



**LIOSMÓR MOCHUDA NATIONAL SCHOOL**  
*Big Trees from Small Acorns Grow*

# Physical and Personal, Health, Social Curriculum

## **Physical Education: (P.E.)**

The curriculum is divided into six strands:

- Athletics
- Dance
- Gymnastics
- Games
- Outdoor and adventure activities
- Aquatics.

**Outdoor and adventure activities:** Outdoor and adventure activities are facets of the physical education curriculum concerned with walking, cycling, camping and water-based activities, orienteering, and outdoor challenge activities. Walking, cycling and camping are valuable activities that some schools may organise. Orienteering is an exciting activity that combines the geographical skills of map work, the physical activity of walking or running and the adventure of exploring unfamiliar locations. It can be introduced through preliminary exercises on the school site. Outdoor challenge activities include trust or co-operative activities, group problem-solving exercises, and physical challenges such as those presented by rope courses and adventure play apparatus. Water-based activities may be included in the programme, providing opportunities for canoeing or sailing. These activities, which are mainly non-competitive, offer alternative avenues for pupil achievement and encouragement to adopt a healthy life-style based on an enjoyment and appreciation of the outdoors.

**Aquatics:** The aquatics programme is concerned with gaining competence and confidence near, in, under and on water. It provides unique opportunities for enjoyment, allowing the child the sensation of buoyancy. The term 'aquatics' is used to include not only the teaching of swimming strokes but the provision of opportunities for enjoyment of water play and other aspects of aquatics. The emphasis on enjoyment should be maintained as proficiency is acquired in specific techniques, including learning to swim a stroke or a variety of strokes. The concern for water safety permeates all aquatic activities and needs to be stressed throughout the programme. The aquatics programme is presented as one complete unit, without division into class levels. This allows for adaptation by schools related to their access to a local facility. The programme can be implemented progressively at whatever stage the child has an opportunity to begin water-based activities.

**Gymnastics:** Gymnastics in education is concerned with the use of movement in a creative way in response to set tasks, both individually and with others. Children explore movement on the floor and when negotiating a variety of equipment. The gymnastics curriculum encourages children to participate in movement experiences that are open to personal interpretation, providing every child with the opportunity to experience success at a personal level, by engaging in challenging but realistically achievable tasks. As the children progress through a sequential programme they are encouraged to strive for more control over their movements and to respond to more complex tasks. They can be helped to enjoy and develop an appreciation of gymnastics while realising individual potential and limitations, thus enhancing overall development.

**Games:** The games strand fosters the child's natural tendency to play through informal play activities. It enhances the development of basic skills, and many opportunities are provided for

social interaction. As skills develop in accordance with the stage of development of the child, the desire to apply them in informal activities in competition with others increases. Initially this may occur with a partner and then lead into 'small-sided' or mini-games. As the child progresses to these more formalised games, a variety of games should be provided that develop not only skills but also understanding of such concepts as possession, teamwork, attack, defence and use of space. If allowed to experiment, the child will invent many games in which to apply developing skills and understanding. Playground games, co-operative games and games traditional to the school or locality should be considered when planning a programme for the school. Gaelic games should be given particular consideration as part of the games programme. Invasion games, net games, striking and fielding games, target games and shared court games provide a range of opportunities for the development of skills and understanding. 'Small-sided' or mini versions of these games encourage maximum participation. A balanced programme of such games ensures that the child experiences a wide variety of activities that provide enjoyment and challenge and that foster a lifelong interest.

**Athletics:** The athletics strand provides a variety of opportunities to engage in the natural activities of running, jumping and throwing. The child needs to learn to associate joyfulness with these experiences. The emphasis should be on exploring and experimenting with the basic movements of walking, running, jumping and throwing through a wide range of informal play experiences. Building on these early experiences, children then develop the techniques of running, jumping and throwing as they progress through the primary school. Running activities can be devised to encourage children to run and to accept challenges to their personal performances by running faster or by running over a longer distance. Jumping activities will give the child an opportunity to explore various jumps and to develop technique for height and distance. The child participates in throwing activities using objects of different shapes and weights and develops a variety of throwing techniques, improving accuracy and distance.

**Dance:** Dance in education involves the child in creating, performing and appreciating movement as a means of expression and communication. Dance differs from the other aspects of the physical education programme in that the primary concern is with the expressive quality of movement and the enjoyment and appreciation of the aesthetic and artistic qualities of movement. The dance programme involves the child in a range of creative and folk dance. When creating dance, the child explores a range of body parts, body actions and body shapes. Concepts relating to the body in space, the changing dynamics of movement and the implications of moving in relation to another person and his/her environment are explored. The child is encouraged to dance in response to different stimuli and accompaniment and to view dance performance. The child's concept of what a dance is can be enriched by opportunities to see and appraise the more accomplished work of others. Folk dancing is presented with an emphasis on being fully involved and enjoying the dance rather than on the movements involved in the dance. It provides the child with a knowledge and experience of dance of Irish and other cultures.

### **Aims:**

The aims of the physical education curriculum are:

- to promote the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of the child
- to develop positive personal qualities
- to help in the acquisition of an appropriate range of movement skills in a variety of contexts

- to promote understanding and knowledge of the various aspects of movement
- to develop an appreciation of movement and the use of the body as an instrument of expression and creativity
- to promote enjoyment of, and positive attitudes towards, physical activity and its contribution to lifelong health-related fitness, thus preparing the child for the active and purposeful use of leisure time.

## **Social, Personal and Health Education: (S.P.H.E.)**

The Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE) is for children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

The SPHE curriculum...

- fosters children's well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging
- develops children's sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions
- promotes children's self-awareness and understanding by helping them to manage their own feelings, to recognise and appreciate individual abilities, and to cope with change of various kinds
- supports children to become active and responsible citizens.

The curriculum consists of three strands:

- Myself
- Myself and others
- Myself and the wider world.

The current curriculum was introduced as part of the Primary School Curriculum (1999).

### **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.

### **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