



Drama Policy

January 2023



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Introduction

All staff of the North Dublin Muslim National School were involved in the creation of this policy. A wealth of training backgrounds has allowed us to share our knowledge and expertise working in conjunction with the 1999 Primary School Curriculum and keeping the Islamic ethos to the fore at all times. This policy was reviewed in in 2022/2023.

Rationale

In the North Dublin Muslim National School, we believe that drama provides pupils with ways to explore our variety of cultural heritages and new dimensions of our changing world. It also helps pupils to explore their own emotions and how they relate to the world around them. Language plays a critical role in drama. The drama curriculum contributes to developing the pupils' confidence in oral language.

Vision

In the North Dublin Muslim National School we are committed to the holistic development of each pupil in our care. We hope, through drama, to help the pupil develop in confidence and enable each pupil to explore their emotions and engage with their environment in a safe and creative manner.

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 questioning, 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 world drama culture.
- To form the criteria with which to evaluate the drama texts, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed.

Content

1. Strand and strand units:

There is only one strand in the drama curriculum; “drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding.” This strand is sub divided into three units:

- Exploring and making drama
- Reflecting on drama
- Co-operating and communicating in making drama

The objectives for the strand units as taught in each class are listed in appendix 1 of this document.

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. Each year the teacher will agree the ground rules with the class so as to ensure the conditions described above are met. Pupils will be taught to understand that when the drama lesson is ended so too is the world of make believe that is created. This allows pupils to explore a wide range of topics, some of which in other circumstances may be too sensitive to bring up.

Staff of North Dublin Muslim National School will always ensure that the content of the lessons are sensitive to the school ethos. In order to provide the pupils with an opportunity to explore the vast array of cultures present in our school, to express themselves in public, to experience being on stage and to grow in self-confidence, at intercultural week assemblies the pupils may be given an opportunity to perform a short piece of drama. In addition, each class has an option to perform a short drama at their monthly assembly. However, the main focus of our drama curriculum is process drama, where pupils will explore topics as wide as life itself. Exploring these topics involve pupils in such activities as:

- The spontaneous making of drama scenes (improvisation).
- Entering into other lives and situations.
- Engaging with life issues, knowledge and themes through drama.
- Honing and shaping drama scenes for the purpose of communicating them to others.
- Living through a story, making it up as they go along, solving problems in the real and fictional worlds, cooperating with others and pooling ideas.
- Thinking about and discussing the patterns in life so that the outcome of encounters and plots will reflect their perception of how life is or might be.

All of this will take place at a suitable level to the age of the child.

As drama is a holistic activity, it is difficult to separate from the form of the content, the affective from the cognitive and the social from the personal. Nevertheless, we believe that educational outcomes will derive from two main sources:

- The knowledge and insights gained from bringing the child’s experience to bear on the examination of a particular aspect of life through drama.
- The personal skills, social skills and drama skills that pupils gain when they enter effectively and create the world of drama.

The teacher acts as facilitator and demonstrator, pointing out possibilities of certain directions and avenues but leaving much of the responsibility for the exploration and its enjoyment to the child.

3. Pupils with different needs

Drama offers pupils with special needs an excellent opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the work of the class, to learn in a team and to excel. Teachers will ensure that these pupils are encouraged to engage fully with the topic being covered. In the North Dublin Muslim National School the approach to drama at all class levels is inclusive in nature. Differentiation is used as a mechanism to ensure that the needs of all pupils are being met. Special consideration will be given to pupils in the school's ASD class and the opportunities for integration into mainstream classes drama allows.

4. Linkage and integration

All three strand units are integrated throughout the curriculum. Drama is fundamentally about exploring and creating and drama is often linked to other subject areas particularly English, Gaeilge, History and SPHE, where skills can be further developed and practiced.

5. Assessment and record keeping

All work is always reflected on and reviewed and this can only be best achieved in an environment of co-operation and clear communication. Assessment will help the teacher to monitor pupil's learning and development. It provides the teacher with the means of identifying the needs of individual pupils and enables him/her to create drama contexts and to modify curriculum contents in order to facilitate effective learning. Most assessment is done in drama through teacher observation, in conjunction with monthly checklists (Appendix 2) appropriate to each class level.

6. Equality of participation and access

All pupils have equal access to drama in our school. Appropriate support will be given to pupils with English as an Additional Language. A strong emphasis is placed on differentiation to ensure that all pupils can access the content of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum.

7. Timetable

Drama is allocated thirty minutes per week from First to Sixth Class. This can be taught in weekly lessons, blocks, or through integration with other subjects. Thirty minutes per week for Infants can be integrated through other subjects such as English, Gaeilge, History, Aistear and SPHE.

8. Resources

We are developing a resource bank for drama in our school and each year we hope to add drama props and costumes. A range of books are available to aid teachers in teaching drama at all class levels.

9. Health and safety

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils is, as always of paramount concern. Pupils are never unaccompanied during drama, there is always a teacher present, and no pupil may attempt anything in drama which might pose a threat to his/her own health or that of someone else.

10. Individual teacher's planning and reporting

Each teacher should prepare a long-term plan in keeping with the drama policy. The teacher's short-term plan should reflect the contents therein.

11. Staff Development

Teachers work closely together and share their talents and strengths generously with each other—something which enriches practice throughout the school. The school also welcomes any PDST support which is available.

12. Parental and Community Links

Parents provide an appreciative audience for the short dramas which the pupils may perform on Intercultural Day or at other in-person or online events. Where suitable and possible, we will endeavor to create links with the local library, local schools and local drama groups.

Success criteria

This policy will be deemed successful when all classes enjoy drama and all pupils have the opportunity to explore their world in a safe creative manner. We believe that drama helps to create confident pupils and success is evident in the pupils themselves.

Roles and Responsibilities

The teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, parents and the local community.

Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management in January 2023 and is available to staff on the shared drive and to parents and others on the school website. This policy will be reviewed in 2026, or sooner if necessary.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: 23rd January 2023

Appendix 1

Overview for Junior Infants & Senior Infants

Strand	Strand Unit	Objectives. The child should be enabled to:
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding	1. Exploring and making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the instinct for make-believe play into drama • Develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action. • Experience how the use of space and objects can help to create the reality of the make believe world. • Experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action • Develop awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the dramatic action. • Develop awareness of tension in the drama
	2. Reflecting on drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability to reflect on the action as it progresses • Experience the relationship between story, theme and life experience. • Share insights gained while experiencing the drama.
	3. Co-operating and communicating in making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama. • Develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama.

Overview for First and Second Class

Strand	Strand Unit	Objectives. The child should be enabled to:
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding	1. Exploring and making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the ability at make believe to enter fully into participation in drama. • 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. • Experience how context is built and a drama reality created through the use of space and objects. • Experience how fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action. • Develop the ability to maintain the focus in the dramatic action. • Begin to see how tension adds to drama the suspense that ensures the interest of participants.
	2. Reflecting on drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reflection on a particular dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action. • Experience, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience. • Share insights while experiencing the drama or insights that arise out of the drama.
	3. Co-operating and communicating in making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama. • Develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama. • Develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small groups or whole class scenes as the drama text is being made. • Re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small- group work.

Overview for Third and Fourth Class

Strand	Strand Unit	Objectives. The child should be enabled to:
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding	1. Exploring and making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into the fictional dramatic context with the same spontaneity and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play. • 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. • Discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and in signifying dramatic themes. • Explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action. • Become aware of the rules that help maintain focus in the dramatic activity. • Begin, as a member of a group, to include in drama activity the elements of tension and suspense. • Begin the process of using script as a pre-text.
	2. Reflecting on drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reflection on and evaluation of a particular dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action. • Learn, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience. • Use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people.
	3. Co-operating and communicating in making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama. • Develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the drama. • Develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made. • 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.

Overview for Fifth and Sixth Class

Strand	Strand Unit	Objectives. The child should be enabled to:
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding	1. Exploring and making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional dramatic context. • 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 him/herself. • Discover how the use of space and objects helps in building context and in signifying the drama theme. • Explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action. • Become adept at implementing the 'playing rules' that maintain focus in dramatic action. • Help to plan dramatic activity to include particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme being explored. • Become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which scripts becomes action. • Distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy, fantasy.
	2. Reflecting on drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Learn, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience. • Use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people.
	3. Co-operating and communicating in making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the drama. • Develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama. • Develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole class scenes as the drama text is being made. • 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.

Appendix 2

Junior and Senior Infants Drama Assessment Checklist

Teacher: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____ Class: _____

Child's name	Can take on a role in a designated drama	Can work with props to enhance the drama	Can talk about what they liked/disliked about a drama lesson	Can suggest changes they could make in the future to improve the drama	Can work with other children in role	Can work with other children out of role

First and Second Class Drama Assessment Checklist

Teacher: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____ Class: _____

Child's name	Learning objective achieved	Followed teacher's instructions	Cooperated and communicated with others in/out role	Participated in lessons to the best of their ability	Contributed to decisions	Established links between the drama and real life personal experiences	Participated in a display of process drama

Third and Fourth Class Drama Assessment Checklist

Teacher: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____ Class: _____

Child's name	Does the child participate well in the drama lesson?	Does the child understand the rules of the drama contract?	Are the children able to engage and co-operate with each other in making drama?	Is the child able to work well using pair/group work?	Is the child able to engage well using methodologies such as teacher in role/narration/still images?	Can the child reflect on the drama created?	Can the child co-operate and communicate appropriately with others in and out of role?

Fifth and Sixth Class Drama Assessment Checklist

Teacher: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____ Class: _____

Child's name	Does the child go into role or character	Can the child use objects and resources appropriately	Can the child include an appropriate suspense or tension	Does the child become comfortable with a script in creating appropriate action	Can the child distinguish between various genres