An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

# Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme: Personal Care
Curriculum Area

**For introduction to schools in September 2025.**

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

# Contents

# 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.

Personal Care consists of three modules. It is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of teaching time/class contact time over two years.

| Module title | Recommended time in hours |
|---|---|
| Self-awareness and self-care | 60 |
| Connecting with myself and others | 60 |
| Minding myself | 60 |

# Rationale

Personal Care develops the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and dispositions needed to support students' physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Young people experience changes and challenges as they move through this stage of their lives. The knowledge and skills developed through Personal Care enable students to better manage these changes and challenges. Learning in Personal Care, while focused on supporting students' wellbeing, is age, stage and developmentally appropriate, recognising students are at different stages of their development. 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. Personal Care nurtures self-care and supports self-management skills. It supports students prepare for the transition to life outside of and beyond school. As such, it supports their overall wellbeing and prepares them for the transition beyond school to adult services, further education or occupations.

Through Personal Care, students fulfil their requirement for learning in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

# Continuity and progression

Personal Care is designed to consolidate and progress students' learning and experiences from junior cycle, as well as developing students' awareness, knowledge and skills to enable them to better manage the demands of life now. Personal Care is structured to provide continuity from the Primary Wellbeing curriculum and the Level 1 Personal Care Priority Learning Unit (PLU) at junior cycle. Personal Care enables students engaged in a L1LP to progress their learning about health and wellbeing in an age and stage appropriate manner throughout senior cycle.

Across all stages of learning, Personal Care is developing students' capacity to respond to their own needs and of 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, strengths, needs and stage of development.

This module 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[1]), including self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship 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.

[1]  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**

# 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 and learning needs. 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.

A practical focus is required, 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 a student's self-management and communication skills. These strategies and skills can 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 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. 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.

Parents[2] 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. Examples include, but are not limited to, visual, sensory, symbols, signs, cues, prompts, role play, mimicking or imitating, teacher modelling, direct instruction, music, structured or visual timetables, task analysis, photos, story boards, symbols or signs. Students may need individual instruction to support the transfer of learning to their own contexts and daily lives.

Students should be given opportunities to learn about their own families and families of their peers. Students should be encouraged to socialise with their peers. This can be done with scheduled and spontaneous small and large group activities. Teachers should encourage social engagement with other classes, local schools, shops and other activities which involves interacting with people.

Students need to be supported in their individual, preferred way of communicating. While students should experience many modes of communication, they should be enabled to communicate in ways that are most appropriate to them to build upon their communicative ability. 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 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**

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[2] 'Parent' encompasses parent, guardian, carer or other person acting in loco parentis of a child

# Module: Self-awareness and self-care

## Module descriptor

This module promotes self-awareness, body awareness and students' capacity to manage their personal care needs.

| Students learn about | Students should be able to |
|---|---|
| Self-awareness and body awareness | a. become aware of self<br><br>b. express preferences, likes and dislikes<br><br>c. indicate and demonstrate personal skills and abilities<br><br>d. recognise personal features of themselves and others and indicate differences<br><br>e. show awareness of body parts and indicate body parts using simple gestures<br><br>f. explore movement and sensory experiences using different body parts<br><br>g. recognise that sexual feelings are a typical part of growing up<br><br>h. recognise physical development by identifying changes in clothes and physical features<br><br>i. identify body parts and understand that some body parts are private<br><br>j. understand the importance of clothing/covering<br><br>k. distinguish between appropriate behaviours and inappropriate behaviours across a variety of contexts |
| Self-management and self-care | l. participate in setting goals with supports<br><br>m. engage with transition routines and structures<br><br>n. develop self-reliance in daily tasks<br><br>o. respond to reminders or prompts for hygiene routines<br><br>p. express their needs and preferences regarding personal care routines<br><br>q. follow the sequence and routine of personal care task<br><br>r. participate in daily personal hygiene care routines<br><br>s. indicate if help is required with personal care activities and acknowledge assistance<br><br>t. show increasing awareness of how cleanliness, hygiene and self-care can affect health and wellbeing and apply this understanding to everyday routines<br><br>u. participate in changing clothes at transition times<br><br>v. recognise errors and respond appropriately |

# Module: Connecting with myself and others

## Module descriptor

This module fosters students' interpersonal capabilities, developing their capacity to communicate and connect with others and to express and manage their emotions.

| Students learn about | Students should be able to |
|---|---|
| Using communication to make connections with others, and modes of communication | **a.** show awareness of others<br>**b.** anticipate their turn during familiar activities<br>**c.** engage with peers through specific actions or prompts<br>**d.** engage in and practice appropriate interactions during cooperative activities<br>**e.** demonstrate appropriate social interactions during activities<br>**f.** establish and develop relationships with peers<br>**g.** recognise who family and peers are<br>**h.** recognise that there are different types of relationships<br>**i.** demonstrate understanding of the meaning of "yes" and "no" and communicate it<br>**j.** show awareness of their own boundaries[3] and those of others<br>**k.** initiate engagement with others |
| Expressing and managing emotions | **l.** notice the needs and feelings of others and show empathy through gestures or actions<br>**m.** communicate to express needs, wants, feelings and emotions in social situations<br>**n.** express emotions and feelings in a healthy way<br>**o.** identify feelings of stress and respond appropriately<br>**p.** identify and apply strategies to enable self-regulation<br>**q.** apply coping mechanisms to deal with challenges |

[3]  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.

# Module: Minding myself

## Module descriptor

This module focusses on the student's awareness of how to stay safe in day to day life and helps students understand what is appropriate and inappropriate in order to make healthy and safe decisions.

| Students learn about | Students should be able to |
|---|---|
| Minding themselves at home, in school and in their communities while developing an awareness of the importance of safety. | a. show an awareness of daily activities by following structure/routine/prompts<br><br>b. transition from one location to the next following structure/routine/prompts<br><br>c. follow safety routines in familiar environments<br><br>d. recognise safe situations/places and the factors that can make a situation/place safe<br><br>e. recognise unsafe situations/places and the factors that can make a situation/place unsafe<br><br>f. engage in and demonstrate safety skills<br><br>g. recognise immediate potential dangers around them<br><br>h. recognise the importance of safety around medicines and link them to their use<br><br>i. recognise the importance of safety around hazardous substances |
| Identifying where personal safety might be at risk and appropriate responses and approaches for staying safe | j. explore how to seek, give or deny permission respectfully when sharing possessions or personal space<br><br>k. communicate effectively when they need help/assistance or feel unsafe<br><br>l. show ways of getting help in unsafe situations and emergencies and identify people who can help<br><br>m. respond appropriately in emergency situations<br><br>n. demonstrate skills for personal safety<br><br>o. understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour towards self and others<br><br>p. identify appropriate responses to inappropriate behaviour<br><br>q. show awareness of personal space and communicate discomfort or consent regarding personal space or touch during routines<br><br>r. recognise that boundaries apply to all forms of interactions with others<br><br>s. demonstrate skills for personal safety by applying refusal skills |

# 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.*