



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme: Personal Care

Curriculum Area

Draft For Consultation



Introduction

The Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme (SCL2LP) consists of a range of curriculum areas, each designed on a modular basis. There are four curriculum areas at the heart of the SCL2LP: Numeracy; Communication and Literacy; Personal Care; and Electives.

Personal Care consists of one module. It is designed for a minimum of 60 hours of teaching time/class contact time over two years.

Module Title	Recommended time in hours
Personal Care	60

Rationale

Personal Care develops the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and dispositions needed to support students' physical, social, emotional and spiritual¹ wellbeing, now and in their future lives.

Young people experience changes and challenges as they move through this stage of their lives. The knowledge, skills, values and dispositions developed through Personal Care, enable students to better manage these changes and challenges. Learning in Personal Care is age, stage and developmentally appropriate and is focused on supporting students' health and wellbeing. Personal Care is designed to develop students' positive sense of self, build their capacity to care for themselves and support them in maintaining caring and healthy relationships with others. Through their learning in Personal Care, students can increase their capacity to make decisions that support their health and wellbeing and work towards becoming more independent as they move into adulthood. As such, Personal Care plays a central role in preparing students for a safer, healthier, and more fulfilling life within and beyond school.

When challenges occur, developing and using a range of coping strategies and recognising how to ask for help, is important. Students also need to understand their rights and responsibilities with regard to protecting their wellbeing and how to access reliable, relevant information and supports from trusted sources.

Personal Care helps students prepare for the transition to life beyond school. It nurtures important self-care and self-management skills, enabling students to take care of their physical wellbeing, cope with the normal stresses of life and feel a sense of purpose and belonging.² It supports their overall wellbeing and prepares them for the transition beyond school to adult services, further education or occupations.

Through supporting students' engagement with the Personal Care curriculum area, schools fulfil the requirement to provide for learning in Social, Personal and Health Education.

¹ The spiritual dimension of wellbeing relates to being able to experience a sense of awe and wonder and knowing that life has meaning and purpose. (*Primary Curriculum Framework*, p12, NCCA, 2023) This is based on a human development approach to wellbeing that is holistic and interdisciplinary and recognises different aspects to wellbeing, including the spiritual aspect of life.

² Wellbeing as defined in Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA 2021

Continuity and progression

The Personal Care module is designed to consolidate and progress students' learning and experiences from junior cycle, as well as developing students' increased awareness, knowledge and skills to enable them to better manage the demands of life now and prepare for experiences beyond school.

Personal Care is structured to provide continuity from the Primary Wellbeing Curriculum, the Level 2 Personal Care Priority Learning Unit (PLU) at junior cycle, and the Junior Cycle SPHE specification. Personal Care enables students engaged in a L2LP to progress, enhance and deepen their learning about health and wellbeing in an age and stage appropriate manner throughout senior cycle.

Across all stages of learning, Personal Care supports the development of students' positive sense of self, and their capacity to care for themselves and others. At each stage, important topics/themes are revisited, and new topics/themes introduced, thus ensuring both continuity and progression of learning. In revisiting topics/themes, care is taken to allow for deeper engagement relevant to the student's age, evolving needs and stage of development.

This curriculum area continues to build upon the key skills developed in junior cycle and provides progression through the development of relevant senior cycle key competencies. It also promotes students' ongoing development and learning in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)³, including, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and decision-making skills. Students are given opportunities to demonstrate how learning acquired in this curriculum area can be linked to prior learning, other curriculum areas, modules, wider school activities and life outside of school.

Teaching and learning

Personal Care should be carefully and collaboratively planned to personalise the intended learning for each student and ensure that learning is suited to their stage of development, strengths, abilities, learning needs and life experiences. The Student Support File is a key resource in this regard. Effective teaching and learning is supported when teachers collaborate and plan for learning thus enabling a shared vision and approach.

Personal Care has a practical focus, enabling students to build and practise skills that are important for them across a range of real-world scenarios. In particular, there is a focus on developing students' communication skills, problem-solving skills, skills of self-management and coping strategies. These strategies and skills should be practised in an informal yet structured and supportive setting within the classroom and can then be applied in wider contexts.

The learning outcomes within Personal Care should not be viewed in isolation. They are interconnected and overlap. Therefore, teachers may focus on a number of learning outcomes when planning learning activities and draw on a student's prior learning. As with all curriculum areas, some learning outcomes may need to be revisited to reinforce and deepen the learning. Learning outcomes should be viewed in tandem with the Progression Continuum.(p. 17). [SCL1L2LP Programme Statement](#) The Progression Continuum indicates where the student's progress is in relation to the learning outcomes. The Progression Continuum may be used to support teaching, learning and ongoing assessment in the student's daily activities.

³ This module supports the development of social and emotional learning as set out in the CASEL Social and Emotional Skills Framework'. [What Is the CASEL Framework? - CASEL](#)

Parents⁴ play a key role in all aspects of students' education. Collaboration between school and home is particularly important in supporting health and wellbeing education. Parents can provide invaluable insight into the most appropriate approach to take when working with their child. Their unique and personal knowledge on how their child learns should inform a personalised approach to teaching and learning that can optimise student engagement and learning.

Teaching and learning requires multiple means of engagement and active pedagogies. This may involve use of audio or visual supports such as photos, video clips, storyboards, symbols or signs, role play, art, sensory activities or task analysis. Some students may need individual instruction to support their learning. Students are supported to express their learning through their individual, preferred way of communicating. These supports may include augmentative and alternative communication aids such as embossed symbols, writing devices, electronic devices, visual and object cues.

Teachers can also ensure that all language and imagery employed in the classroom is inclusive and promotes equality, respect and the rights of all individuals. This ensures students can see themselves, their families and their communities reflected across the learning and can learn that diversity is an important and enriching part of life. Guidance on how to create a safe and inclusive classroom can be found on the NCCA SPHE toolkits at www.curriculumonline.ie.

Module: Personal Care

Module descriptor

This module focuses on deepening the student's knowledge, understanding, skills, values and dispositions in order to enable them to take better care of themselves, make healthy decisions and enjoy positive, caring relationships.

Students learn about	Students should be able to
How to take care of themselves, how to recognise and manage emotions, and communicate more effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore ways to support their personal health and wellbeing including physical activity, nutrition, sleep, social connections and hobbies b. Describe personal hygiene routines and demonstrate increased responsibility for personal care c. Establish and manage a daily routine, including times of transition d. Demonstrate sharing and turn taking in different contexts e. Communicate in a respectful and effective manner f. Demonstrate how to address disagreements respectfully g. Communicate needs and wants assertively and respectfully h. Demonstrate refusal skills appropriately and effectively i. Describe their emotions and recognise the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviours j. Recognise helpful and unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours and explore helpful

⁴ Parent encompasses parent, guardian, carer or other person acting in loco parentis of a child

	<p>ways of responding to and managing thoughts, feelings and behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> k. Recognise sensory overload and identify ways of responding l. Discuss ways of responding to stress and anxiety m. Recognise positive and negative peer influence, both online and in person and demonstrate an appropriate response
Healthy and unhealthy relationships, and the skills needed to nurture and maintain healthy relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n. Recognise and appreciate their own unique identities o. Explore the range of relationships that are important to them and ways to nurture these p. Demonstrate the skills needed for healthy relationships, both in person and online, including communicating respectfully, managing emotions, respecting boundaries q. Know what sexual activity is, in the context of an adult healthy, respectful relationship r. Explore ways to support one's own sexual health s. Understand the need to give and receive consent in the context of all interpersonal relationships, including within an adult sexual relationship t. Discuss ways to manage scenarios where they may feel pressure to engage in unhealthy or harmful behaviours u. Understand the consequences, including legal consequences, of accessing or sharing sexually explicit material v. Identify places and/or situations where they do and don't feel safe and demonstrate skills for assessing and avoiding risks w. Identify ways in which substance use can impact on physical, social and emotional health x. Recognise examples/situations where people are treated unfairly or experience exclusion and identify helpful responses y. Recognise health services and supports available locally and online and demonstrate how to access them

Glossary of terms

Term	
Boundaries	In the context of interpersonal relationships, boundaries are the personal limits that individuals set for themselves to protect their own well-being. They express what a person is comfortable with and what they will not tolerate. Boundaries can be emotional, physical or material.
Consent	A core principle of all respectful interpersonal relationships; consent involves recognising and respecting one's own boundaries and the boundaries of others and always checking whenever one is unsure. Consent in a sexual setting is defined in Irish law as follows: <i>a person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act</i> . The age of consent to engage in sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17 years old. See page 3 for further information relevant to consent.
Emotional wellbeing	Recognising, understanding and being able to express and manage our feelings and emotions in an appropriate manner. Emotional wellbeing is fluid and should not be equated with happiness which is subjective and transitory. Nor should it be understood as the absence of negative moods, feelings or thoughts.
Health	A state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
Identity	Identity is shaped by various factors including one's culture, ethnicity, values, beliefs, abilities, gender and sexual orientation. A person's identity can evolve and change over time.
Sexual activity	A range of activities from kissing, touching, fondling to sexual intercourse which involve giving and receiving sexual pleasure. These activities can be solitary or involve other people. In the context of an adult healthy relationship, sexual activity includes consideration of contraception, safer sex and consent.
Sexual health	In the context of Personal Care at Level 2 this refers to awareness of sexuality as an aspect of being human, understanding sexual and reproductive behaviour and knowing how and where to seek sexual health advice and information.
Skills	Skills within Personal Care refer to social and emotional skills such as self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness as set out in the CASEL Social and Emotional Skills Framework.
Social health	Social health is our ability to interact and form meaningful relationships with others. Social relationships have an impact on our emotional and physical health.
Substance use	In the context of Personal Care at Level 2, substance use refers to alcohol, nicotine, vaping and drugs.

Appendix 1

Sexuality education and the law

Ireland signed the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCPRD\)](#) in 2007 and ratified it in March 2018. This means that Ireland is committed to promoting and protecting the full enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to sexual health services and education programmes.

In addition to recognising this right, educators need to be aware of the legal framework which informs relationships and sexuality education. The [Criminal Law Sexual Offences Act 2017](#) defines consent as follows: *a person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act*. Section 21 focuses on ‘sexual acts with protected persons’ and a ‘protected person’ is someone who *lacks the capacity to consent to a sexual act*;

Accordingly such a person is *incapable of*—

- (a) *understanding the nature, or the reasonably foreseeable consequences, of that act,*
- (b) *evaluating relevant information for the purposes of deciding whether or not to engage in that act, or*
- (c) *communicating his or her consent to that act by speech, sign language or otherwise.*

