Schools of Sanctuary

All are Welcome, All Belong

PLANNING FOR SANCTUARY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to support schools in bringing their Schools of Sanctuary journey into teaching, learning and whole-school practice. It demonstrates how the principles of welcome, inclusion, participation and belonging can be embedded across the Primary Curriculum.

Schools of Sanctuary is not an additional curriculum initiative; rather, it is a whole-school framework that complements the Primary Curriculum Framework (2023) and supports schools in promoting inclusion, wellbeing, Global Citizenship Education, learner agency and a culture of belonging.

The Schools of Sanctuary programme is based on three core principles: **Learn, Action and Share**. Through these principles, schools create welcoming and inclusive communities where every child feels safe, valued and respected, while developing the knowledge, skills and values to become active, responsible and compassionate global citizens.

Your school's Schools of Sanctuary journey can inform both whole-school and curriculum planning, providing meaningful opportunities for children to explore identity, diversity, equality, human rights and social justice, while fostering empathy, critical thinking, respect for diversity and a strong sense of belonging within their school, community and the wider world.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- Primary schools can use Schools of Sanctuary to build on the principle of inclusive education and support integration across the school community.

- Schools play an important role in fostering inclusive, anti-racist learning environments where prejudice and discrimination are challenged, diversity is celebrated, and all children, families and communities experience a sense of belonging.
- Schools of Sanctuary can be embedded across all areas of the Primary Curriculum. Wellbeing, Social and Environmental Education, Arts Education, and Language, together with Aistear in the infant classes, provide rich opportunities for children to explore identity, belonging, diversity, human rights and active citizenship through meaningful learning experiences.
- The Primary Curriculum Framework recognises that every child is unique and brings diverse experiences, identities, languages, cultures, abilities and backgrounds to school. Schools of Sanctuary supports this vision by promoting learning environments where every child feels welcomed, included, respected and able to participate fully.
- To become a member school, we encourage schools to reflect on their current Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) practice by asking: What is already happening? What new ideas can be introduced? How can children get involved? How can we take a whole-school approach?
- Welcoming diversity, striving for inclusivity and promoting equality are at the heart of the Schools of Sanctuary programme. These values also underpin Global Citizenship Education by encouraging children to develop empathy, respect for human rights, critical thinking and a commitment to positive action.

GETTING INVOLVED

A School of Sanctuary undertakes a journey of learning, action and sharing where welcome is placed at the heart of the school's identity.

- A core element of the Schools of Sanctuary programme is supporting children to understand the importance of welcome, inclusion and belonging, while exploring how schools can create safe, inclusive environments for refugees, people seeking

international protection, migrant families, and all those experiencing exclusion or marginalisation.

- Another core element of Schools of Sanctuary is for schools to model and celebrate difference and diversity, striving to ensure that every child or young person respects the identities, cultures and values of others .

Becoming a School of Sanctuary involves a whole-school commitment to inclusion, belonging and participation, embedding welcoming practices across all aspects of school life.

Schools of Sanctuary can be meaningfully embedded across all curriculum areas through rich, integrated learning experiences. It supports schools in planning for Global Citizenship Education, Wellbeing, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and learner agency across the curriculum.

We understand the pressures in the classroom so we have created links across the following subjects to aid with planning and allowing for a cross-curricular approach.

KEY COMPETENCIES

The Sanctuary message aligns directly with the following elements of the Primary Curriculum Framework:

Being an Active Citizen

Schools of Sanctuary supports children to:

- Understand the rights, responsibilities and dignity of all people.
- Recognise prejudice, inequality and discrimination and explore ways to take positive action.
- Develop empathy, respect and a sense of responsibility within their school, community and the wider world.

Being an Active Learner

Schools of Sanctuary encourages children to:

- Explore questions about identity, belonging, diversity and inclusion through inquiry and discussion.
- Learn collaboratively by listening to and learning from the experiences of others.
- Reflect on their learning and take meaningful action to create a more welcoming and inclusive school.

Being a Communicator

Schools of Sanctuary enables children to:

- Share their ideas, experiences and perspectives with confidence and respect.
- Listen actively to others and appreciate different cultures, languages and viewpoints.
- Use a variety of ways to communicate messages of welcome, inclusion and belonging.

Being Creative

Schools of Sanctuary provides opportunities for children to:

- Express ideas about identity, culture and belonging through creative experiences.
- Use drama, music, art, storytelling and other creative approaches to celebrate diversity.
- Imagine positive ways to build inclusive and welcoming communities.

Being a Digital Learner

Schools of Sanctuary supports children to:

- Use digital technologies safely and responsibly to learn about global issues.
- Access and evaluate information from a range of reliable sources.
- Use digital technologies to share messages of welcome, inclusion and active citizenship.

Being Mathematical

Schools of Sanctuary encourages children to:

- Explore data and information about communities, migration and global issues.
- Use mathematical thinking to interpret information, identify patterns and solve real-world problems.
- Recognise how mathematics can help us understand our diverse and interconnected world.

Being Well

Schools of Sanctuary promotes children's wellbeing by helping them to:

- Develop a strong sense of identity, belonging and self-worth.
- Build positive, respectful and inclusive relationships with others.
- Foster empathy, resilience and compassion in a safe, welcoming and supportive school environment.

CURRICULUM AREAS OF THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The Sanctuary message aligns directly with the following subject areas across the curriculum

Wellbeing

Wellbeing supports children's social, emotional, and physical development now and into the future.

- It enables children to develop self-awareness and knowledge, build life skills, and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school, their community, and wider society.
- To develop these skills and dispositions, it is important for children to develop their own ethical understanding of the world.
- Values education encourages reflection on choices, exploration of opportunities, and commitment to responsibilities.
- Children will be encouraged to value what it means to be an active citizen.
- Children are encouraged to develop empathy, respect for diversity, positive relationships and a strong sense of belonging, all of which are central to Schools of Sanctuary.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a key component of the Wellbeing curriculum area. The aims of social, personal and health education are:

- To promote children's personal development and wellbeing.
- To foster in children a sense of care and respect for themselves and others, and an appreciation of the dignity of every person.
- To enable children to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
- To develop in children a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- To enable children to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

Social and Environmental Education

- It supports children's awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the world through learning about the rich diversity of peoples: their experiences, cultures, religions, beliefs, and environments in different times, places, and circumstances.
- This is made more meaningful and empowering through children's active identification, exploration and investigation of local, national, and global challenges. This provides meaningful opportunities for children to explore migration, sustainability, equality, human rights and global interdependence through the lens of Global Citizenship Education.

Arts Education

- Arts education enables children to explore alternative ways of communicating with others.
- Arts education is integral to primary education in helping to promote thinking, imagination and sensitivity, and arts activities can be a focus for social and cultural development and enjoyment in school.

- To enable children to see and to solve problems creatively through imaginative thinking, encouraging individuality and enterprise.
- To value children's confidence and self-esteem through self-expression.
- To foster an appreciation of the arts in local, regional, national and global contexts, both past and present.

Primary Language

- It empowers children to develop their thinking, expression, reflection, critique and empathy, and it supports the development of self-efficacy, identity and full participation in society.
- For children with English as an Additional Language (EAL), partnerships between the primary school and their homes are critical for planning for and supporting their language learning; developing their first school language while maintaining their home language.
- Children are encouraged to value multilingualism and recognise home languages as an important part of identity, belonging and inclusion.
- To broaden children's understanding of the world through a rich variety of language experiences and through fostering an awareness and appreciation of other languages and cultures in an enriching learning environment.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education encourages children to explore, investigate, design and solve problems through inquiry and collaboration.
- Schools of Sanctuary provides meaningful opportunities for children to investigate global issues such as migration, sustainability, equality and environmental responsibility through questioning, critical thinking and evidence-based learning.

- Children are encouraged to use creativity, problem-solving and digital technologies to understand real-world challenges and explore ways to contribute positively to their communities and the wider world.

Patron's Programme / Religious Education

- To develop a sense of identity and support their connection to their community and to wider society.
- To prepare children to become caring members of a multicultural society.
- To raise awareness in children of issues of human rights, justice and equality in society.
- To develop in children compassion and care for their community.
- To provide children with a range of dispositions and skills to enable them to participate in and contribute to the democratic process and become informed and active citizens.

SANCTUARY OUTCOMES

Children From Refugee, Migrant And International Protection Backgrounds

● Increased sense of inclusion and belonging.

● Increased confidence to make friends, speak to others, share their stories and make social connections in the school.

● Increased opportunities to participate in decision-making processes, helping children feel engaged, valued and heard.

All Children

● Increased understanding of identity, belonging, human rights and active global citizenship.

● Developed intercultural skills including awareness of other languages, religions and food.

● Increased empathy and compassion.

- Improved understanding of world geography, culture and politics.
- Increased understanding of the value of advocacy and the importance of equality at all levels of life.

Parents/Carers:

- Increased confidence for participation in school, and better understanding of school in Ireland.
- Increased sense of belonging within the school community.
- More skills and confidence to help their own children's education.
- Have opportunities to share their cultures, languages, experiences and skills.

School Community

- Increased knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a refugee or a person seeking international protection, and of the International Protection System and International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS).
- Increased understanding of the important role of the school in providing welcome, being a safe space, providing information and enabling integration through friendship.
- Schools can show evidence of their commitment to ensuring a welcoming atmosphere where children feel safe, welcomed, included and valued.
- Schools find positive and effective ways of engaging in advocacy and promoting equality and inclusion for under-represented groups.
- Schools will discover a fresh and deeper appreciation of the diversity of cultures and languages in their school community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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