



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme: Looking after my Environment Elective Module

For introduction to schools in September 2025.

Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

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Introduction

The Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme (SCL1LP) consists of a range of curriculum areas, each designed on a modular basis. There are four curriculum areas at the heart of the SCL1LP: Numeracy; Communication and Literacy; Personal Care; and Electives. Looking after my Environment is an elective module.

Looking after my Environment is designed for a minimum of 60 hours of teaching time/class contact time over two years.

Module title	Recommended time in hours
Looking after my Environment	60

Rationale

This elective module enables students to explore the physical world around them. Students engage and interact with topics and activities related to the physical environment. The environments which are most familiar to students are those which have been largely created by human activity. Their homes, the areas which surround them, their schools and yards, roads and farmland have been shaped by the actions of people and their interaction with natural environments. The natural environment and its features—mountains, hills and other landforms, seas, rivers, weather systems and climate — give places their distinctive character. A recognition of the features of human-made and natural environments and how they relate to one another is an important aspect of students' growing awareness of their environment.

This module aims to nurture students' interest in their environment. Through outdoor activities and engagement with the natural world and their community, students grow in their appreciation for nature as well as its benefits to their personal wellbeing.

The nurturing of students' understanding of their environment contributes to the development of key competencies in senior cycle. By creating opportunities to build key competencies, all learning across senior cycle is supported and the development of important life skills are promoted. Students stand to benefit in many ways as they progress in learning pathways and as they transition to life beyond school.



Continuity and progression

This module consolidates and builds upon students' learning and experiences at junior cycle.

Looking after my Environment supports the progression of students' key skills of junior cycle of managing self, staying well, communicating, being creative, working with others and managing information and thinking. Development and learning in areas such as literacy, numeracy, language, motor coordination and leisure skills are also promoted.

Through engagement with this module, students are given opportunities to demonstrate how their learning can be linked to prior learning in other curriculum areas, wider school activities and to life outside of school. Students are also supported in applying their learning from this module across senior cycle modules and curriculum areas such as Being part of the community, their area of special interest, Communication and Literacy, Numeracy, PE, SPHE and Visual Art. This supports a continuous senior cycle learning experience for students. It helps to reinforce and progress students' learning which, in turn, enables them to further develop a sense of achievement and confidence.



Teaching and learning

This elective module incorporates sensory-rich activities that support students to explore the environment through touch, smell, sight, taste and sound. This multisensory approach helps students connect with their surroundings in a meaningful way. Collaborative projects promote social interaction and communication as students engage with their peer group and the broader community.

Students engage in a range of activities designed to enable them to appreciate the physical world around them. Activities are the medium through which the learning outcomes can be achieved. While some activities are listed, schools have the flexibility to provide their own activities depending on available resources, local amenities and their students' interests.

Examples of activities include but are not limited to:

- bird feeding
- maintaining a bug hotel
- improving an indoor/outdoor area
- collecting and using rainwater
- composting
- nature walks
- planting and growing flowers
- seeds
- vegetables
- community clean-ups
- attending to gardens or nature.

Involving the broader community, such as local environmental groups or community gardens, provide students with additional resources and real-world engagement opportunities.

Prioritising tactile and interactive experiences can engage multiple senses, making learning more effective and enjoyable. Students might feel the texture of soil, smell flowers, see the colours of plants, hear the sounds of nature. Where appropriate, digital and assistive technology is used to support learning and participation. Visual aids, adaptive tools for gardening, communication devices, visual and object cues, may enhance students' ability to engage with the curriculum.



Module: Looking after my Environment

Module descriptor

Students will explore, engage with and enjoy many natural and human-made features in their environment. This module supports students' growing awareness, appreciation and curiosity about their local environment and communities.

Students learn about

Their environment. Students explore and understand their environment and record, in a supported and systematic way, natural and human-made features of their locality. Students will develop a sense of their own place and thus, their sense of local community will be supported.

Students should be able to

- a. observe some of the distinctive natural features of their environments
- b. observe some of the distinctive human-made features of their environments
- c. observe different flora and fauna
- d. identify people, occupations and organisations/groups who live and work in the locality and their roles in the community
- e. recognise and record features encountered on routine journeys
- f. record and display simple weather observations by using charts and/or common meteorological symbols
- g. recognise different weather conditions and changes in weather
- h. identify and plan for the impact of weather on daily routines

Individual and community responsibility for environments. Students will engage safely in practical activities to protect and enhance their environment.

- i. use appropriate tools and equipment safely while undertaking an environmental activity
- j. participate in the care of a plant or animal in their environment
- k. recognise the importance of caring for plants or animals in their environment
- l. engage in activities that have a positive impact on the environment, such as reducing energy consumption, waste generation and water usage
- m. use appropriate tools and equipment safely while undertaking an environmental activity
- n. demonstrate safe working practices while undertaking an environmental activity e.g. wear gloves
- o. identify everyday items that can be reused
- p. reuse a common household material or item
- q. upcycle a common household item
- r. recognise symbols and signs related to recycling
- s. separate recyclable materials into categories (plastic, paper, metal, etc.)



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