

**Thomond Primary School**

**School Plan for Social, Personal and  
Health Education  
(SPHE)**

September 2020 sees us returning to school in the midst of a global pandemic. Social and Personal Health Education always takes a very central role in the curriculum at Thomond Primary School but this year it is essential that we place it at the heart of the curriculum. Government guidelines state, "There should therefore be a focus on wellbeing as a foundation for learning" and "SPHE is particularly important in responding to how Covid-19 has impacted on children in terms of their feelings, thoughts and behaviours" (*Return to School – Curriculum Guidance for Primary School Leaders and Teachers*). Through SPHE we will endeavour to take the greatest care of the health and wellbeing of our pupils. To this end, we have drawn up a one year plan for 2020/2021 to help us address the needs of our pupils in this extraordinary year.

### **Introductory Statement**

The staff of Thomond Primary School formulated this school plan for SPHE, in consultation with our Board of Management and parents through our parent representatives, as we believe that SPHE is a shared responsibility and their contributions and involvement will be essential to the effective implementation of the SPHE programme in the school. It was drafted by the S.P.H.E. Committee during in-school planning sessions, and then brought to the attention of the whole staff, the Board of Management and Parents. It was reviewed by the SPHE co-ordinator with the assistance of staff and principal.

### **Rationale**

Aspects of SPHE are taught in Thomond Primary School through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Relationships and Sexuality Education and also through integration with other subject areas such as Physical Education, Religion, Geography, etc. SPHE and in particular, Social and Emotional Programmes, is an integral part of the DEIS Action Plan, which is reviewed and targets set yearly, We consider SPHE to be of paramount importance in our school and place great emphasis on the content of lessons as well as the methodologies and approaches utilised. Each aspect is addressed on an annual basis rather than over a two year period. We are an 'Incredible Years' school and as per our mission statement we show and foster respect for all and take very seriously our goal to develop the children as individuals and as contributing members of their community and of society in general.

### **Vision and Aims**

#### **Vision**

Our mission statement states;

***Rooted in our Christian tradition, Thomond Primary School strives to work in partnership with parents and community to provide a holistic and high quality education in a safe, caring and nurturing environment; where everybody is respected, valued and cherished in order that each child may have the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential.***

This underpins our rationale for teaching SPHE and informs the content, approaches and methodologies used.

## **Aims**

The children of Thomond Primary School should be enabled to achieve the aims outlined in the SPHE curriculum, which include:

- to promote the personal development and well-being of the child
- to foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the value and dignity of every human being
- to promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects
- to enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future
- To develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life
- to enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world

## **Content of Plan**

### **Curriculum**

#### ***Strands and Strand Units:***

The curriculum is delineated at four levels—infant classes, first and second classes, third and fourth classes, and fifth and sixth classes—and is divided into three strands: Myself, Myself and Others, and Myself and the Wider World.

Each of these strands is further subdivided into a number of strand units or topic areas that contain particular objectives.

Thomond Primary school will teach aspects of all three major strand units each year and strand units will be chosen in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE every year.

We have created the attached timetable to reflect this approach. **(See attached appendix 1)**

### **Contexts for SPHE**

SPHE will be taught in Thomond Primary through a combination of the following contexts:

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

Thomond Primary School has created a positive atmosphere by:

- implementing the strategies of The Incredible Years Programme
- highlighting, prioritizing and rewarding respect for all
- building effective communication
- catering for individual needs
- creating a health-promoting physical environment
- developing fair processes
- enhancing self-esteem

- fostering respect for diversity
- fostering inclusive and respectful language
- developing appropriate communication

### **Discrete time for SPHE**

SPHE is allocated ½ hour per week on each teacher's timetable in Thomond Primary School. However teachers may allocate 1 hour per fortnight to allow for more in-depth exploration of a strand unit. This year, there is scope for even more time to be allocated to SPHE. Each teacher will assess the needs in her classroom and respond accordingly.

### **Integration with other subject areas and Linkage within SPHE**

Teachers will endeavour to adopt a thematic approach to SPHE by integrating it with other subject areas such as Language, Aistear, Geography, History, Religion, Visual Arts, Physical Education, etc. Themes/Projects such as Healthy Eating Week, Friendship Week, Agri-Awareness, Healthy Heart Week, fundraising for charities, Respect Month, Internet Safety Week etc. may also be explored.

### **Approaches and Methodologies**

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

- drama activities
- co-operative games
- use of pictures
- videos, photographs and images
- written activities
- media study
- information technologies and looking at children's work
- circle time
- talk and discussion
- social and emotional skill development
- collaborative learning
- problem solving approaches
- use of the environment

### **Assessment**

Thomond Primary School uses the following recommended informal tools for assessment in SPHE:

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

### **Children with Different Needs**

Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify activities and methodologies in SPHE to encourage participation by children with special needs. The learning support and resource teachers will supplement the work of the class teachers where necessary. Thomond Primary School will liaise with trained professionals/appropriate agencies such as art therapists, music therapists, crisis counsellors when dealing with sensitive issues such as trauma, bereavement or loss to ensure that the children involved are fully supported while complying with Covid regulations at all times.

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

Thomond Primary School recognises and values diversity, and believes all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment. Ours is a mixed-sex school and we endeavour to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure that equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in discussion, debate, presentation, etc. Thomond Primary School is under Roman Catholic management, and we endeavour to provide for members of the travelling community, children with disabilities, families with literacy difficulties, children who are learning English as an additional language.

### **Organisation**

#### **Policies and Programmes that support SPHE**

- Child Protection
- Anti-Bullying
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Substance Use
- Code of Behaviour
- Enrolment
- Health and Safety
- Healthy Eating
- Internet Acceptable Usage
- Active School Flag
- Health Promoting Schools
- Food Dudes
- Green Flag
- Super Troopers
- Alert
- Walk Tall

#### **Homework**

SPHE homework, if prescribed in SPHE, will reflect the active learning approach as described in the curriculum and will be within the ability of all children to complete.

#### **Resources**

**(See attached Appendix 2)**

**Guest Speakers**

When a guest speaker addresses the children in SPHE, the class teacher will always remain in the classroom (as per Circular 22/2010) and make the speaker aware of this school plan and attached policies. It may not be possible to engage outside speakers this year. Covid protocols will be followed at all times.

**Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting**

This plan in SPHE and the curriculum documents will inform and guide teachers in their long and short term planning in SPHE. Each teacher will keep a Cuntas Míósúil and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in SPHE.

**Staff Development**

Training opportunities will include the following areas and this training will support an effective implementation of the SPHE programme:

- *training in the Child Abuse Prevention Programme/ Stay Safe*
- *training in the Substance Misuse Programme /Walk Tall*
- *training in the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme /R.S.E.*
- *PDST Advisor support and modelling of lessons*
- *training in Incredible Years*
- *training in Friends for Life*
- *training in Zippy Friends*
- *training in Dina in the Classroom*
- *training in Restorative Practice*

Teachers are encouraged to attend and are facilitated in so far as is possible to attend SPHE related courses and will share information/skills acquired at these courses with other members of staff during staff and/or planning meetings.

**Parental Involvement**

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

**Community Links**

Thomond Primary School believes that the local community has a very important role to play in supporting the programme in SPHE and endeavour to liaise with the members such as the dental hygienist, health nurse, fireman, gardaí, vet, new parent, community worker, public representative if and when Covid restrictions allow.

**Success Criteria**

The success of this plan will be evaluated through teacher's planning and preparation, and if the procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed.

**Implementation**

**(a)Roles and Responsibilities**

Thomond Primary School believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement SPHE. Therefore, the teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, Parents and the Local Community where appropriate and safe.

**(b)Timeframe**

The plan is currently being implemented.

**Review**

**(a)Roles and Responsibilities**

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

Those involved in the review will include:

- SPHE Committee
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Teachers
- Board of Management

**(b)Timeframe**

This plan will be reviewed as required in line with curricular changes or DES circular updates.

**Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management of Thomond Primary School ratified this plan on **29<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Canon Donal McNamara

Chairperson of the Board of Management.