

# St Mary's Junior School

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# St Mary's Junior School School Plan for Social, Environment and Science Education (SESE)



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## 1. Introductory Statement and Rationale

#### a) Introductory Statement

This Social, Environment and Science Education (SESE) curriculum plan for St. Mary's Junior National School was developed by teaching staff in January 2023. History, science and geography curriculum plans were reviewed in consultation with staff on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Following feedback from the staff, a decision was made to merge the three subject plans into one SESE curriculum plan. This reflects our integrated approach to SESE planning and our commitment to providing thematic learning experiences in St. Mary's Junior National School.

#### b) Rationale

We recognise that SESE incorporates the three integral elements: history, science, and geography. We aim to integrate the three elements by using a thematic approach to planning in our school. Integration between SESE and other curricular areas is also a feature of our thematic planning with a view to broadening children's understanding and promoting language development. The whole school monthly themes used for SESE planning are:

Month	Theme	Month	Theme
September	Myself	February	Places
October	Autumn	March	Spring
November	Homes	April	Transport
December	Winter/ Christmas	May	Food
January	Play/ Sports	June	Summer

SESE provides opportunities for the child to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural dimensions of local and wider environments. The child is enabled to learn and practice a wide range of skills and to acquire open, critical, and responsible attitudes. SESE enables the child to come to terms with the biological and physical world and to live as an informed and caring member of local and wider communities.

# 2. Vision and Aims

### a) Vision

- It is the ethos of our school to enable each and every child to reach their full potential. A key component of this is encouraging children's exploration of the world around them. Building on their natural curiosity, we will structure learning opportunities that are thematic and meaningful to children's lives.
- We envision that history in our school will enable children to explore and critically examine significant events in their own immediate past, the past of their families, the past of their community and the past of communities in the wider world. History will allow children to work as historians and will enable the children in our school to understand more fully the world in which they live and how events and personalities have shaped the home, locality and wider environments in which they exist.
- Science in our school will enable children to develop an understanding of and take an interest in the physical and biological world and environments around them. It

should give them an appreciation of their environment and their effect on it thus developing individuals who will treat their world and its resources in a responsible way. We believe that science should be a practical subject with many opportunities to engage in hands-on investigative work. To this end, we will consciously develop children's scientific skills as well as their scientific knowledge.

• Geography in our school will enable children to make sense of the natural and human environments in which they live, in addition to environments in the wider world. By studying their local environment and other areas, the children will be prepared to play a role in their communities and appreciate the interdependence of people. Through geography, we will promote an understanding of and respect for different cultures and foster an informed sense of individual and community responsibility for environmental care.

#### b) Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for SESE.

The aims of social, environmental and scientific education are:

- to enable the child to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes so as to develop an informed and critical understanding of social, environmental and scientific issues
- to reinforce and stimulate curiosity and imagination about local and wider environments
- to enable the child to play a responsible role as an individual, as a family member and as a member of local, regional, national, European and global communities
- to foster an understanding of, and concern for, the interdependence of all humans, all living things and the earth on which they live
- to foster in the child a sense of responsibility for the long-term care of the environment and a commitment to promote the sustainable use of the earth's resources through his/her personal life-style and participation in collective environmental decision-making
- to cultivate humane and responsible attitudes and an appreciation of the world in accordance with beliefs and values.

The aims of the history curriculum are

- to develop an interest in and curiosity about the past
- to make the child aware of the lives of women, men and children in the past and how people and events have had an impact upon each other
- to develop an understanding of the concepts of change and continuity
- to provide for the acquisition of concepts and skills associated with sequence, time and chronology, appropriate to the developmental stages of the child
- to allow the child to encounter and use a range of historical evidence systematically and critically
- to provide opportunities for the child to communicate historical findings and interpretations in a variety of ways
- to foster sensitivity to the impact of conservation and change within local and wider environments
- to help the child recognise and examine the influences of the past on the attitudes and behaviour of people today
- to foster a willingness to explore personal attitudes and values and

- to promote an openness to the possibility of changing one's own point of view
- to encourage the child to recognise how past and present actions, events and materials may become historically significant
- to enable the child to acquire a balanced appreciation of cultural and historical inheritances from local, national and global contexts.

The aims of science education are:

- to develop knowledge and understanding of scientific and technological concepts through the exploration of human, natural and physical aspects of the environment
- to develop a scientific approach to problem-solving which emphasises understanding and constructive thinking
- to encourage the child to explore, develop and apply scientific ideas and concepts through designing and making activities
- to foster the child's natural curiosity, so encouraging independent enquiry and creative action
- to help the child to appreciate the contribution of science and technology to the social, economic, cultural and other dimensions of society
- to cultivate an appreciation and respect for the diversity of living and non-living things, their interdependence and interactions
- to encourage the child to behave responsibly to protect, improve and cherish the environment and to become involved in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems and so promote sustainable development
- to enable the child to communicate ideas, present work and report findings using a variety of media.

The aims of geography are:

- to develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships
- to encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth
- to develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence
- to develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with the development of graphicacy (mapping and other non-verbal, non-numerical forms of data presentation)
- to encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness
- to encourage the development of caring attitudes and responsible behaviour towards the environment, and involvement in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems
- to develop an understanding of appropriate geographical concepts.

# **3.** Curriculum Planning

All teachers are familiar with the strands, strand units and content objectives for his/her relevant class. Equal emphasis is given to each of the strand and strand units across each two year cycle (i.e. junior and senior infants/  $1^{st}$  and  $2^{nd}$  class). The post holder responsible for SESE circulates information to new teachers or teachers changing class level so that familiarity is maintained when teachers change class or if new teachers join the staff. This

ensures there is continuity, progression and consistency from class to class. Please see Appendix for a yearly overview of strands and strand units for each class level.

Strand	Junior and Senior Infants – strand units	First and Second Class – strand units
Myself and my family	<ul> <li>Myself</li> <li>My family <i>or T</i>he family of a person known to me</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Myself</li> <li>My family <i>or T</i>he family of a person known to me</li> <li>When my grandparents were young</li> <li>Games in the past</li> <li>Feasts and festivals in the past</li> </ul>
Stories	Stories	Stories
Change and continuity		• Continuity and change in the local environment

#### **History a.1) Strands and Strand Units** (*Refer to Curriculum pp. 14-71*)

We endorse the emphasis this curriculum places on the exploration of personal and family history at junior infants to second class level and are conscious of the sensitivities some aspects of these topics may involve. We will ensure that the stories and other activities selected will encompass a range of perspectives and will:

- Introduce children to the lives of women, men and children from a range of social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- Include studies from a wide range of human experience.
- Come from local, national and international contexts.

#### **b.1**) Skills and Concepts Development

We are aware of the skills and concepts that children develop through engagement with the history curriculum. The below skills and concepts will be developed:

	Junior and Senior Infants	First and Second Class
Working as a historian	• Time and	• Time and
	Chronology	Chronology
	Using Evidence	Change and
	Communication	Continuity
		Cause and Effect
		Using Evidence

	<ul> <li>Synthesis and Communication</li> <li>Empathy</li> </ul>
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Strategies we will use to develop the child's ability to work as a historian include (*Refer to History Teacher Guidelines pp. 6-15*):

- Sequencing activities: ordering objects/pictures, sequencing of artefacts from own personal past, sequencing of elements in a story and placing objects or pictures in historical sequence.
- Use of timelines
- Using simple evidence: artefacts and photographs from own personal past e.g. clothes, toys, birthday cards etc, photographs, objects, memories of older people, buildings, stories and songs.
- Providing children with opportunities to communicate an awareness of stories about the past in a variety of ways: listening to and retelling stories, drama, art work and ICT.
- Exploring instances of change and continuity in personal life, family and immediate local environment: looking at features which have changed or remained unchanged.
- Discussing the reasons for change and the effects of change: examining the actions of a character in a story.

#### c.1) Approaches and Methodologies (Refer to History Teacher Guidelines pp.64-115)

Our History Curriculum states that one of the keys to successful history teaching is the use of a broad range of classroom approaches and methodologies. We are aware of the variety of approaches and methodologies outlined as particularly suited to history and will endeavour to make use of the following:

- Story: Teachers have access to a wide range of suitable stories and fiction books in our big book storage library and class libraries. Books on specific topics can also be sourced by North Clondalkin Library.
- Personal and family history: Children will identify, discuss ad record significant personal events. Parents, grandparents and other family members will be encouraged to share family history with the children.
- Using artefacts: A selection of artefacts are available for history lessons. These include old toys, old clothes and old school items. An inventory of artefacts will be taken yearly and will be added to when appropriate.
- Drama and role-play: Strategies such as hot seating, conscience ally, freeze frames and thought tracking will enable the children to empathise with people from the past and recreate human experience.
- Using pictures and photographs: Historical photographs of our school and our locality will be used to enhance children's learning and allow them to work as a historian.
- Use of the environment: We aim to actively use our local environment and make use of the local features with historical significance. These local features include: Clondalkin Round Tower, Liffey Valley, Church of the Immaculate Conception and Carnegie Library.

- Oral evidence: Children will prepare and conduct interviews with family members, members of the local community and special visitors to gather information about the past.
- Documentary evidence: Old newspaper and magazine articles are available for history lessons. Sensitivity to children's personal circumstances will be exercised and careful thought will be given to the selection of new documents for this purpose.
- Use of ICT: We will make use of suitable websites, videos and images to enhance our teaching of history. Children will be given opportunities to research and record their work on iPads. The school's Acceptable Usage Policy will be followed at all times.

#### Science:

Strand	Junior and Senior Infants – strand units	First and Second Class – strand units
Living things	<ul><li>Myself</li><li>Plants and animals</li></ul>	<ul><li>Myself</li><li>Plants and animals</li></ul>
Energy and forces	<ul> <li>Light</li> <li>Sound</li> <li>Heat</li> <li>Magnetism and electricity</li> <li>Forces</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Light</li> <li>Sound</li> <li>Heat</li> <li>Magnetism and electricity</li> <li>Forces</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul> <li>Properties and characteristics of materials</li> <li>Materials and change</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Properties and characteristics of materials</li> <li>Materials and change</li> </ul>
Environmental awareness and care	Caring for my locality	Caring for my locality

a.2) Strands and Strand Units (Refer to Curriculum pp.15-49)

### **b.2**) Skills and Concepts Development

We are aware of the skills and concepts that children develop through engagement with the Science Curriculum. The below skills and concepts will be developed:

	Junior and Senior Infants	First and Second Class
Working scientifically	Questioning	Questioning
	Observing	• Observing
	Predicting	• Predicting
	• Investigating and	• Investigating and
	experiments	experiments
	<ul> <li>Estimating and</li> </ul>	• Estimating and
	measuring	measuring

	<ul> <li>Analysing – sorting and classifying</li> <li>Recording and communicating</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Analysing – sorting and classifying, recognising patterns, interpreting</li> <li>Recording and communicating</li> </ul>
Designing and making	<ul> <li>Exploring</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>Making</li> <li>Evaluating</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Exploring</li><li>Planning</li><li>Making</li><li>Evaluating</li></ul>

Strategies we may use to develop the above skills and concepts include (*Refer to Science Teacher Guidelines pp. 16-21*):

- Observation activities: observing using all the senses separately or combined.
- Classifying activities: sorting what has been observed into groups by colour, size, shape etc.
- Recognising patterns: recognising patterns in the environment and linking observations with ideas and possible explanations e.g. associating autumn leaves falling with a decrease in temperature.
- Estimating and measuring: measuring using non-standard units, comparing items by weight or size, ordering items by size and selecting appropriate tools for measuring.
- Making predictions: the teacher will prompt children to make predictions on what will happen in certain circumstances.
- Exploring materials, objects and models: the children will be given opportunities to handle and manipulate materials and make models from Lego, building blocks, plastic straws and other materials.
- Designing and making: planning an investigation, selecting appropriate equipment and materials needed, selecting the most appropriate method of recording, analyse the results of the investigation and evaluate their design.
- Recording and communicating: providing children with opportunities to communicate their observations and results in a variety of ways: drawings, collage, written or oral reports and use of ICT.

# **c.2)** Approaches and Methodologies (*Refer to Science Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines pp.*52-142)

Our Science Curriculum states that one of the keys to successful science teaching is the use of a broad range of classroom approaches and methodologies. We plan to use the key methodologies of the Primary Curriculum in the teaching of science: active learning problem solving, developing skills through content, talk and discussion, co-operative learning and use of the environment. We are aware of the variety of approaches and methodologies outlined as particularly suited to Science and will endeavour to make use of the following:

• Use of children's ideas: We understand that children's ideas should be the starting point for learning activities within SESE. We will find out children's knowledge and

ideas for a topic by the use of KWL, questioning, talk and discussion, annotated drawings, brainstorming and mind maps.

- Investigative approach: Teachers will use a combination of closed and open activities. Open activities will encourage the pupils to work scientifically and to raise their own ideas and questions, which will then be tested or investigated.
- Teacher directed approach: Teachers will model working scientifically and using new equipment.
- Outdoor exploration and investigation: The children will engage in frequent outdoor investigations. We have several outdoor learning spaces on our school grounds including the school garden, the classroom in the sun, the fairy garden and the stepping stone forest. We also aim for all classes to visit Collinstown Park during the school year. In addition, we recognise that school tours can provide opportunities for enhancing SESE teaching and learning.
- Inquiry-based learning: We aim to provide children with regular inquiry-based learning experiences. All teaching staff completed CPD on inquiry-based STEM learning with Curious Minds in the academic year 22/23.

Strand	Junior and Senior Infants – strand units	First and Second Class – strand units
Human Environments	<ul> <li>Living in the local community</li> <li>People and places in other areas</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Living in the local community</li> <li>People and places in other areas</li> </ul>
Natural environments	<ul> <li>The local natural environment</li> <li>Weather</li> <li>Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>The local natural environment</li> <li>Weather</li> <li>Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>
Environmental awareness and care	Caring for my locality	Caring for my locality

#### Geography

a.3) Strands and Strand Units (Refer to Geography Curriculum pp. 17-44)

# b.3) Skills and Concepts Development

We are aware of the skills and concepts that children develop through engagement with the Geography Curriculum. The below skills and concepts will be developed:

	Junior and Senior Infants	First and Second Class
A sense of place and space	<ul><li>A sense of place</li><li>A sense of space</li></ul>	<ul><li>A sense of place</li><li>A sense of space</li></ul>
Maps, globes and graphical skills	Picturing places	• Using pictures, maps and globes

Geographical investigation skills	<ul> <li>Questioning</li> <li>Observing</li> <li>Predicting</li> <li>Investigating and experimenting</li> <li>Estimating and</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Questioning</li> <li>Observing</li> <li>Predicting</li> <li>Investigating and experimenting</li> <li>Estimating and</li> </ul>
	<ul><li>measuring</li><li>Analysing</li><li>Recording and communicating</li></ul>	<ul><li>measuring</li><li>Analysing</li><li>Recording and communicating</li></ul>

Strategies we may use to develop the above skills and concepts include (*Refer to Geography Teacher Guidelines pp. 18-25*):

- A sense of place: exploring and discussing some of the distinctive human and natural features of the locality and develop some awareness of people and places in other areas.
- A sense of space: using locational terms, discussing and recording journeys to and from places in the immediate environment and referring to or using directions within home, classroom, school and familiar features in the locality.
- Picturing places: using simple drawings of areas, making model buildings with bricks, Lego and other play materials, and becoming aware of globes as models of the Earth.
- Using pictures, maps and models: recording areas in the immediate environment and places in stories using simple picture maps, models and other methods, exploring the outlines and plans of small everyday items, developing some awareness of maps and aerial photographs of limited areas in the locality, identifying land and sea on maps and globes, and using maps of Ireland and the globe to develop an awareness of other places.
- Observation activities: observing using all the senses separately or combined.
- Classifying activities: sorting what has been observed into groups by colour, size, shape etc.
- Estimating and measuring: measuring using non-standard units, comparing items by weight or size, ordering items by size and selecting appropriate tools for measuring.
- Making predictions: making predictions on what will happen in certain circumstances.
- Recording and communicating: providing children with opportunities to communicate their observations and results in a variety of ways: drawings, collage, written or oral reports and use of ICT.

### c.3) Approaches and Methodologies (Refer to Geography Teacher Guidelines pp.62-163)

Our Geography Curriculum states that one of the keys to successful science teaching is the use of a broad range of classroom approaches and methodologies. We plan to use the key methodologies of the Primary Curriculum in the teaching of geography: active learning problem solving, developing skills through content, talk and discussion, co-operative learning and use of the environment. We are aware of the variety of approaches and methodologies outlined as particularly suited to Science and will endeavour to make use of the following:

- Use of children's ideas: We understand that children's ideas should be the starting point for learning activities within SESE. We will find out children's knowledge and ideas for a topic by the use of KWL, questioning, talk and discussion, annotated drawings, brainstorming and mind maps.
- Fieldwork: Children will engage in regular fieldwork. We have several outdoor learning spaces on our school grounds including the school garden, the classroom in the sun, the fairy garden and the stepping stone forest. We also aim for all classes to visit Collinstown Park during the school year. In addition, we recognise that school tours can provide opportunities for enhancing SESE teaching and learning.
- Gathering data: The children will gather data through a variety of different methods including interviews, surveys, sampling, tallies and use of photographs.
- Use of pictures, maps and models: Children will record areas in the immediate environment and places in stories using simple picture maps, models and other methods. They will develop an awareness of maps and aerial photographs of areas in the locality, identify land and sea on maps and globes and use maps of Ireland and the globe to develop an awareness of other places.
- c) Linkage and Integration (*Refer to History Teacher's Guidelines pp.56-57, Science Teacher's Guidelines pp.44-45, Geography Teacher's Guidelines pp.44-46*)

#### Linkage

We are aware of instances where linkage within the history curriculum may be established (i.e. integration within the history curriculum). For example, content within the 'Change and Continuity' strand may also link with listening to local people telling stories about their past in the 'Story' strand. We understand that there are also opportunities for linkage within the science and geography curricula respectively.

#### Integration

We understand that integrated learning is an important principle of the primary curriculum. The use of well- planned integrated approaches, both within SESE and between SESE and other curricular areas, will be a key consideration for planning at all levels. Many elements of the history, science and geography curricula will be explored concurrently and much of the activities involved will contribute to the development of oral language, literacy, numeracy, aesthetic awareness, creative expression and communication skills. Some SESE learning will take place during Aistear in infant classes and during thematic learning stations in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes. A thematic approach to planning will allow for SESE to be integrated with the English, Gaeilge, maths, visual arts, music, drama, SPHE and PE curricula. We endeavour to not only seek opportunities to integrate content, but to also seek opportunities to encourage the transferral and application of language and skills in new contexts.

#### d) **Disciplinary Literacy** (*Refer to Primary Language Curriculum p.48*)

We endorse the emphasis the Primary Language Curriculum places on disciplinary literacy and understand the importance of integrating language and subject-based learning across the school day. SESE offers rich potential for the meaningful and critical application of language and literacy skills. Within SESE learning, we aim to provide an authentic context for development in oral language, reading and writing. We also understand that vocabulary development across history, science and geography is essential to support children's engagement. e) Assessment and Record Keeping (Refer to the school's policy on Assessment, History Curriculum pp. 74-87, Science Curriculum pp. 96-109, Geography Curriculum pp. 88-97)

We understand that assessment is an essential and on-going part of the teaching and learning process in SESE. We are aware that the primary purpose underlying assessment in SESE is to enhance the learning experience of the child. Assessment in SESE will seek to identify the child's learning needs in addition to measuring the child's progress and achievements in all aspects of the curriculum. We recognise the following areas must be assessed:

History:	<ul> <li>Children's knowledge about the past</li> <li>Children's ability to use historical skills</li> <li>The development of children's attitudes, interests and critical thinking skills</li> </ul>
Science:	<ul> <li>Children's scientific knowledge</li> <li>Children's ability to use scientific skills</li> <li>The development of children's attitudes, interests and critical thinking skills</li> </ul>
Geography:	<ul> <li>Children's knowledge of the environment and of the world</li> <li>Children's ability to use geographical skills</li> <li>The development of children's attitudes, interests and critical thinking skills</li> </ul>

Assessment in SESE is concerned with the child's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum in addition to their development of skills and attitudes. Consequently a broad range of assessment tools and approaches will be necessary. The following methods are highlighted in curriculum documents as particularly useful for SESE:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Work samples, portfolios and projects
- Concept-mapping
- Curriculum profiles

Teacher questioning, conferencing and self-assessment will also be used when appropriate. Assessment will inform the teacher of the progress of the child, the effectiveness of teaching methodologies employed and inform future planning. Assessment records will form the basis for reporting and discussing the child's progress with parents during parent teacher meetings and with children during conferencing. Assessment records will also be used to inform end of year reports.

*f*) Children with Different Needs (*Refer to History Teacher's Guidelines p.43, Science Teacher's Guidelines p.41, Geography Teacher's Guidelines p.35*)

We understand the need to provide a broad and differentiated curriculum in order to fulfil the social and learning needs of individual pupils. Differentiation will be an integral part of SESE

planning to ensure all children participate to the best of their ability. Children with exceptional ability will be able to make contributions to discussions as well as receive opportunities for expanding on the minimum expectations of a task that reflect their skills and knowledge. Equally, children with learning difficulties, language learning needs and special educational needs are helped to achieve their potential by receiving suitable supports to help them engage meaningfully in lessons. Teachers will consider a range of differentiation strategies. They will include

- Using a mixture of whole-class teaching and focused group work. Following a wholeclass lesson, different groups of children could be set tasks of varying complexity.
- Planning topics so that opportunities are provided for further investigation work for the more able or less able.
- Choosing more accessible or more demanding evidence. For example, artefacts and pictorial evidence may be more accessible than written evidence.
- Using a range of questions and providing a range of tasks. Teachers' questioning in oral discussion should use a range of skills from simple recall to more complex comparative and analytical skills so that all pupils will have opportunities for success while the more able will be challenged.
- Planning for the use of a wide range of communication skills. Some pupils may have developed a sophisticated understanding yet will be unable to communicate this in written form. Opportunities should be provided for children to record their learning in oral presentations, debates, drawing, role-playing, modelling, computer- aided work, etc.
- Intervening to give individuals and groups extra support they need as the children are engaged in learning activities.
- Providing opportunities for interacting and working with other children in small groups.
- Giving children opportunities to work with concrete materials.
- Using investigations as the basis for practical work. Children respond differently to open-ended tasks according to their existing knowledge and understanding.
- Consulting the 'Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities' (NCCA) and 'Exceptionally Able Students: Draft Guidelines for Teachers' (NCCA) where appropriate.
- **g)** Equality of Participation and Access (Refer to school's Equality Policy, Primary School Curriculum: Introduction p.28, Intercultural Education in the Primary School Guidelines for Schools)

We are committed to the provision of equal opportunities for all children in the implementation of the SESE Curriculum. At its heart, the curriculum seeks to build an awareness of self in the context of others and various understandings of community and life experiences. Equal opportunity will be given to all children, regardless of gender or ability, to experience all strands and to participate in class activities. Supports will be put in place to ensure children with physical disabilities and children with learning disabilities can access the SESE curriculum. Children whose first language is not English will also be supported in accessing the curriculum. At all class levels we include lessons on the lives of men, women and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. In addition, activities will be designed to support children in sharing their personal background, experiences and opinions.

### 4. Organisational Planning

a) Timetable (Refer to Primary School Curriculum Introduction p. 67-70, History Teacher Guidelines p.27, Science Teacher Guidelines p.26, Geography Teacher Guidelines p.27)

Timetabling for the SESE subjects will follow the NCCA guidelines which recommend a minimum of two and a quarter hours in infant classes and three hours for 1st and 2nd class per week. While all teachers will make a timetable that fulfils these requirements, teachers may choose to organise this time according to their thematic teaching plans, at times devoting more time to one of the three subjects for an extended period of time as long as this is balanced over the course of the year. Most importantly, teachers are actively encouraged to seek out multi-disciplinary approaches, linking SESE content with other curricular areas.

#### b) Resources

There are adequate SESE resources for all classes. Resources and equipment are centrally stored in the storage room on the green block. Some outdoor learning equipment is also stored in the 'Classroom in Sun'. All classes have a copy of the relevant text books for their class level. An inventory of resources and equipment for SESE is taken on an annual basis and shared with staff. The post of responsibility for SESE is responsible for maintaining resources and equipment. Resources are purchased centrally by the post holder if required. All purchases are made in consultation with the principal and class teachers. When possible, resources will be borrowed from North Clondalkin Library or the Dublin West Education Centre.

c) ICT (Refer to History Teacher Guidelines p.114, Science Teacher Guidelines pp.14-Geography Teacher Guidelines pp. 155-56, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Teachers, Acceptable Usage Policy)

ICT will play a role in SESE lessons through the use of multimedia materials, iPads, CD-ROMs and videos, internet websites and resources. The use of the school's digital camera or iPads will be useful in recording observations during investigations, assisting children in presenting their work, and recording children's work as a means of assessment. Photographs of children's work will be uploaded on the school website and included in our school newsletter. All teachers are familiar with the school's Acceptable Usage Policy and will follow the guidelines set out in the policy when planning for the use of ICT in SESE lessons.

# d) Health and Safety (Refer to Science Teacher Guidelines pp.27-134, Geography Teacher Guidelines pp.74-79, Health and Safety Policy, School Tour Policy)

The teaching of SESE in St. Mary's Junior National School will, at all times, be governed by our Health and Safety Policy. We understand that successful and enjoyable practical work within SESE requires sensible planning, good supervision, and adherence to safety rules. Teachers should be aware of the safety implications of any exploratory or investigative work and consider the following when planning for SESE:

• Primary science activities should not involve the use of chemicals or other hazardous materials.

- Plants and animals: Children should never handle unknown or unfamiliar plants, especially fungi. Children will be asked to wash their hands after handling plants and animals.
- Magnetism and electricity: Children should only use low-voltage battery powered devices, mains electricity should never be used for electricity and magnetism experiments, and rechargeable batteries should not be used for investigations.
- Light: Children should not look at the sun or at very bright beams of light. Plastic mirrors should be used for investigations i.e. glass mirrors should be avoided.
- Heat: The teacher should be very careful in the organisation of tests involving the use of hot water: the children should use water that is safe for them. Under no circumstances should the children handle matches or lighters.
- Equipment: Children should not use glass apparatus or sharp-edged tools.
- Fieldwork/ school outings/ school tours: Teachers must follow the guidelines set out in the School Tour Policy when conducting fieldwork outside of the school grounds, visiting features of the locality or going on a school tour.

#### e) Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Teachers will refer to the whole school plan and the curriculum documents for SESE to provide information and guidance for their short- and long-term planning. The strands, strand units and content objectives the class are working on will be noted in plans. Teachers will also record: learner outcomes, learner experiences, skills, methodologies, differentiation, assessment and subject specific language. Plans will not only indicate discrete lessons and activities but also highlight integration across the wider curriculum based on the monthly theme. Content covered will be recorded in the teacher's cuntas míosúil and uploaded to the shared drive. Cuntais míosúla will assist in evaluating progress in SESE and inform future planning. In addition, assessment records will be used to inform parents are informed of children's progress in SESE at parent teacher meetings and end of year reports.

#### f) Staff Development

Teachers have access to a variety of resource materials, equipment, and websites to support their planning and preparation for SESE. Teachers are encouraged to work collaboratively with colleaugues during block planning and staff meetings. This allows for teachers to share resources, lesson ideas, and previous experiences with one another. Teachers are also encouraged to engage in CPD courses relating to SESE. Time is allocated in staff meetings for teachers to relay information learned from CPD with colleagues. In addition, whole school CPD will be sought if needs arise from staff evaluation of our SESE teaching. For example, all teachers completed CPD on inquiry-based STEM learning with Curious Minds in the academic year 22/23.

**g) Parental involvement** (*Refer to History Teacher Guidelines p.36, Science Teacher Guidelines p.29, Geography Curriculum Guidelines p.34, Primary School Curriculum, Your child's learning, Guidelines for Parents*)

We understand that parents and the extended family (grandparents) have an important role to role to play in enriching their child's learning in SESE. We recognise that parents have a wealth of local knowledge and can provide children with a greater understanding of their personal history. Parent involvement in SESE will include:

• Talking to the children about their lives, work, cultural and leisure interests.

- Lending photographs or artefacts to their child's class to illustrate elements of the past.
- Participating in surveys and interviews.
- Providing assistance to children with SESE projects at home e.g. design and make a rocket.
- Supporting Science Week activities.
- Supporting the Green Schools programme e.g. contributing to clothes and electrical recycling drives.
- Participating in workshops or events ran by the HSCL teacher e.g. parent child planting workshops and science for fun activities
- Viewing children's work on the school website or school newsletter and discussing it with their children.
- Ongoing involvement of parents in activities and organised events in our outdoor learning spaces: the school garden, the 'Classroom in the Sun', raised flower beds, the fairy garden and the stepping stone forest.

#### h) Community links

We aim to identify parents and members of the local community who could make a particular contribution to the SESE programme in our school as a guest speaker or provider of resources. We are also aware of the following organisations which may be able to assist us in planning for SESE:

- North Clondalkin Library
- South Dublin County Council
- Clondalkin Tidy Towns
- Dublin West Education Centre
- Green Schools Ireland
- Corkagh Park
- An Garda Síochána
- Dublin Fire Brigade
- Round Tower Visitor Centre
- Recreate
- Picker Pals
- Orienteering Ireland
- Mobile pet farms
- Local retired community groups e.g. The Men's Shed
- Alone Ireland
- Local Nursing Homes

### 5. Success Criteria

This plan was developed with a view to improve the teaching and learning of SESE in our school. The below criteria will indicate success:

#### • **The** Plan **is implemented.**

- Teachers' individual planning and preparation reflects this plan
- Teachers' cuntais míosúla reflect this plan

- Procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed
- The methodologies within this plan have been implemented
- The **Plan has achieved its aims**.

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include

- Teacher/parent/pupil/community feedback
- Inspectors' suggestions/report
- Teachers' assessment records

#### • The Plan has enhanced pupil learning.

- Children have a positive attitude towards and appreciation of the three integral elements of SESE: history, science and geography.
- Children have an interest in and curiosity about the past
- Children have an awareness of the lives of women, men and children in the past and how people and events have had an impact upon each other.
- Children in first and second class have an understanding of the concept of change and continuity.
- Children have developed the skills associated with working as a historian relevant to their class level.
- Children have developed knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts through the exploration of human, natural and physical aspects of the environment.
- Children have developed the skills associated with working scientifically relevant to their class level.
- Children have engaged in designing and making activities and developed the skills associated with such activities relevant to their class level.
- Children have developed knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments, and their interrelationships.
- Children have development of a sense of place and spatial awareness.
- Children have developed maps, globes and graphical skills relevant to their class level.
- Children have developed geographical investigation skills relevant to their class level.
- Children have communicated findings, observations and ideas using a variety of media.

### 6. Implementation

#### a) Roles and Responsibilities

Individual teachers are responsible for the implementation of the SESE plan. It will be supported by the post holder with responsibility for SESE. The plan will be developed by the whole staff.

#### b) Timeframe

Plan will be implemented by April 2023.

#### 7. Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SESE curriculum in the school.

#### a) Roles and Responsibilities

The following groups are involved in the review.

- Teachers
- Pupils
- Parents
- Post holders/coordinators
- BOM/DES/Others.

The SESE post holder has responsibility for co-ordinating the review.

#### b) Timeframe

Plan will be reviewed by June 2025/2026.

#### 8. Ratification

#### **Reviewed / Ratified by:**

	Date:
Teaching Staff	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Board of Management	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Appendix** A yearly overview of strand and strand units for each class level is available below:

September:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Myself	Myself and my family	Living things	Human environments
·	• Myself	• Myself	• Living in the
	• My family		local
			community
October:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Autumn	Story:	Living things	Human environments
	Stories	Plants and	• Living in the
		animals	local
November:	<b>TT</b> <sup>2</sup> = 4 = =====	Science:	community
November: Homes	History: Story:	<i>Energy and Forces:</i>	<b>Geography:</b> <i>Human environments</i>
nomes	• Stories	Magnetism and	Living in the
	<i>Myself and my family</i>	electricity	local
	Myself and my family     My family	Materials:	community
	iviy family	Properties and	community
		characteristics	
		of materials	
December:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Winter/ Christmas	Story:	Living things	Natural Environments
	Stories	Plants and	• Weather
		animals	
		Materials:	
		• Materials and	
<b>T</b>		change	
January:	History:	Science:	Geography: Human environments
Play/ Sport	<i>Story:</i> • Stories	<ul><li><i>Energy and Forces:</i></li><li>Forces</li></ul>	Living in the
	Myself and my family	Materials:	<ul> <li>Living in the local</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>My family</li> </ul>	Properties and	community
		characteristics	community
		of materials	
February:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Places	Story:	Energy and Forces:	Human environments
	Stories	• Sound	People and
		Living things	places in other
		• Plants and	areas
		animals	
March:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Spring	Story	Living things	Natural Environments:
	Stories	Plants and     animals	• Weather
		ammais	Human environments
			• Living in the local
			community
April:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Transport	Myself and my family	Energy and Forces:	Human environments
	My family	Magnetism and	Living in the
	Story	electricity	local
	Stories		community
May:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Food	Story	Living things	Human environments
	Stories	• Myself	

		Materials: • Materials and change	<ul> <li>People and places in other areas</li> <li>Environmental awareness and care</li> <li>Caring for my</li> </ul>
June:	History:	Science:	locality Geography:
Summer	Myself and my family • Myself Story • Stories	Living things • Plants and animals Energy and Forces: • Light	<ul> <li>Natural Environments</li> <li>Weather</li> <li>The local natural environment</li> </ul>

#### **Senior Infants:**

September:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Myself	Myself and my family • Myself	Living things • Myself	Human environments <ul> <li>Living in the local community</li> </ul>
October: Autumn	History: Story: • Stories	Science: Living things • Plants and animals Energy and Forces: • Light	Geography: Human environments • Living in the local community
November: Homes	History: Story: • Stories	Science: Energy and Forces: • Sound	Geography: Human environments <ul> <li>Living in the local community</li> <li>People and places in other areas</li> </ul>
December: Winter/ Christmas	History: Story: • Stories	Science: Living things • Plants and animals Environmental awareness and care • Caring for my locality	Geography: Human environments • People and places in other areas Environmental awareness and care • Caring for my locality
January: Play/ Sport	History: Story: • Stories	Science: Energy and Forces: • Forces Living things: • Myself	Geography: Human environments Living in the local community
February: Places	History: Story: • Stories Myself and my family • Myself	Science: Living things • Plants and animals Materials: • Properties and characteristics of materials	Geography: Human environments • People and places in other areas

March:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Spring	Story	Living things	Natural Environments:
	• Stories	• Plants and	• Weather
	Myself and my family	animals	Human environments
	• Myself		• Living in the
	-		local
			community
April:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Transport/ Space	Story	Energy and Forces:	Natural environments
	Stories	• Heat	• Planet Earth in
		Forces	Space
May:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Food/ Water	Story	Living things	Natural Environments
	Stories	Plants and	• The local
		animals	natural
		Materials:	environment
		Properties and	Environmental
		characteristics	awareness and care
		of materials	Caring for my
			locality
June:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Summer	Story	Living things	Natural Environments
	Stories	Plants and	• The local
		animals	natural
		Energy and Forces:	environment
		Forces	Environmental
		Materials:	awareness and care
		Materials and	Caring for my
		change	locality

# 1<sup>st</sup> Class:

September:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Myself	Myself and my family	Living things	Environmental
	Myself	• Myself	awareness and care
	• When my		Caring for my
	grandparents		locality
	were young		Human environments
	• My family		• Living in the
			local
			community
October:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Autumn	Story:	Energy and Forces:	Natural Environments
	Stories	• Light	• Weather
	Myself and my family	Living things	Human environments
	• Feasts and	Plants and	• People and
	festivals in the	animals	places in other
	past		areas
November:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Homes	Myself and my family	Energy and Forces:	Human environments
	• When my	• Heat	<ul> <li>Living in my</li> </ul>
	grandparents	Living things	local
	were young	Plants and	community
	Change and Continuity	animals	
	Continuity and		
	change in the		
	local		
	environment		
December:	History:	Science:	Geography:

Winter/ Christmas	Story:	Living things	Natural Environments
	<ul> <li>Stories</li> <li>Myself and my family</li> <li>Feasts and festivals in the past</li> <li>When my grandparents were young</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Plants and animals</li> <li>Materials:</li> <li>Materials and change</li> <li>Properties and characteristics of materials</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Weather</li> <li>Human environments</li> <li>People and places in other areas</li> </ul>
January: Play	History: Story: • Stories Myself and my family • Games in the past	Science: Living things • Myself Energy and Forces: • Magnetism and electricity Materials: • Properties and characteristics of materials	Geography: Human environments People and places in other areas Living in the local community
February: Places	History: Story: Stories Myself and my family Feasts and festivals in the past	Science: Living things • Plants and animals	Geography: Human environments People and places in other areas Natural Environments The local natural environment
March: Spring	History: Story Stories Myself and my family Feasts and festivals in the past Change and Continuity Continuity and change in the local environment	Science: Environmental awareness and care • Caring for my locality Living things • Plants and animals	Geography: Natural Environments: • Weather
April: Transport	History: Change and Continuity • Continuity and change in the local environment Myself and my family • When my grandparents were young Story • Stories	Science: Materials: Properties and characteristics of materials Energy and Forces: Forces Environmental awareness and care Caring for my locality	Geography: Human environments People and places in other areas Living in the local community
May: Food	Stories      History:     Myself and my family         • When my         grandparents         were young     Story     • Stories	Science: Living things • Myself • Plants and animals	Geography: Human environments • People and places in other areas

			• Living in the local community
June:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Summer	Myself and my family <ul> <li>Myself</li> <li>When my grandparents were young</li> </ul> <li>Change and Continuity <ul> <li>Continuity and change in the local environment</li> </ul></li>	<ul> <li>Living things</li> <li>Plants and animals</li> <li>Materials:</li> <li>Materials and change</li> </ul>	Natural Environments <ul> <li>Weather</li> <li>Local natural environments</li> </ul> <li>Human environments <ul> <li>Living in my local community</li> </ul> </li>

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Class:

September:	History:	Science:	Geography:
Myself	Myself and my family	Living things	Human environments
	• Myself	• Myself	• Living in the local community
October: Autumn	History: Story: • Stories Myself and my family • When my grandparents were young	Science: Energy and Forces: • Light Living things • Plants and animals Materials: • Materials and change	Geography: Natural Environments • Weather Human environments • People and places in other areas • Living in the local community
November: Homes	History: Story: Stories Myself and my family When my grandparents were young	Science: Energy and Forces: • Sound Living things • Myself	Geography: Human environments • Living in my local community • People and places in other areas
December: Winter/ Christmas	History: Story: • Stories Myself and my family • When my grandparents were young	Science: Living things • Plants and animals Materials: • Materials and change • Properties and characteristics of materials	Geography: Natural Environments • Weather Human environments • People and places in other areas Environmental awareness and care • Caring for my locality
January: Play/ Sport	History: Story: Stories Change and Continuity Continuity and change in the local environment	Science: Living things • Myself • Plants and animals Energy and Forces: • Forces	Geography: Natural Environments • The local natural environment Human environments

			• People and places in other areas
February: Places	History: Change and Continuity Continuity and change in the local environment Story: Stories Myself and my family My family	Science: Energy and Forces: • Magnetism and electricity Materials: • Properties and characteristics of materials	Geography: Human environments • People and places in other areas
March: Spring	History: Story Stories Myself and my family Feasts and festivals in the past When my grandparents were young	Science: Environmental awareness and care • Caring for my locality Living things • Plants and animals	Geography: Natural Environments: • Weather • The local natural environment Environmental awareness and care • Caring for my locality
April: Transport/ Space	History: Myself and my family • When my grandparents were young Story • Stories	Science: Living thing • Plants and animals • Myself Energy and Forces: • Magnetism and electricity	Geography: Natural Environments • Planet Earth in space
May: Food/ Water	History: Myself and my family • When my grandparents were young Story • Stories	Science: Living things • Plants and animals Energy and Forces: • Forces	Geography: Human environments • People and places in other areas Environmental awareness and care • Caring for my locality
June: Summer	History: Myself and my family • Myself • When my grandparents were young Story • Stories	Science: Living things • Plants and animals Materials: • Materials and change • Properties and characteristics of materials	Geography: Natural Environments • Weather • Local natural environments Human environments • Living in the local community