Whole School Plan for Drama

Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement:

This plan was formulated by the teaching staff in Scoil Mhuire following a 2 day In-service.

It will form the basis of each teacher's long & short term planning in Arts Education, Drama. It will also inform new and temporary teachers of our approaches and methodologies in this area.

(b) Rationale

In Scoil Mhuire we recognize that Drama enables our pupils to express themselves creatively and imaginatively through exploring emotions, communicating effectively with others and helping to make sense of the world they live in. We want to give our pupils opportunities to use Drama in many areas across the curriculum.

Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

We are committed to the holistic development of each pupil in our care. Through Drama we aspire to help all our pupils develop self expression and self confidence by enabling them to explore their emotions and engage with their environment in a safe and creative manner.

(b) Aims

We endorse the following aims of Arts Education:

- 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 curriculum areas or in general areas relevant to the child’s life.
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- 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 tests, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed.

Our Drama Plan will be addressed under the following headings:

1. **Curriculum Planning**

   Strands and Strand Units
   Approaches and Methodologies
   Pupils with different needs
   Linkage and Integration
   Assessment
   Equality of participation and access

2. **Organisational Planning**

   Timetable
   Resources
   Health and Safety
   Parental Involvement
   Community links

1. **Curriculum Planning**

1(a) **Strands and Strand Units**

There is one strand in the Drama Curriculum:

*Overview of Strand*

Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.

*Overview of Strand Units*

- Exploring and making drama
- Reflecting on Drama
- Co-operating and communicating in making drama

1(b): **Approaches and Methodologies**

Belief is central to all drama and should be characterised by a willingness to believe in the drama itself, sincerity in playing roles and characters, a willingness to accept the fictional consequences of drama and a willingness to explore. The teacher will agree the ground rules with the class, so as to ensure the conditions above, i.e. a willingness to enter into the drama, to work with others in sincerity and with respect, and to explore together situations which may arise. Children will be taught to understand that when the drama lesson is ended so too is the world of make-believe that is created. This allows children to explore a wide range of topics, some of which in other circumstances may be too sensitive to introduce.
The main focus of our drama curriculum is process drama, where pupils will explore topics as wide as life itself. Exploring these topics will involve pupils in such activities as:

- The spontaneous making of drama scenes (improvisation)
- Entering into other live and situations
- Engaging with life issues, knowledge and themes through Drama
- Honing and shaping drama scenes for the purpose of communicating them to others
- Living through a story, making it up as they go along. Solving problems in the real and fictional worlds, co-operating with others and pooling ideas
- Thinking about and discussing the patterns in life so that the outcome of encounters and plots will reflect their perception of how life is or might be.

All of this will take place at an age appropriate level for each child. Because drama is a holistic activity it is difficult to separate the form from the content, the affective from the cognitive, the social development from the personal. Nevertheless we believe that educational outcomes will derive from two main sources:

- The knowledge and insights gained from bringing the child’s experience to bear on the examination of a particular aspect of life through drama
- The personal skills, social skills and drama skills that children gain when they enter effectively and create the world of drama.

These skills are as natural to the child as playing, the teacher has only to act as facilitator pointing out possibilities of certain directions and avenues but leaving much of the responsibility for the exploration and its enjoyment, to the child.

1(c) Children with different needs:

Drama offers children with special needs opportunities to participate as fully as possible in the class, to learn in a team and to excel. Teachers, through the use of differentiation, will ensure that children are not over-looked in group work & that they are encouraged to engage fully with topics being covered. Teachers will also look for opportunities where other children can learn from special needs children.

1(d) Linkage and integration

All three strand units in drama are normally covered in each lesson. Because they are so closely linked it would be difficult to teach them separately. Drama is fundamentally about exploring and creating, all activities are reflected on and reviewed and this can be best achieved in a co-operative environment with clear communication. Drama is often linked to other subject areas in the school curriculum.
1(e) Assessment

Through assessment the teacher can monitor pupils’ learning and development and the needs of individual pupils can be identified, thereby enabling drama contexts and modifications to curriculum content to facilitate effective learning. Most assessments in drama are done during formal drama with Paula Conlon and class teacher by observation, questioning, teacher designed tasks, work samples and projects where applicable.

Following is an outline of how the teacher might begin to observe the development of the elements of drama:

**How the elements might look …**

**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?

**Information gained from assessment:**

- enables teachers to review their teaching points
- enables teachers to review their methods of teaching where necessary
- ensures the teaching aims set out in the drama plan are met
- ensures there is a spiral approach to the planning and deliverance of the drama curriculum within the school (A record of all work covered in drama during the year is handed over to the next class teacher.)

1(f) Equality of participation and access

All pupils have equal access to drama in our school, with a balanced programme of drama based themes and activities in place to reflect the interests of all. When and where applicable the drama class is used as an opportunity to integrate the culture of all pupils within the school. Authentic materials from other cultures can be used for various drama activities when applicable: celebrating
International Children's week, establishing home-school links with children from different countries, engaging in some of the customs, traditions and cultural dances of the school's ethnic groups. Equality of participation and access for children with special educational needs is also guaranteed within the school at a differentiated level.

2. Organisational Planning:

2(a) Timetable

Each class is time-tabled to have a block of formal drama classes during the school year. Every class is allocated 6 weeks drama with external drama facilitator Paula Conlan. This service, works within our school drama plan and in co-operation with teachers to enhance our drama plan. In addition to this, Drama is integrated into the curriculum in all subject areas. Pupils also have opportunities to engage in Performance Drama throughout the school year. i.e. Plays, Pagents, Concerts, Assemblies.

2(b) Resources

Our school is very well resourced to facilitate Drama, with two large halls. The larger wooden hall also has a good stage with sound and light systems. Our Teacher’s Resource Room contains a good choice of books on drama/poetry/music. Also there’s a wealth of ideas for drama on websites which are easily accessed online. [www.ppds.ie/drama](http://www.ppds.ie/drama)

2(c) Health & Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy in our school. The safety and well-being of our pupils is always of paramount concern. Pupils are never unaccompanied during drama and there is always a teacher present. No pupil may attempt any activity in drama which might pose a threat to health of self or anyone else.

Care and attention are given to the following:

- The number of children in the class
- The amount of physical space required for the drama lesson
- The movement of furniture if and when applicable
- Establishing and setting personal boundaries
- Providing adequate supervision for drama events and activities, both within and outside of the school

2(d) Individual teachers' planning and reporting

Whole school planning in the shape of the yearly plans for all classes provides information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short-term planning. Where and when it is practical to do so, a thematic approach is adopted when planning for drama. Linkage/integration across the drama curriculum itself and other subjects provides opportunities and lends itself to this. Paula Conlan, the Drama facilitator, meets with a teacher at each level to discuss how the classes can build on the 6 weeks Drama experience, throughout the year.

2(e) Staff development

There are opportunities for teachers to engage in in-career development.

2 (f) Parental Involvement
Our school welcomes parental involvement and parents have enriched us by sharing their talents in many areas of the curriculum. We benefit from support given by parents in assisting with costumes, scenery, stage lighting, sound, choreography. Parents make a very appreciative and supportive audience at events in our school.

2 (g) Community Links

Our school has close links with the wider community in our area. Contact is maintained between present and past pupils by our annual attendance at 2nd level musicals/shows. Our pupils are encouraged to participate in Community Games Variety Competitions. Past pupils are involved in providing Summer Drama Courses for primary school children in the community. These links were forged many years ago and continue very successfully to date. Many of our pupils also take part in Music and Drama summer courses, in our own school which are given by members of staff including the specialist Drama Teacher. We encourage our pupils to visit Riverbank Arts centre in Newbridge and occasions we have Drama performances by outside companies.

2(h) Success criteria

This plan will make a difference to the teaching and learning of drama in our school. We will know that the plan has been implemented because teacher's planning will become more co-ordinated and streamlined across the school, linkage and integration of drama will take place more easily and naturally as a result of the plan and we will be enabled to observe the pupils all round enjoyment of the drama process in general.

Roles and Responsibilities

• The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by school staff, pupils, the school’s board of management and Paula Conlan, Drama Facilitator. The teacher responsible for co-ordinating drama will monitor the progress of the plan, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report to staff on findings. The plan will be monitored and evaluated regularly by the teaching staff as they use the plan for short-term planning purposes and monthly schemes. Time will also be allocated in staff meetings to discuss any issues with regard to the drama plan.

Review

This plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the drama curriculum. Those involved in the review are:

• Teachers

• Paula Conlan, Drama Facilitator

• Post holder: Drama plan co-ordinator

• The School’s Board of Management
Ratification and Communication

This policy will be communicated to the school community by the following means:

- Teachers via School Development Plan on Teacher Server
- Board of Management/Other staff members via hard copy
- Hard copy available in Principal’s Office.

Included with the School Drama Policy on the Teacher’s Server are the following documents.

1. PPDS Strand Units for 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th.
3. Drama Activity suggestions for use in the classroom.
This policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

Ratified by Board of Management

Signed __________________________________________
Chairperson, Board of Management