



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme: Music

Elective Module

For introduction to schools in September 2026.

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

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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. Music is an elective module.

Music 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
Music	60

Rationale

Learning through the arts significantly contributes to the development of the whole person. By learning about and through music, this elective module aims to support students' physical, social and emotional development, and nurture their sensory exploration in ways that value their individual sensory preferences. It provides students with an opportunity to explore, express and communicate their ideas, emotions, thoughts, feelings and experiences through sound, music and words.

Music is a medium for students to discover new things, express their feelings and engage with others by responding through musical experiences. Through listening, discussing and making music, students recognise the presence and role of music in their everyday lives. Students recognise that music surrounds them, from nature, media, school, to their local community. Elements of pattern, sound, structure, movement, vibration and rhythm, inherent in the everyday environment, are reflected in music. This supports students to interpret and form connections to their local environment and community. This helps students make sense of their world.

This elective module enables students to listen to, engage with, and respond to music in all its forms in school, at home and in their communities. It positively impacts the students' overall wellbeing, which helps enhance their self-confidence, self-expression and sense of accomplishment as they experience a range of musical activities. Music should be experienced with enjoyment and curiosity.

The development of students' understanding and appreciation of music contributes to the development of key competencies in senior cycle and vice-versa. When this happens, all learning across senior cycle is supported and the development of important life skills are promoted. Students can benefit in many ways as they progress in learning pathways.



Continuity and progression

This module builds upon students' learning and experiences with the Primary School Curriculum and the Framework for Junior Cycle. In particular, learning through the Music elective module builds upon students' development of the junior cycle key skills of Managing self, Staying well, Communicating, Being creative, Working with others, and Managing information and thinking. The module also promotes development and learning in areas such as literacy, numeracy, language, motor coordination, mobility and leisure skills.

The elective aims to support students' development of the senior cycle key competencies of Participating in society, Working with others, Communicating, Cultivating wellbeing, Thinking and solving problems, Being creative, and Managing learning and self. It promotes greater independence, as well as providing students with a sense of achievement and confidence in their learning.

Students are given opportunities to demonstrate how learning acquired here can be linked to prior learning, to other modules and curriculum areas, wider school activities and life outside of school, applying their learning in areas such as Communication and Literacy, Numeracy, Personal Care, Literature, Area of Special Interest, Physical Education, IT Skills, Visual Art and Drama. This helps to reinforce learning and progress students' ability to communicate, interact, be creative, to express themselves, to explore their feelings and ideas, the perspectives and worldview of others in a variety of ways. This supports students beyond school and provides students with a sense of achievement and confidence as they transition to the world of work, study or further services beyond school.



Teaching and learning

Music is an umbrella term for a range of music-related experiences and learning activities. Music may take the form of listening, responding, participating or creating. The Music elective module emphasises active participation, social engagement, experiential hands-on learning, with a focus on enjoyment of music. Students learn that music surrounds us. Students should be encouraged to actively engage with music, to identify their preferences and begin to understand musical concepts in a meaningful way.

Every individual has an innate sense of musicality that can be explored and developed. Practical learning activities are the medium through which students achieve the learning outcomes. Schools are encouraged to offer students a variety of activities that help them appreciate and enjoy the musical world around them. By providing opportunities to participate, respond to, and create music, schools can gently nurture students' curiosity, appreciation and enjoyment for music in a supportive environment.

Collaborative projects promote social interaction and communication as students engage with their peer group and the broader community. While some ideas are listed, schools have the flexibility to provide their own activities depending on available resources, local amenities and their students' interests, strengths and abilities. All activities can be teacher or student led, modelled or supported as appropriate. Examples of activities or events include, but are not limited to:

- Instrument exploration
- Sound matching games that support auditory discrimination and listening skills, visuals or other stimuli may be used
- Singing phrases, rhymes, songs in groups or individually. Visuals, Lámh or ISL may be used.
- Rhythm and movement games to music
- Games to link music to emotions
- Music relaxation time
- Creating your own instrument
- Musical story time

- Creating and performing musical pieces based on their own ideas, improvisation, image, drama
- Playing music and let students paint, draw, or colour to express what they feel
- Freeze dance
- Musical communication activities such as call-and-response singing, rhythmic clapping, body percussion or expressive movement
- Jam time
- Creating music through improvisation with voice, instruments or digital instruments
- Creating an image/piece of artwork/short dance/short drama that has been inspired by an existing piece of music
- Lyric listening and discussion
- Creating a play list
- Digital music making
- Choir
- School play or musical
- Visits to musical events
- Guest musicians
- Creating their own composition.

Providing students with basic terminology or vocabulary to discuss some elements of music such as tempo (fast/slow), dynamics (loud/quiet), beat (steady/unsteady), will expand student vocabulary and offer opportunities to students to use musical language. This language can be used by students not only to describe music but in other everyday activities, as well as enabling them to express how music can impact their thoughts, feelings and emotions. Through listening, students are made aware of the emotive qualities of music and can be given appropriate vocabulary to discuss how music makes them feel.



Music supports sensory-rich activities that enable students to explore their musical environment and create their own music. Students can enjoy these activities while recognising their own personal talents with music, develop an appreciation of music and form a way of expressing themselves through music.

Music can also be used to support transition times by using familiar music or musical routines. Students can anticipate familiar songs or musical cues within a structured routine, indicating their understanding through a manner appropriate to them. Students can also participate in start-and-end procedures or structures for music sessions, such as hello or goodbye songs.

Considerations may apply when teachers are planning their students' musical activities. This may apply to choosing equipment, instruments, technology and exploratory activities appropriate to students' needs. The initial learning point for some students may be to become accustomed to and comfortable with the acoustics of music environments, or they may need adapted instruments, while some students may be wholly reliant on technology to create their own music. Where appropriate, digital and assistive technology can be used to support learning and participation. Visual aids, adaptive tools for creating, communication devices, visual and object cues, may enhance students' ability to engage with the module.



Module: Music

Module descriptor

Students will experience and engage with various types of music and musical instruments as an individual and within a group. They will be supported in recognising different aspects of music, responding to different genres of music and linking music to their imagination, thoughts and feelings. Students will have the opportunity to create their own music. Students will learn how meaning can be shaped through music.

Students learn about Students should be able to

Self-expression through music

Language and techniques relating to music and sound

Types of music and a variety of musical instruments

- a. communicate where they experience music in their lives
- b. recognise or name instruments
- c. know how sounds are made with an instrument
- d. demonstrate techniques and musical routines such as warm-up, rhythm, pattern, cool down
- e. demonstrate musical turn-taking (e.g., waiting for their turn to play an instrument or respond to a musical cue)
- f. demonstrate how sounds can be used to create an effect
- g. describe how music is used for effect in a piece of drama/film
- h. create a variety of sounds, pitches, rhythms or effects
- i. perform an instrumental and/or or vocal accompaniment to an existing piece of music
- j. identify instrumental and/or vocal techniques in a musical piece
- k. describe how listening to different pieces of music can affect their feelings, thoughts, emotions and imagination
- l. recognise how music can be used to relax, energise and entertain

Creating music

How to generate, develop or initiate musical ideas individually or with others

Using instrument, voice or technology to create their own music

- m. perform a short musical piece or excerpt individually and/or in a group
- n. recognise symbols used to represent musical sounds
- o. perform music from symbolic representations of sounds
- p. create and perform a musical piece based on a stimulus
- q. contribute and develop musical ideas to be used in creating a piece of music
- r. select a musical instrument for their own musical piece
- s. distinguish between different sounds or voices and how they convey emotions in music
- t. describe the intention (or purpose) of music which they create
- u. describe their role and contribution to a group performance
- v. improvise using a variety of instruments, rhythms and melodic pitches to create a short piece of music
- w. communicate steps taken to create a piece of music
- x. respond to questions about particular aspects of a musical work
- y. use appropriate musical language/terminology to describe music.



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Published August 2026.