

## SPHE Overview – Myself



The strand 'Myself' is subdivided into the following strand units:

Strand	Strand Units
<b>Myself</b>	Self Identity
	Taking Care of my Body
	Growing and Changing
	Safety and Protection
	Making Decisions

The strand units are consistent throughout all the class levels, reflective of the spiral nature of the curriculum. The 'Making Decisions' strand unit is integrated into 'Self Identity' from Infants to second class, therefore 'Making Decisions' is only applicable from third to sixth classes. The strand 'Myself' concentrates on what is essentially the intrapersonal side of the child's life. Its strand units focus the learning on self-awareness and self-development. The emphasis is on getting to know and understand oneself on many different levels and on learning to act on the basis of that self-knowledge.

### **Self Identity**

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In exploring this strand unit, children are encouraged to see themselves as unique individuals, with differing abilities, strengths and limitations, who are loved and cared for and who have an important contribution to make in life.

As the children progress through the school, more emphasis is placed on helping them to deal with the various factors that influence their self-esteem and self-concept, such as the role of peers, the role of families, personal successes and failures, media images, and the affirmation of others

## **Taking care of my Body**

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Children who care for and respect themselves are more likely to treat their own bodies with dignity and be more particular about their lifestyle choices, both now and in the future

The strand unit focuses on promoting health by exploring:

- the need for regular exercise
- food and nutrition and the significance of healthy eating habits
- the use and misuse of various substances
- the transmission of infection and disease

As physical growth and development are explored, children learn the appropriate anatomical terms for the private parts of both the male and female body. Acquiring this vocabulary at an early age provides the foundation for later learning on puberty and reproduction and can help children to speak about all parts of their bodies in a respectful and dignified way.

## **Growing and Changing**

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By exploring this strand unit children begin to understand that the rate at which each person grows is unique and that growth is characterised by a combination of social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and physical factors. Making children aware of this integrated nature of the human being can help them to grasp the fact that their emerging sexuality is an integral part of growth and development. In this context, it is also essential that children have an understanding of puberty and human reproduction before they leave primary school.

Children need to learn to recognise and manage their own feelings. Opportunities are provided for them in this strand unit to name, express and deal with these feelings. The emphasis is placed on exploring the whole spectrum of feelings without labelling them as either positive or negative. Understanding one's own feelings increases self understanding and allows for greater awareness of one's own moods, intentions and motivations.

## **Safety and Protection**

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In this strand unit, children are made aware of potentially dangerous situations and are given the opportunity to explore strategies that can be used to help protect themselves and others. Children also explore the concept of risk. It is important that they develop a balanced perspective on risk taking by assessing situations and examining consequences. Children are encouraged to recognise a potentially serious situation and to know how to take appropriate action

The Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedure for Primary and Post Primary Schools outline that: *'All primary schools must fully implement the Stay Safe Programme (DES, 2011, P6)'*. All the content objectives, at all class levels under 'personal safety' which is part of the safety and protection strand unit can be met by teaching the Stay Safe programme. For further information on Stay Safe log onto: [www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)

## Making Decisions

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Being able to make informed decisions and choices is inherent in SPHE. In this strand unit, children can identify and recognise the kinds of decisions they can and cannot make and the factors that may influence their choices. They will learn how to:

- exercise judgement
- weigh up different possibilities
- examine the steps and choices that guide them towards considered decision making
- begin to understand their own rights, the rights of others and associated responsibilities
- explore the various factors that influence decision making
- reflect on actions taken

[Click here for Sample lesson plan:](#) Based on decision making for third to sixth class. This resource offers some support materials to a lesson outlined in the Relationships and Sexuality education manual for third/ fourth class