Kerry Children and Young People's Services Committee

CYPSC
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES
Kerry

Strategies in Kerry Schools to Promote the Prevention of Bullying

Connect – focus on relationships

Protect – promote safety and trustworthiness

Respect – Learn to treat people as would you would like to be treated

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 2
Introduction 3
Anti-Bullying Procedures in Schools 4
Schools' Survey 5
Practices and Programmes in Schools 6
Wellbeing Guidelines 7
Social, Personal and Health Education 10
The *Stay Safe* Programme 14
Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy 16
Health Promoting Schools - Whole School Approach 19
Aistear: Early Childhood Curriculum 22
The *Incredible Years* Programmes 25
Zippy's Friends Programme 29
FRIENDS for Life Programme 31
Conclusions 34

CYPSC
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES
Kerry

Acknowledgements

The Kerry Children and Young People's Mental Health committee would like to thank the 27 schools that took part in the survey. In particular, it would like to acknowledge some examples good practice written by the following primary schools:

Cullina N.S., Beaufort – Health Promoting Schools

Firies N.S., Firies- Whole School '*No Blame'* Approach and *Aistear*

Fossa N.S., Killarney- '*Zippy's Friends'*

Holy Cross Mercy Primary, Killarney- '*FRIENDS for Life'*

Mercy Moyderwell Primary School, Tralee –'*The Incredible Years'*

Introduction

Kerry Children and Young People's Service (CYPSC) highlighted that bullying is an area of concern for Children and Young People's (CYP) mental health in Kerry. Therefore, as part of the CYPSC Workplan for 2014-2017 this area was further researched in order to support CYP in schools.

The objectives of the work as highlighted in the Workplan were:

- To promote interagency collaboration and coordination around anti-bullying.
- To provide information to parents re: programmes available to address bullying in Kerry.
- To identify the anti-bullying programmes being implemented in schools and community settings in Kerry.

In order to achieve the aims an interagency subgroup within the Children's and Young People's Mental Health subgroup was formed which comprised of:

- A Primary School Deputy Principal;
- A Post Primary School Principal;
- A Health Promotion Officer from the Health Service Executive (HSE);
- An Educational Psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

This report will discuss anti-bullying prevention in schools solely. Due the depth and breadth of the area, procedures and programmes available to all and in some primary schools in Kerry will be outlined. To capture some of the work done by schools in the area of anti-bullying, some case studies are described. The intention of this is not to prescribe a particular approach, but to highlight what some schools are doing. This report does not cover anti-bullying procedures in post primary schools. Further information from secondary schools may follow at a later date.

In addition, interventions available in other community settings were beyond the scope of the sub-group and thus are not discussed in this report.

The information compiled herewith to promote the prevention of bullying report will be available for school and parents on the Kerry Children's Services website: www.kerrychildrenservices.com.

Anti-Bullying Procedures in Schools

Bullying is defined as: "*unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time".* (Department of Education & Skills, 2013). Types of bullying include: physical aggression; intimidation; isolation/exclusion; cyber-bullying; name-calling; damage to property and extortion.

The Education (Welfare) Act section 23(3) requires that every school must have in place an anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall school code of behaviour which includes specific measures to deal with bullying behaviour.

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has published guidelines to schools in the prevention and intervention of bullying in primary and post primary schools entitled *"Anti-bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools"* (DES, 2013). The role of schools is viewed to be in terms of "*preventing and tackling school-based bullying behaviour amongst its pupils*" (p. 1). The main procedures outlined by DES are:

- All Schools' Boards of Management must formally adopt and implement an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of these procedures.
- The school's anti-bullying policy must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (a template is available for schools).

The DES does not promote any one specific anti-bullying programme. However, based on international evidence, the *'Action Plan on Bullying'* Report (DES, 2013) recommends nine core principles that should underpin a schools approach to preventing and tackling bullying which are as follows:

- A positive school culture and climate;
- School-wide approach;
- Effective leadership;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Anti-Bullying policies;
- Consistent recording of reported bullying behaviour;
- Education and training;
- Prevention strategies and awareness raising;
- Established evidence based intervention strategies.

The full DES guide to schools is available on: (http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf).

Further in 2017, the DES guidelines in relation to the allocation of resources in primary schools, available on: www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/Guidelines-for-Primary-Schools-Supporting-Pupils-with-Special-Educational-Needs-in-Mainstream-Schools.pdf, specifically highlight the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) '*Anti-Bullying Support Materials'*, available on: www.pdst.ie/primary/antibullying.

Schools' Survey

In 2015-2016 school year a small sample of schools (n=35), both primary and post primary were surveyed by CYPSC in order to ascertain schools' experiences of bullying and the anti-bullying procedures. This is not meant to be fully representative, but a '*snapshot*' of what is happening in a selection of schools in Kerry. The general results were as follows**:**

1. **Type of school** (27 schools replied-24 primary, 3 secondary).
2. **Number of students** (smallest, n=19 students, largest=410 students; average= 167 students).
3. **Number of bullying reports annually** (75%=1-5 reports; 18%=5-10 reports; 7%=10-15 reports).
4. **Types of bullying (**4% physical; 48% verbal; 15% nonverbal; 26% social).
5. **Preventative measures for anti-bullying** (anti-bullying procedures/ policy; SPHE; '*Stay Safe'; 'FRIENDS'; 'Zippy's Friends', 'Aistear'*; base groups; annual anti-bullying weeks)
6. **Intervention (**observe, survey, investigate, interview, restore- no blame procedures in line with the DES no blame policy; restorative work).
7. **Time spent on bullying situations** (21% report spending one day; however, the majority (48%) reported that it depends on the situation and can take longer).
8. **Opinion on DES procedures** (good guidelines, but schools need more support)
9. **What CYPSC can do? (**Online resources; information on cyberbullying; more training for parents; promoting the positive).
10. **Other Comments:** More work needed on homophobic bullying intervention; work in internet safety; creative use of the media to promote anti-bullying prevention.

Practices and Programmes in Schools

In the school's survey whole school approaches as well as some specific programmes were highlighted as helpful in bullying prevention. Through primary school examples, the following section will outline:

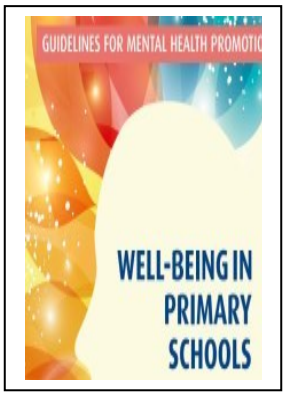
Whole school approaches to bullying prevention that are available to all schools:

- Wellbeing guidelines;
- Social Personal and Health Education Programme;
- *'Stay Safe'*;
- Anti–bullying policy using a '*No Blame'* restorative approach;
- Health Promoting Schools.

Specific programmes and resources used by some schools to support curriculum and learning for bullying prevention:

- *Aistea*r (Pre-school and Infant classes)
- *Incredible Years* (Lower and Upper Primary)
- *Zippy's Friends* (First & Second Classes)
- *FRIENDS for Life* (Third to Sixth Classes)

Well-being Guidelines for Primary Schools



Description:

The well-being in primary schools guidelines for mental health promotion

resource provides practical guidance on how primary schools can promote

mental health and wellbeing. The guidelines were developed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in consultation with the Inspectorate and other Department of Education and Skills (DES) Support Services, the Health Service Executive (HSE) including Health Promotion Officers and clinical services, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). They were informed by Well-Being in Post Primary Schools; Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, HSE, DOH, 2013). The purpose of the guidelines is to:

• Promote mental health awareness;

• Build on the existing good practice already in place in primary schools;

• Inform schools about the Health Promoting Schools Framework and Co-ordinators Handbook;

• Progress mental health promotion using the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Continuum of Support Framework which involves a graduated school response when mental health issues arise;

• Help schools develop a coherent whole school approach to mental health that focuses on children, their parents and teachers, which is integrated into core school structures and practices;

• Raise awareness of school support systems and services available to schools in relation to mental health promotion;

• Assist schools in effectively addressing issues that arise.

Principles:

The guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive but, present in an integrated way the existing elements of current good practice. Effective and consistent delivery of SPHE as part of a whole school approach to mental health promotion is central to implementation. Many schools currently provide a range of evidence-based supports and interventions that address the emotional well-being of young people.

Ten actions that schools can undertake to promote well-being of a school community

Within the school context, positive mental health promotion should focus on enhancing protective factors that contribute to the social and emotional growth, and general well-being of young people.

Key strategic actions for positive mental health promotion include:

1. Developing and maintaining a safe and caring environment within the school where a sense of belonging and connectedness is fostered.

2. Building positive relationships between teachers and children to promote participation, social interaction and pro-social behaviour.

3. Adopting a whole-school approach to health promotion, where health is promoted by all and not just by a few members of staff.

4. Actively involving children and their parents/guardians in developing and implementing school policies to support mental health and health promotion.

5. Supporting and implementing a well-planned, consistent and integrated SPHE/ RSE curriculum to enable children enhance their coping, resilience, communication, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills.

6. Developing whole-school systems and structures to support the early identification of children experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties.

7. Actively involving, supporting and encouraging children's participation in extra-curricular activities.

8. Fostering a whole-school ethos that accepts and values diversity within the pupil and staff population.

9. Providing easy access to information for pupils and staff on supports available to them within the school and wider community.

10. Facilitating access to continuing professional development for school staff on the promotion of the mental health and well-being of children.

Further information:

- These guidelines are available on the Department of Education and Skills website: www.education.ie

Primary School Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE.)- Whole School Curriculum

Description:

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is the overarching context for anti-bullying work in schools. SPHE is intended to support the personal development, health, and wellbeing of young people and help them to create and maintain supportive relationships. It is an aspect of the school curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students' attitudes and values and skills.

The S.P.H.E Curriculum is for all children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. It aims to:

- Foster children's well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging;
- Develop children's sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions;
- Promotes children's self-awareness and understanding by helping them to manage their own feelings, to recognise and appreciate individual abilities, and to cope with change of various kinds;
- Support children to become active and responsible citizens.

The Primary SPHE curriculum consists of three strands: '*Myself', 'Myself and Others' and 'Myself and the Wider World'*. Strand 2 '*Myself and Others'* has the most significance for promoting bullying prevention).

Strand	Overall Objective	Strand Units of Work
1. Myself	This strand concentrates on what is essentially the intrapersonal side of the child's life. It is presented in a number of strand units that 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.	**1.Self-identity** Self-awareness Developing self-confidence **2.Taking care of my body** Knowing about my body **3. Growing and changing** As I grow I change Feelings and emotions **4. Safety and protection** Personal safety Safety issues **5. Making decisions**

Strand	Overall Objective	Strand Units of Work
2. Myself and Others	Learning to connect, care for (protect) and respect for others is the cornerstone of this strand. It explores the role of various people in one's life and how people interact (connect) communicate, live, play and work respectfully and safely together. Opportunities should explore in particular: • The meaning and significance of friendship; • Aspects of genuine friendship; • Making and changing friends as part of growing up; • The ways in which individual actions and behaviour affect others; • Relating others with dignity and respect. • The positive and negative role of peers and on helping children to cope with pressure and persuasive influences.	**1. Myself and my Family** **2. My friends and other people** The meaning and significance of friendship, what can threaten it, and how it can be supported. • Aspects of genuine friendship, such as listening, trust, honesty, laughter, empathy and the importance of spending time together. • Making and changing friends as part of growing up. **3. Relating to Others** • Listen effectively; • Learn about different types of communication and explore their effectiveness; • Affirmation and constructive criticism; • Empathise with others. • Resolving conflict through: ➢ Identifying the problem; ➢ Exploring different techniques; ➢ Choosing the most appropriate approach learning how to compromise; ➢ To apologise, to receive apologies, and to forgive learning about passive, assertive and aggressive behaviour; ➢ Exploring bullying.

Strand	Overall Objective	Strand Units of Work
3. Myself and the Wider World	Children explore the diversity of the world in which they live. • Share and co-operate; • Set realistic goals and targets for themselves and others; • Develop leadership; • Celebrate difference; • Voice individual opinions; • Undertake a variety of Responsibilities; • Listen to different points of view; • Work both as an individual and as a member of a group; • Be involved in school decision-making.	**Developing Citizenship** **My School Community** **Living in the Local Community** **National, European and wider Communities** *(This sub-unit is applicable only from third to sixth classes).* **Environmental Care** (*The sub-unit Environmental care is developed in detail in SESE).* **Media Education.**

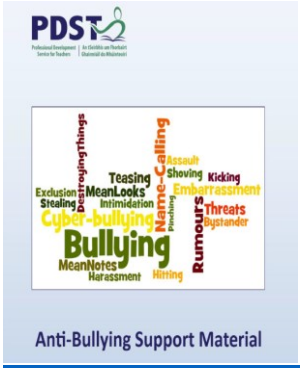
Programmes and Supports for Primary SPHE

The following are some of the programmes and resources listed by the DES to promote Self-Awareness, **Connectedness, Respect, Protection** of Self and Others, Resilience, Social & Emotional Competence, and Well-Being:

- ***Stay Safe** (Child-Abuse and Bullying Prevention) is a mandatory support for all three strands of the S.P.H.E. Curriculum.
- **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** fosters healthy personal relationships as children / young people and is a mandatory support for all three strands of the S.P.H.E. Curriculum.
- ***DES Action Plan on Bullying (2013)** mandatory for all schools.
- **Walk Tall** (Substance-Misuse, DES Prevention Programme).
- ****Aistear*,** the DES Early Childhood Framework lays the foundations in the Junior and Senior Infant Classrooms through themes such as Identity, Belonging, and Well-Being.
- The ****Incredible Years*** Programme…social and emotional self-regulation, including a Support Programme for Parents and 'Dina School' Therapy with puppets.
- **Fun Friends** (Infants)… anxiety prevention and resilience-building.
- ***Zippy's Friends** (Aged 5-8)… feelings, communication, making & breaking relationships, conflict resolution, dealing with change and loss, general coping skills.
- ***Friends for Life** (Aged 8-12/13)… developing effective strategies to deal with worry, stress, change, managing stress and anxiety.
- **Webwise** (Aged 8-12)… internet safety
- **Webwise/My-Selfie**… cyber-bullying awareness and prevention
- **Garda Primary School's Programme** (for 5th Class)… promoting sensible and responsible behaviour.
- **Active School Flag(DES)**… linking physical activity to positive mental-health/well-being
- ***Health Promoting Schools (HSE)** … the whole-school promotion of social, emotional, mental, spiritual, cognitive and physical health.

- The *__Well-Being in Primary Schools__ Guidelines and Resources Documents (2015) is an excellent collaboration between the DES, DH, NEPS and the HSE.
- **Safe-TALK** (HSE)… Teacher training to raise knowledge and skills around suicide alertness.
- **Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties –A Continuum of Support (2010)** is a whole-school framework of graduated intervention by NEPS, for Primary School children displaying difficulties.

Further information:
For further information on support materials and resource log onto the following websites:



- www.ncca.ie
- www.pdst.ie

*These programmes and procedures are listed in more detail in this document.

The '*Stay Safe*' Programme

Description:

The *Stay Safe* programme is a personal safety skills programme designed for use with primary school children from Junior Infants through to 6th class. The programme seeks to enhance children's self-protective skills by participation in lessons on safe and unsafe situations, bullying, inappropriate touch, secrets, telling and stranger danger. The programme aims to give children the skills necessary to enable them to recognise and resist abuse/victimisation and teaches them that they should always tell (an adult that can help) about any situation which they find unsafe, upsetting, threatening, dangerous or abusive. The Stay Safe programme should be taught in its entirety over one school year. Each topic builds on the learning from the previous topic.

Principles:

The *Stay Safe* programme is developmentally tailored and contains four sets of lessons suitable for Infants, First and Second classes, Third and Fourth classes, and Fifth and Sixth classes. This approach is compatible with the structure of the SPHE curriculum. The lessons plans are divided into the five Stay Safe Topics:

- Feeling Safe and Unsafe;
- Friendship and Bullying;
- Touches;
- Secrets and Telling;
- Strangers.

Teachers ensure that topics are taught consecutively, beginning with Topic 1 and working through to Topic 5. The lessons of the *Stay Safe* programme are spiral in nature, where similar content is revisited at each level but the processes, approaches and information adopted are designed to reflect the needs of children at a particular time and at their various stages of readiness. '*Friendship and bullying'* lessons are repeated across age levels as the next table highlights.

Stay Safe Topic	Number of Lessons			
	J. Infants S. Infants	1st and 2nd	3rd and 4th	5th and 6th
Feeling Safe and Unsafe	3	3	3	3
Friendship and Bullying	3	5	6	6
Touches	2	2	2	2
Secrets and Telling	1	1	1	1
Strangers	1	1	1	1

More Information:

The revised edition of *Stay Safe* was published in 2016.

To access the Teacher Guide, Lesson Plans and Teaching Resources for each class level, go to:

http://www.pdst.ie/Stay-Safe-Teachers

Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy

Firies National School

Description:

All schools were requested to put a policy in place in their schools based on the circular " *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Secondary schools*" published in September 2013. In Firies N.S. we developed our policy during the school year 2013 to 2014. All staff received a copy of this circular. It was important that all staff understood the implications of the new circular. During Croke Park hours, all staff attended a talk on '*Anti- Bullying'*. This was followed by an open invitation to all parents to attend a talk specifically geared to understanding our new approach to anti bullying.

Principles:

The main principles of the policy are:

1. Awareness Raising lessons
2. No Blame Approach.

The premise for all work on anti–bullying is on *"prevention*". We used the website 'antibullyingcampaign.ie' for our awareness raising lessons. Every year we also have a '*Friendship Week'*. Other subjects like SPHE & Religion also support children's understanding of empathy, friendships and accepting difference.

The '*No Blame Approach'* restorative approach is central to the policy. This involves a '*Reform not Blame'* approach when dealing with bullying situations.

Programme in Action: Firies N.S.

In Firies N.S. we developed a whole school approach to dealing with Bullying. It involves all staff and includes Learning Support/Resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants.
We use the antibullyingcampaign.ie website.

- All classes do 6 or 7 '*Awareness Raising'* lessons during the school year.
- Surveys are carried out regularly at least once a term.
- An action plan is developed for the school year.
- When dealing with instances of bullying all teachers adopt a '*no blame'* approach. This informs the interaction between pupil and teacher.
- The teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "*mistake*" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.

- When dealing with very young children in Infants to First, the '*Awareness Raising'* lessons are undertaken. In the event of a bullying incident a quiet one-to-one conversation with the young child where the teacher seeks a verbal promise. This may be enough to bring the problem to an end.

Restorative Practice is also central to the resolution of instances of bullying. The questions asked are:

- "*What happened?"*
- *"What were you thinking at the time?"*
- *"Who was affected by what you did? How were they affected?"*
- *"What needs to happen to make things right?"*

Children rarely break this promise as they realise that what they have done is hurtful and with the constant '*Awareness Raising'* lessons children have a clearer understanding on what bullying is.

If however a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed. Our policy states that further bullying behaviour is regarded

as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school. We hope that serious sanctions will be needed very rarely.

We have a sub- committee to monitor the implementation of the policy in the school. The sub-committee is made up of teachers from all levels within the school as well as the Principal. The committee meet once a term and make changes and communicate these to all staff at staff meetings.

Further information:

- www.antibullyingcampaign.ie

DES Circular

- (http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf).

Health Promoting Schools (Whole School)

Cullina N.S.

Description

The Health Promoting School (HPS) Framework involves the whole school community coming together and working towards better health for all. It seeks to create a school environment that promotes health and wellbeing for all its members. The HPS addresses health in its broadest sense including social, emotional, mental spiritual, cognitive and physical health. Developing as a HPS involves putting in place policies and practices that enable the school community to develop sustainable programmes of action. The HPS process encourages schools to focus on four key areas of action; Environment, Curriculum and Learning, Policy and Planning and Partnerships. Schools are supported to develop as Health Promoting Schools by HSE Health Promotion Officers. For further information please contact local health promotion office or visit www.healthpromotion.ie /schools.

Criteria:

- The school registers on an annual basis to be part of the Irish Network of Health Promoting Schools.
- A HPS Coordinator is in place and attends Coordinator training days with the HSE Health Promotion Dept.
- A HPS working group is in place to support health related activities in the school.
- Consultations are carried out to identify the health needs of the school community
- Action plans are developed and implemented based on consultation findings.
- The school regularly reviews and celebrates its achievements.
- A HPS flag is awarded to schools in recognition of achievements.

Programme in Action: Cullina National School

Cullina N.S is proud to be a Health Promoting School for over ten years. We see Health Promotion as a vital and necessary part of educating the youth of today. It has become very clear to us that while academic endeavours are very important, it is also so important that the children we teach are educated in how to maintain a healthy mind and body. It is through Health Promotion that we give children the tools to be healthy not just as children but throughout their lives.

Lifelong health and the building of healthy attitudes are the main goals of Health Promotion and not just in pupils but also among school staff and the wider community.

Health Promotion has long been the champion of healthy eating, physical activity and mental health and wellbeing among our children. Cullina N.S with the support of Health Promoting Schools has used many tools and strategies to combat unhealthy eating, increase physical activity levels and promote healthy minds. In January of 2016 we were presented with an Active Flag in celebration of our promotion of an active school. We became aware of the Active School process through our connection with Health Promoting Schools

The promotion of a healthy mind is of great importance also. This entails the prevention of bullying, the promotion of healthy friendships and the guidance on how to problem solve in daily

life. We are using the programmes '*Zippys Friends'* and '*Friends for Life'* in our school at present. We became aware of them through our correspondence with the 'Health Promotion Schools' office in Killarney. Many of the teachers in our school have attended workshops and have been trained in both programmes. We also hold a '*Friendship Week'* and an '*Anti-Bullying Week'* annually in our school. Special attention is given to the topics of friendship, emotions and the prevention of bullying in every class during these weeks. Workshops have also been held for parents on preventing cyber-bullying and the parents association have had a play-therapist speak on building children's self-confidence etc. We have also purchased a '*friendship stop'* for our schoolyard so that any child without a playmate can wait at it and a member of their class will know they have no one to play with. We recently purchased signs for our schoolyard with friendship slogans on them and these are in the playground. We obtained them after hearing about them in a Health Promoting Schools co-ordinators meeting.

In conclusion, Health Promotion is vital to the running of a happy and healthy school. We have seen our pupils gain lifelong skills through the implementation of Health Promotion in our school. It has made us as a school more conscious of our health and more aware of how health is maintained**.**

Further Information:

Kerry Health Promotion Offices

Tralee Office
HPO's: Michelle Foley
Kerry Community Services Building, Rathass,
Tralee. Tel: 066 7195617 Email: michelle.foley@hse.ie

Killarney Office
HPO's: Máire O' Leary & Anne Culloty
Block 1, St. Colmbanus Hospital, Killarney,
Tel: 064 6670763 Email: hp.killarney@hse.ie

Aistear: Early Childhood Curriculum (0-6 years)

Firies National School

Description:

Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. (0-6years) is the national programme, initiated in 2009 by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), for supporting children's learning through play. *Aistear* means "*Journey*" and the staff and children at Firies N.S. have been on this journey since 2010.

In our school we have a policy of early intervention and team-teaching in the Junior Infant classrooms. Through Aistear we aim to:

(a) Strengthen our partnership with parents.
(b) Use one hour per day to nurture the children's social and emotional competence through teacher facilitated play with planned learning objectives.
(c) Use Aistear plenary sessions to foster an atmosphere in the classroom that is preventative and awareness raising in relation to our "*no blame*" anti-bullying approach.

Principles:

- All Junior Infant children have an opportunity to engage in *Aistear* playtime.
- The school has a policy of team-teaching and role modelling of pro-social behaviours during infant playtime.
- Parents are actively encouraged to join us in the classroom through a series of information meetings.
- All play at *Aistear* time has learning objectives and play experiences are carefully structured to facilitate children's academic as well as social-emotional development.
- Equal weighting is given to the emotional and cognitive aspects of playtime
- Pro-social behaviour is modelled, noticed and reinforced at every opportunity.
- The "*no-blame*" approach to our anti-bullying policy permeates and informs the adult – child, adult – adult and child –child interactions on a daily basis.

Programme in Action: Firies N.S.

Aistear guidelines recommend forging partnerships and involving parents in their own children's learning. Since 2010 we have been inviting a cohort of parents to join us daily on a rota basis to support small groups of children at a series of five play stations. The children play for 45 minutes each session. Depending on the play theme for the week, different elements of the primary school curriculum are incorporated and delivered during *Aistear* time. We follow the tidy up with a very important plenary session where each group gets to tell the rest of the class what they have worked on, how well the session has gone, what they have found challenging and what they would do differently next time.

It is a time for reflection, higher order thinking and consolidation of learning. It is also an opportunity to promote positive social interactions, cognitive interactions and generate curiosity. It is an opportunity to tease out some of the normal inter-peer difficulties that arise naturally when children play together. We use concepts like "*kind words*" and "*kind thoughts*" and actively name and praise the types of pro-social behaviours we observe during each session with a view to their wider use throughout the day.

The presence of two adults facilitates a natural voicing out loud of issues that may have emerged and how well each group managed or struggled with a particular problem/situation. Shared group problem-solving allows ideas to be voiced and responded to in a safe and nurturing environment. The teachers act as role models, modelling skills, strategies, behaviours, thinking, questioning, and feelings.

Play is children's approach to life. It is the work that children do. Children learn by being with each other, sharing ideas and making decisions. They learn by taking on different roles and responsibilities. When children play with children and/or adults, opportunities arise to make friends, negotiate with others and to develop their communication skills.

The adults focus on aspects of friendship, kindness and respect and rarely need to mention bullying. Because bullying is a habit established habit early (by age 6 according to research- http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/) we are attempting to proactively prevent it from arising. We do not explicitly mentioning it as an issue - to prolong the innocence of the children, and instead reinforce clear positive messages.

The whole *Aistear* experience at Firies N.S. has been an enriching one for the teachers, the children and the parents alike. We have found new creative ways of working together, relationships have been strengthened and the most striking result has been the increase in the children's self-confidence, oral language, problem-solving skills and pro-social behaviour. Feedback from our last Whole School Evaluation (WSE) was extremely positive and supportive in relation to the incorporation of *Aistear* into our infant programme.

In the kitchen at Firies restaurant.

Addressing letters at the Post Office.

Serving lunch to customers at the Firies Restaurant

A visit to the Firies dentist

Further Information:

www.ncca.ie

The Incredible Years Programmes

(Lower & Upper Primary)

Moyderwell Primary School

Description

The '*Incredible Years'* Programme is a series of interlocking, evidence-based programmes. It is a programme for parents, children, and teachers, supported by over 30 years of research. The goal is to prevent and treat young children's behaviour problems and promote their social, emotional, and academic competence through a positive no-blame approach, based on positive relationship-building and reward. *Incredible Years* increases the social competence of children, and reduces challenging and aggressive behaviours at home and in school. The Parenting and Teacher Training Programmes two help parents and teachers work in a collaborative way. The collaborative approach used at home and at school is built on an understanding of the following 'Guidance Pyramid'

It's about setting limits through achievable targets, with reward; addressing misbehaviour in a firm but kind way, encouraging reciprocal, collaborative play, learning to manoeuver the social world

through awareness of good social and emotional behaviour in others.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GHrg1WgCAo.

The '*Incredible Years Dina Dinosaur Programme'* is a Therapy Programme for children with particular Social and Emotional Difficulties. It's a social problem-solving programme centred on two life-size school-age puppets called Molly and Wally. These child-sized puppets can be used to model appropriate feelings and social skills related to the children in a small group therapy session. The teachers develops bio sketches for their puppets that include the puppet's name, age, family living situation, pets, special interests, and special difficulties or worries. As children become familiar with the puppets personalities they begin to develop empathy for them and identify with them as peers with relatable difficulties and successes. Teachers use these puppets to talk about feelings and problems and share some possible solutions as well as to role-play solutions to difficult situations

'*Dina Dinosaur School Therapy Programme'*, the '*Parents Training Programme*' and the '*Teacher Training Programme'* ensures that the same concepts are able to mesh together in the child's mind, thus giving everybody skills to be able to communicate with each other/ live together/play together/work together. Aggression decreases and the children's social and emotional skills increase….sharing, turn taking, listening, helping words, helping actions, waiting, following directions, showing kindness, noticing kindness, noticing others sharing/listening/turn-taking/working quietly.

Principles:

The focus of our training was on strengthening teachers' classroom management strategies, and promoting children's prosocial behaviour, school readiness, and reducing children's classroom aggression and non-cooperation with peers and teachers. The programme also helped teachers work with parents to support their school involvement and promote consistency between home

and school. Children with more demanding behaviour act-outs are still welcomed to help *'Molly and Wally'* solve their problems in the Dina Dinosaur Room.

Teacher classroom management skills were significantly improved following training. Teachers used more positive classroom management strategies and fewer negative classroom management strategies. All teachers trained in '*Incredible Years'* found that they were able to easily transfer the skills learned to their class. Classrooms were calmer, more pleasant places in which to work and learn. Teachers were more confident in their ability to manage their classrooms effectively and to deal with disruptive behaviour. Target-charts for improvement were introduced, which worked in tandem with the achievement of a predetermined award. Overall, teacher well-being was enhanced. A greater focus on developing positive teacher-pupil relationships was evident. Teachers reported improved child adjustment in school and were more active in encouraging prosocial and positive child development. Generally teachers found that the '*incredible years'* strategies were of considerable practical use. The training provided teachers with an opportunity for professional development and augmented reflective teaching practices, which are still ongoing. Positive classrooms help develop positive children. Positive homes help develop positive children. The magic happens when both school and home are '*singing from the same book'*. This remains the challenge for all partners in the education of the child.

Programme in Action: Moyderwell Primary School

The Impact of Parents Programme working with School

- **Child A**, is in senior infants (new to school) and presented with little/no emotional self-regulation. There were frequent outbursts in class with no apparent triggers. There was also an inability to relate to peers and the child could only cope with the whole class setting for limited periods of time. This child had lived in direct provision and the family moved to Tralee and secured accommodation. The previous school reported that the best way to deal with misbehaviour was to bring parent into the working classroom. The child's father eventually agreed to take-part in I.Y programme. Through the class teacher's hard work and implementation of I.Y strategies, the child taking part in Dina school and the parent following through with Incredible Years Parenting Skills, noticeable improvements in behaviour were noted. The child now begins the day with a member of staff for a 'Settling' time before whole-class interaction. The child is responding well to reward charts with

significantly fewer outbursts. The holistic nature of the *Incredible Years* Programme intervention is key to its success.

- **Child B,** is a junior infant pupil. Mom was very concerned about the child's behaviour and wanted to referral to the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The school suggested trying the *Incredible Years* Programme in THE interim as a support. Both parents attended the Parenting programme, albeit reluctantly. The child again attended the Dina Dinosaur In-School Therapy and class teacher implemented the Incredible Years class management strategies. Parents reported being able to take child on a trip to Dublin and that the family enjoyed the experience. This had never happened before because of misbehaviour, but more importantly the parents reflected on how **they had changed their approach**. The child's parents were now using a lot more praise and positive re-enforcement with their child. They also acknowledged the benefits of holistic approach, shared between school and home, of the *Incredible Years* Programme.

Further Information:

www.incredibleyear.org.

- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) can provide teacher classroom management training to schools. See www.education.ie/ NEPS for more information.
- Incredible Years parents' programmes may be available through Family Resource Centres.

Zippy's Friends Programme

(First & Second Class)

Fossa N.S.

Description

'*Zippy's Friends'* is a mental health and emotional wellbeing programme for young children. The fundamental concept behind the programme is to teach young children how to cope with everyday difficulties, to identify and talk about their feelings and to explore ways of dealing with them. It also encourages children to help other people with their problems.

Zippy's Friends is a whole class programme for schools specifically developed for use with young children of all abilities. In Ireland the programme is currently offered to 1st and 2nd class teachers. It usually runs for 24 weeks, with one 45-minute session each week.

The programme is built around a set of six stories. Zippy is a stick insect and his friends are a group of young children, and the stories show them confronting issues that are familiar to young children - friendship, communication, feeling lonely, bullying, dealing with change and loss, and making a new start. Each story is illustrated by brightly coloured pictures and a range of child-centred activities. Schools participating in the HSE Irish Network of Health Promoting Schools may access training in this programme.

Criteria

- Teachers must attend Zippy's Training which is provided by HSE Health Promotion. (The school is provided with a resource pack from the HSE on completion of the training).
- The programme consists of 6 modules delivered over 24 weeks for 45 minutes per week
- The programme is delivered to the whole class by the teacher.

Principles of the *Zippy's Friends* Programme

1. Children choose their own solutions.
2. Positive skills are reinforced.
3. Repetition and continuity are essential for learning.
4. Abilities are developed in different settings.
5. Children participate.
6. Children help each other.
7. Children evaluate their own success.
8. Teachers are open to listening to children.

Programme in Action - Fossa National School

Fossa National School first began this programme in the school year 2012-2013. It proved to be such a success that it has been continued each year since and has grown from strength to strength.

The *Zippy's Friends* mental health and wellbeing programme, supported by the HSE has proved to be an invaluable asset to the school. Initially the programme required extra time, until both staff and students became more familiar with it. The programme was incorporated into the curriculum through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE.). The benefit was and continues to be acknowledged as the majority of teachers note that the students are becoming more confident in themselves and in their dealings with others. The programme has been part of the process of achieving a happier and more productive work ethos in the school.

Communication with parents on the aims and the content of the programme has aided openness and transparency of this programme within the school. Parents are delighted that their children are partaking in this programme. Most parents are conscious of the fact that mental health and wellbeing should be everyone's concern, and is critical to success in school and life and it involves the whole community.

Further Information: Kerry Health Promotion Offices

Tralee Office
HPO's: Michelle Foley
Kerry Community Services Building, Rathass,
Tralee. Tel: 066 7195617 Email: michelle.foley@hse.ie

Killarney Office
HPO's: Máire O' Leary & Anne Culloty
Block 1, St. Colmbanus Hospital, Killarney,
Tel: 064 6670763. Email: hp.killarney@hse.ie

FRIENDS for Life Programme

(Third to Sixth Class)

Holy Cross Mercy NS

Description

FRIENDS For Life is an Australian Programme which helps children, families and schools to develop resilience and positive life coping skills so that everyone can deal with whatever life throws their way. We piloted the *FRIENDS For Life* Programme as part of a national study of schools during the school year 2012-2013. Since then, *FRIENDS* has been central in the delivery of the SPHE Curriculum and our anti-bullying policy in the 5th & 6th Classes of Holy Cross Mercy School.

Through *FRIENDS For Life* we aim to:

(d) Empower children.
(e) Recognise, understand and accept our feelings.
(f) Reverse negative thinking and negative self-talk.
(g) Replace the above with helpful Green (Happy) thoughts.
(h) Look for the good in difficult situations.
(i) Use strategies from FRIENDS to deal with bullying from the inside out.
(j) Remind children about the importance of confidentiality.
(k) Begin each lesson on an uplifting note sharing through the "*Happy Thought Ball*"
(l) End each lesson with a relaxing & refreshing "*Mindful Moment*".

Criteria and Principles

- The *FRIENDS* Programme is covered in detail with the 5th Class.
- *FRIENDS* is an acronym for each element of the programme as follows:

F – ***Feelings***: Pupils learn to understand their own feelings and recognise them in their bodies. They accept that all feelings are normal and okay. They learn to empathise with the feelings of others.

R – ***Remember to Relax***: Pupils learn a variety of relaxing coping mechanisms like "Milkshake Breathing", "The Pizza Massage" and meditation exercises. These mindful moments can help them to make themselves and others feel good.

I – ***I Can Do It/I Can Try My Best***: In this unit the children are encouraged to avoid negative and unhelpful self-talk (RED Thoughts) and replace these instead with positive and helpful self-talk (GREEN Thoughts)

E- Exploring Solutions & Coping Step Plans: When faced with external/internal problems or challenges they come up with their own coping step plans. These plans are devised by breaking down the tasks into manageable chunks. The children identify their support network

N – ***Now Reward Yourself:*** Remember to reward yourself for trying hard, don't focus on perfection. Emphasis is on healthy rewards. (Petting a dog, going for a walk with a loved one, receiving a hug from a loved one)

D – ***Don't Forget to Practice***: Pupils are reminded to prepare for upcoming stressful situations by practicing their FRIENDS skills regularly and planning ahead to be as confident and brave as they can.

S – ***Smile*****:** Stay calm & talk to your support network.
Spend your time with special people who make you feel good and happy about yourself.

Programme in Action- Holy Cross Mercy

Each session began with a happy thought. The Happy Thought Ball (covered in stickers) was passed around our *FRIENDS* circle. Children are encouraged to share their happy thought of the week in return for a sticker. If they didn't want to share, they were allowed to pass. This took the pressure off of any anxious children who didn't want to share all the time. This set a relaxed tone for the session. We introduced the particular topic or part of the *FRIENDS* acronym for the session. The lessons included some quiet time, stories, poetry, group work, whole class discussion, music, artwork, drama, role play, co-operative games and team building exercises. Children were invited to share their own personal experiences and challenges as we worked

through recognising our feelings, behaviour, fear, goals & friendship. We helped each other to make our coping step plans to be used in difficult situations. We found this slotted very well into the SPHE curriculum. Emphasis was always put on trying something new and being confident & brave. Each session ended with a re-cap of the skills learned. The family activities were explained. To round off our special *FRIENDS* time we had a 5-10 minute mindful moment. These always involved relaxation, deep breathing, visualisation & unwinding. The children left the sessions feeling refreshed, confident & enthusiastic about their goals for the week. It is hoped by investing time in the *FRIENDS* Programme that children will use these coping skills going forward to their teenage years and into adulthood. *FRIENDS For Life* is truly for life! We as teachers have seen the positive effects this programme had on our pupils. We were privileged to see them blossom before our eyes facing new risks & challenges with bravery. They have regained control of their thoughts and feelings with the focus now on their own capabilities and the potential each one of them have through positive thinking, surrounding them with their own support network & being part of good support networks for each other. This is a central part of our school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Parental feedback in relation to *FRIENDS* has been really positive. They appreciated the home-school link created through the family activities. They were delighted to have time away from technology & bonding in a meaningful way as families.

Further Information:

- Training for schools is provided by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).
- General Information on the programme:

  www.friendsresilience.org.

- Presentation on NEPS' research on the implementation of Friends by Irish Primary teachers:

  http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/NEPS-Presentation-on-FRIENDS-for-Lifefor-NCSE-Conference.ppt

  Irish Primary and Post Primary teachers/principals' reflections of the FRIENDS programmes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDj1ny98hp0.

Conclusions

An Overall Approach to tackle bullying and promote anti-bullying prevention

From this small scale research by CYPSC in Kerry primary schools, anti-bullying programmes focus on the following principles that are core to intervention and prevention:

Connect

Focus on relationships, building friendships and social skills (for example, SPHE, *FRIENDS for Life, Zippy's Friends, Incredible Years*)

Protect

Promote safety and trustworthiness (Whole School Anti-bullying procedures, *Stay Safe* programme, '*No Blame'* and restorative practices approaches, HSP and SPHE)

Respect

Learn to treat people as would you would like to be treated (HPS, SPHE, Anti-bullying procedures, *FRIENDS for Life, Incredible Years, Zippy's Friends* and *Aistear*).

Bullying is a complex issue that requires prevention and intervention measures. There are good guidelines by the DES (2013) for schools, however, there is no one programme that is used to promote wellbeing and prevent bullying, however, in this report there is a CPR '*toolkit'* of programmes and practices that are used in some primary and post primary schools in Kerry to connect, protect and promote respect amongst CYP.

This toolkit will continued to be updated periodically with other examples of good practice in schools.