



# **St. Joseph's Boys' School**

## **Curriculum Policy for Drama**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introductory Statement

This Whole School Drama Policy outlines the teaching and learning of Drama in St. Joseph's B.N.S. The plan is for the information of teachers, school staff, the Board of Management, the Department of Education and Skills and other interested partners in the school community. Throughout this policy, Drama terminology is used in line with the Primary School Curriculum. For clarity and consistency, definitions of key terms are provided in Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms.

## 1.2 Rationale

Drama helps pupils to explore different roles, characters and ideas in a safe, imaginative way. It supports their emotional, social, language and creative development, while building empathy, confidence and teamwork. This plan was developed for the following reasons:

- To benefit the teaching and learning of Drama in our school.
- To provide a record of our decisions regarding Drama.
- To draw up a whole school plan for Drama
- To guide teachers in their individual planning for Drama.

# 2. Vision and Aims

## (a) Vision

St. Joseph's B.N.S recognises that Drama is an important part of a balanced curriculum that supports the development of the whole child. Through Drama, we aim to support pupils' creative, emotional, intellectual and cultural development.

## (b) Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for Drama as outlined in the Drama curriculum:

- 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.

### 3. Curriculum Planning

#### 3.1 Strands and Strand Units

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 and strand unit are detailed in the tables below:

<b>Exploring and Making Drama</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	<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> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> and 4 <sup>th</sup> class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop their ability to enter fully into a fictional dramatic context.</li> <li>• develop the ability to stay in role or in character for as long as required.</li> <li>• experience how space and objects can create context and signify dramatic themes.</li> <li>• explore how the fictional past and desired future influence the present dramatic action.</li> <li>• become aware of the rules that maintain dramatic action.</li> <li>• include the elements of tension and suspense into the drama activity.</li> <li>• begin to use script as pre-text.</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enter appropriately and with facility into the fictional dramatic context.</li> <li>• extend role and character to accept an already agreed brief from teacher or group or self.</li> <li>• discover for themselves how space and objects builds context and signifies dramatic themes.</li> <li>• explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future 5.</li> <li>• influence the present dramatic action</li> <li>• implement the rules that maintain focus in dramatic action.</li> <li>• plan dramatic action to include particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme explored.</li> <li>• become comfortable with script and how it becomes action.</li> <li>• distinguish between different genres, such as comedy, tragedy and fantasy.</li> </ul>

**Reflecting on Drama**

1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	<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> <li>• develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people.</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflecting on the dramatic action to create alternative courses of action and outcomes that reflect more closely life patterns.</li> <li>• learning, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience.</li> <li>• developing the ability to draw conclusions and hypothesise about life and people through drama.</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflecting on the dramatic action to create alternative courses of action and outcomes that reflect more closely life patterns and issues being examined.</li> <li>• learning through drama the relationship between story, theme and life experience.</li> <li>• developing the ability to draw conclusions and hypothesise about life and people through drama.</li> </ul>

**Co-operating and Communicating in Making Drama**

1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	<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>
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3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing the ability in and out of role to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama.</li> <li>• developing fictional relationships with the other characters as the drama text is being made.</li> <li>• re-enacting for others a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work.</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing the ability in and out of role to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama.</li> <li>• developing fictional relationships with other characters as the drama text is being made.</li> <li>• enacting spontaneously for others a scene from the drama and sharing a scene already made in simultaneous small group work.</li> </ul>

### **3.2 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.

The strand ‘Drama to explore feeling, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding’ will be important for teachers in this school in informing the content that they choose for Drama activities.

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 for their chosen content. A character or story will be selected that the children will easily believe in, whose context will allow for the realisation of the content to be explored.

Stimuli such as the following will be used in our school as starting points for the creation of a Drama. These are in keeping with the Drama activities as outlined in the Teacher Guidelines:

- Story
- Poems
- Newspaper Captions
- Pictures
- Painting
- Photographs
- Objects

The suggested uses of these stimuli are outlined in **Appendix 1** at the end of this document.

Elements are used organically through the 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 teachers will have to think about. Tension will often have to be injected e.g., by 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 is a table showing some suitable strategies for the class level. 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.

Class Level	Suggested strategies
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	Defining the Space, Mimed Narration, Teacher in Role, Whole Group Improvisation, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Paired Improvisation, Improvisation in threes, Hot seating.
3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> class	Defining the Space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group Improvisation, Ritual, Flashback/flash forward.
5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> class	Defining the Space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group

	Improvisation, Hot seating, Ritual, Flashback/flash-forward
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An explanation of each strategy is contained in the **Appendix 2**.

A safe environment is essential for successful drama work. In our school, each class may agree on a drama contract. To help build confidence and reinforce this safe environment, classes will take part in appropriate warm-up activities that develop the drama skills needed for their work. Where appropriate, discussion of the drama contract and the importance of a safe environment may take place before and after drama activities.

Reflection is of vital importance to the drama process. We will strive to ensure that reflection takes place at the appropriate points in the drama experience. We will also strive for a balance of methods of reflection using discussion, writing, visual arts, speaking, listening, doing and questioning.

A list of drama reflection methods is to be found in the **Appendix 3**.

### **3.3 Children with Special Educational Needs**

It is the policy of our school that all children in mainstream classes will participate in Drama activities. Drama activities will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the children in a particular class. This will be done by careful grouping of children, consciousness by the teacher of children’s abilities when giving briefs and by providing opportunities for different methods of reflection.

### **3.4 Linkage and Integration**

Linkage is inherent to the Drama process. All activities in Drama will include exploring and making Drama, reflecting on Drama and co-operating and communicating in making Drama.

Teachers are encouraged to integrate Drama with other subjects in a way that complements curriculum aims and objectives in both subjects. Integration is encouraged where it is natural and where children’s learning can be maximised.

### **3.5 Assessment and Record Keeping**

We recognise the importance of assessment and record keeping in the delivery of the Drama Curriculum. Much assessment will focus on the children's learning and how best to inform subsequent planning and teaching. Teachers will observe which areas children are achieving in and which areas need further development. Teachers should approach assessment in Drama by referring to the Curriculum Statement and examine children's engagement in terms of the three strand units as follows:

- Exploring and making drama – the extent to which the child enters into a role or a character and develops it in the context of the action.
- Reflecting on drama – the extent to which they use reflection to create alternative courses for the action or the quality of the insights they gain from the Drama experience.
- Co-operating and communicating in making drama – the child's ability to contribute to the shaping of the Drama, both individually and in group in-role and out-of-role discussion about the Drama as the action takes place.

Teacher observation and note taking will be central to all assessment in Drama. Other forms of assessment will include basic projects such as Christmas plays. Progress will be recorded and communicated in teachers' own notes, Cúntas Míósúil, end of year report and at parent teacher meetings.

## **4. Organisational Planning**

### **4.1 Timetable**

Each class is timetabled to have 9 hours Arts Education (Junior Infants- Second Class) and 8 hours(Third Class-Sixth Class) each month. Drama may also be integrated into the curriculum with other subjects and may be timetabled into the school day using the discretionary curriculum time available to teachers. This is based on the individual needs of a class. The allocation of time to drama will have two sources:

- in the time allocation given to Arts education.
- in its integration with other subjects and curriculum areas.

**Primary curriculum framework – weekly time allocations:**

- First and Second Class- 9 Hours Arts Education per month
- Third - Sixth Class- 8 Hours Arts Education per month

#### **4.2 Resources and Equipment**

We have a temporary stage for the hall that is constructed for Christmas concerts. A list of suggested websites suitable for the delivery of the Drama Curriculum has been compiled and is included in Appendix 5 of this document. Drama plays which have been purchased by the school are located in Mr. Russell's room. All basic props and some costumes are located in an external storeroom at the front of the school. Teachers are encouraged to teach their Drama lessons in their own classrooms. Drama may also be taught in the school hall (if available).

#### **4.3 Health and Safety**

As with all curricular areas work, the Drama Curriculum will maintain due care to our school's Health and Safety Policy. Care and attention will be given to the following:

- Hidden dangers if children are moving around the classroom.
- Storage facilities.
- Ventilation of the classrooms.
- Amount of space for children to sit or stand when engaged in Drama work.
- Particular care will be needed when children are setting up the Drama space.
- Appropriate volume levels when using audio equipment or when engaged in a very loud activity

#### **4.4 Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting**

Each teacher will be given a copy of this school plan and will be encouraged to refer to it when doing their own long term and short-term planning. In St. Joseph's B.N.S., teachers teaching the same level are encouraged to plan together. The elements of Drama should be carefully considered in the short-term planning of Drama. The Cúntas Míósúil is an indicator and record of work carried out in Drama.

#### **4.5 Staff Development**

Teachers have access to resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with Drama. We will continue to add to this in the coming years. Teachers will be informed about upcoming courses in the education centres and other bodies providing professional development through email.

#### **4.6 Parental Involvement**

Where appropriate, parents may be involved in Drama within the classroom. If a parent has particular expertise, they may be invited in to be part of the classroom process in Drama. Parents may be invited to presentations and performances, such as Christmas concerts.

#### **4.7 Community Links**

The local community including actors, locally based theatre professionals, local arts centres, education officers, theatre organisations, local Drama events and national support structures will all be considered as valuable resources in supporting the Drama Curriculum

## **5. Success Criteria**

How will we know that this plan has been implemented?

- Teachers' planning and recording in Cuntas Míosúil.
- Children's involvement in Drama activities

Has the plan achieved its aims? What are the indicators? (Refer to Aims). Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include:

- Teacher/parent feedback.
- Children's feedback.
- Inspectors' suggestions/reports.

## **6. Implementation**

### **6.1 Roles and Responsibilities**

Each teacher and the staff as a group will evaluate the progress in Drama by referring back to our set of stated objectives as outlined in this plan. Stephen Russell will co-ordinate the review of the plan in Drama, encouraging and accepting feedback on its implementation

**Appendix 1: Suggested uses of drama stimuli**

**Appendix 2: Glossary of terms**

**Appendix 3: Drama Reflections**

**Appendix 4: Resources and Suggested Drama Websites**

### **6.2 Timeframe**

This plan will be implemented with immediate effect.

## **7. Review**

### **7.1 Roles and Responsibilities**

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Drama curriculum in the school. Stephen Russell will be responsible for co-ordinating this review.

## **8. Ratification and Communication**

This policy is subject to review by B.O.M.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

This policy has been made available to school personnel through a central shared folder.

Parents can request a copy from the office.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary/Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1**

# **Suggested Uses of Drama Stimuli**

Great drama can arise from using an interesting and stimulating base for the work. Below are various ideas for what to use to stimulate a drama lesson or scheme of work:

### **Poems**

Search around for anything which has a central character or which highlights an issue strongly, or has good physical or comedy potential.

### **Pictures/Photographs**

Find pictures in books or magazines or bring in photographs from home to use as a starting point. Use old photographs to develop a drama lesson based on an era in history. Pictures from newspapers also work well. Keep an eye out for anything which is interesting, unusual or which sparks your imagination.

### **Newspaper Headlines**

These can be excellent for exploring a range of topical issues.

### **Objects**

Search your cupboards for something old, very interesting or unusual. Everyday objects can also have 'a story' built around them if approached in the right manner.

### **Quotations**

Any quote which sparks your imagination can be a good basis of a lesson-historical or current. Could also use seanfhocail as Gaeilge.

### **Music**

Any piece of music ranging from classical to pop can be used in sound-tracking or students may improvise what they feel is happening in the composition.

### **Stories**

Reading extracts and then exploring central characters, or 'what happens next', can instigate a variety of drama work. Encouraging the children to invent their own stories can also become the basis for drama work.

### **Fables, Bible Stories, Myths**

Highlight one small aspect or explore in full detail. Central characters can be used to highlight personal dilemmas. Themes and issues can be linked to the pupil's own experience.

### **Curriculum**

Subjects All subjects can provide a stimulus for Drama lessons.

## Appendix 2

# Glossary of Terms

Below are some suggested drama strategies that teachers can use:

### **Visualisation**

Imagine the setting in which the drama takes place or imagine what a character or a scene looks like.

### **Soundtracking**

Using sounds to accompany an action. Can use dialogue, voices or instruments to create a mood or paint a picture

### **Freezes /Still Images**

Using their own bodies, members of a group create an image of an event, idea or theme similar to a waxwork or still photograph. Still images can be brought to life through improvisation. Can be combined with flashbacks and flashforwards.

**Hot-Seating** A character is questioned by the group about his or her background, behaviour and motivation.

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

The teacher assumes a role in relation to the pupils. A role signifier is usually used to help the transition from teacher to the role.

### **Small Group Improvisation**

Small group plan, prepare and present improvisations as a means of expressing understanding of a situation, idea or experience.

### **Forum Theatre**

A situation or improvised piece is enacted by a small group whilst the rest of the group (including the teacher) observe. Action may be frozen at any time by both the actors and the observers. Observers may step in and take over roles or add to them. Proceedings may be controlled by the teacher if necessary. Excellent for assessment.

### **Mime to a narration**

The teacher reads aloud instructions or an extract to the class and children mime what is being said.

### **Briefing**

A suggestion or instruction may be given to one character, of which the other characters may or may not be unaware, which gives a new direction to the drama.

**Hidden Brief**

One group of pupils is given a piece of information, while the remainder of the group are given a conflicting piece of information or set of instructions. In this way when the two characters come together to play the scene, their objectives may clash dramatically.

**Conscience Alley**

The class are formed into two lines between which a character can walk. As (s)he walks down the 'alley' the lines form, individuals offer various opinions (as when listening to one's own conscience as a character tries to make a decision.

**Thought Tracking**

The private thoughts or reactions of a character are spoken publicly by the character. It might be used when the action is frozen or used in conjunction with still images.

**Role on the wall/role on the floor**

An important role is represented on paper through drawings or words identifying key facts and exploring attitudes, relationships, feelings, etc.

**Character profiling**

Similar to role on the wall – children fill out a profile sheet on a character including details such as name, age, likes, dislikes, eye colour.

**Writing in role**

Similar to character profiling, the children write about their character in the first person.

**Collective role**

A character is improvised by a group, any one of whom can speak as that character.

## Appendix 3

### Drama Reflections

- Reflecting on a particular dramatic action in order to create possible alternative courses for the action.

Questioning: What has happened, Where the situation is leading, How his/her character is developing?

- The relationship between story, theme and life experience.

Story is at the heart of the drama process and the themes the story explores are drawn from the child's general experience, from concepts, knowledge and experiences encountered in the various curriculum areas and from other contexts.

- Using insights arising out of dramatic action to draw conclusions about people and life.

As well as the children discussing the ideas, feelings and knowledge gained they can explore the ways in which drama has given them new insights into human attitudes and a greater understanding of people and life.

## Appendix 4

# Resources and Suggested Drama Websites

### General reading on Drama

[www.childdrama.com/mainframe.html](http://www.childdrama.com/mainframe.html)

[www.creativedrama.com](http://www.creativedrama.com)

[www.dramaineducation.com](http://www.dramaineducation.com)

[www.artsonthemove.co.uk](http://www.artsonthemove.co.uk)

[www.drama-education.com/site/](http://www.drama-education.com/site/)

### Planning for Drama

[www.pesp.ie](http://www.pesp.ie)

[www.sdps.ie](http://www.sdps.ie)

[www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)

### Drámaíocht agus an Ghaeilge

[www.pesp.ie](http://www.pesp.ie)

[www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie)

[www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie)

[www.tobar.ie](http://www.tobar.ie)

## **Drama Games**

[www.creativedrama.com/theatre.htm](http://www.creativedrama.com/theatre.htm)

[www.artsonthemove.co.uk](http://www.artsonthemove.co.uk)

[www.aspa.asn.au/projects](http://www.aspa.asn.au/projects)

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca)

[www.learnimprov.com](http://www.learnimprov.com)

## **Theatre in education companies**

[www.ark.ie](http://www.ark.ie)

[www.teamtheatre.ie](http://www.teamtheatre.ie)

[www.unicorntheatre.com](http://www.unicorntheatre.com)

[www.baboro.ie](http://www.baboro.ie)

[www.graffiti.ie](http://www.graffiti.ie)

[www.barnstorm.ie](http://www.barnstorm.ie)

## **Drama Resources in School**

- Christmas play scripts : *Brian the Christmas Tree, Hey Ewe!, Yo! Ho! Ho!, Santa's On Strike*
- Props and sets for the above plays.
- Some costumes for the above plays.
- Temporary stage in the hall
- Microphones and sound system for performances
- <https://dabbledoo.com/> access for all classes