St. Patrick’s N.S.

Drumshanbo,

Co. Leitrim.

Roll No: 19423J

**Arts: Drama Policy**

**Reviewed:** August 2021

**Ratified:**

**Full review:** 2026

**Appendix 1: Book list**

**Appendix 2: Prop list**

**Appendix 3: Methods of reflection**

**Appendix 4: reflecting on Drama pack**

**Appendix 5: Resource pack**

**St. Patrick’s National School**

**Drama Policy**

**Introductory Statement**

This policy was originally formulated by the staff of St. Patrick’s NS in autumn 2013 and was reviewed in 2016. It conforms to the principles of the Primary School Curriculum and guides all teachers with classroom planning and yearly schemes.

**Our School vision**

The Teacher Guidelines state that drama “has as its aim a quest for knowledge that involves every aspect of the child’s personality: spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual and physical.” We endorse this and feel that drama can support our school vision for the children. We seek to assist the children in our school in achieving their potential through developing their dramatic talents and their abilities to express themselves through Drama.

**Aims**

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for drama

* To enable the child to become drama literate
* To enable the child to create a permanent bridge between make-believe play and the art form of theatre
* To develop the child’s ability to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the drama world in order to promote questing, empowering and empathetic skills
* To enable the child to develop the social skills necessary to engage openly, honestly and playfully with others
* To enable the child to co-operate and communicate with others in solving problems in the drama and through the drama
* To enable the child to understand the structures and modes of drama and how they create links between play, thought and life
* To enable the child to acquire this knowledge of drama through the active exploration of themes drawn from life (past and present), whether they have their source in other curricular areas or in general areas relevant to the child’s life
* To enable the child to begin the process of translating a knowledge of drama into the active exploration of life themes from drama literature, leading to the appreciation of world drama culture
* To form the criteria with which to evaluate the drama texts, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed.

We also aim

* To use drama to explore actively the human aspect of all learning and as a means of curricular integration

In all of this we are mindful of the key message that drama is fun!

**Curriculum planning**

Because drama has only one strand, it will obviously be addressed in every drama lesson. We believe that the 3 strand units of the drama curriculum are very interlinked and all three should from part of every drama lesson. This is also true of many of the objectives:

* We recognise that the objectives of the strand unit Exploring and Making Drama are organised around the elements of drama. Since all of the elements are present in any piece of Drama, it follows that all of the objectives may well be covered in any lesson. However a teacher may emphasise one particular element depending on the content of the lesson.
* Equally, we understand that meaningful reflection must be part of any drama lesson. This reflection may happen within or without the drama, as the objectives suggest. (Strand unit: Reflecting on Drama)
* This also applies to the strand unit Co-operating and Communicating in making Drama. Children will co-operate and communicate within and without the drama, in any given lesson. Again this means that it is quite possible that all of the content objectives of the Drama curriculum could be covered in any given lesson.

Therefore, when it comes to individual planning we will use the pre-requisites for Drama as a way of planning lessons and we will use a thematic approach. Some themes we may use are:

* Friendship
* Seasons – the meaning of Christmas, Spring etc
* Safety
* A journey
* Food
* Cleachtaí drámaíochta bunaithe ar na téamaí Gaeilge
* Emigration
* Family
* Health issues
* Fair play
* Prejudice
* Bullying
* Interculturalism
* Trade issues
* Themes arising from the History curriculum
* Other themes arising from SPHE curriculum particularly

**Strand Unit: Exploring and making drama**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Junior and Senior Infants** | **First and Second Classes** | **Third and Fourth Classes** | **Fifth and Sixth Classes** |
| **Belief** | * develop the instinct for make-believe play into drama | * use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in drama | * enter into the fictional dramatic context with the same spontaneity and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play | * enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional dramatic context |
| **Role and Character** | * develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action | * use his/her emerging awareness of the differences in people in order to begin to develop an understanding of the relationship between role and character | * understand the relationship between role and character and develop the ability to hold on to either role or character for as long as the dramatic activity requires | * extend playing in role and in character to include the ability to accept and maintain a brief that has been decided on by either the teacher, the group or himself/herself |
| **Place** | * experience how the use of space and objects can help to create the reality of the make-believe world | * experience how context is built and a drama reality created through the use of space and objects | * discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and in signifying dramatic themes | * discover how the use of space and objects helps in building the context and in signifying the drama theme |
| **Time** | * experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action | * experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action | * explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action | * explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action *(time)* |
| **Action** | * develop awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the dramatic action | * develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the dramatic action | * become aware of the rules that help maintain focus in the dramatic action | * become adept at implementing the ‘playing rules’ that maintain focus in dramatic action |
| **Tension** | * develop awareness of tension in the drama | * begin to see how tension adds to drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants | * begin, as a member of a group, to include in drama activity the elements of tension and suspense | * help to plan dramatic activity to include the particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme being explored *(tension)* |
| **Genre** |  |  |  | * distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy, fantasy |
|  |  |  | * begin the process of using script as a pre-text | * become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which script becomes action |

**Strand Unit: Reflecting on drama**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Junior and Senior Infants** | **First and Second Classes** | **Third and Fourth Classes** | **Fifth and Sixth Classes** |
| **Significance** | * develop the ability to reflect on the action as it progresses | * use reflection on a particular dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action | * use reflection on and evaluation of a particular dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action | * reflect on a particular dramatic action in order to create possible alternative courses for the action that will reflect more closely the life patterns and issues being examined |
| **Significance** | * experience the relationship between story, theme and life experience | * experience, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience | * learn, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience | * learn, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience |
| **Significance** | * share insights gained while experiencing the drama | * share insights while experiencing the drama or insights that arise out of the drama | * use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people | * use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people |

**Strand unit: Co-operating and communicating in making drama**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Junior and Senior Infants** | **First and Second Classes** | **Third and Fourth Classes** | **Fifth and Sixth Classes** |
| * develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama | * develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama | * develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama | * develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the drama |
| * develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama | * develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama | * develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the drama | * develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama |
|  | * develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made | * develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made | * develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made |
|  | * re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work | * enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work | * enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work |

**Approaches and methodologies**

In order to plan, teachers will use the pre-requisites for Drama

* Content – what is being taught through the drama
* The fictional lens – How is the content being framed? What story/fiction is being used?
* A safe environment – How is the teacher creating an environment where the children fell safe to express themselves and take part whole-heartedly in the drama.

**Content**

The content for drama is life. We will use as our sources

* Material experienced imagined or read about
* Aspects of life from the past present or future that will arouse the pupil’s curiosity
* The needs, concerns and preoccupations of the children
* Issues which may arise in the classroom which may be explore through drama
* Curriculum material, whose codes drama can crack and whose human aspects can be effectively explored through drama – SPHE, for example

**Fictional lens**

The teacher will select a fictional lens through which the content may be explored. In the junior and middle classes this may often be a story. In the senior classes it may be linked to some aspect of SESE – a period in History, a place in Geography. The lens used will be appropriate to the age and experience of the children as well as to the content being explored.

**Creating a safe environment**

We recognize that a safe environment is very important for the drama to be effective. Therefore, at the beginning of each year, considerable time will be given to the development of an appropriate drama contract. This contract will be drawn up with the children and may be renegotiated should the need arise. The contract may be read at the beginning of every drama class. The contract should be signed by each child and by the teacher. It may also be signed by the parents/guardians.

We will also use drama games to help the children to feel safe in entering into the drama. Games will be used during the period of the contract negotiations. They will also be used as a warm-up for drama lessons. Games may be used as a cool down also to help the children to leave the drama behind.

**Also**

In the infant classes, the focus will be on make-believe play. Many of the elements of the infant classroom will be used to provide the opportunity for dramatic play such as

* Dressing-up box
* Home corner
* Puppets
* Water play
* Sand play

This may form part of Aistear in the infant classes.

Stimuli such as

* Story
* Poems
* Newspaper headlines
* Pictures and photographs
* Objects/artefacts

may be used as starting points for the drama.

Because we are adopting a thematic approach in our teaching of Drama, planning will be carried out for a block period of about a month but this could be longer depending on the success of the Drama and the level to which the content is being explored.

We will use Drama strategies such as

* Thought-tracking
* Still image
* Mime
* Narrated mime/Narration
* Hot-seating
* Conscience alley
* Defining the space
* Soundtracking
* Living picture
* Carouselling
* Briefing
* Improvisation
* Flashback/forward
* Ritual
* Teacher-in-role
* Role on the wall
* Forum theatre

**School Plays**

Each class will present a school play annually unless there are exceptional events of circumstances which do not allow for this – eg Covid. (NCC is one such circumstance). Normally Junior Infants, Senior Infants, Second and Sixth classes will present plays at Christmas and the remaining classes will present plays in the Spring or Summer terms.

Drama time will be given over to the preparation of these plays and during the month of the play, teacher preparation and planning for Drama will be given over to the class play.

**Children with different needs**

It is the policy of this school that all children will participate in Drama activities. The activities will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the children in a particular class. This will be done by appropriate grouping, giving children suitable tasks within the drama and by providing for different methods of reflection.

Children in the Cairde and Laochra will be included in mainstream classes for class plays. Differentiated roles will be given to children in consultation with relevant teachers and SNAs. They may also be included for Drama lessons if the teachers concerned feel that it would be appropriate and meaningful for them.

**Equality of Participation and Access**

Equal opportunities will be given to all children regardless of gender, ethnic background, socio-economic status across all strands and activities.

**Linkage and integration**

Given the fact that all three strand units are present in almost every lesson, linkage is inherent in Drama.

As has been referred to already in the section on **approaches and methodologies,** we see many opportunities for integration also, particularly with

* Story/Poetry
* SESE
* SPHE
* Other arts subjects

**(See also Methods of Reflection which is included with this plan; Appendix 3)**

We also see an opportunity to use Irish in Drama, as suggested in the Drama curriculum:

* Introducing a character in an English Drama who only speaks Irish
* Asking the children to create playlets around a group of words supplied by the teacher
* Using short improvisations in Irish to build up a day in the life of a character

We will also use some of the Drama strategies in our Irish classes.

**Assessment and record keeping**

We recognize the importance of assessment in the delivery of the Drama curriculum. It will be used to inform planning and subsequent teaching. Teachers will observe the areas in which children are achieving and the areas which need further development. Assessment will also be used to ensure continuity across the school.

Teachers may approach assessment in Drama by referring to the Curriculum Statement p 43-44 and examine children’s engagement in terms of the three strand units. e.g .see below

* Exploring and making Drama – the extent to which the child enters into a role or a character and develops it in the context of the action
* Reflecting on Drama – the extent to which they use reflection to create alternative courses for the action or the quality of the insights they gain from the Drama experience
* Co-operating and communicating in making Drama – the child’s ability to contribute to the shaping of the Drama, both individually and in group in-role and out-of-role discussion about the Drama as the action takes place

Alternatively, the teacher might use the elements as a way of assessing Drama:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Elements** | **Observation** |
| ***Belief*** | How can the child be encouraged to enter into the drama with full belief? *Evident in the child’s trust in and ease with make-believe play* |
| ***Role and Character*** | How will the child move from role playing to entering into character? *Taking on the characteristics, attributes and thought process of another person* |
| ***Action*** | What is happening in the drama? *Action in drama comes from the interaction between characters and situations in which they find themselves in the drama* |
| ***Place*** | Where is the action taking place? How is real place and space used to represent this? |
| ***Time*** | When is the action taking place? *The fictional past and fictional future will have a bearing on the drama* |
| ***Tension*** | How will tension drive forward the action of the drama? *The characters will be faced with choices, desires and uncertainties. Such tension causes characters to make decisions and moves the drama forward* |
| ***Significance*** | What is the relevance of the drama to the child’s life? In what way can the child relate to the drama? |
| ***Genre***  ***(Fifth and Sixth Classes only)*** | Is the drama naturalistic, absurd, tragic, comic or fantasy? *Genre is the style of the drama* |

Teacher observation will be central to all assessment in Drama. Other forms of assessment will include basic teacher-designed tests and tasks, recordings of children’s work.

Progress will be recorded and communicated in teachers own notes, Cúntas Míosúil, and at parent teacher meetings.

**Organisational Planning**

**Timetable**

Infant class will have a minimum of 50 minutes of Drama per week while 1st to 6th classes will have a minimum of one hour per week of Drama. This time allocation may be broken down at the discretion of the individual teacher. Teachers may also choose to block times for Drama at particular times of the year. Timetables will all record the time allocation for Drama.

There is discretionary time available each week (Infants: one hour, First to Sixth Classes: two hours) that teachers can occasionally use to support the Drama Curriculum. This may be used also for preparation of plays.

Teachers should ensure that pupils attending supplementary teaching are included for as much of the Drama programme as possible.

**Resources and ICT**

The principal has a large selection of Drama books which are available to all members of staff. (*Appendix 1*)

Teachers are also beginning to source a variety of props that can be used in all classes. However we feel that at is not necessary to have a great many props for the Drama to be successful. A list of possible props is attached to this plan (*Appendix 2*)

**Health and Safety**

As with all curricular areas work, implementation of the Drama Curriculum will take place within the framework of our schools Health and Safety Policy.

Care and attention will be given to the following:

* Hidden dangers if children are moving around the classroom
* Storage facilities
* Ventilation of the classrooms
* Amount of space for children to sit or stand when engaged in Drama work
* Particular care will be needed when children are setting up the Drama space.
* Appropriate volume levels when using audio equipment or when engaged in a very loud activity

**Individual Teachers’ Planning and Reporting**

Each teacher will have access to the school plan and will be encouraged to refer to it when doing his/her own long term and short term planning.

As mentioned in the integration section teachers in the school approach much of their teaching thematically and are encouraged to do so with Drama also.

The Cúntas Míosúil is an important indicator and record of work carried out in Drama. Teachers will record their work in Drama each month.

**Staff Development**

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with Drama. We will continue to add to this in the coming years.

Drama will be on the agenda at least one staff meeting per year. This will allow for review of the policy and also give an opportunity for members of staff to share ideas that are working for them.

Teachers will be informed about upcoming courses in the education centres and other bodies providing professional development through the staffroom notice board.

Over the coming years we hope to engage with experts in the area of educational Drama to work with classes which we feel might benefit from such skills.

**Parental Involvement**

Parents may be invited to open classroom presentations of improvisations or other work created in small group settings. As outlined, children’s progress in Drama will be discussed at parent teacher meetings.

Parents are also welcomed to school plays and help with the provision of props and costumes for same.

**Community Links**

The local community, actors, theatre professionals living locally, local arts centres and education officers, theatre, local Drama events and national support structures may be considered as valuable resources as support for The Drama Curriculum.

**Success Criteria**

We would hope that following this review, all teachers will renew their engagement with Drama to include at least

* Two pieces of process Drama, arranged around a theme and linked to other areas of the curriculum
* Drámaíocht sa rang Ghaeilge bunaithe ar scéalaíocht
* An annual play

**Implementation/Ratification and Review**

This policy will be presented to the Board of Management in the 2021. When ratified, it will become school policy and will be included in the Plean Scoile.

The whole policy is due for review in 2026. However, changes to the curriculum or to classroom organisation may precipitate an earlier review.

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**Ratification of policy for St. Patrick’s NS**

**Chairperson Date**

**Principal Date**