manner

*choosing the appropriate time to talk
talking and discussing rather than prolonging
a conflict or disagreement by remaining silent
empathising with the feelings of others
knowing when it is appropriate to share
feelings with others*

- understand how feelings help in understanding himself/herself

understanding that moods and emotions are often affected by physical and hormonal changes, realising that true feelings may often be masked, being aware that personal feelings can affect others

- differentiate between needs and wants and recognise and explore the concept of delayed gratification

will I watch television now or do my homework first and watch television later?

- discuss the different types of love that exist and explore how love is portrayed and defined in music, films, books, magazines and other media

- identify and learn about healthy ways to help him/her feel positive about himself/herself.

Strand unit Safety and protection

The child should be enabled to

Personal safety

- explore rules and regulations at home, in school and in society and the importance of adhering to them
identifying limits and boundaries that change as children grow and show more responsibility, obeying those responsible for enforcing the rules
- identify situations and places that may threaten personal safety
*bullying, seeing others being bullied
being asked to keep a 'difficult secret'
large public gatherings
recognising inappropriate or unsafe touches, being with people who make me feel unsafe*
- discuss a variety of risky situations and behaviour and assess and evaluate how these risks may be avoided or minimised and the implications of taking risks
sometimes taking a risk can be important for growing and developing, while on other occasions the consequences can be dangerous or even tragic
- realise that as independence increases, responsibility for personal safety increases, and that a strategy for keeping safe has to be developed and adhered to by each individual
*being assertive
telling or confiding in people who are trustworthy
realising how and when to get help
being aware of policies in school and at home that provide support: for example, the child is aware of the procedure if someone is being bullied or is not collected after school, contacting the emergency services
making his/her whereabouts known at all times*

- discuss and appreciate the role each individual has in keeping others safe and identify occasions when his/her actions can threaten the safety of others

Safety issues

- recognise places where it is safer to play and how to behave in a responsible manner when playing
- know how to keep safe when travelling and to understand how individuals can keep others safe
- develop an awareness of health and safety in the school, home and work-place
- develop responsible attitudes towards the prevention of accidents and know what to do in the event of an accident
using simple first aid procedures, knowing who to contact, knowing how to use the emergency services
- identify the substances in the home and school or on the farm that may be dangerous if not used properly and ensure that he/she has learned a safety strategy for dealing with unknown and dangerous substances
- explore and examine the use of medicines
- identify and explore some potential risks to health and safety in the environment
traffic, pollution, chemicals, ultraviolet light.

Strand unit Making decisions

The child should be enabled to

- acquire a growing sense of the importance of making informed decisions at many levels and identify some of the decisions he/she has to make
 - how will I say no?*
 - what will I wear today?*
 - which book will I choose from the library?*
 - will I tell on my friend?*
- explore and learn to examine critically the factors and levels of thought that influence decisions and choices
 - impulse*
 - values and beliefs*
 - parental opinion*
 - social constraints*
 - peer and media influences*
- recognise that decisions have consequences and that not all people will make the same decisions all the time
- recognise the important and legitimate role that adults have to play in making decisions and setting boundaries for young people
- recognise that opportunities to exercise choice can increase as responsibilities are accepted and as the trust of others is earned
- discuss and practise a simple decision-making strategy
 - pausing and thinking*
 - identifying the important facts and moral questions about the problem*
 - considering the possible consequences and solutions*
 - weighing up the advantages and disadvantages*
 - taking the decision*
 - reflecting on choice or decision*
- distinguish between assumption, inference, fact, rumour and opinion in making a decision
- identify sources of help in solving problems
 - a parent or guardian, a trusted friend, a teacher.*

Strand: Myself and others

Strand unit Myself and my family

The child should be enabled to

- explore and discuss families and homes and how they can vary in many ways
single-parent, two-parent, step-parents, adoptive parents, foster-parents, group homes, hostels
- explore what belonging to a family means
being cared about, having a sense of belonging, a place where I can be myself, healthy interdependence, having particular roles and responsibilities, being sensitive to the needs of others in the family, having rules and boundaries, caring and supporting for each other
being accountable
- discuss possible changes in family relationships and expectations as he/she grows and matures and how he/she can cope with them
increasing independence, conflicting opinions
- discuss and identify behaviour that is important for harmony in family life
adhering to family rules, resolving conflict, forgiving, laughter, love, empathy, trust, listening, honesty, accountability, respecting each other
- critically examine the media portrayals of families and family life
- examine some factors that can affect family life
the birth of a baby, addiction, material prosperity, poverty, illness, bereavement, violence, a change in life-style, sexual stereotyping
- compare and contrast the life-styles of families in different cultures, both in Ireland and abroad.

Strand unit My friends and other people

The child should be enabled to

- explore the importance of friendship and interacting with others and realise that making and changing friends is part of the natural process of growing
- discuss and appreciate the different aspects of friendship and the difference between close friends and acquaintances
 - mutual respect, trust, loyalty, listening, spending time, genuine communication, laughter, honesty, resolving conflicts, forgiveness, being just and fair*
- explore the differences between boy-and-girl friendships and same-sex friendships
 - talking about different things, having different expectations of each other wishing to impress his/her own sex and opposite sex*
- consider problems that can arise in friendships and other relationships and how these could be handled
 - jealousy, uncertainty, feeling left out, pressure to belong and conform*
- identify the different groups to which friends can belong and recognise what constitutes a healthy group
 - healthy group:*
inclusive, friendly, supportive, respectful of the rights and views of others
- explore how the opinions, views or expectations of others can influence how people relate to each other, either positively or negatively
 - being inclusive, respectful, sharing, truancy, shoplifting, smoking, making assumptions, stress*
- practise and recognise the importance of care and consideration, courtesy and good manners with others
- recognise, discuss and understand bullying and its effects
 - what behaviour constitutes bullying, how and why bullying happens, how it feels to be intimidated and to intimidate others, the effect of bullying on self and others, know that bullying is always wrong*
- explore and discuss how individuals can deal with being bullied, knowing that others are being bullied and being a bully
 - who to confide in, when to tell, how to be assertive.*

Strand unit Relating to others

The child should be enabled to

Communicating

- explore and practise the many verbal and non-verbal ways in which people communicate with each other

introducing an individual in different situations

expressing gentleness, concern, tenderness, love

resisting the opinions or requests of friends, peers

- listen actively to others and respect what each person has to say

listening carefully to the experiences and views of others, reflecting and repeating what has been said

giving and receiving compliments and affirmations and giving and receiving constructive criticism

- examine the various ways in which language can be used to isolate and discriminate against people

- begin to appreciate the importance of maintaining a personal stance while also respecting the beliefs, values and opinions of others

finding positive ways of expressing views that differ from others

- examine the power of persuasion, how it can be used both positively and negatively, and suggest practical ways and develop practical suggestions for dealing with pressures and influences

pressure to conform or to belong to a group

Resolving conflict

- discuss how conflict can arise with different people and in different situations
- identify and discuss various responses to conflict situations

submission, negotiation, aggression, telling the truth, avoidance, walking away

- explore and practise how to handle conflict without being aggressive.

Strand: Myself and the wider world

Strand unit Developing citizenship

The child should be enabled to

Living in the local community

- explore the concept of the class or school as a community
- practise ways of working together and of developing a sense of belonging
 - celebrating group and individual achievements, reaching group decisions, making class decisions, taking particular responsibilities in class or in local organisations, exploring the class or club rules and being involved in making the rules, resolving conflicts in appropriate ways*
- explore local traditions and folklore and develop a sense of pride in his/her local community
- recognise and understand the role of the individual and various groups in the community
 - having a sense of identity, exploring the duties, rights and responsibilities of both adults and children, making individual contributions, respecting each other, being inclusive, taking democratic decisions, adhering to rules, working together for the common good*
- recognise and explore the positive contributions made to the local community by various organisations, ethnic, social or community groups and individuals
 - sports clubs, credit union, community council, community radio, senior citizens' groups, boy scouts*
- explore how inequality might exist in the local community and suggest ways in which this might be addressed
 - poverty, homelessness, material need, lack of facilities for some groups, prejudice and discrimination against particular individuals or groups, stereotyping*
- identify some local issues of concern and explore possible action that could be taken to address these issues
 - recognising the individual and group responsibility we have as citizens in the community*
 - consumer rights*

National, European and wider communities

- become aware of elements of his/her own cultural heritage and traditions
music, literature, language, folklore, landscape, respecting the national flag and anthem, taking part in festivals and celebrations that are unique to Ireland
- begin to explore the concept of democracy
the role of the President, the Oireachtas and the Constitution, role of elections, equal rights
- recognise and acknowledge the various cultural, religious, ethnic or other groups that exist in a community or society and explore ways in which these differences can be respected
learning about different groups and their culture and heritage, realising what can be learned from them and the positive contributions they make, using inclusive language, exploring ways in which these groups experience discrimination, examining the role of each individual in counteracting prejudice, discussing the need for empathy and mutual understanding
- become aware of some of the cultures, life-styles and languages of some countries in the European Union and the wider world
learning about the countries in the European Union, identifying some of the effects of the European Parliament on Irish life, exploring the interdependence of countries and peoples, learning about each other through sport and music

- explore how justice and peace can be promoted between people and groups, both nationally and internationally
beginning to learn about Irish involvement in international organisations and the importance of this contribution
- realise and begin to understand the unequal distribution of the world's resources
basic needs not being met, understanding some of the issues, the ways in which we can help, the role Irish people have to play

Environmental care

- appreciate the environment and develop a sense of individual and community responsibility for caring for the environment and being custodians of the Earth for future generations.

This sub-unit is developed in detail in SESE geography and science.

Strand unit Media education

The child should be enabled to

- explore and understand how information is conveyed and practise relaying messages using a variety of methods
information and communication technology, letter, telephone, picture, poster, sign, film, book
- explore the role of newspapers and other forms of print media in transmitting messages, the techniques used and the types of information included
identifying information that may be deliberately excluded, the role of bias
- recognise unequal treatment of sexual roles and other issues in literature, advertising, drama, magazines and other media
- identify the audiences at which different aspects of the media are aimed
the approaches used, the content
- become aware of the different forms of advertising, its purpose and the messages it promotes
*advertising messages—slim always means healthy, beautiful people smoke and drink, certain diets are safe, beauty is physical
hidden links between body-image and certain products—you will belong if you use this product
what I need versus what I want*
- become increasingly critical and discerning in his/her own attitude to advertising and the techniques used to promote products, life-styles and ideas
*techniques:
beauty and glamour to promote certain products, the use of music, associating personalities with certain products, giving free gifts on purchase, the use of attractive visual images, the repetition of certain advertisements*
- explore various recreation and leisure activities as an alternative to watching television
- explore and use some simple broadcasting, production and communication techniques
lighting, voice-over, interview, camera work, using different kinds of music, e-mail.

Assessment

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.

Assessment can enhance the relationships between the parent/s and the teacher and between the child and the teacher. It provides information that can be communicated to the parent/s and ensures that learning experiences are based on the most comprehensive information about the child. Assessment can also contribute to the child's sense of security because it ensures that each child knows how he/she is performing in school and that individual difficulties are being acknowledged and dealt with as they occur.

Teachers and schools will need to take time to explore the nature and role of assessment in SPHE and to decide on the most effective ways of using it in order to enhance and complement the learning and teaching in the school. There will be a greater possibility of continuity and progression in SPHE in the school where there is a common language and approach to observing, describing, discussing and reporting on children's progress. Time spent discussing and sharing ideas will enhance communication among staff, with parents and with individual children and will ensure that the assessment is used in the most positive and helpful way.

Assessment in this curricular area cannot be seen in isolation, as it will be directly related to the assessment in other subjects and to any assessment that may take place of the school climate and atmosphere.

Roles of assessment: why assess in SPHE?

Assessment provides the teacher with information on how and what children are learning through the planned programme in SPHE. This knowledge will inform decisions regarding future learning experiences and give directions for planning, designing and adapting materials in SPHE and for adopting certain teaching approaches in the classroom. The teacher will be able to discern what the child knows and understands and how he/she transfers learning from one situation to another.

This information will be gleaned from the child's work during the discrete SPHE time, from the child's informal learning and everyday interactions and from the learning and teaching in other subjects. When used in this *formative* way assessment is very significant in the child's overall development. It provides feedback to the child on his/her progress and it also involves the child in reflecting critically on his/her learning.

Assessment also has a *diagnostic* role, in that it identifies areas of strength or difficulty that may be encountered by the child in his/her learning. The difficulties may relate to the acquisition and use of various skills, to any deficiencies that may exist in the child's knowledge and understanding or to difficulties that the child may have in engaging in and reflecting on various processes. This type of assessment will provide the teacher with directions for teaching and learning approaches that could help to improve the child's learning. The strengths can refer to his/her leadership skills or effective social skills or the ability to face a new challenge or situation. This information will help the teacher in planning activities and in working with the children in such a way that their talents and abilities are used and developed effectively. At times, information from formal behavioural tests, carried out in conjunction with psychologists and other professionals, may contribute to this diagnostic assessment.

Summative assessment presents an overall picture of the child's progress in SPHE. It is a formal recording of information gathered and is particularly useful for informing parents, teachers and other professionals of the progress of the child as he/she moves from class to class.

Assessment may also play a significant role in helping the teacher to evaluate the SPHE programme and its suitability for a particular class and to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching methodologies, approaches and resources in use. *Evaluative* assessment provides an opportunity to explore the extent to which the objectives of the curriculum have been achieved and the emphasis that is placed on the learning process and on the active engagement of children. It would also identify positive ways of improving the general climate and atmosphere in the school and of building on the good practice that already exists.

Assessment in SPHE: what should be assessed?

There are particular difficulties associated with assessment in this area. In many situations the real impact of the learning in SPHE will take place long after the child has left primary school. Similarly, the achievement of many of the objectives of the curriculum will be dependent on the emotional, intellectual and social maturity of the child, so that rates of progress can vary considerably from child to child. It can also be difficult to assess the effects of personal, social and health messages on an individual child, on his/her thought processes and on the manner in which he/she internalised the learning.

Nonetheless, some very valid and helpful assessment can take place that will enhance the learning and teaching in SPHE. The assessment should reflect the progress of the child in the planned programme in the school. It should take cognisance of the objectives in all three strands and relate to that which can be realistically and appropriately assessed in school. The assessment should also take account of the child's ability to assess his/her own progress and to set and achieve his/her own goals and targets.

It will be imperative that some assessment should take place of the general approach adopted to the SPHE curriculum in the school, and of the implementation of the programme in the context of the overall school climate and atmosphere. Such assessment will require the teachers to consider a number of key questions for assessing the school environment and identifying the areas that need improvement.

Assessment tools: how to assess

Assessment in SPHE requires the use of particular tools that will help the teacher to acquire information about the child's progress and the effectiveness and suitability of the programme in place. The primary emphasis in this area is on informal assessment but at times this will be complemented by formal techniques (as they are available), such as behavioural tests, pupil profiles and set criteria reference tests for certain aspects. The informal tools recommended for assessment in SPHE are:

Teacher observation

Teacher-designed tasks and tests

Portfolios and projects

Teacher observation

Teacher observation is a particularly suitable and effective technique for assessing this area of the curriculum. It takes place while children are engaged in various activities and/or during the everyday interactions in the class or school. Teachers have always been observing children in school as part of their daily work and in recording some of the observations. Focusing on specific aspects of SPHE can enhance their usefulness in the learning and teaching cycle in the class.

Teacher observation might focus on

- the ability of the child to co-operate and work in groups or to work independently
- the informal interactions between the child and adults and between the child and other children
- the quality of presentation of work
- particular interests or aptitudes displayed by the child
- the participation and interest of the child in a variety of activities
- the level of personal or social responsibility exhibited by the child
- the reliability of the child in carrying out established routines
- the perseverance of the child in carrying out a task
- the child's awareness of the difficulties of others and his/her willingness to help
- the questions the child asks and the responses the child makes to questions and suggestions made by the teacher
- various behaviour, for example shyness, leadership ability, level of self-confidence, the tendency to be anxious, sense of fair play, assertiveness, aggression, readiness to take risks and meet challenges
- physical and emotional maturity
- the ability of the child to engage in assessing his/her progress and reflecting on his/her learning.

Recording the relevant observations or those that the teacher considers the most significant can contribute to the overall picture of the child's development and can be used as a reference for the teacher when planning for SPHE and in communicating about the child to other teachers, either as the child moves through the school or as he/she moves to another school. Such recorded observations are particularly helpful in discussions with the parent/s. They can also be used in discussions with the individual child and will play an important role in encouraging valuable personal contact both between parent and teacher and between child and teacher.

Where children are involved in particular classroom activities, the teacher can informally observe the way in which they are learning, the level of participation in the activity, the quality of the group or individual work being carried out and any difficulties being displayed by individual children in completing the activity.

Observing the children in various contexts outside the classroom, such as on school outings and in playtime activities in the yard or school hall, will enable the teacher to gauge the effectiveness of activities that are designed to improve the child's self-esteem or co-operative spirit. The observations of incidental happenings will be as informative for the teacher as those based on planned or structured activities.

Observations by the teacher play a formative and diagnostic role by indicating aspects of the programme that need development and by helping the teacher to plan future learning experiences. For example, where a child or number of children seem ill-equipped to work together effectively, the teacher may have to spend some time developing the group work process so that the children may engage in, and benefit from, a wide variety of activities. Similarly, where a school has noticed a particular need arising from its observations of the children and their behaviour, it can decide to concentrate on a specific aspect of the programme for a particular period. These observations can also be used to communicate regularly with the child about his/her own work and help him/her to gain more from the learning process.

Teacher-designed tasks and tests

Tasks set in a learning context can allow for the assessment of the process and product or a combination of both. The teacher can assess the processes in which the children are involved and gauge the extent to which they understand what is being taught and are able to transfer and use what they have learned to a variety of situations. As children reflect on a particular process they can begin to make sense of it and become more aware of themselves as individuals and the ways in which they learn and work.

Tasks

A task for example, can be designed that presents children with a situation where they, in a group, will have to reach a decision and defend their opinions. This activity will enable the teacher to assess how the children worked together and whether or not they were able to reach a consensus. The assessment also provides for the children to reflect on and

become aware of their own role in the decision-making process and to learn about the factors that influenced them in reaching a decision.

Specific tasks can also be used effectively to ascertain a child's ability to apply particular skills in different situations. Tasks can be designed that allow the children to demonstrate abilities in many social, personal and health contexts, for example in displaying assertiveness, persuasiveness, coping ability, critical analysis or safety skills or in solving a problem and reaching a solution. The use of tasks is to be recommended in SPHE, because they mirror the type of activities required by the objectives of the curriculum and so create a link between objectives, methodologies and assessment.

Tests

SPHE includes areas of knowledge and understanding that will need to be assessed at regular intervals. Simple tests designed by the teacher will allow for the teacher to ascertain the knowledge that has been acquired. For example, on completion of the strand unit on food and nutrition it may be helpful to set a test that requires children to display their knowledge of food, food groups, healthy diet, etc.

Portfolios

A portfolio is a personal folder kept by each child that contains a wide variety of evidence of achievement and is appropriate for all age groups in the school. It is a useful way of collecting work that is completed as well as being used as a means of assessing progress.

These portfolios, by becoming a source of pride and giving the child a sense of ownership, can enhance the self-esteem of the child and show concrete evidence that everybody has some success in school. They also provide a means of self-assessment where the child becomes aware of, and reflects on, personal capabilities and limitations.

Portfolios in SPHE can include surveys or questionnaires completed, drawings, written activities, newspaper cuttings or check-lists. They should be sufficiently flexible to record a wide range of achievement in many aspects of the SPHE curriculum. At the end of a term or the end of the school year a representative sample from the portfolio could be chosen for assessment purposes. To complement this assessment by the teacher, the child could be asked to choose his/her own best work and be encouraged to discuss the choices made. This can enhance the teacher-child relationship and reinforce the child's role in his/her learning.

Portfolios also give the teacher direct evidence of the day-to-day work during the year and are a useful source of information for the child's next teacher. They are an excellent means of communication between the school and home and enable the teacher to review his/her own approach to SPHE and the effectiveness of various methodologies used.

Projects

Projects allow children to focus on a particular aspect of the curriculum and to study it in some detail. Opportunities arise for project work in all strands of the curriculum, for example in creating a class newspaper, in exploring dietary habits in various parts of the world or in examining safety in school. These types of projects can illustrate how much a child has learned and are particularly significant in assessing the child's ability to gather information, to collate and present it, and to work with others. It also reveals much about individual and group responsibility and can indicate the level of interest of each child.

Displays and presentations of work

Among the recommended approaches and methodologies in SPHE are displays and presentations of work. These allow children to summarise and collate information they have gathered, to present particular viewpoints or to argue a position. They can also be used to assess what children have learned and indicate their ability to present data to a specific audience.

A balanced approach to assessment

The aim of assessment is to improve the learning experiences of the child in SPHE. It is essential that any of the techniques used and the ways in which recording takes place should not hinder the learning experiences of the child. Once the techniques have become familiar to the teacher they will enhance the work in the classroom and will not detract from teaching time. The school policy should outline ways in which assessment can be undertaken in a practical and balanced way within the school.

Recording and communicating

The importance of discussing assessment in SPHE among the staff in the school cannot be over-estimated. In sharing their expertise and exploring their opinions or concerns, teachers will develop a common understanding of pupils' progress and the role of assessment in SPHE. Such co-operation can help to ensure continuity and reliability in the use of various assessment tools and provide support for teachers in their everyday use.

Discussions should also take place between parents and teachers regarding the assessment of individual children, because it will ensure a more realistic picture of the child's overall progress, strengths and weaknesses. Assessment provides essential information for children, teachers, parents and others about the child's learning and overall development and so facilitates future decisions regarding learning experiences and pupils' needs.

Pupil profile card

The pupil profile card will contain a profile of the child's progress in all curricular areas, and the assessment of the child's development in SPHE will be one aspect of this profile. The teacher's continuing observation of the child in the completion of various teacher-designed tasks and the compilation of portfolios and projects will form the basis for the information on the pupil profile card. This card will serve as a permanent record of the child's progress and will be especially useful in communicating information about the child to the parent/s and to other teachers. It is essential that the way in which information is recorded on such a card is both relevant and meaningful.

Appendix

Membership of the Curriculum Committee for SPHE

This curriculum has been prepared by the Curriculum Committee for Social, Personal and Health Education established by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

Chairperson	Sally Sheils	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Committee members	Des Broderick	Irish Federation of University Teachers
	Denis Coleman	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Angela Griffin	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Audrey Johnston	Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education
	Sr Regina Lydon	Association of Primary Teaching Sisters/Teaching Brothers' Association
	Marion Lyon	National Parents Council—Primary
	Colm Ó Ceallacháin	Department of Education and Science
	Micheál Ó Cinnéide	National Parents Council—Primary
	Carmel O'Doherty	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Proinsias Ó Dughail	Department of Education and Science
	Clare O'Leary	Catholic Primary School Managers' Association
	Eileen O'Sullivan	Management of Colleges of Education
Education officers to 1996	Carmel O'Doherty	
	Eileen O'Sullivan	
Education officer	Noreen Kavanagh	

Membership of the Primary Co-ordinating Committee

To co-ordinate the work of the Curriculum Committees, the Primary Co-ordinating Committee was established by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

Chairperson	Tom Gilmore	
Committee members	Sydney Blain <i>(from 1995)</i>	Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education
	Liam Ó hÉigearta <i>(from 1996)</i>	Department of Education and Science
	Dympna Glendenning <i>(to 1995)</i>	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Fionnuala Kilfeather <i>(from 1995)</i>	National Parents Council—Primary
	Éamonn MacAonghusa <i>(to 1996)</i>	Department of Education and Science
	Fr. Gerard McNamara <i>(from 1995)</i>	Catholic Primary School Managers' Association
	Peter Mullan	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Sheila Nunan <i>(from 1995)</i>	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Eugene Wall	Irish Federation of University Teachers
Co-ordinator	Caoimhe Máirtín <i>(to 1995)</i>	
Assistant Chief Executive Primary	Lucy Fallon-Byrne <i>(from 1995)</i>	
Chief Executive	Albert Ó Ceallaigh	

NCCA Chairpersons: Dr Tom Murphy *(to 1996)*, Dr Caroline Hussey *(from 1996)*

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