

PRIMARY

Social, Personal and Health Education

Guidelines for Teachers of Students with

MILD

General Learning Disabilities



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Rationale and introduction

Social, personal and health education (SPHE) aims to provide opportunities to foster students' personal development, health and well-being, and by so doing to enable them to develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will guide and inform them in decision-making now and in the future.

Rationale

SPHE is intrinsic to all areas of the curriculum and to every facet of the student's life. Personal and social development should permeate all aspects of the work of schools. This includes the nature of the relationship between staff members, parents and students at every level throughout their schooling.

SPHE addresses areas that are particularly important for students with mild general learning disabilities. The development of positive self-esteem, social and communication skills, appropriate expression of feelings, and safety and protection skills are particularly important, as many students with mild general learning disabilities lack confidence. These students need opportunities to develop these skills through a structured programme.

By providing opportunities within the curriculum to develop these skills students can be helped to become more confident and to relate to others by learning effective means of handling situations.

SPHE fosters respect for oneself and others, promotes healthy lifestyles, and builds links to the community. The work in this area promotes cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual development.

The development of the skills, attitudes and knowledge that foster independence and the ability to form relationships has always been regarded as an extremely important aspect of the curriculum in schools catering for students with mild general learning disabilities. The *Primary School Curriculum, SPHE*, formalises this work and draws on this experience.

Introduction

The inclusion of social, personal and health education as a curricular area is in line with current thinking, which highlights the importance of developing social competence for all students. There is no universally accepted definition of social competence, but it is generally agreed that it is a composite of social skills and adaptive behaviour. Social competence relies on more than the ability to perform a social skill. It involves the ability to read the social situation correctly in order to identify and adapt the appropriate social skill necessary. It is important to state that not all students with mild general learning disabilities have difficulty with social skills acquisition.

Social skills development is of crucial importance in the lives of many students with mild general learning disabilities, who often do not possess the necessary social skills to interact appropriately with others. Some of the observable characteristics of students with difficulties in this area are seen in their inability to make friends. This is often highlighted by parents' awareness of their son's/daughter's lack of friends both within and outside school. Students' lack of interpersonal skills narrows their opportunities for friendship-making and so further reduces their opportunities to become socially skilful. There are several reasons why students fail to learn and use social skills effectively and appropriately. These can be summarised as follows:

Lack of knowledge: Students fail to perform because they have never learned the appropriate social skill.

Lack of opportunity: Students may be restricted in performing social skills by a classroom environment, which restricts social interaction. Opportunities for practising social skills should be facilitated through peer tutoring and activity-based learning that promotes social interaction. SPHE is a shared responsibility. Close liaison with parents is necessary to provide opportunities for students to interact socially in the community.

Lack of feedback and reinforcement: Students need constant feedback on what they do correctly or incorrectly in order to improve their performance. Modelling and role-playing can also assist in providing positive feedback.

Lack of sensitivity to environmental cues: Some students know how to perform the correct social skill but fail to know when to perform it. They often have difficulties cueing in to the general atmosphere of a given social situation and to the feelings of others. This can result in inappropriate language or behaviour.

Identifying social skills

The skills identified throughout the *Primary School Curriculum, SPHE*, highlight the importance of developing these competencies. These include the following:

Interpersonal/communication skills

Interpersonal skills relate to the communicative skills used in all social situations. These are regarded as the most essential skills in achieving social competence and peer acceptance. They involve eye-contact, listening and responding, turn-taking, introducing oneself, joining in, asking/offering help, giving and receiving compliments, apologising, expressing opinions, and understanding gestures, facial expressions and feelings.

Behavioural skills

Behavioural skills involve assessing a social situation, selecting an appropriate skill, and assessing its effect on others. These skills relate to dealing with stress, expressing feelings appropriately, having a positive attitude towards oneself, engaging in responsible behaviour, and self-care skills.

Assertive skills

Assertive skills involve representing one's view without becoming aggressive or withdrawn. The student's age and his/her social and emotional development should be considered when teaching all social skills. The social skills of play for the younger student will differ considerably from the skills of co-operation older students will need to use in group activities. Similarly, introducing oneself is not a skill expected of a pre-school child, but it is a skill expected of older students.

A co-operative approach

SPHE permeates all aspects of school life for the student. Students with mild general learning disabilities are very capable of attaining social and personal development in all areas outlined in the *Primary School Curriculum, SPHE*. The school ethos, as well as the respect and dignity experienced by these students in their dealing with all school staff and personnel, will be of crucial importance in promoting a positive climate for this development. The relationship between the teacher and student will be yet another determining factor in facilitating SPHE. The teacher should ensure that students have opportunities to have their views listened to, to make decisions on matters relating to themselves, and to be given responsibility and opportunities for control as frequently as possible.

The *Primary School Curriculum* recommends that SPHE be best facilitated in a combination of three ways:

- in the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere
- through discrete timetabled time
- through cross-curricular integration.

Overview of the strands of the curriculum

Myself	<p>Self-identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Self-awareness ■ Developing self-confidence ■ Making decisions <p>Taking care of my body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowing about my body ■ Food and nutrition <p>Growing and changing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As I grow I change ■ New life ■ Feelings and emotions <p>Safety and protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Personal safety ■ Safety issues
Myself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Myself and my family ■ My friends and other people ■ Relating to others
Myself and the wider world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developing citizenship ■ My school community ■ Living in the local community ■ Environmental care ■ Media education

Myself

The strand **Myself** promotes the interpersonal side of the student's life through developing self-awareness and self-esteem. It enables the student to see himself/herself as a unique individual with different abilities, strengths and limitations, who is loved and cared for, and who has a unique and important contribution to make in life.

This awareness starts with the self, knowledge of the body and how it works, and further develops into an exploration of the student's abilities and talents. For students with mild general learning disabilities, this is an area that presents much difficulty due to social immaturity. This lack of body image is often represented in their drawings when depicting themselves or others.

The development of interpersonal skills, as outlined in this strand, is dependent on the development of communication and language skills. In order to interact socially the student needs to be competent in communication skills. This is the most fundamental skill that students need in order to describe themselves, to relate to their peers, and to interact with the outside world.

Attempts at completing tasks often lead to feelings of frustration rather than feelings of accomplishment. Instead of building up self-esteem, the students' attempts often lead to feelings of insecurity about themselves, which in turn create secondary emotional problems. In order to encourage each student to learn that he/she has an important part to play in the whole scheme of things, it is of the utmost importance to build up the individual's personal profile, highlighting their unique features, personal preferences, particular strengths, and abilities.

Celebration of each student's uniqueness should be supported by the ethos and culture of the school. This is especially relevant for students with mild general learning disabilities, as it enhances the image of each student in the eyes of parents, peers, classroom staff, and all those who have regular contact with the student.

In this strand, the student is also encouraged to build up an awareness of his/her own behaviour and to learn strategies for managing that behaviour if necessary. There is an emphasis also on learning how to manage feelings and how to cope with new and demanding situations. Self-worth and self-confidence are nurtured, with opportunities for choice and independence being seen as essential learning experiences. The ability to control one's environment and to be as independent as possible is of particular importance for students with mild general learning disabilities. Many students will depend on the adults around them and will not move to independence as readily as other students. This highlights the significant responsibility of parents, teachers and all those who work closely with these students in ensuring that opportunities for practising independence skills are provided both in school and at home.

SPHE also explores growth, change, and personal and safety issues. This is important to students with mild general learning disabilities, since their inability to cue into social situations can often leave them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The development of personal care skills is fundamental in the presentation of self to others. Much work is required in this area for these students, and careful planning for this section, in the context of *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)* and the *Stay Safe Programme*, is recommended.

Through learning about food and nutrition students can establish self-help skills such as cookery, the ability to organise meals, and the development of healthy eating habits. This provides yet another fun social activity through which the skills of all students can be developed through practical class activities involving planning, shopping and cookery.

Myself and others

In the strand **Myself and others** SPHE aims to enrich the students' awareness and understanding of their relationship with others, and promotes a sense of belonging and an understanding of interdependence. SPHE can enable students to move towards a perspective from which they begin to understand how they influence and are influenced by the world around them. Students with mild general learning disabilities may need particular help in this area due to communication difficulties, which may impede their ability to interact with others.

The skills to be developed here focus on enabling students to establish and maintain healthy relationships, resolve conflicts, and relate to others in a caring and respectful manner. The development of these abilities is facilitated through all the curricular areas and activities that students engage in. It is important, therefore, to provide as many group and co-operative activities as possible to foster this development. For the younger student, play is the most important medium in providing a social context for the development of these skills.

Through SPHE students can learn to appreciate the role of other people in their lives, to strive towards an understanding of the feelings of others, and to treat people and their property with care and respect. For students to learn respect and understanding, it is important that they experience dignity and respect from all those with whom they come in contact. In correcting inappropriate behaviour, it is important for the student to understand that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable and that the correction does not signify a rejection of himself/herself as a person.

Developing an appreciation of the importance of family, friends, school, and the community is outlined in this strand. This can present a difficulty for students who attend a special school that is located in a different community, and where school friends are from different locations. Parents need to be aware of the importance of the inclusion of these students in social activities outside school.

Myself and the wider world

The strand **Myself and the wider world** focuses on broadening the student's ability to understand and interact with his/her wider environment. This will be facilitated through work in SESE in which the student explores the wider environment through history, geography and science. The media plays a significant role in the lives of these students. Much time is spent watching television and every student has a familiarity with and knowledge of the weekly happenings in many programmes. It is possible to use this interest to explore many issues relating to relationships, growing and changing, resolving conflict, body image, safety, and dealing with difference. Recorded extracts from television programmes can be discussed to illustrate some topic of relevance and to help students distinguish fact from fiction. For older students, listening to the daily news as part of the language lesson can help them to develop a sense of awareness of events as they unfold both nationally and internationally. Locating these places on maps of the country, of Europe and of the world will develop a sense of the world as it impacts on their lives daily through the news media.

The concept of community is also explored in this strand. This is of key importance to students with mild general learning disabilities, since these students can often be marginalised from their peers. It provides an opportunity to explore how the class, school and wider communities accommodate different values and opinions, and how the rights of others are often denied through prejudice or misinformation. The rights and responsibilities of the students could be discussed and agreed, and in this way the democratic principles operating in the class or school can be highlighted.

Developing a sense of belonging to the wider world and having something important to contribute, regardless of academic achievement, is of crucial importance for these students. This begins by enabling the student to take on responsibilities within the school and at home.

School planning

The importance of SPHE in the lives of these students, and the skills it develops, cannot be overstated. For many students with mild general learning disabilities the development of these skills is a necessary precursor to the development of academic skills. Planning which identifies the individual needs of these students should be done in collaboration with parents, and reviewed at regular intervals.

In identifying the content to be covered at each curriculum level, the school will need to address how it will effectively develop the communication, interpersonal and safety skills that are so important for these students. Planning should also take account of the ways in which these skills can be reinforced and consolidated through integration with other curriculum areas.

The Primary School Curriculum: SPHE, Teacher Guidelines provide adequate advice on all aspects of school planning to facilitate the needs of students with mild general learning disabilities. However, some additional points need to be emphasised.

Creating a school climate that enhances self-esteem

The need to foster feelings of self-worth is of paramount importance for students with mild general learning disabilities. Due to the many difficulties these students encounter, it is often found that they have low self-esteem. Self-esteem has been defined in the *Primary School Curriculum* as ‘the degree to which people feel worthy, capable, significant and effective’ (page 24). The School Plan should outline in its policy and philosophy how these needs could be met. Creating a positive school environment in which the individuality of the student is respected and celebrated will serve to enhance the students’ feeling of self-esteem and belonging.

The school atmosphere

A school atmosphere that helps all staff and parents to communicate positively and celebrate the talents of these students should be fostered. The language used to describe students’ achievements in a positive manner should be agreed, especially in relation to reports to parents and staff members.

Inclusion

Much is written on the value of inclusion for students with learning disabilities in mainstream schools as a means of enhancing their social development. However, much planning by the teacher is needed to facilitate this development, as students with mild general learning disabilities often have communication and social difficulties which inhibit their social relations with others, thus making it difficult for them to gain acceptance with their peers.

Partnership with parents

The student's parents should be involved in planning for and in assessing the social, personal and health education of the student. Skills learned in school will need to be continuously reinforced in the home environment. Parents will also need to be supported in their efforts, and feel that they have a positive and valuable contribution to make to the work of the school. The inclusion of parents in celebrating the work and achievement of these students is important for both parents and students. It can provide parents with a comprehensive picture of the holistic development of the student as outlined in the aims and objectives of the *Primary School Curriculum*. For students, it highlights the importance that is placed on helping them to be actively engaged in developing the emotional and social maturity that they need in all their relations with others.

The school plan

The school should develop policy on a code of behaviour and on bullying in consultation with the students and parents. Parents and students could be requested to agree the joint document, thus ensuring that students will be treated in a fair and consistent manner.

The school policy will also need to outline how it will provide for a comprehensive programme to meet the needs of these students in the areas of relationships, sexuality and safety. The involvement of parents in the planning process is of utmost importance. In dealing with these issues it may be necessary for some schools to identify staff members who have particular expertise in this area or to make provision for further expert training for staff members.

Classroom planning

The classroom plan should reflect the ethos of the school and its agreed policies for the mediation of SPHE. The plan should take cognisance of the particular individual and group needs of students. Individual education plans outlining the most pertinent social needs of individual students should always be referred to. Progress should be recorded, celebrated and reported to parents.

The *Teacher Guidelines for SPHE* in the *Primary School Curriculum* provide adequate advice on all aspects of classroom planning to facilitate the needs of students with mild general learning disabilities.

It is important that the teacher creates an atmosphere of co-operation rather than competition in the classroom. Equal opportunities for choosing teams and group members should be afforded to all students, as students with inadequate social skills development will often be the last to be picked by peers. Seating position in class should not serve to further isolate the student from his/her peers.

Providing a culture of acceptance of difference in the classroom environment is of the utmost importance. Students need to know that it is acceptable to fail in their efforts and that failure is part and parcel of the learning process. Communicating with the students and engaging them in setting personal learning outcomes will facilitate the development of more autonomy and control in their lives.

In developing social skills, it is necessary to provide as many opportunities as possible for the students to interact and work, both in pairs and in teams, on all aspects of the curriculum. This opportunity to interact socially is especially relevant to the SPHE programme. Students should be given opportunities to assume responsibilities in both the class and the school context. These could include such activities as planning visits or welcoming people to the school. This can help to develop their self-confidence and enhance their social standing with their peer group.

Classroom planning for any particular group of students should identify the individual skills that students have, and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate these skills to their peers in other curriculum areas.

Much repetition and reinforcement is needed in order to practise the skills learned and to facilitate transfer from one social situation to another. This can be facilitated through planning for integration and linkage with other curriculum areas, and by providing as much real-life experience as is possible. Possible opportunities for integrating SPHE are outlined on page 38 of the *SPHE Curriculum*.

A generic list for informal teacher observation of students

All students will benefit from a variety of teaching styles and classroom activities. Students with mild general learning disabilities will particularly benefit if the teacher is aware of their strengths and needs before embarking on a new topic. The following questions indicate some observations that the teacher may note about the student. Such informal assessment can assist the teacher in selecting suitably differentiated methods for the class and may prove useful in providing feedback to parents and students.

Pre-test using a simple task in the area you are introducing

- What is the state of readiness of the student to do this task in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes?
- What learning strategies are being used by the student?
- Can he/she describe what he/she is doing and how he/she is doing it?
- Does the student understand why he/she is doing this activity?
- Is the student's reading level inhibiting his/her ability to engage with the task?
- Is the student's numeracy level inhibiting his/her ability to engage with the task?
- Does the student have any misconceptions about the task?

Independence

- How does the student cope when left alone with a task?
- Does he/she give up easily, ask for help, begin the next task, sit inactively, or become disruptive?
- Does the student clearly understand what to do if he/she has a problem or is finished work earlier than others?
- Is the student organised in his/her work? Does the student check if he/she has the correct equipment, for example pencil, pen, ruler, graph paper?
- Does he/she have other difficulties, such as hearing loss, poor vision, poor motor control, or hyperactivity, that may need to be considered?
- Can the student present work in a way that can be understood by others?

Group work

- Does the student appear to learn better in a group, alone, or in pair-work?
- Can he/she take turns and listen to other students' responses?
- Can he/she present the work in a clear and coherent manner on behalf of the group?

Instructions

- Does the student listen to and understand instructions?
- Can the student read instructions?
- Can he/she follow instructions given by the teacher?
- Can he/she follow more than one instruction effectively?
- Can he/she make appropriate responses to the instructions?
- Is the student clear about routines for setting out materials and clearing up after an activity?

Approaches and methodologies

Skills such as how to establish friendships, how to engage with others in conversation, how to question, and how to share information are important skills for students with mild general learning disabilities. These skills can be broken down into smaller steps and illustrated by the teacher through modelling, role-playing or drama activities. The ability of students to apply these new skills should be monitored and rewarded at frequent intervals.

The approaches and methodologies in the *Primary School Curriculum: SPHE* outline an active approach to learning through which students construct new meaning through experience and discovery, and so internalise their new learning and apply it to new situations.

However, internalising new learning and transferring it to other situations is an area that presents much difficulty for students with mild general learning disabilities.

Some students with mild general learning disabilities may have uneven patterns of social skills development, which can impede learning. Coupled with this, some students may exhibit irritating, impulsive or unpredictable behaviour patterns that further alienate them from their peers. These behaviours may relate to inappropriate tone of voice, abusive language, aggression, or temper tantrums.

For some students it may be necessary to provide individual coaching in a particular social skill away from their peers. This individual instruction will be crucially important in preparing the students for engagement in class activities.

Social skills can be divided into cognitive behaviours and overt behaviours.

- **Cognitive behaviours**—knowing what to do by interpreting the social cues in a situation, for example knowing when to approach an adult to ask a question or to give information, understanding the feelings of others, and being able to anticipate the outcomes of actions taken.
- **Overt behaviours**—using appropriate behaviour in different social situations, for example making eye contact, not standing too close to people, using appropriate volume when speaking, and learning how to greet and how to receive greetings.

Teaching specific social skills involves

- defining the skill to be taught and breaking it down into its simplest components parts
- outlining its importance to the student in terms of how it will help him/her to interact more effectively with others
- modelling the skill and allowing the student to practise the simple components in the sequence
- providing and structuring opportunities for the student to practise and rehearse the skill in a structured situation
- providing praise and feedback on the observed use of the skill in different situations
- providing opportunities for the student to use and maintain the skills learned.

While it is necessary to teach discrete social skills, it is best if these skills are not taught in isolation but rather in a meaningful way that engages students in identifying social situations they have encountered in their own lives at home and at school. Asking questions, giving and receiving compliments, dealing with name calling, asking for directions, and being assertive in social situations are some examples of situations that can be explored through role-playing techniques.

Social skills are best illustrated as they relate to social problem-solving behaviour. Problem-solving approaches generally involve defining the problem, looking at alternatives, selecting an alternative, predicting its effects, assessing actual outcomes, and rewarding appropriate behaviour. This, in practice, might involve getting a young child to share a toy (the problem), and the alternatives could be grabbing the toy, asking to play, or offering another toy in its place (the alternatives). The child is then asked *'What would happen if ...?'* (effects) and *'What happened when you did it a different way?'* (selecting an alternative). The instructional appeal of this approach is that it helps to generalise problem-solving behaviour across social situations and settings.

Group work

Factors which enhance the student's chances of developing social skills are best facilitated by group work that emphasises co-operative learning. It is important that the teacher teaches the skills that are required for effective group work. These skills involve listening to others, sharing, offering help, praising, encouraging, and checking each other's work. The teacher will need to monitor group activities carefully and intervene when necessary, providing suggestions for sharing a task and encouraging and praising examples of co-operation. The size and composition of the group is important, as, in larger groups, the more able students often tend to dominate the activity. The choice of topic and the tasks assigned need to be matched to the student's level of competence within the group. Group work must be consistent in order to allow for the development of previous skills learned through group collaboration.

Play

The importance of play in the earlier years, in providing a context for young children to interact with peers and adults alike, cannot be overstated. Play allows social skills to be taught in a natural setting. It also allows for experimentation with language and provides opportunities to engage in turn-taking, co-operation, sharing, problem-solving, and in assuming others' perspectives.

For older students with mild general learning disabilities, role-playing is an important technique to be explored. For these students, difficulties often lie in their inability to understand others' feelings and perspectives, and to appreciate the importance of learning social skills in the first instance. Stories, which depict students who lack critical social skills, can be read and discussed to examine how they could have behaved differently in effecting a better resolution of the social problem depicted.

For students who have limited role-playing abilities, much practice and observation of others in role will be necessary. Modelling and role-playing by the teacher for and with students can help to break down barriers. At the conclusion of all role-playing activities it is important to elicit responses from the group as to what X did well and what he/she could improve on. It is important also to have rules for participation and to debrief the participants at the end of the role-playing session.

Circle time is another technique that is suitable for use with these students, in that it provides support within the group to express feeling and opinions. The social skills outlined in SPHE will be practiced and reinforced through cross-curricular activities involving co-operation, communicating, sharing, discussing, and accepting other opinions. There is no activity or curriculum area where opportunities to practise these skills is not present.

The content, approaches and methodologies as outlined in the *Primary School Curriculum: SPHE, Teacher Guidelines* (pages 54-99) will also apply to students with mild general learning disabilities. The exemplars provide a rich resource of ideas and activities at all levels.

Further strategies in relation to the development of social skills for students with mild general learning disabilities are outlined in the supplementary exemplar material of these guidelines.

Assessment of social skills

The centrality of assessment, its importance in every aspect of the SPHE programme, and its relevance to all students are outlined in the *SPHE Curriculum* (pages 70-77). The importance of assessing needs and recording progress are of crucial importance for students with mild general learning disabilities.

The *Primary School Curriculum* highlights the importance of teacher observation as a tool in the assessment of SPHE. Through informal observation of the student's interaction with others, both within and outside the classroom, the teacher can observe the factors that inhibit the student's acceptance in

the group. In some instances the student may have a tendency to spoil games, to be aggressive, or to make hurtful remarks to others.

How students interact, co-operate, work independently, ask questions, and engage in setting their own goals and outcomes are all measures of their social skills development. For students with mild general learning disabilities, initial observations by the teacher are important in planning for their learning needs. Through observation the teacher can decide which social skill is the most relevant in terms of the student's age and his/her need for inclusion in group activities. A checklist is provided on page 16, which may help teachers to record their observations for future planning to meet the individual needs of the student.

The use of a portfolio of the student's work is a very appropriate method of assessment for these students. It provides the student with concrete evidence of his/her achievements to discuss, review and share with parents and peers. It can serve to enhance self-esteem by focusing the student on what he/she has achieved. It can also serve to engage the student, through discussion with teachers and parents, in setting further outcomes for himself/herself. The portfolio could be built up from the first year of schooling. It could contain information gleaned from parents on likes/dislikes, family members, pets, and things of interest to the student that would help connect home to school. As the student progresses through school, the portfolio could contain examples of work in different curriculum areas that are of particular relevance to the necessary skills and competence level required by the individual student. It can serve as

- a record of work done
- a basis for reporting to parents
- a basis for awarding a class or school certificate of achievement
- a source of positive feedback
- a source of information at the point of transfer to another class or teacher
- a basis of self-assessment
- an important home-school link.

Framework for targeted teaching of social skills

- Observe the student's behaviour.
- Document the area of need.
- Identify the particular skill to be taught.
- Demonstrate/model/ teach the skill directly to the student.
- Allow the student time to imitate and rehearse the skill in a structured situation.
- Provide constructive feedback to the student in an encouraging and positive manner.
- Allow the student time to practise the skill in a variety of situations: individually, in pair work, or small group work activities.
- Praise and reward the student for applying the skill without prompting.
- Review the student's acquisition and application of the skill.
- Target the next social skill to be taught.

Checklist of basic social skills to help identify and plan for individual social skills development

- Can the student make and maintain eye contact when listening or speaking?
- Has the student the appropriate facial expression, such as, smiling, showing interest?
- Has the student appropriate control of speech: quality of voice, volume, diction rate of speech, clarity, content?
- Can the student greet others and respond to greeting by others?
- Will the student initiate contact by asking or inviting others to join in an activity?
- Does the student understand the rules of a game: sharing, compromising, turn-taking, helping, complimenting, saying thank you, saying sorry?
- Can the student make age-appropriate conversation, understanding issues relating to privacy in questioning or in answering questions?
- Does the student have appropriate listening skills?
- Has the student the appropriate skills required to ask for help or to seek explanation?
- Does the student have appropriate awareness of proper hygiene and grooming?
- Has the student adequate assertive skills in saying 'No!' and accepting 'No!'?
- Can the student cope with conflict, accept criticism, deal with anger in himself/herself and others, cope with mistakes and failure?
- Has the student personal organisational skills: care of books, copies and personal items?
- Does the student understand school organisation, timetable routines, etc?
- Has the student acquired a sense of ease of movement within the space provided in the classroom and throughout the school building?

Exemplar 1: SPHE

Strand: Myself

Strand unit: Self-identity – *Self-awareness*
(four-six lessons)

Level: Junior*

*Content can be differentiated to suit students at an older age.

The student should be enabled to:

- develop body awareness
- explore differences in physical appearance—size, gender, age, colour of eyes, hair, clothes worn at different ages (baby clothes, etc.).

Materials

- Two large cut-outs of body shapes, one cut in a jigsaw pattern
- Pictures showing children and people of varying ages
- Materials to explore taste, smell, touch, sight, and sound

Methodology

- Students discuss body shape and name parts of the body that they know.
- When the teacher touches a certain part of the body the student mirrors this action.
- Talk about what the part of the body is called and its uses.
- Students match the jigsaw pieces to the body template.
- Students, in groups, sort pictures according to age/gender, tall/short, etc., and discuss why they placed pictures in each category.
- Students explore tasting, smelling, touching, looking, feeling, and listening.
- Feely bags could be used to explore different textures. Students discuss and record in groups: *'These are the things we tasted today'*.
- Posters representing the different materials used to experience each sense could be displayed and referred to at frequent intervals.
- Two large cubes are made from cardboard boxes, with pictures of the five senses/parts of the body depicted on the cube face. On the sixth side of the cube the words *'roll again'* or a *'smiley'* face indicates another turn. In pairs, students take turns to roll the cube and say what they can do with the sense or part of the body.

Exemplar 1: SPHE

Linkage/Integration

- **Visual arts:** handprints, fingerprints, body outlines, silhouettes
- **Physical education:** games such as 'Simon Says', 'Hokey Pokey', 'Robot Game', 'Body Shapes'
- **Music:** action songs and rhymes reinforcing parts of the body and their names
- **Drama:** Tell a story and ask students to sort and match happy/sad facial expression pictures to different parts the story. Discuss times when they felt happy or sad.

Differentiation

- If students are older, use age-appropriate materials in all activities.
- The demands made on individual students should be based on observations made in planning.

Assessment

- Can the student describe his/her own physical appearance?
- Can the student describe or indicate the use of the five senses?
- Can the student find similarities in the physical features of other students?
- Can the student sort a given set of pictures into one or more categories: old/young, boy/girl, man/woman, baby/young child?

Exemplar 2: SPHE

Strand: Myself

Strand unit: Self-identity – *Making decisions*
(three-four lessons)

Level: Senior*

*Content can be differentiated to suit students at a younger age.

The student should be enabled to:

- plan and prepare for a theme party
- list occasions when people have parties
- list the jobs to be done in preparation: shopping, cooking, cleaning, invitations, decorations
- cost the items needed.

Materials

- Foodstuffs needed for the party theme, recipe books
- Cooking utensils
- Tableware
- Decorations
- Invitations

Methodology

- Students, as a class, discuss the different occasions on which parties are held, for example birthdays, weddings, christenings, Christmas.
 - Students work in groups to decide on a theme and explain the reasons for their choice.
 - Students, in groups, list the activities to be undertaken in preparation for a party.
 - Students pick a piece of paper indicating which group they belong to, for example the shopping group, the invitation group, the cookery group.
 - Lists of printed prices from supermarkets could be supplied to help in the costing.
 - Students record in groups what they did to help in the preparations.
 - Students decide whom to invite and when.
 - Students write out a welcome speech to be delivered by one of the group.
- (These lessons can be developed as a discrete unit or a theme across curricular subjects.)

Exemplar 2: SPHE

Linkage/Integration

- **Visual arts:** decorations for the classroom
- **ICT:** banners and invitations
- **Physical education:** party games for younger students, or charades for older students
- **Music:** suitable music to celebrate the occasion
- **Maths:** costing, estimating, budgeting
- **SESE:** celebration in other countries

Differentiation

- The grouping of students to facilitate the recording of ideas is important.
- The teacher can act as leader for younger students.

Assessment

- Can the student describe what decisions were taken in the group and why?
- Can the student describe the activities the group engaged in to prepare for the occasion?
- Can the student state what he/she enjoyed when engaging in the activity?
- Can the student state what he/she learned in the group?

Exemplar 3: SPHE

Strand: Myself

Strand unit: Taking care of my body
(two-three lessons)

Level: Middle*

*Content can be differentiated to suit students at an older or younger age.

The student should be enabled to:

- explore what constitutes a balanced and healthy diet by examining the *'food pyramid'*
- understand that we need to eat certain foods in order to stay healthy
- understand that different foods are eaten at different times of the day
- understand that different foods are eaten in different countries.

Materials

- Chart of the food pyramid
- Magazines with food pictures
- Examples of different foods: vegetables, fruits, cereals, biscuits, sweets, etc.
- Worksheets on the food pyramid
- Collection of empty packages and cartons of food products

Methodology

- Students, in groups, discuss/pick pictures of their favourite foods.
- Students, in groups, discuss/pick out foods they would eat at breakfast, dinner, etc.
- The teacher explains what the food pyramid is and how healthy foods are chosen.
- In groups, students complete given pyramid charts by selecting/matching pictures to each food category represented on the pyramid.
- Students sort and classify real food on a given pyramid template drawn on a table or a chart.
- Students, in groups, make charts to represent the different food groups—meats, fruits, vegetables, etc.
- Conduct a class survey to find out *'our favourite foods'*.

Exemplar 3: SPHE

Linkage/Integration

- **Art:** collage of different foods—prints using potatoes, peppers, onions, etc.
- **Music:** songs with a food theme, making instruments using food—rice, pasta, etc.
- **Maths:** pictorial representation of favourite foods—vegetables, fruits, meats, etc.
- **ICT:** using suitable programs which explore this topic
- **SESE:** foods from other countries
- This exemplar links well to themes outlined in the *SPHE Teacher Guidelines* (pages 72 and 77).

Differentiation

- Names of food items and words such as '*pyramid*' and '*balanced*' should be accompanied by pictures.

Assessment

- Can the student name different foods from the food pyramid?
- Can the student name different food categories—meats, fruits, vegetables, etc.?
- Can the student name foods that are needed in order to stay healthy?
- Can the student name foods which should be eaten in moderation?
- Can the student name foods which are eaten at different meal times?
- Can the student discuss his/her favourite food?

Exemplar 4: SPHE

Strand: Myself

Strand unit: Growing and changing
(two-three lessons)

Level: Middle*

*Content can be differentiated to suit students at an older or younger age.

The student should be enabled to:

- become aware of the nature of his/her own feelings and understand that these feelings can change over time and in response to different situations
- learn that feelings are good but need to be expressed in an appropriate manner
- learn that not everyone reacts in the same manner emotionally.

Materials

- Magazines, comics, sport pages, pictures of babies/children/teenagers/parents
- Stories that depict conflict, disappointment, etc.

Methodology

- The teacher reads a story or poem depicting a conflict situation.
- The teacher questions the students on what feelings were expressed in the poem/story.
- Students discuss times when they felt sad/happy/upset/angry/frightened.
- The teacher gives examples of times when he/she felt these emotions.
- The teacher compiles a chart '*I feel happy when ...*', listing examples from general class discussion.
- The teacher makes four charts depicting four key faces/feelings.
- Students, in groups, find pictures to match each feeling shown and discuss their choices.
- Use a large wheel with a pointer depicting emotional situations (a child crying, a lost pet, winning the lotto, etc.). Students, in pairs, get a chance to spin the pointer and describe the feelings depicted where the pointer stops.
- The lesson can be extended to include other feelings: boredom, jealousy, worry, excitement, disappointment, self-consciousness.

Exemplar 4: SPHE

Linkage/Integration

- **Art:** *'my feelings scrapbook'*, making a feelings wheel, collage of *'good and had days'*
- **Music:** listening to music expressing different moods, discussion about the feelings aroused
- **ICT:** using suitable programs to draw and write about emotional expressions
- This exemplar can be linked to the exemplar outlined on page 76 of the *SPHE Teacher Guidelines*
- This exemplar can be linked to good feelings and bad feelings, as in the *Stay Safe* programme.

Differentiation

- Difficulties with understanding language can be helped by using pictures with words to represent feelings discussed.
- Care should be taken to set rules for respecting others' feelings, and for allowing students to decline to relate personal experiences if they so choose.

Assessment

- Can the student select a picture to represent a feeling chosen by the teacher?
- Can the student recognise different expressions—funny, sad, angry?

Exemplar 5: SPHE

Strand: Myself and the wider world

Strand unit: Developing citizenship — *My school community* (two-three lessons)

Level: Middle*

*Content can be differentiated to suit students at an older or younger age.

The student should be enabled to:

- identify the name of the school and state its location
- identify key personnel within the school—principal, class teacher, other teachers, other personnel
- deliver a message to a given location within the school.

Materials

- Photographs of the school building, staff, personnel, and the locality
- Large puzzle map posing the problem of how to get X to his/her home
- Large simple map outline of school classroom location

Methodology

- Hold a general discussion about the school, the number of teachers, its location, the distance from home, etc.
- Students discuss the photographs and orally match names to pictures.
- In groups, students find the home for X.
- On a given large-scale map students, in pairs, are requested to locate the teacher's table, their own table, the toilet, the press, the blackboard, the window.
- Robot game: a blindfolded student (playing the robot) gives directions to get X student from A to B. (Ensure that there is plenty of space for this activity.)
- Teach the language of direction (left, right, down, up, straight, over, in, out, turn) using a large-scale map and model cars/people. The teacher follows instructions given by the student (models behaviour) and students then follow instructions from each other.
- Students, in pairs, could be given responsibility for delivering information from the office to teachers.

Exemplar 5: SPHE

Linkage/Integration

- **Physical education:** mazes, obstacle courses with directions marked on floor, words and arrows
- **Music:** musical games—when music stops take three steps to the right/left, etc.
- **SESE:** map reading, orienteering
- **ICT:** programs in which directional skills are used to solve puzzles

Differentiation

- Instruction should be individual with visual cues provided.

Assessment

- Can the student follow simple directional instructions?
- Can the student state in which direction he/she is moving?
- Can the student locate a given classroom/office within the school?

Exemplar 6: SPHE

Strand: Myself and others

Strand unit: My friends and other people
(two-three lessons)

Level: Middle*

*Content can be differentiated to suit students at a younger or older age.

The student should be enabled to

- explore and discuss the qualities and skills associated with friendship
- explore how friends can have a negative influence on others
- explore how it is important not to exclude others.

Materials

- Pictures of groups of students engaging in different activities
- Set of cards with incomplete sentences: 'A friend is ...' 'A friend would always ...' 'A friend would never ...' 'I like having friends because ...', etc.
- Copies of letters depicting problems that friends may have (See page 29.)

Methodology

- Students engage in choices game. (See page 29.)
- Initiate a general discussion on how students become friends.
- Discuss similarities in the group in likes/dislikes/hobbies/family members.
- Similar interest groups are requested to engage in a joint activity.
- Students working in groups/pairs outline and record the activities that friends engage in and the qualities that a good friend must have.
- Cards are chosen from the set and sentences completed.
- The teacher reads letters and invites discussion. (See page 29.)
- In pairs/groups, students reply to letters orally/on a tape recorder/in written format/on the computer.
- The teacher reads replies to letters and invites discussion on the similarities and differences in advice given.

Exemplar 6: SPHE

Linkage/Integration

- **Visual arts:** designing a poster entitled '*Friends*', friendship bracelets
- **ICT:** letter writing

Differentiation

- Descriptive words for friendship are illustrated with pictures/facial expressions/gestures.
- Ensure that groups are matched suitably to the tasks given.
- Provide activities which encourage interaction between different groups in class.

Assessment

- Can the student name some qualities that a friend should have?
- Can the student outline ways in which friends can have a negative influence on him/her?
- Can the student express how a student would feel if he/she were excluded by others in the class?

Exemplar 6: SPHE

The choices game

Students stand in the centre of the room. The teacher indicates two places at opposite ends of the room. The students are asked to move to one or other place following each question. In each case the teacher should indicate which place corresponds with each answer.

Questions

- Which do you prefer: ice cream or chocolate?
- Where do you prefer to eat: Mc Donald's or Burger King?
- Where do you prefer to visit: the zoo or the beach?
- Which do you prefer: watching television or listening to music?

In watching the students move and sometimes hesitate or change their minds the teacher can comment on the fact that some decisions are easier to make than others. Students can discuss which decisions they found difficult and why.

Letter 1

Dear Agony Aunt,

I have two very good friends in school but the other day I heard them talking and laughing about me in the bathroom. You see they have really nice cool clothes and I don't, as my Mom lost her job and she has no extra money to give me to buy clothes. They were laughing at my clothes and saying that I never have any of the latest gear.

I couldn't believe that it was me they were making fun of. I really thought they were my good friends. I feel so terrible and I don't know what to do. I feel that I'll never have them as friends again. Please help me. I feel so alone and sad.

Margaret

Letter 2

Dear Agony Aunt,

I go to a school which is far away from where I live. Most of the students live close to the school and they all knew each other for years. I find it very hard to make friends, and when I try to talk to them they all move away and start talking to their friends. One day this boy started talking to me and asked me to join his team but his friends told him not to be bothered with that new fella and that I wouldn't know the rules of the game anyway, so I was left out. He never asked me to join again. I feel that they all hate me and that I will never have friends in this school. I wish that I never had to leave my old school. I feel so lonely all the time. What can I do?

John

Exemplar 7: **SPHE****Strand:** Myself**Strand unit:** Safety and protection**Level:** Senior*

*Content can be differentiated to suit students at a younger age.

The student should be enabled to	Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise that students sometimes experience pressure from other students • recognise that students sometimes experience pressure from other students • provide them with strategies for decision-making which maintain their safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large picture of the key incident under discussion • A4 copies of the same picture for each student • Markers/crayons

Methodology

- Students engage in the the *choices game*.
- Students are requested to study the picture in silence and imagine what is happening.
- Students are invited to say what is happening in the picture.
- Students, in pairs, discuss what could have happened to the boy in the picture.
- Students engage in discussion on how the boy could handle this situation.
- Students role-play the boy being forcibly offered cigarettes by two/three other boys.
- Other similar situations could be role-played.

Exemplar 7: SPHE

Linkage/Integration

- **Drama:** Role-playing
- **Visual arts:** poster depicting 'yes' and 'no' scenarios
- **English:** letters to the agony aunt looking for advice on how to handle a pressurised situation

Differentiation

- Students with limited communication skills may need to observe the role-playing or be paired with a more vocal student.
- Ensure that groups are suitably matched to the tasks given.
- Provide activities encourage interaction between different groups in class.

Assessment

- Can the student discuss the outcome of the role-playing engaged in?
- Can the student outline ways in which others can pressurise them to engage in activities that may be hazardous to them?
- Has the student an awareness of how to withstand the pressure by saying 'no'?

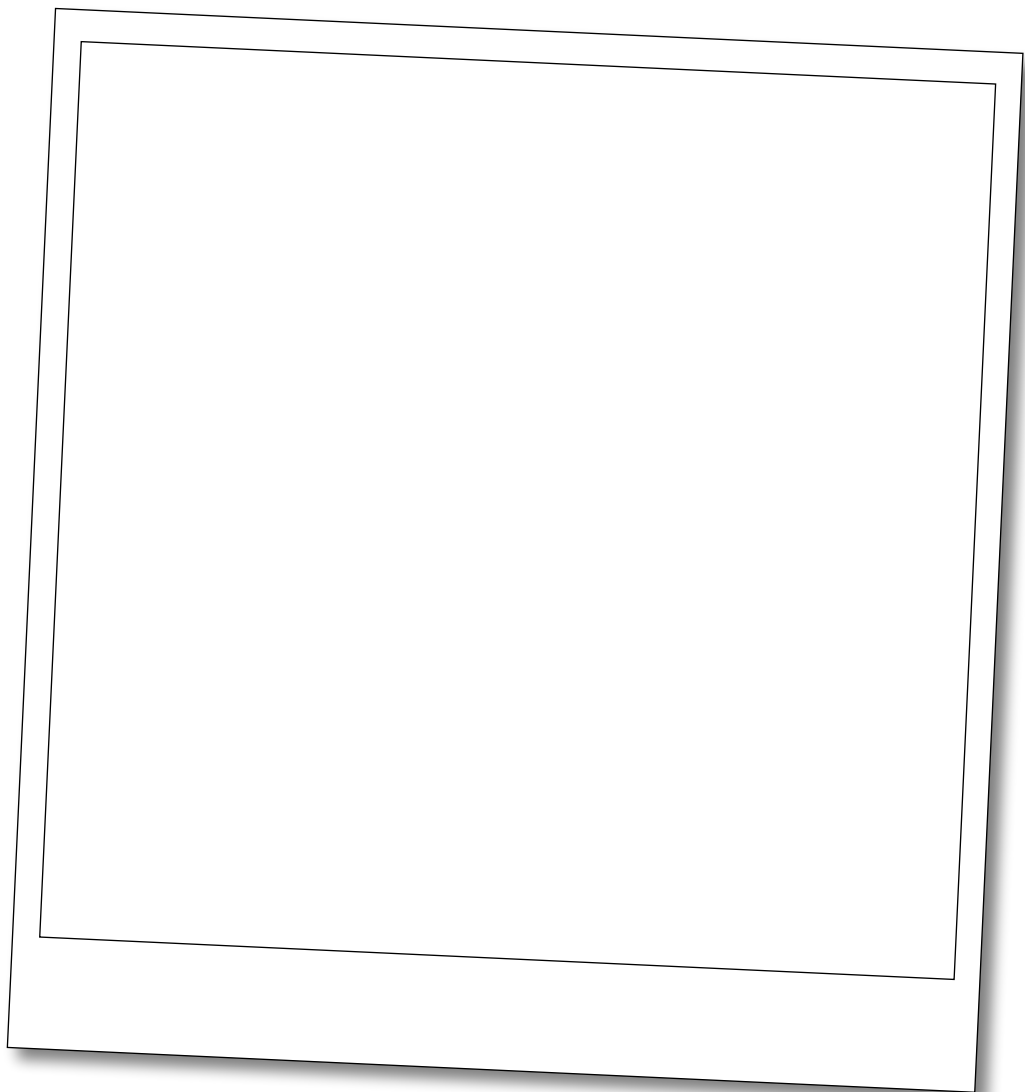


**My book
about me**

MY NAME IS

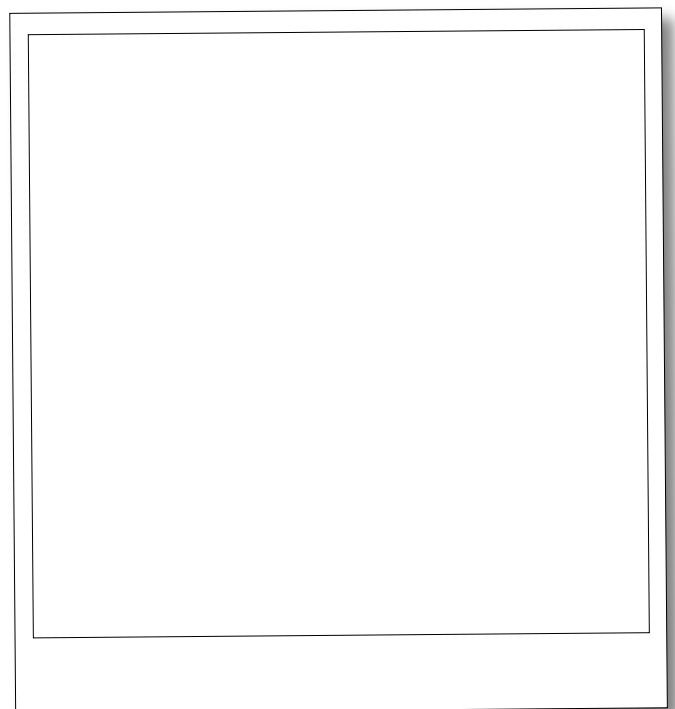
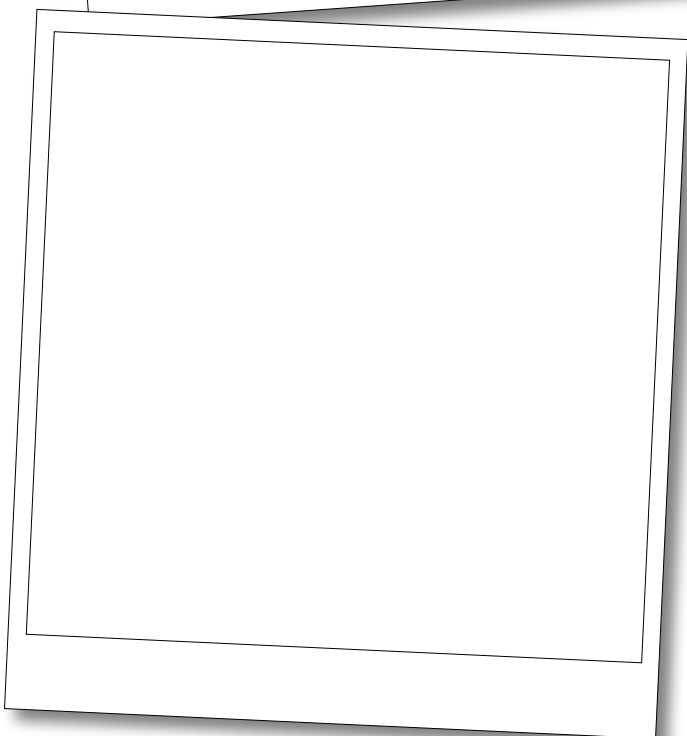
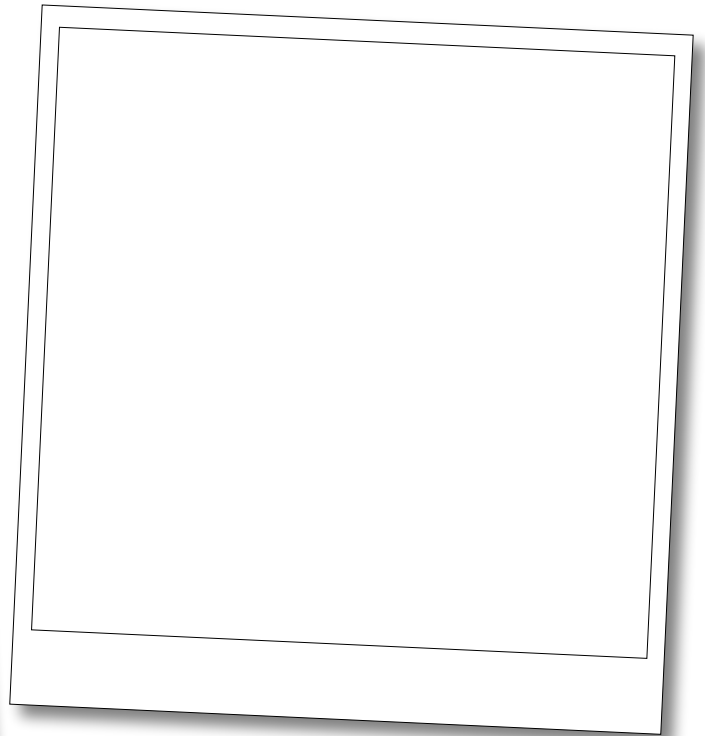
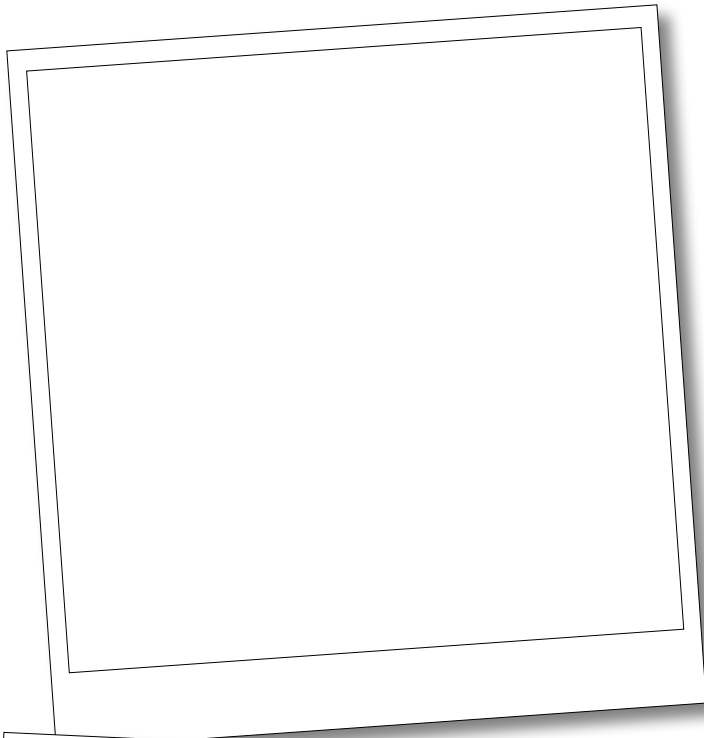
This is a book about me and my life.

Here is my photograph!



THE SONG SAYS 'ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE'.

Here are some of the people I love and
the people who love me!



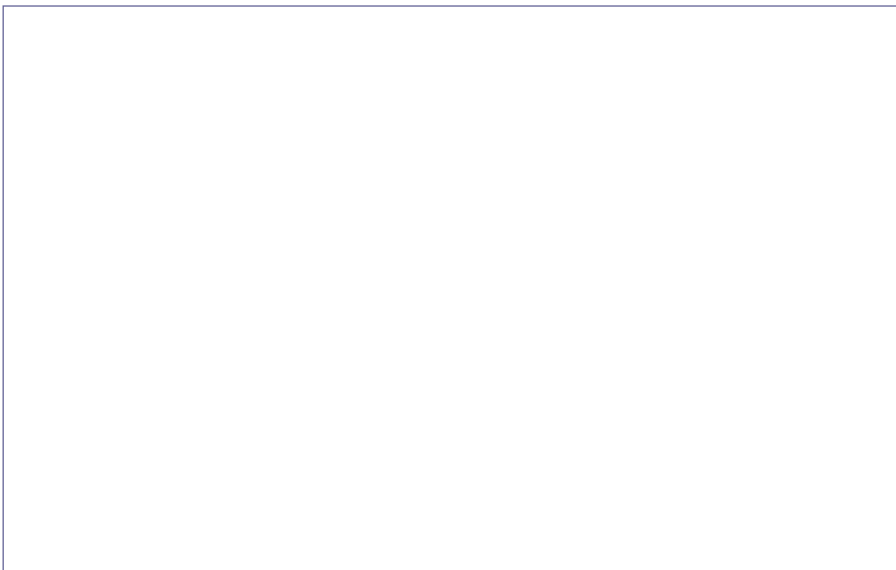
HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS I HAVE DONE
THAT I AM PROUD OF!

WE ALL MAKE A MISTAKE SOMETIMES.

This is a picture of a time I made a mistake!

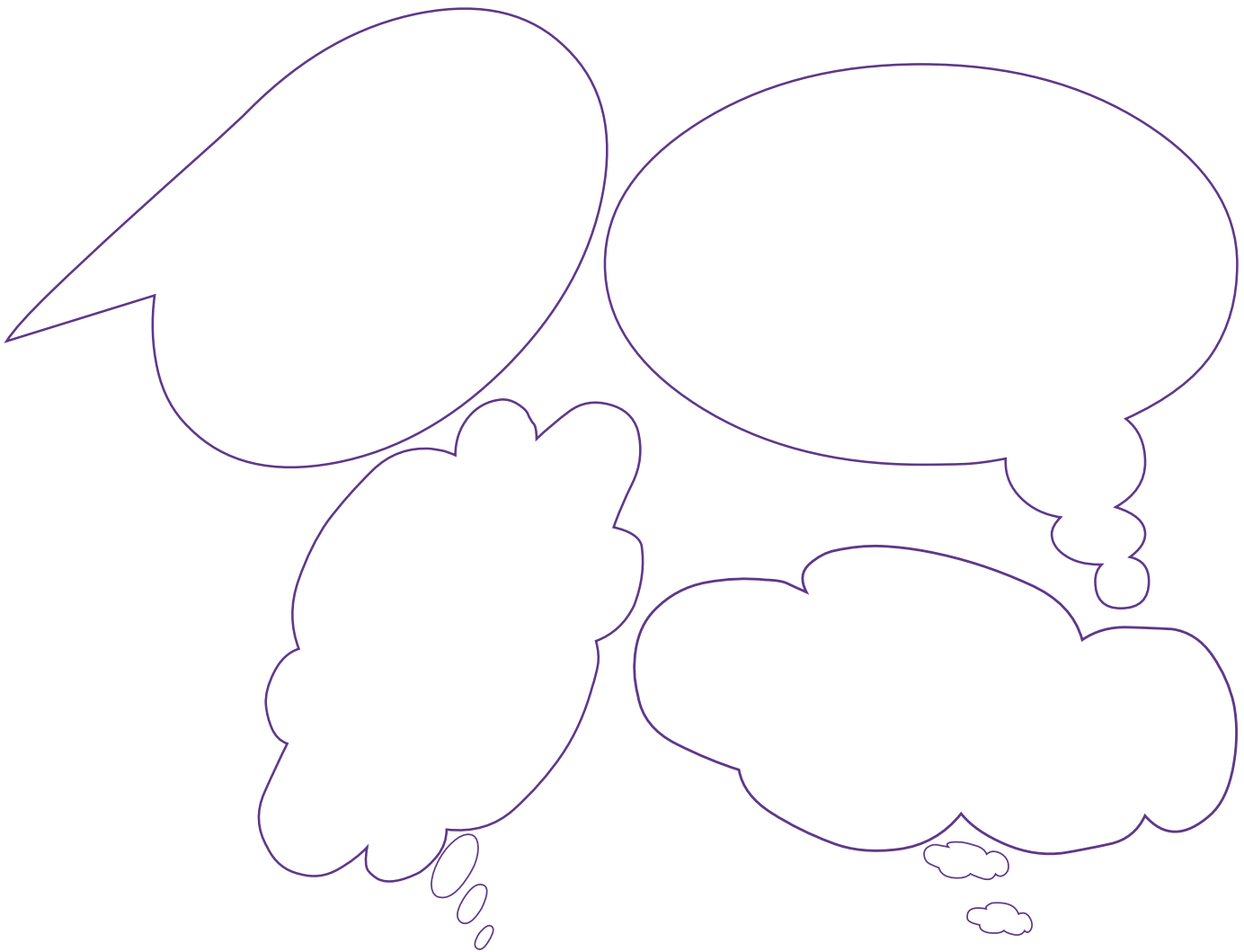


If I had the chance again this is what I would do!



I FEEL GOOD WHEN I CAN MAKE UP MY OWN
MIND ABOUT THINGS.

Here are some of the decisions I have made!



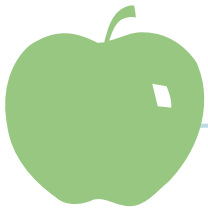
EVERYONE LIKES TO HAVE FUN.

Here are some of the ways I have fun!

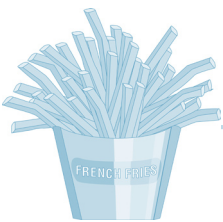
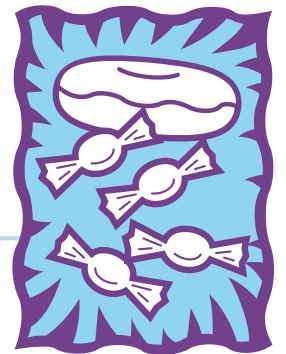


IF I WANT TO STAY HEALTHY I NEED TO EAT HEALTHY FOOD.

Here are all the healthy foods I ate this week:



Here are all the not so healthy foods I ate this week:



Do I have to change my diet?

- A lot? A little? Not at all?

TO STAY HEALTHY I NEED TO STAY FIT.

Here is a record of all the times I exercised this week:



Date

Exercise



How many times did I exercise this week? _____

- Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday
 Friday Saturday Sunday.

MY FEELINGS CHANGE ALL THE TIME.

Here are some of the ways I feel:

happy

sad

angry

scared

bored

excited.



Sometimes I feel scared.

I need to talk to a grown up I can trust.

Here are some of the people I can talk to:

SOMETIMES WHEN I AM FED UP OR SAD ...

I think about my favourite things and then I don't feel so badly.

Sometimes when I'm unhappy I feel pains in my body.



When do I feel:

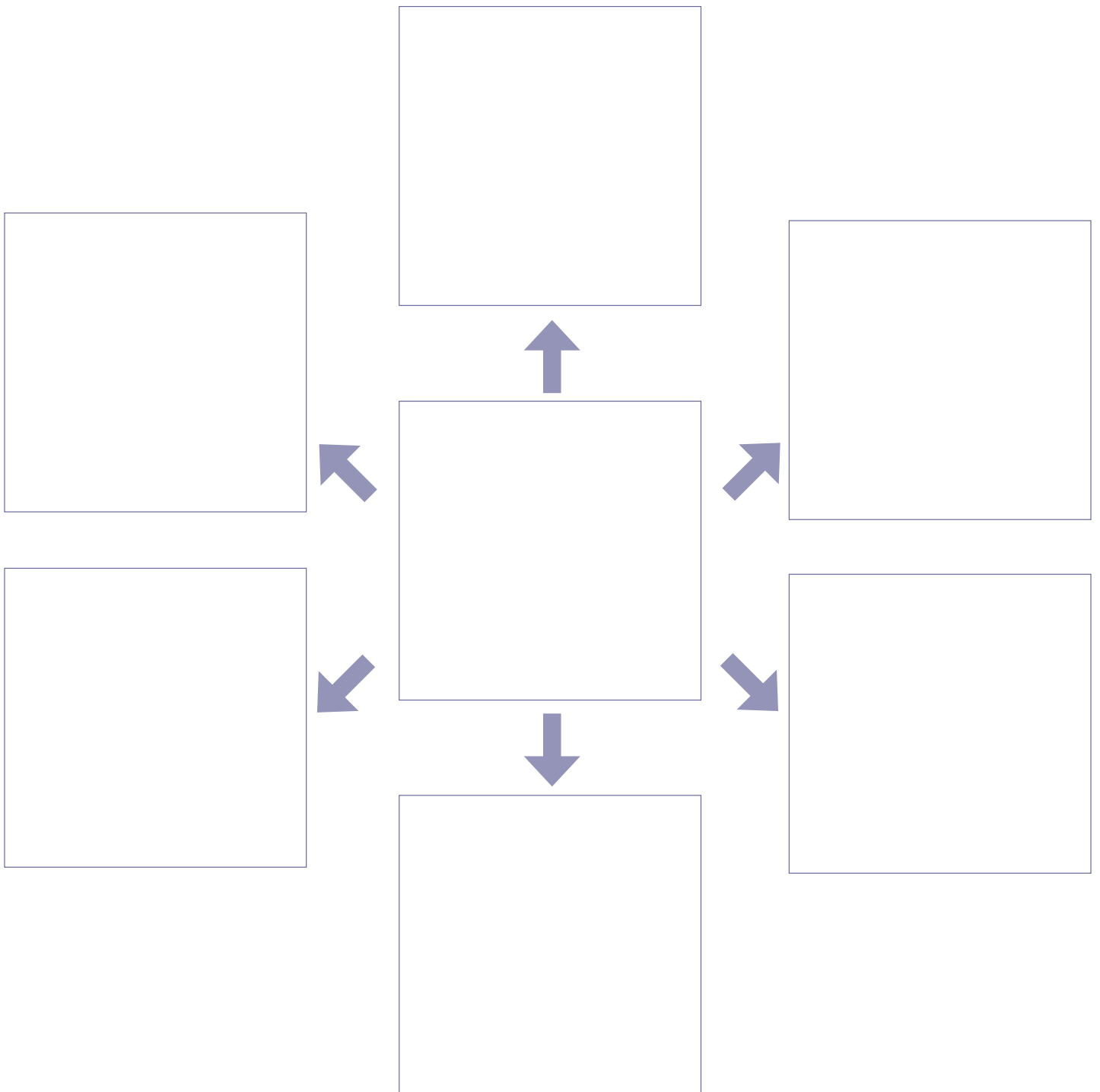
sadness?

anger?

guilt?

worry?

If I could have a team of people to help me be happy
who would be on my team?



THIS WEEK IN SCHOOL ...

I learned ...

The hardest work was ...

I got help from ...

I worked hard at ...

I had fun when ...

TODAY IS A SPECIAL DAY.

The date is

It is _____ 's birthday.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

from all your classmates

COMPLIMENTS.

My name is

Here are some of the things my classmates have told me:

WELCOME!

Today's date is

Today we welcome someone new to our class.

His/her name is

We are glad you've joined us!

WISHING YOU GOOD LUCK!

Today we say goodbye to

You have been a part of our class for _____ years.

We will miss you.

We hope you will be very happy in your new school.

SPECIAL EFFORT AWARD

This is to certify that

worked really hard at

We are happy to have you in our school!

Teachers who are proud of you are:

Date



LISTENING

Sounds I love to listen to are:

Three empty ovals for writing answers to the question 'Sounds I love to listen to are:'.

Sounds I do not like are:

Three empty ovals for writing answers to the question 'Sounds I do not like are:'.

TOUCHING



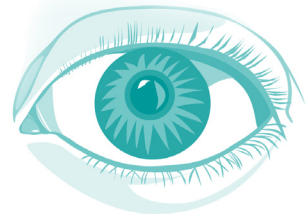
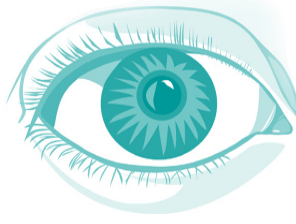
Here are some things I love to touch:

Three empty ovals arranged in a triangle (two on top, one centered below) for writing things you love to touch.

Here are some touches I do not like:

Three empty ovals arranged in a triangle (two on top, one centered below) for writing touches you do not like.

LOOKING



Here are some things I love to look at:

Three empty ovals arranged in a triangular pattern (two on top, one centered below) for writing things you love to look at.

Here are some things I do not like to look at:

Three empty ovals arranged in a triangular pattern (two on top, one centered below) for writing things you do not like to look at.

TASTING



Here are some foods I love to taste:

Three empty ovals arranged in a triangle (two on top, one centered below) for writing favorite foods.

Here are some tastes I do not like:

Three empty ovals arranged in a triangle (two on top, one centered below) for writing disliked tastes.

SMELLING



Here are some smells I love:

Three empty ovals for writing down favorite smells.

Here are some smells I do not like:

Three empty ovals for writing down disliked smells.

THIS RULE IS IMPORTANT.

We had a problem in our class. The problem was

We talked it out and made a rule to solve the problem.

Here is our rule

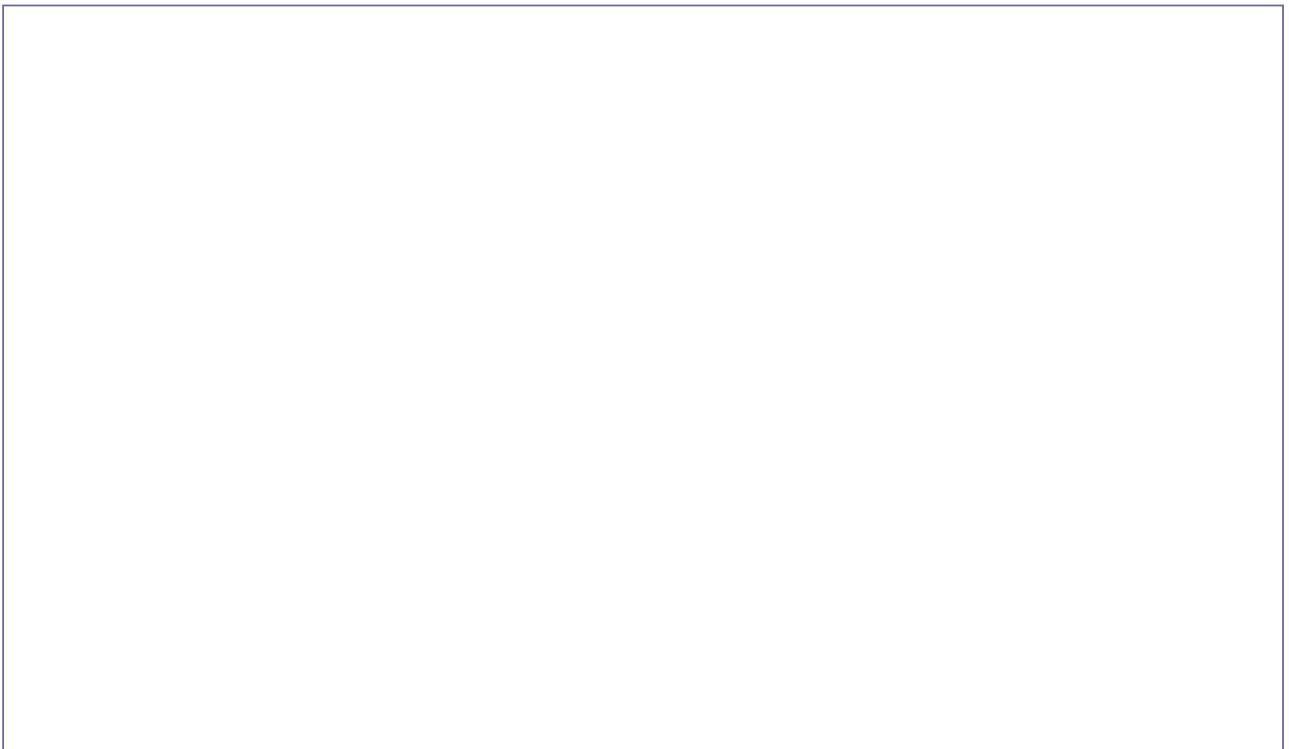
We made this rule because we care about

REMEMBERING A HAPPY DAY

_____ was a happy day.

I want to remember that day forever.

Here is a picture of the day!



The people who shared my day were

If I had a magic wand I would



THE QUESTION IS NOT:

'HOW SMART ARE YOU?'

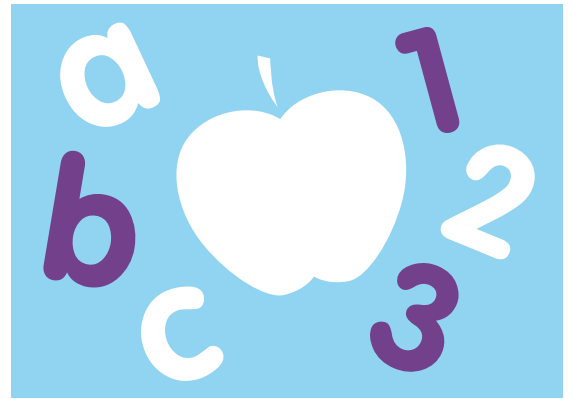
BUT RATHER

'HOW ARE YOU SMART?'

ARE YOU WORD SMART?



ARE YOU NUMBER SMART?



ARE YOU PICTURE SMART?



ARE YOU MUSIC SMART?



ARE YOU BODY SMART?



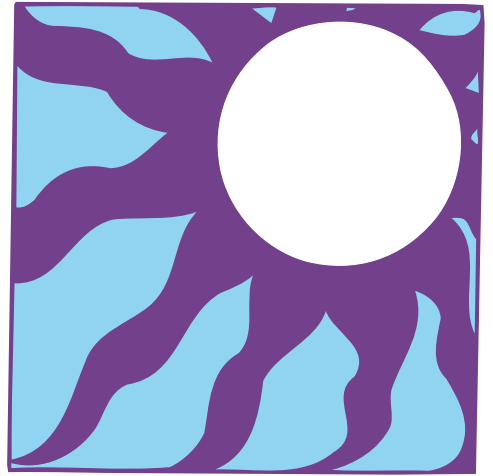
ARE YOU PEOPLE SMART?



ARE YOU SELF SMART?



ARE YOU NATURE SMART?



WISHING AND DREAMING!

My name is

My talent is

The subjects I find easy in school are

The subjects I find harder in school are

My dream for the future about how I might use my talents is
