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## Geography Policy V 1.0

### Rationale

This policy was devised in the school year 2023/2024. The initial draft was put forward for whole staff consideration and input. The plan was also circulated to the parents/guardians of St. Mary's Primary School for consideration and comment. Geography is one of the Social and Environmental Education subjects (S.E.S.E.) and S.E.S.E. provides opportunities for the child to explore and investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, scientific, historical, social and cultural environment in which they live.

### Vision

We seek to assist the children in St. Mary's Primary School in achieving their individual potential and as a member of a local, national, and international community. Our school celebrates social, cultural, and national diversities and we are committed to providing the children with enriched opportunities to develop a respect and interest in their Human Environments, their Natural Environments, and their man-made Environments. We promote learning activities that foster the pupil's curiosity and enjoyment so that they will develop a lasting interest in Geography.

### Aims:

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for Geography:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships
- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth

- To develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence
- To develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with the development of graphicacy (mapping and other non-verbal, non-numerical forms of data presentation)
- To encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness
- To encourage the development of caring attitudes and responsible behaviour towards the environment, and involvement in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems
- To develop an understanding of appropriate geographical concepts.

**The aims above will be linked and integrated with the aims of S.E.S.E which are:**

- To enable the child to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes so as to develop an informed and critical understanding of social, environmental and scientific issues.
- To reinforce and stimulate curiosity and imagination about local and wider environments.
- To enable the child to play a responsible role as an individual, as a family member, and as member of local, regional, national, European, and global communities.
- To foster an understanding of, and concern for, the interdependence of all humans, all living things and the earth on which we live.
- To foster in the child a sense of responsibility for the long-term care of the environment and a commitment to promote the sustainable use of the earth's resources through his/her personal lifestyle and participation in collective environmental decision making.
- To cultivate humane and responsible attitudes and an appreciation of the world in accordance with beliefs and values.

## Strands and Strand Units

Teachers will familiarise themselves with the strands and strand units relevant to the class they are teaching.

- Infant Classes pp.17-27 (Geography Curriculum 1999)
- First and second classes pp.29-43
- Third and Fourth classes pp.45-61
- Fifth and Sixth classes pp 63-84.

We have ensured that there is continuity and progression from class to class. Please see Appendix 1.

## Skills and Concepts Development

The geographical skills and concepts below will be developed as work is completed on the strands and strand units of the curriculum outlined in Appendix 1

### Junior Infants and Senior Infants:

<b>A sense of place and space</b>	-A sense of place
	-A sense of space
<b>Maps, globes, and graphical skills</b>	-Picturing places
<b>Geographical investigation skills</b>	-Questioning
	-Observing
	-Predicting
	-Investigating and experimenting
	-Estimating and measuring
	-Analysing
	-Recording and communicating

**1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class:**

<b>A sense of place and space</b>	-A sense of place
	-A sense of space
<b>Maps, globes, and graphical skills</b>	-Using pictures, maps and globes
<b>Geographical investigation skills</b>	-Questioning
	-Observing
	-Predicting
	-Investigating and experimenting
	-Estimating and measuring
	-Analysing
	-Recording and communicating

**5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class:**

<b>A sense of place and space</b>	-A sense of place
	-A sense of space
<b>Maps, globes, and graphical skills</b>	-Using pictures, maps and globes
	-Maps and globes
<b>Geographical investigation skills</b>	-Questioning
	-Observing

	-Predicting
	-Investigating and experimenting
	-Estimating and measuring
	-Analysing
	-Recording and communicating
	-Evaluating

### **Approaches & Methodologies**

- Active learning
- Oral presentations
- Photographs
- Pair and group work.
- Problem solving
- Individual work on chosen topics or projects
- Developing skills through content
- Open investigations
- Teacher – directed approach.
- Exemplars
- Use of the local environment
- Junior Achievement Programme
- I.C.T.
- Use of maps, globes and atlases
- Interviews and surveys

### **Assessment**

A variety of approaches will be used in assessing the children's progress in Geography. Assessment of and for learning will take place. Children will be encouraged to self-assess where appropriate.

The following assessment tools will be used:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher questioning
- Teacher designed tests and tasks.
- Work samples, portfolios, and projects.
- Curriculum profiles
- Concept mapping

## **Linkage and Integration**

### **Linkage:**

Within the Geography curriculum there are opportunities to link one strand with another. Strands and strand units also provide opportunities for linkage within lessons. Teachers may choose to use a thematic approach for other linkage possibilities.

### **Integration:**

Opportunities for the use of an integrated approach exist at all levels of the Geography curriculum. Many elements from the history, science and geography curriculum will be explored concurrently with the teacher choosing appropriate activities when doing so. Geography will also be integrated with other subjects including English, S.P.H.E, Gaeilge, Music, Drama Art and Religious Education. The integration of Geography within S.E.S.E and with other subjects will be planned and organised by the class teacher who will take into account factors such as time, structure of topic work, continuity and progression, curriculum requirements, skills and concepts.

## **Assessment and Record Keeping**

Through assessment, teachers will seek to assess the child's knowledge and understanding of environmental matters, the acquisition of geographical skills and the development of attitudes.

Children's progress will be assessed using the following methods:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests.
- Work samples, portfolios and projects.
- Curriculum profiles

## **Differentiation**

Teachers will differentiate within their class for all children to ensure that objectives are attainable for every child. We believe in equality of participation and access. The Geography programme in St. Mary's Primary School is inclusive of everyone and every effort will be made to meet the needs of all the children in the school. We view the Geography programme as playing a key role in ensuring equality of opportunity for all children.

This will be achieved by teachers varying the pace, content and methodologies to ensure learning for all pupils. This will be recorded in the teacher's yearly notes. The requirements of children with additional needs will be taken into account when planning class lessons and related activities. It is imperative that children with additional needs are given additional opportunities to develop the skills to read maps and to develop a strong sense of place, space and people. Additional language support will be given to children who are just beginning to learn the English language so that they may participate fully in this curricular area that provides so many

opportunities for such children to celebrate and share their sense of place and people.

## **Organisational Planning**

### **Timetable**

Our teachers work in keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum for S.E.S.E., i.e. a minimum of two and a quarter hour in Infant years, with three hours for First to Sixth class per week. On occasion, time will be blocked as appropriate.

### **Health and Safety**

As per Health and Safety Statement and Supervision Policy, school field trips must have adequate supervision and content and skill development to be recorded by the class teacher in notes. Trips are arranged in consultation with the Principal. No child should ever be brought on a school outing without permission from parents. (Permission for school outings should be sought using Google Forms, Google Forms to be shared with the Principal).

### **Individual Teachers Planning and Reporting**

Teachers write long-term plans for each S.E.S.E. subject using the Curriculum guidelines. We also produce a fortnightly plan that will include Geography. The Cuntas Míósúil (monthly progress reports) are sent to: [cuntasmiosuil@stmarysmullingar.ie](mailto:cuntasmiosuil@stmarysmullingar.ie) and are stored in the relevant year folder. Teachers will base their yearly and short-term plan on the approaches set out in the whole school plan for Geography.

### **Community Links/People**

Local people with expertise in S.E.S.E. topics related to Geography will be invited into our school to share their experiences and knowledge with the pupils.

### **Implementation of the Primary Curriculum Framework 2025/2026**

The Primary Curriculum Framework was launched by the Minister on the 9th of March 2023. This Framework is for all primary and special schools and will guide teachers and school leaders in their work to enhance learning, teaching, and assessment for all children. In the Primary Curriculum Framework, the curricular area of Geography will be included under the curriculum area- Social and Environmental Education. Stage 1-Junior and Senior Infants monthly allocation for Social and Environmental Education is 6 hours. Stage 2- First- and Second-class monthly allocation for Social and Environmental Education is 9 hours. Stage 3 and 4- Third to Sixth class monthly allocation for Social and Environmental Education is 8 hours.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Each teacher has responsibility for implementing this school plan within their classroom. The principal is responsible for ensuring all teachers are aware of the plan and use it within their classrooms. Each class Geography plan must include an up-to-date list of resources being used.

The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by:

The Board of Management of St. Mary's Primary School

- The Principal of St. Mary's Primary School
- The parents/guardians of St. Mary's Primary School
- The Post Holder for SESE
- The teachers and staff of St Mary's Primary School

**Ratification and Review:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 3rd Dec. 2024 and will be reviewed every three years.

Signed Barbara O'Leary Chairperson BOM

*Barbara M Weigh 3/12/24*

Date 3/12/24



## Appendix 1

### Strands and Strand Units

#### Junior and Senior Infants

Stands	Strand Units	Junior Infants	Senior Infants
<p><b>Human Environments</b></p>	<p>-Living in the local community -People and places in other areas</p>	<p>-Compare and contrast school in a different part of the world (Sweden)</p> <p>-Recognise rooms around the house. Identify different homes. -Talk about 'my home.' -Discuss activities inside and outside the home.</p> <p>-Explore different foods from around the world – project work in groups.</p> <p>-Jobs in the community. - Matching their tools to their job. -Roles of people who serve local community.</p> <p>-Buildings and places where people work.</p> <p>-Simple journeys. Drawing two things you pass on the journey from your house to school. -Santa's journey.</p> <p>Daily work of a farmer. -Things you might find on a farm; animals/buildings/equipment</p> <p>-Identify and discuss the role of a vet -Explore their role in the wider community -How to look after a pet/animal life -Features of summer weather.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and discuss his/her membership of the family, school and local community</li> <li>• Identify and discuss the roles of people who serve the local community postal worker, garda, shop worker, doctor, nurse, refuse worker, road worker, lorry driver, bus driver, teacher</li> <li>• Recognise that people live in homes</li> <li>• describe areas within the home</li> <li>• associate activities with areas within the home and outside the home</li> <li>• acquire some awareness of different types of homes in the locality flat, cottage, house, caravan, trailer</li> <li>• make simple drawings of home, immediate surroundings and journeys to and from home</li> <li>• begin to appreciate the need for shelter for a family</li> <li>• Become aware of, discuss and appreciate the people in the school community classmates, other pupils, teachers, caretaker, secretary</li> <li>• describe areas within the school</li> <li>• associate activities with areas within the school and outside the school</li> <li>• make simple drawings of school, immediate surroundings and journeys to and from School</li> <li>• Discuss the work of people in the</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Clothes we wear in summer.</li> <li>-Traveling to another country.</li> <li>-Features of travel and journeys.</li> <li>-Mapping our travels.</li> <li>-Looking after the school grounds – litter picking</li> </ul>	<p>home, at school, in the local community, in towns or countryside nearby and in wider environments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become aware of some buildings and places where people work, especially those in the locality home, school and immediate environs</li> <li>shops, farms, offices, parks</li> <li>• Become aware of and discuss play spaces at home at school in the locality</li> <li>• Suggest ways in which these places may be kept clean and safe</li> <li>• Make simple drawings of these places, immediate surroundings and journeys to and from these places</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Environments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The local natural environment</li> <li>-Weather</li> <li>-Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Nature walk collecting leaves, stones from the local environment.</li> <li>-Discuss autumn leaves and weather, sun moon and stars.</li> <li>-Identify events that occur in the day and night</li> </ul> <p>Seasonal changes on the farm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Record weather observations for a week</li> </ul>	
<b>Environmental awareness and care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Caring for my locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Autumn nature walk</li> <li>-Spring nature walk</li> <li>Spring Walk: Observing aspects of the local natural environment (plant and animal life)</li> <li>-Record observations using pictures</li> <li>-Observe compost bin- how can we contribute to caring for the environment?</li> </ul>	

### 1st and 2nd class

Stands	Strand Units	1st class	2nd class
<b>Human Environments</b>	-Living in the local community -People and places in other areas	Living in the local community:  My family and community Homes and shelter People at work People at play  People and places in other areas:	-Discussing important features in the local area  - Exploring satellite and map view of Mullingar, discussing differences and similarities.  -Making simple drawings and sketches of important buildings in the locality.  Writing about Mullingar  Building a house
<b>Natural Environments</b>	-The local natural environment -Weather -Planet Earth in space	The local natural environment  Weather  Planet Earth in space	-Identify and explore aspects of some major features in local environments – name, location, appearance, flora and fauna, river, lake, hedgerow and grassland  -Record and communicate observations  -Record simple journeys to and from play spaces (the park)  • Water cycle  Local habitat study
<b>Environmental awareness and care</b>	-Caring for my locality	Caring for my locality	<b>The story of waste</b>  -Learning about using the bins in the classroom correctly  -Keeping classroom, school and play spaces clean, tidy and safe  -Caring for clothes, toys and other possessions

### 3rd and 4th class

Stands	Strand Units	3rd class	4th class
<b>Human Environments</b>	-People living and working in the local area -People living and working in a contrasting part of	-Settlements homes and other buildings. -County, regional and national centres (Westmeath)	-Types of Transport - People at work - Exploring countries based on ancient cultures such as Italy, Egypt, Denmark,

	Ireland -People and other lands -County, regional and national centres	-people living and working in the local area (Mullingar Fire Station) -People and other lands (Spain/ Peru).	Norway and Sweden- to include culture, food, architecture, landmarks and traditions
<b>Natural Environments</b>	-The local natural environment -Land.rivers and seas of my county -Rocks and soils -Weather, climate and atmosphere -Planet Earth in space	-The local natural environment (lakes of Westmeath) -Weather, Climate and atmosphere. -Lands rivers and seas of my county -Rocks and Soils -Plant Earth in Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weather</li> <li>- Planet Earth in Space</li> <li>- Rivers and Lakes of Ireland</li> <li>- Mountain Ranges of Ireland</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental awareness and care</b>	-Environmental awareness -Caring for the environment	-examine a number of ways in which local and other environments could be improved or enhanced -realise that there is a personal and community responsibility for taking care of and conserving environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caring for our locality</li> <li>- Recycling</li> <li>- Climate Change and prevention</li> </ul>

#### 5th and 6th class

Stands	Strand Units	5th class	6th class
<b>Human Environments</b>	-People living and working in the local area -People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland -People and other lands -Trade and developmental issues	-County, Regional and National Centres (The European Union, EU and their capitals, features of the capital cities of the European Union, Counties and proveniences.) -People living and working in the local area (homelessness, weatherings & pollution, -People and other lands (Mexico and El Dia d Los Muertos, France, America) -People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland. (• Homes and houses in our local area • Effects of weathering on buildings • Town vs county	Forestry - effects of deforestation, local forest, work of a forester, life of the forest  Italy Australia  Where commodities are produced Fair and unfair trade Causes and effects of the famine Relief agencies Refugees and world community
<b>Natural Environments</b>	-The local natural environment -Land.rivers and seas of	- Planet Earth in Space (the Great Bear and Pole Star, Orion.)	The Burren The Wicklow mountains Powerscourt waterfall

	<p>Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Physical features of Europe and the world</li> <li>-Rocks and soils</li> <li>-Weather, climate and atmosphere</li> <li>-Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Weather, Climate &amp; Atmosphere (Winter v Summer- January v July)</li> <li>-The local natural environment (Cliffs of Moher, Giant's Causeway, Macgillicuddy Reeks)</li> <li>-Land, Rivers and seas of Ireland</li> <li>-Physical features of Europe and the world</li> <li>-Weather, climate and atmosphere</li> <li>-Rocks and soils (• Label structure of the Earth</li> <li>• Cause and effect of volcanoes and earthquakes)</li> </ul>	<p>Headlands, bays and islands</p> <p>Mountain, rivers, seas of Europe and others from the rest of the world</p> <p>Explore Weather patterns over the year</p> <p>Study of weather maps</p> <p>Climate in a contrasting region</p> <p>Develop of atmospheric features</p> <p>Positions of the sun</p> <p>Importance of sunlight</p> <p>Study of a planet and the solar system</p> <p>Solstice, tide, equinox</p> <p>Daylight during the seasons</p>
<p><b>Environmental awareness and care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Environmental awareness</li> <li>-Caring for the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Environmental Awareness (Earth's renewable and non-renewable resources)</li> </ul>	<p>Study of a global environmental issue</p> <p>Improving and enhancing local and other environments</p>