

DRAMA POLICY

Introduction and Rationale

This policy is formulated to provide a coherent approach to the teaching of Drama across the whole school. It is envisaged that this plan will benefit the teaching and learning of Drama in Enable Ireland Sandymount School.

Drama and education affirm the notion that everything can be thought of in a variety of ways. This is a particularly important concept in the teaching of students with moderate and severe and profound learning difficulties. Drama activities can attempt to provide our students with several different entry points to the learning area.

Drama can provide our students with an outlet for self-expression and helps the development of imagination and artistic awareness. The Primary Curriculum Framework outlines the importance of unlocking and promoting creativity to benefit self-esteem, motivation and overall development (p.9, 2023). Drama can increase social awareness, particularly in role play while also enhancing mental awareness, fluency of speech and vocalisation, self-knowledge, self-respect, self-discipline and most importantly self-confidence and self-esteem. Involvement in drama activities can improve co-ordination and physical fitness. Drama may also have a therapeutic effect through helping children to cope with their real-life problems. It can provide social and moral training and helps young people mature, emotionally preparing them for the challenges of adult life.

Our Vision

The development of self-esteem and self-confidence plays a major role in all drama activities. Through drama our students experience life skills needed for real life situations. We attempt to promote empathy with the ideas, attitudes and feelings of others through dramatic activity.

It is our intention to foster interest in drama as an art form, instilling an interest in the theatre, we plan to provide learning opportunities which contribute to our students' articulation and communication skills in extending vocabulary and expressive ability, using a switch (e.g. for sounds effects) and providing opportunity for social interaction. The physical dimension of drama also assists non-verbal expression. In developing concepts of drama, elements such as place and time, spatial awareness and more accurate perceptions of time relationships are cultivated. Drama and music activities are a focus for social and cultural development and enjoyment throughout the school.

Our Aims

The aims of our drama curriculum are to foster personal and social outcomes such as:

- Promoting self-expression
- Building self-esteem, and confidence
- Enhancing creativity
- Encouraging co-operation
- To use drama as an active learning strategy in the teaching of other subjects and to value drama as an art form.

The drama curriculum should enable our student to:



- Improve sensory awareness through experiencing a wide range of costumes and props
- Increase attention and concentration
- Participate and be part of a group
- Develop self-esteem and self-confidence
- Increase listening skills
- Develop communication and social interaction skills
- Explore a range of human feelings and begin to come to terms with their feelings
- Explore choices and moral dilemmas
- Achieve a sense of responsibility and confidence in decision making in the real world
- Play alongside peers and learn to compromise in order to sustain and develop the activity
- Expand, enrich and prompt their use of language in a stimulated real life situations where language use arises out of a genuine need to communicate
- Develop their ability to work in groups trusting and relying on each other.
- Appreciate and respond positively to the part played by others in the drama
- Enjoy and appreciate being part of an audience

Curriculum Planning

The Drama Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Severe and Profound General Learning Disabilities consist of a single strand, 'Drama to explore feelings knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding', which is then divided across three strand units:

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

There are eight elements through which the strand is explored:

- Impulse to play
- Role and character
- Using space and objects to deepen the drama context
- Function and the effect of drama tension
- Connection between events in the drama (understanding narrative)
- Reviewing an action
- Appreciating drama performance
- Contributing to a drama performance

There are also three prerequisites for making drama:

- Content
- The fictional lens
- Creating a safe environment

Due to the complex nature of the disabilities of our students, it is crucial for teachers to choose material which caters for their individual needs. Teachers may also refer to The Drama Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Moderate General Learning Disabilities as needed.



Ideas for Drama

- Movement work to stimulate imagination; encourage co-operation, awareness, turn taking and sharing.
 - Nursery rhymes
 - Simple mime exercises – eating, drinking, emotions
 - Improvisation – e.g. going on a bus journey
 - Developing scripts
 - Performing – different roles played
 - Preparing for performance – responsibility
 - Speech rhymes to improve tongue and lip flexibility
 - Group work e.g. choral speaking
 - Story telling/sensory story – acting out different parts/using a switch for sound effects
 - Games: Kim’s Game, Musical Statues
 - Sensory songs and poems with props e.g. Julia Donaldson songs, poems based on the theme
 - Lego to build own scenes

Approaches and Methodologies

- Talk and discussion
- Active learning
- Collaborative learning
- Problem solving
- Skills through content
- Use of the environment

Every teacher can devise their own style and methods in the teaching of drama. Good planning is required to structure the drama experience, while careful selection of relevant and age appropriate material is essential.

Students with different needs

Many students require structures help in making connections and developing ideas. Concrete materials are needed to consolidate learning. It is essential that a multi-sensory approach is used to support students’ transition from reality to the fictional environment. Appropriate musical, visual, tactile and olfactory cues should be used to evoke the atmosphere of the scene and situation.

Linkage and Integration

There is a strong natural linkage between the three strand units. Each lesson can include aspects of exploring and making, reflection, co-operation and communicating in making drama.

Drama is an invaluable method of actively exploring other subject areas. It has personal understanding and communication skills at its core and is a valuable tool in the teaching of both language and numeracy skills.

Drama helps students to understand the people and the world around them and the social world in which they live. It is an essential element to the teaching of SPHE, Geography, History and Science.



Assessment and Record Keeping

- Teacher Observation
- Student feedback and engagement
- Photographic records

Equality of Participation and Access

All students have equal access to all drama activities.

Organisational Planning

It is the responsibility of individual teachers to plan for drama and for it be included in their timetables, allowing opportunities for integration with other subjects. Teachers may wish to create collaborative learning opportunities through drama with other classes.

Individual teachers' planning and reporting

Teachers will include music in their fortnightly/monthly plans and reports, noting integration opportunities where applicable.

Each teacher should plan to:

- Give as wide and as rich a drama experience as possible
- Achieve a balance between activity based on child's general experience and drama arising from an integrated approach to other curriculum areas.

Resources

Resource books to assist in the facilitation of drama are available in the Resource section of the library. Useful books include Flo Longhorn's Sensory Drama for Very Special People.

Health and Safety

Drama activities may take place in the classroom, however when space is needed to allow for movement, it is advisable that they are carried out in the school hall or general purpose area.

Staff Development

Teachers work closely together and share their talents and strengths. Information on courses will be circulated as soon as they come into the School. The school also has access to a drama teacher who is available for advice and support.

Parental Involvement

Families and friends are encouraged and invited to visit the school for performances in both drama and music. Photos are sent home for discussion and display. Students are encouraged to bring in souvenirs and photos of drama experiences they have had in their personal lives.



Community Links

Classes are encouraged to attend theatre performances off site, while we endeavour to create drama experiences in school by means of visiting performers and teachers.

Success criteria

Engagement and enjoyment of drama experience by all. We will use staff observation and parental and pupil feedback as our benchmark for success.

Review and Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed:



Sé Goulding
Chairperson of Board of Management



Jennifer Doyle
Principal

Date: 17 April 2024

