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SPHE Policy

Introductory Statement

Devised and formulated by the staff and whole school community of Rush National School, in accordance with the Revised Curriculum, and rules and regulations of the Department of Education and Science and the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association.

Ethos

Rush National School is a co-educational primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While respect is paid to all religious and/or value systems, Rush National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

Compliance with School Ethos

Whilst preparing the pupils to contribute and play a pivotal role in their community, it was felt that, in the formulation of our SPHE programme, due consideration should be given to the philosophy and ethos of Rush N.S. It is a co-educational primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While respect is paid to all religions and/or value systems, Rush N.S. is a denominational school with a Roman Catholic ethos. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and of participation in the school life, with respect for diversity of traditions, values and beliefs, language and ways of life in society, whilst working within the context and parameters of Department of Education & Skills regulations and programmes.

Rationale

To conform to principles outlined in the Revised Curriculum, Rush N.S. has formulated a Social, Personal and Health Education Plan (SPHE) which 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 of society. Through the 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. Through SPHE, we endeavour to foster the notions of responsibility and empowerment to promote a sense of achievement and to enhance self-confidence.

General Aims

The aims of Rush N.S. SPHE programme are:

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the individual 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 independent nature of the world.

Additional Aims for Our School

Taking into account the intrinsic abilities and circumstances of the individual child, the SPHE programme in Rush N.S. should enable him/her 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 process 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 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 in society and to recognise that these affect thoughts and actions.
- Respect the environment and develop a sense of responsibility for its long-term care.
- Foster the importance of respect for fellow pupils, staff members and the wider community.

Initiatives/Programmes used to support the teaching of S.P.H.E in Rush NS (2023/2024)

- Weaving Wellbeing Programme (whole school- as an additional resource)
- Accord R.S.E Day annually in second term (6th class only)
- Revised Stay Safe Programme (covered in the 2nd year in two year cycle)-2023/2024 school year
- R.S.E. Programme-(Sensitive lessons covered in RSE Month (February) the 1st year in two year cycle) 2024/2025 school year
- Revised Walk Tall Programme to supplement SPHE curriculum teaching at all levels
- Friendship/Anti-Bullying week-November 2023

Note: See SPHE yearly plan/calendar for further details on monthly topics

- Fun Friends/Friends for life programmes used in Special Education Department when required, to supplement all of the above programmes

The Language of SPHE

SPHE is guided by the values of kindness, trust, responsibility, respect, empathy, self control, friendship, tolerance, honesty and the language of all of these values will be referred to in the teaching of SPHE topics. A range of vocabulary based on emotions will also be explored and used. Children will be afforded the opportunity to build on SPHE related language in each lesson through use of relevant resources, and talk and discussion. Teachers will provide a language rich environment to support the teaching of new SPHE topics, and the children will be exposed to as much new SPHE vocabulary as possible each year. They will be encouraged to express themselves appropriately, and will be enabled to use the new language acquired through the various methodologies used and activities employed by the class teacher to deliver the various SPHE topics.

Methodologies

The SPHE programme as devised in Rush N.S. 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 will 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 competence and confidence in using language will be particularly significant in enabling the 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 of others.

Active learning is a key principle of the overall curriculum and is the principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE. The more the child is directly engaged in the learning process, cognitively, physically, emotionally and creatively, the more he or she is enabled to internalise what is learned. The 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.

A variety of strategies will be used:

- Drama activities
- Role play
- Co-operative games
- Pictures, photographs and visual images
- Discussion: in pairs, small groups, with whole class
- Written activities: surveys, questionnaires, lists, check-lists, projects, worksheets
- Interviews of friends/family members
- Media Studies
- E Learning/ICT
- Looking at children's work: portfolios, projects

A broad range of approaches and methodologies will also be implemented:

- Talk and discussion
- Skills through content
- Collaborative learning
- Problem-solving
- Use of the environment

Assessment and Record-keeping

Informal assessment will be used to assess the children's learning in SPHE.

Teacher observation will be the main assessment tool used in this area. Parents will be informed of his/her child's progress in SPHE at the annual Parent/Teacher meetings.

Differentiation

Through differentiation teachers support and ensure the participation of all children regardless of their differing needs. All children are enabled to make a contribution regardless of academic achievement or additional learning needs. Class tasks are adapted and modified so that all children can participate.

Support teachers work closely with class teachers to support the teaching and learning of SPHE for children with additional learning needs. SNA's also support the teachers and children in the teaching and learning involved in SPHE.

As various needs arise with individual children e.g. bereavement, loss, family separation, disability, illness, these are dealt with accordingly by class teacher, supported by the SPHE co-ordinator.

Resources

SPHE resources are centrally stored in the shelving area between Rooms 5 and 6. The list of resources is circulated to all members of staff at the start of each school year to ensure he/she is aware of what is available to enhance teaching and learning in the area of SPHE. Teachers are also notified of the location of the whole school plan on the server at the start of each school year.

Role of Parent

It is recognised that parents have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children, Parents can contribute to the development and implementation of SPHE in the school by supporting teachers in implementing certain aspects of the programme and discussing topics which are being introduced. Parental involvement is of great importance in the implementation of the SPHE programme. Parents will be notified in the event of any sensitive area of the programme being implemented, i.e. R.S.E., Stay safe and Substance Abuse. Parental observations and assistance in preparing children for various SPHE topics is very important.

Role of the SPHE Co-Ordinator

- Co-ordination of the SPHE policy and school plan.
- Acceptance of feedback, and evaluation of the policy
- Identifying areas of need in the area of SPHE
- Organising and sourcing of relevant SPHE resources
- Ensuring all teaching staff have the relevant materials to deliver the SPHE curriculum effectively
- Supporting and guiding teachers in their teaching of the SPHE curriculum
- Updating staff on changes to the various SPHE programmes in use in the school
- Upskilling in the area of SPHE

Role of Teacher

- Plan SPHE in accordance with the whole school plan
- Designate half an hour per week/one hour every fortnight to the teaching of SPHE
- Liase with class level colleagues when creating short term plans for SPHE
- Deliver the SPHE curriculum using a multi-sensory approach

- Plan learning which builds on children's prior knowledge
- Make provision for children with differing needs when delivering the SPHE curriculum
- Use language appropriate to level and topic being taught
- Create an effective learning environment, providing for pupils who need additional support with communication, language and literacy
- Ensure an environment where children can be afforded a safe space to express their feelings and opinions on topics being covered
- Provide equality of opportunity through teaching approaches and personalization of tasks and materials as appropriate
- Seek support and advice from SPHE co-ordinator/fellow colleagues if required
- Utilise the relevant resources available in order to enhance delivery of the SPHE curriculum

Role of Principal

The Principal will support the SPHE school plan, and will also:

- Commit to providing professional development opportunities for teachers, and promote a readiness to share and learn from best practice.
- Provide teachers with the opportunity to share in the planning of SPHE
- Ensure that resources for SPHE are provided to support high quality learning and teaching.
- Foster an awareness of good practice.
- Facilitate upskilling and participation in relevant courses.
- Use staff meetings to promote staff development in this area when required.
- Support new staff members and new teachers.

Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management will:

- Provide funding for equipment.
- Support professional development for teachers.

Ratification, Communication, Implementation and Review

A copy of the draft SPHE Policy was made available to all members of staff and to the Board of Management. The suggestions/proposals arising were considered by the Policy Committee in finalizing this policy.

The draft policy was subsequently reviewed and formally ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Subsequent to BOM ratification, the policy was made available on the shared teacher drive on the school IT network to all teaching staff members. Parents were made aware of the existence and availability of the policy by means of School Newsletter and this policy is also included on the Rush National School website at www.rushnationalschool.ie

The plan will be implemented by the teachers and SNAs supported by the Board of Management from _____.

It will be reviewed every ____ years.

Review Date: __February 2024_____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: _____