



St. Patrick's NS Strangsmills

# Drama Plan

Revised: 2025

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# Drama Plan

## Introductory Statement and Rationale

### (a) Introductory Statement

The staff of St Patrick's NS formulated this plan following in-service training in 2006/2007. It was reviewed in 2012, 2021 and again now in 2025. The plan was developed in consultation and collaboration with the teaching staff to ensure a balanced approach to Drama throughout the whole school. Our school recognises that Drama is part of a balanced curriculum. A collaborative approach was adopted when writing this plan to ensure that all staff have a shared sense of ownership in the planning process and the finished plan. This ensures a consistent development of the Drama curriculum throughout the whole school.

### (b) Rationale

In St. Patrick's N.S., we believe that drama provides children with ways to explore their own feelings, how they relate to the world around them and to develop new concepts. Language plays an important role in drama. The drama curriculum contributes to developing the child's confidence in English and Irish. Opportunities for imaginative play will allow children to be creative and problem-solve everyday events. Aspects of Drama have been taught in our school for many years through many methodologies and strategies. Cuirtear an bhéim ar múineadh an Gaeilge trí mheán na drámaíochta sa scoil seo. Baintear úsáid as an drámaíocht mar mhodh múinte ó na naíonáin go rang a sé. Our school fully endorses the Primary Curriculum in relation to Drama.

## Vision and Aims

### (a) Vision

In line with the mission statement of St. Patrick's N.S., we are committed to the holistic development of each child. We hope, through drama, to help the child develop confidence and enable each child to explore their emotions and engage with their environment.

- We aim through this plan, drawn up in accordance with the Drama curriculum, to set out our approach to the teaching and learning of Drama. This plan will form the basis for teachers' long and short-term planning. It will also inform new or temporary teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in our school.

- We are committed to fostering the strand and three strand units of the Drama curriculum appropriate to the needs and age level of the pupils.
- We envisage that when the children's differing abilities, intrinsic talents and varying styles are considered, Drama can facilitate learning in many areas of the curriculum.

### **(b) Aims**

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

- to enable the child to become Drama literate
- to enable the child to create a permanent bridge between make-believe play and the art form of theatre
- to develop the child's ability to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the drama world in order to promote questing, empowering and empathetic skills
- to enable the child to develop the social skills necessary to engage openly, honestly and playfully with others
- to enable the child to co-operate and communicate with others in solving problems in the drama and through the Drama
- to enable the child to understand the structures and modes of drama and how they create links between play, thought and life
- to enable the child to acquire this knowledge of Drama through the active exploration of themes drawn from life (past and present), whether they have their source in other curriculum areas or in general areas relevant to the child's life
- to enable the child to begin the process of translating a knowledge of Drama into the active exploration of life themes from Drama literature, leading to the appreciation of world Drama culture
- to form the criteria with which to evaluate the Drama texts, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed

## **Curriculum Planning**

### **1. Strands and Strand Units**

We would hope that all children would have a balanced curriculum in all Strands and Strand Units of the Drama curriculum. Drama has one strand at each class level – Drama to explore feelings knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.

The strand is divided into three strand units

- Exploring and Making Drama
- Reflecting on Drama
- Co-operating and communicating in making Drama.

The objectives for each strand unit are detailed in the tables below.

| <b>Exploring and Making Drama</b>         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Junior and Senior Infants                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop the instinct for make-believe play into Drama</li> <li>• develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action</li> <li>• experience how the use of space and objects can help to create the reality of the make-believe world</li> <li>• experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action</li> <li>• develop awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the Dramatic action</li> <li>• develop awareness of tension in the Drama</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                                                                                            |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in Drama</li> <li>• use his/her emerging awareness of the differences in people in order to begin to develop an understanding of the relationship between role and character</li> <li>• experience how context is built and a Drama reality created through the use of space and objects</li> <li>• experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action</li> <li>• develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the Dramatic action</li> <li>• begin to see how tension adds to Drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants</li> </ul> |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enter into the fictional Dramatic context with the same spontaneity</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                           | <p>and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the relationship between role and character and develop the ability to hold on to either role or character for as long as the Dramatic activity requires</li> <li>• discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and in signifying Dramatic themes</li> <li>• explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action</li> <li>• begin, as a member of a group, to include in Drama activity the elements of tension and suspense</li> <li>• begin the process of using script as a pre-text</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional Dramatic context</li> <li>• extend playing in role and in character to include the ability to accept and maintain a brief that has been decided on by either the teacher, the group or himself/herself</li> <li>• discover how the use of space and objects helps in building the context and in signifying the Drama theme</li> <li>• explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action</li> <li>• become adept at implementing the 'playing rules' that maintain focus in Dramatic action</li> <li>• help to plan Dramatic activity to include the particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme being explored</li> <li>• distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy, fantasy</li> <li>• become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which script becomes action</li> </ul> |

| <b>Reflecting on Drama</b>                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Junior and Senior Infants                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop the ability to reflect on the action as it progresses</li> <li>• experience the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> <li>• share insights gained while experiencing the Drama</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use reflection on a particular Dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action</li> <li>• experience, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> <li>• share insights while experiencing the Drama or insights that arise out of the Drama</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                    |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use reflection on and evaluation of a particular Dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action</li> <li>• learn, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> <li>• use the sharing of insights arising out of Dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people</li> </ul>                                                            |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect on a particular Dramatic action in order to create possible alternative courses for the action that will reflect more closely the life patterns and issues being examined</li> <li>• learn, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> <li>• use the sharing of insights arising out of Dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people</li> </ul> |

| <b>Co-operating and Communicating in Making Drama</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Junior and Senior Infants                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> </ul> |

|                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup><br>classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made</li> <li>• re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work</li> </ul>                                                                                   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup><br>classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made</li> <li>• enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the Drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work</li> </ul> |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup><br>classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made</li> <li>• enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the Drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work</li> </ul> |

The school recognises that the strand units and the content objectives for Drama are interlinked and therefore we encourage all teachers at each class level to plan for all of the objectives.

## **2. Approaches and Methodologies**

Belief is central to all drama and should be characterised by a willingness to believe in the drama itself, sincerity in playing roles and characters, a willingness to accept the fictional consequences of drama and a willingness to explore. Teachers will focus on the building of belief when beginning a new drama activity.

‘Drama to explore feeling, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding’ will be an important strand in informing the content choice for drama activities.

The content for Drama will come from life experience. It will be from something that the children have experienced, something that they have read, something that emerged in another subject area, a worry or concern that the teacher might have or something generally that the teacher wants them to explore.

Teachers will carefully select a fictional lens or their chosen content. A character or story will be selected that the children will easily believe in, the content of which will allow for the realisation of the content to be explored.

Elements are used organically through drama. Belief will be built as roles/ characters develop. Action, place and time will be developed as the Drama is framed in its fictional lens. The element of tension is the one which teacher’s will have to think about. Tension will often have to be injected e.g. be adding a mysterious character/secret/ surprise/ problem/ tension of time or urgency/ limitations of space/ temptation of a dare or a challenge/ tension of inappropriate behaviour.

In this school we recognise the usefulness of Drama strategies. Below are some suitable strategies for across the class levels. This is not an exhaustive list, rather a suggestion. Teachers have the freedom to introduce other strategies that they might find useful for their own particular class or for a particular dramatic context.

### **Still Image/ Freeze Frame**

Groups use their bodies to create an image of a moment(s) in the Drama e.g. the moment the bears see Goldilocks asleep in the bed. Older groups may depict a more complex or abstract idea ('winning', 'fear'). Similarly, an individual can act as a sculptor to another student or group.

### **Thought-Tracking**

This technique involves the teacher freezing the action and tapping her hand on the shoulder of some student (or students) in the still image or Drama. This student-in-role then reveals publicly her private thoughts/reactions at that specific moment e.g. one of Christopher Columbus' sailor's thoughts when they finally sight land.

### **Mime**

The class mime action as the teacher describes what a character or occupation or as she narrates a story. Older students may develop more abstract mime sequences.

### **Narration**

The teacher can narrate in or out of the lesson text. Narration has many uses. These include: providing a link or commentary between Drama moments; creating an atmosphere; initiating a drama; moving the action on; create tension. Similarly, the participants might report back in story form, providing narrative to accompany or bridge action - 'We came to the river and saw that the bridge had been destroyed, so we....'

### **Hot-Seating**

This involves students questioning a character (teacher-in-role or student-in-role). The students who are questioning the character may be working as themselves or in role as journalists. Hot-seating can be used to start a Drama or improvisation may be frozen at any point so as in-role characters are released to answer questions often formally seated facing questioners.

### **Caption-Making and Headlines**

This strategy can be used at any point of action. Individuals or groups are asked to give a title or caption or newspaper headlines/slogans to a piece of Drama. They summarize their own scene or another group's scene. When used with still images several headlines can be given to the same still image in order to highlight points of view and bias.

### **Conscience Alley**

A character who has a difficult decision to reach, walks down a corridor of people who, one after another from either side, give conflicting advice about a given situation. This can be done in role by other characters in the lesson and by voices in the character's head played by other members

of the group. It is possible to develop this convention by allowing the character to engage in conversation with the voices and thus challenge the advice being offered.

### **Defining Space**

Available furniture, objects, clothing are used to represent the 'ship', 'castle', 'bears' house' where the Drama is happening. They may also represent the physical scale of someone (Daddy Bear) or something (the beanstalk) in the drama. Also, they may be used to fix the position or proximity of rooms, houses, places where events have taken place.

### **Sound tracking**

Sound may be used in different ways in a drama; narration can be devised to accompany some mime; animal sounds, human sounds, environmental sounds can be devised to accompany a moment of action. Voices or instruments are used to create a mood.

### **Living Picture**

The teacher asks the group to bring their improvisation alive for a few moments. He/ She does not necessarily add tension by briefing some students. The living picture, however, may develop into an improvisation – the difference being that 'living picture' has no particular tension in it whereas the improvisation usually features some tension.

### **Briefing**

Before a whole group improvisation, the teacher takes aside an individual or a number of individuals, and gives him/them a set of instructions that create tension. This will drive the Drama forward. The teacher may choose to give another set of further conflicting instructions to different individual/individuals. As the children develop their drama skills, they will begin to offer their own briefs. Briefing is a key strategy in creating **tension** in drama. The teacher can build tension by suggesting any of the following – 'You have a secret....'; 'Something strange and mysterious has happened', 'You are planning a surprise', 'You are in a hurry', 'You are all crowded together', 'You have an unusual object' or through a challenge.

### **Small-Group Play-Making**

Small group and whole group improvisation constitute the heart of the drama curriculum. The children make up the story as they go along. This story usually explores a character(s) in a dilemma. Small groups plan, prepare, sequence and present their improvisations to show their understanding of that moment in the drama. Briefing (see above) helps to drive the improvisation forward. The teacher can greatly enhance the drama by adopting a role herself.

### **Flashback/ Flash forward**

The children select and depict a moment through such strategies as still image, mime and narration or improvisation. They can then move backwards and forwards in time creating other such moments in time in the drama. This enables the children to reflect on the characters and their dilemmas.

### **Ritual**

Ritual in Drama is a stylized activity that shows a special occasion or some daily routine that shows that a character is part of a community. Some rituals in Drama include: a meal, saying goodbye, the night before a battle, praying.

### **Teacher-in-Role**

The teacher takes on a role in the drama. This allows the teacher to do a number of things. He/ She can manage the learning opportunities within the drama by adopting a suitable role in order to excite interest, control the action, invite involvement, provoke tension, challenge superficial thinking, create choices and ambiguity, develop the narrative, create possibilities for the group to interact in role.

### **Role play**

The children take on a character from a Drama or story and act out the role of this person. They may also represent in actions the thoughts or feelings of these characters. This methodology is frequently used especially during Aistear.

### **Small world**

Small word play, is mainly used in infants. It is an ideal way to facilitate the extensions of a child's vocabulary. Through story-telling and acting out scenarios, children are able to cultivate their imaginations and to develop the language with which to express their imaginative ideas. This type of play offers the children the chance to be in control, to create and manage their environment and make things happen in the way they choose. Their imaginary worlds give them access to a safe context in which to explore their feelings and to try out different possibilities and to explore ideas and scenarios that are usually beyond their everyday experiences.

## **3. Children with Different Needs**

In keeping with the ethos of our school, each individual is helped to develop to his/her potential. This will be achieved by teachers varying the level and pace to suit individual needs and to ensure learning and success for every child. The work assigned to the children will be carried out at an appropriate pace within a specific time range.

#### **4. Linkage and Integration**

Linkage, within the Drama curriculum, e.g. the strands and strand units to be taught through an integrated approach with elements and conventions of Drama and integration with other curricular areas.

Drama is suitable to be integrated with Gaeilge, Music, Art, English, History, PE, SPHE, Religion and Aistear.

#### **5. Assessment and Record Keeping**

Assessment in Drama is concerned with children's acquisition of knowledge and the balance of that with the development of the elements of Drama. Consequently, a broad range of assessment tools and approaches are necessary. The following are among the assessment tools found useful:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks
- Class discussion
- Work samples
- Self-assessment

Teachers are encouraged to use teacher observation when assessing drama work in class. The table below outlines how the teacher might begin to observe the development of the elements in class.

| <b>Elements in Drama</b> | <b>How the elements might look ...</b>                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Belief                   | How can the child be encouraged to enter into the Drama with full belief? <i>Evident in the child's trust in and ease with make-believe play</i>               |
| Role and Character       | How will the child move from role playing to entering into character? <i>Taking on the characteristics, attributes and thought process of another person</i>   |
| Action                   | What is happening in the drama? <i>Action in Drama comes from the interaction between characters and situations in which they find themselves in the Drama</i> |
| Place                    | Where is the action taking place? How is real place and space used to represent this?                                                                          |

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Time                                    | When is the action taking place? <i>The fictional past and fictional future will have a bearing on the Drama</i>                                                                                                     |
| Tension                                 | How will tension drive forward the action of the Drama?<br><i>The characters will be faced with choices, desires and uncertainties. Such tension causes characters to make decisions and moves the Drama forward</i> |
| Significance                            | What is the relevance of the Drama to the child's life? In what way can the child relate to the Drama?                                                                                                               |
| Genre<br>(Fifth and Sixth Classes only) | Is the Drama naturalistic, absurd, tragic, comic or fantasy?<br><i>Genre is the style of the Drama</i>                                                                                                               |

#### **6. Equality of Participation and Access**

All children in our school participate in Drama and are given equal opportunities in class. Equal opportunities will be given to all children regardless of gender, ethnic background, and socio-economic status across all strands and activities.

#### **Organisational Planning**

#### **7. Timetable**

Infant classes will have a minimum of 50 minutes of Drama per week and learning through play facilitates many of the elements of drama. 1st to 6th classes will have a minimum of one hour per week of drama. This time allocation may be broken down at the discretion of the teacher. Teacher may also choose to block times for Drama at particular times of the year. Timetables will all record the time allocation for Drama.

#### **8. Resources**

Teachers have access to an Interactive smartboard where they can access a wide range of resources online. Each teacher can use the various stories/poetry, puppets, objects at each class level as stimuli for Drama. All curricular topics can be used as a basis for Drama. There is a

list of the drama resources available in the school. We currently also use the 'Dabbledoo' programme to support the teaching and learning of the Drama curriculum.

### **Drama Resources in St. Patrick's NS**

*See appendix 1.*

Books on drama are available in the central storage area and online resources such as 'Dabbledoo' may be used as a resource within the school also.

### **9. Health and Safety**

Teachers will at all times be mindful of the schools Health and Safety Policy. Children will be encouraged to safeguard their own wellbeing by following classroom and out of class rules.

### **10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting**

Long Term planning by teachers' covers all strands and strand units. Each teacher plans on a fortnightly basis for drama where further detail of content will be outlined. Each teacher completes a Cuntas Míosuile using the standard school format.

### **11. Staff Development**

Staff needs will be assessed regularly and relevant organisations, local community groups and the Waterford and Kilkenny Education Centres will be accessed to provide ongoing training as the need arises. Details of courses relevant to Drama will be emailed to staff.

### **12. Parental Involvement**

Assessment information and teacher observations are made available to parents at parent/teacher meetings and through the summer reports. In conjunction with school policy, teachers are available by appointment to discuss any drama related concerns with parents. Any local volunteers or parents with skills in this area would be welcome to offer support to the school in enhancing the drama curriculum.

### **13. Community Links**

The Christmas nativity is attended by members of the community every year and is enjoyed by all. The school will attend plays in the local area where feasible. Occasionally a Drama teacher

from the area may assist the teaching of Drama within the school or support teachers in their teaching of the subject.

### **Success Criteria**

The success of this school plan will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- teacher's preparation has been based on this plan.
- procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed.

The success of this plan in achieving the aims will be assessed by:

- teacher feedback.
- children's feedback.
- inspector's suggestions and reports.
- Board of management feedback.
- parental feedback.

### **Implementation**

#### **(a) Roles and Responsibilities**

The plan will be implemented and developed by the teachers in their own classes. We will monitor the implementation/ progress of the Drama curriculum by formal and informal discussions amongst the teachers and by encouraging and accepting feedback on its implementation.

#### **(b) Timeframe**

Following ratification from the Board of Management, this policy will be implemented from the school year 2025/2026.

### **Review**

This plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Drama curriculum in St. Patrick's NS. Teachers, pupils, parents, BOM and DES inspector may be involved in any future review. The policy will be reviewed again following the implementation of the revised Drama curriculum.

## **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on June 24<sup>th</sup> 2025.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson BOM

## **Appendix 1**

### **Christmas plays available in the school:**

- Countdown to Christmas
- Children of the World
- The Nativity
- Celebrate Christmas – Easy Dramas, Speeches and Recitations for Children
- Practical Ways to Christmas Plays
- Easy Ways to Seasonal Plays
- Easy Ways to Christmas Plays
- Hosanna Rock
- The Twelve Plays of Christmas
- DIY Nativity
- Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh
- Are We Nearly There Yet?
- The Very Hopeless Camel
- Lights, Camel, Action!
- Stable Manners
- Simply Nativity
- The Advent Light
- This is Christmas