



NCCA

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

Enacting the curriculum:

Guidance for teachers'
preparation in Wellbeing



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Introduction

The successful enactment of the *Wellbeing* specification relies on effective preparation for learning, teaching and assessment by teachers and schools. This is about bringing to life what is set down in the specification and embedding it in children's Learning Experiences that reflect the vision of the curriculum. This involves purposeful engagement with the specification and its supports, as well as the development of whole-school curriculum plans and whole-school agreed approaches to ensure high quality Learning Experiences are provided for every child.

This guidance offers practical, accessible support for designing playful, engaging Learning Experiences in line with the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and the *Wellbeing* specification. Teachers' preparation for effective learning, teaching and assessment enables them to make purposeful and informed decisions when working with the specification.

Teacher agency is central to this process. Teachers exercise agency by making professional decisions based on children's interests, curiosities and prior learning, and on the curriculum and whole-school approaches. The opportunities for agency available to teachers support preparation for Learning Experiences that are responsive to the unique context of their school. Also important is the recognition and nurturing of children's agency as their capacity to act on, participate in, and make choices about their learning within Wellbeing.

Throughout this guidance there are prompts, suggestions and reflections designed to foreground both child and teacher agency as central to effective preparation.

This guidance provides the basis for schools' and teachers' preparation with the *Wellbeing* specification. This guidance complements the following materials:

- *Whole-School Curriculum Planning: Guidance for all Primary and Special Schools*
- *Preparation for Learning, Teaching and Assessment: Updated Guidance for all Primary and Special Schools*
- *Updated Assessment Guidance for Primary and Special Schools*
- Pedagogy and inclusion support materials.

To access these materials visit the Primary Curriculum Toolkit on www.curriculumonline.ie.

Linking teachers' preparation to Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Individual teachers' preparation does not take place in isolation. It is shaped by the *Wellbeing* specification, collaborative Whole-School Curriculum Planning, School Self-Evaluation and Action Planning. These all work together to guide effective learning, teaching and assessment.

Whole-School Curriculum Planning is especially important. It helps schools to agree on a shared approach to using the *Wellbeing* specification. This includes the sequencing of children's learning across Stages 1 – 4, and how Learning Outcomes, Elements, Pedagogical Approaches and Assessment Guidance are used.

Following the process in *Whole-School Curriculum Planning: Guidance for all Primary and Special Schools* will lead to the successful development of a Whole-School Curriculum Plan for Wellbeing. The plan should set out the agreed approaches which are necessary for teachers in a particular school context working with chapters 5 and 6.

The Whole-School Curriculum Plan acts as a guide for teachers' individual preparation. Teachers should align their preparation with both the specification and the school's agreed plan. This helps ensure consistency between Whole-School Curriculum Planning and classroom practice.

Within this guidance, prompts are included to help guide schools when considering Whole-School Curriculum Planning. This is a non-exhaustive list and schools may adapt or add to them based on their own context.



Wellbeing specification

The strands provide a practical structure for supporting preparation for learning, teaching and assessment. Each strand is important, and teachers should include all Wellbeing strands in their preparation throughout the year.

In practice, learning, teaching and assessment often move fluidly across strands, and natural overlaps may

occur. Teachers may choose to begin with any of the strands in their preparation.

The specification is organised into four interconnected and interrelated strands that together support holistic wellbeing:

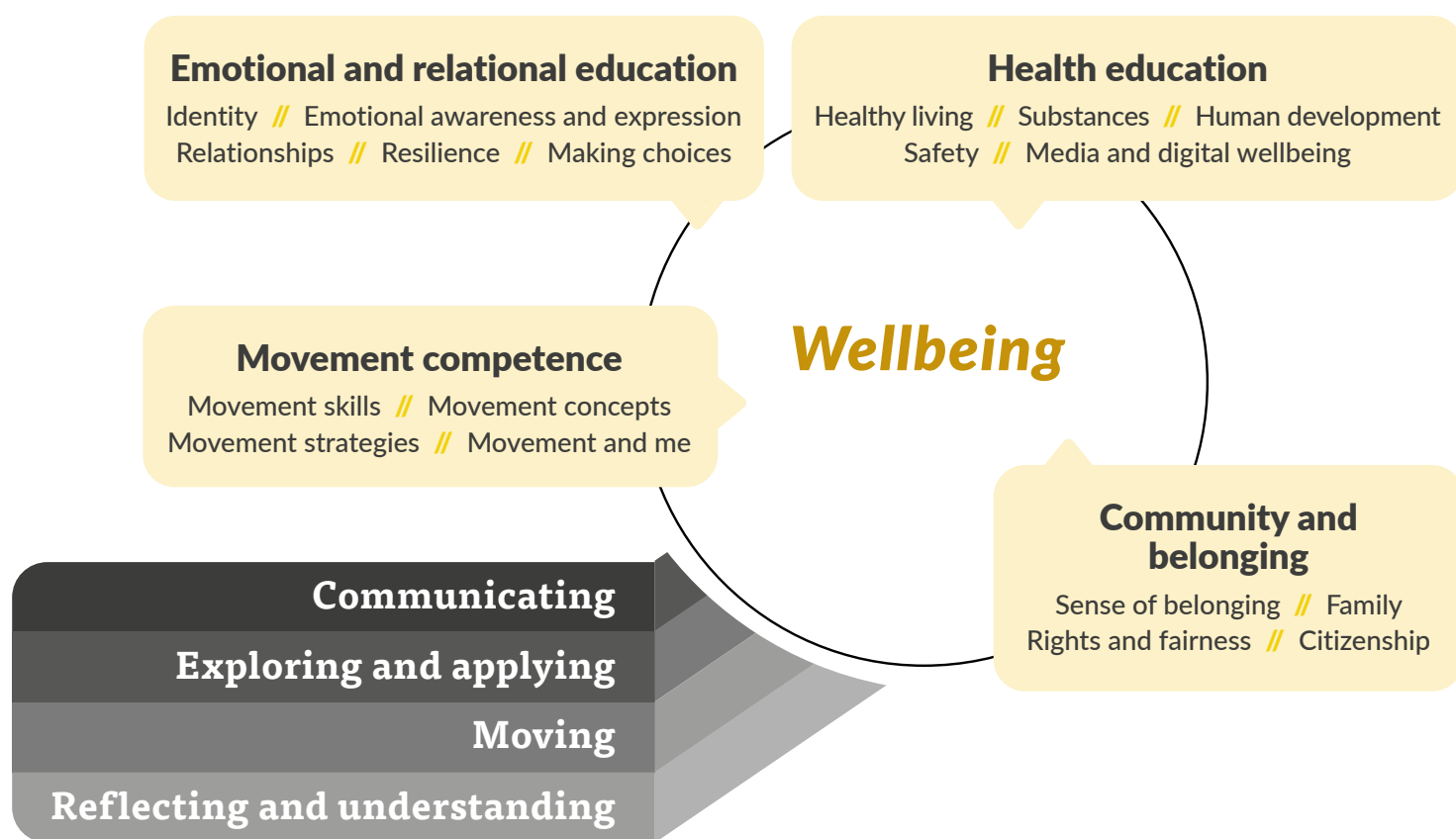


Figure 1: Strands, Strand Units and Elements of the *Wellbeing* specification

Within Wellbeing, teachers are empowered to make informed professional decisions in response to the children in their unique context, adapting Learning Experiences in response to unexpected or emerging learning opportunities.

Learning may address one or more strands simultaneously. In practice, learning may naturally move fluidly across strands and/or strand units and their associated Learning Outcomes during a single Learning Experience or over a series of Learning Experiences. For example, when children work towards developing a range of problem-solving strategies (*Movement strategies*) through the PE activity areas, they may also reflect on their movement experiences (*Movement and me*) while also developing the confidence to persevere with appropriate challenge (*Resilience*). Learning is often developed simultaneously within a single Learning Experience or across a sequence of Learning Experiences, supporting a holistic approach to Wellbeing.

How children learn is as important as what they learn. Figure 1 presents the strands, strand units and elements of the *Wellbeing* specification. While strands and strand units organise learning, the elements describe the processes children engage with as they learn in the *Wellbeing* specification. These elements support our understanding of how children learn.

The four elements in the *Wellbeing* specification are:

- Communication
- Exploring and applying
- Moving
- Reflecting and understanding

As children work towards the Learning Outcomes across the strands and strand units, it is essential to offer opportunities for children to engage with the elements of the *Wellbeing* specification. It is likely that children will engage with more than one element at a time. In practice, the children engage with the elements in interconnected ways, for example, a child will have opportunities to participate in Orienteering in Outdoor and adventure education (Moving) and talk about how they worked together (Reflecting and understanding).

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- ensure breadth, balance and inclusive participation for all children across all stages
- use the Elements as a guide to the 'how' of children's learning.

Key Competencies, Learning Outcomes, Focus(es) of Learning and Learning Experiences

Key Competencies

The key competencies are central to children's learning and development and require sustained ongoing attention. Accordingly, they are embedded through all Learning Outcomes in Chapter 5. In preparing for Wellbeing, it is essential teachers provide opportunities for children to develop as active learners, communicators and users of

language, creative thinkers, mathematical learners, digital learners and active citizens while developing their understanding of being well. This requires intentionality, and therefore teachers should be mindful of how key competencies, including their attributes, are being realised through the curriculum.

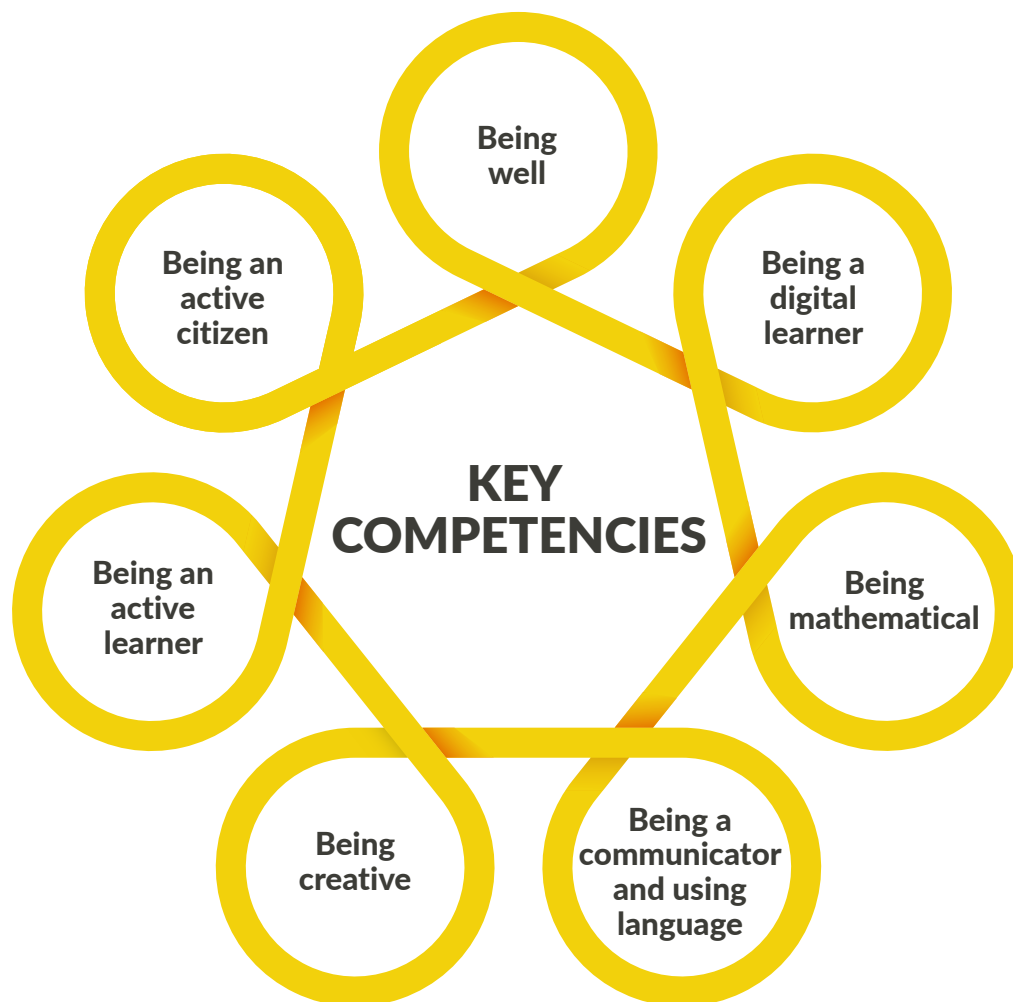


Figure 2: Key competencies

As outlined below, the Learning Outcomes anchor preparation; the Focus(es) of Learning clarifies what children will learn next; and the Learning Experiences provide appropriately playful and engaging opportunities for all children.

Learning Outcomes

As a teacher prepares for learning, teaching and assessment, all decisions should be informed by:

- Knowledge of children and their prior learning, strengths, abilities, interests and needs
- Knowledge of the curriculum, including its vision, principles, key competencies and Learning Outcomes in the specifications
- Knowledge of pedagogy and assessment, including approaches described within the specifications.

The processes of learning, teaching and assessment are complex, fluid and dynamic; while being complimentary of each other. In recognition of this reality 'Entry Points' are where a teacher begins their preparation in working with the Learning Outcomes. There are many possible entry points when preparing for learning and teaching including Learner entry Points, Curriculum entry points and Contextual entry points. The entry points are examples, not a checklist.

Regardless of the entry point, selected Learning Outcomes as well as knowledge of the curriculum anchor preparation and ensure alignment with the curriculum.

• Learner entry points

- Children's questions, wonderings, observations and lines of inquiry
- A theme or topic linked to children's interests and prior learning
- Identified needs, areas for development or strengths in learning suggested by assessment information

• Curriculum entry points

- The Learning Outcomes of the specifications
- The key competencies of the curriculum

• Contextual entry points

- A local, national or international event or topical issue
- An engaging Learning Experience observed or shared by a fellow teacher or through professional learning
- Spontaneous teaching opportunities (e.g., a local festival/celebration, a disagreement at yard time)

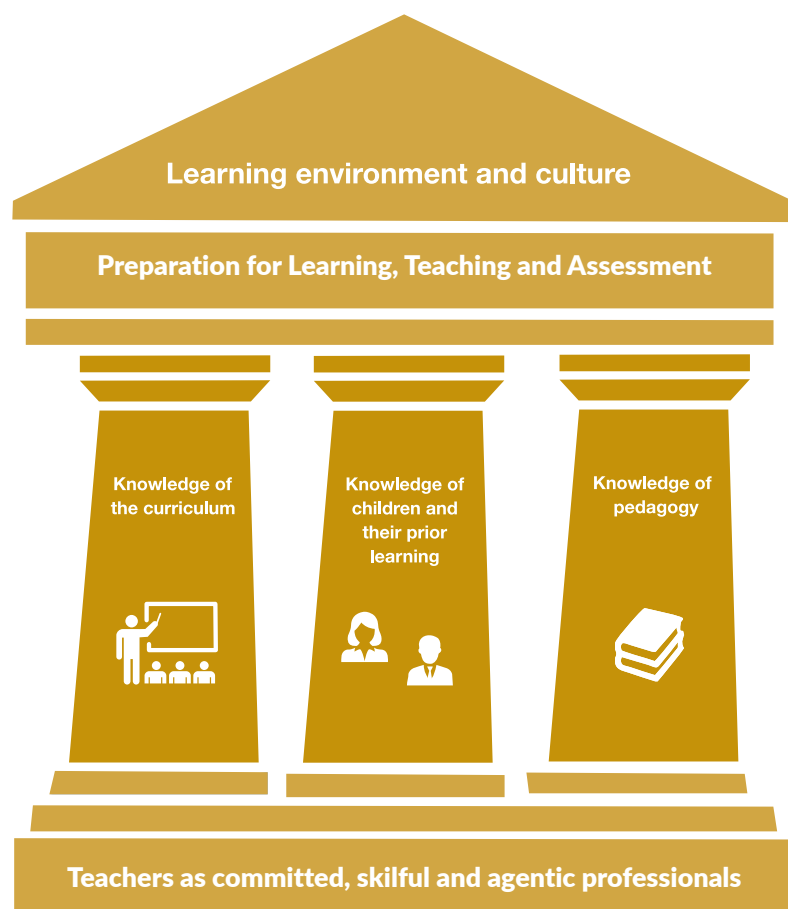


Figure 3: Teacher preparation

Learning Outcomes support preparation that enables every child to learn and develop. In the main, they describe the expected learning and development at the end of each stage (a two-year period). Some Learning Outcomes within the *Wellbeing* specification extend across two stages. They are designed to be broad and flexible to support progression in learning for every child. Ongoing, high-quality assessment plays a central role in identifying each child's abilities, strengths, needs and next steps in learning, ensuring that decisions about the most appropriate Learning Outcomes are responsive, evidence-informed and focused on supporting meaningful progression. It is expected that children work towards all of the Learning Outcomes for their stage. However, for some children, it may be appropriate, in particular curriculum areas and subjects, to work towards Learning Outcomes or aspects of Learning Outcomes from a different stage. These decisions should be based on knowledge of the children informed by assessment information and reviewed regularly. Longer term measures, where a child continues to work towards Learning Outcomes from a different stage, for an extended period, should be taken in consultation with the special education teacher (if applicable). This should be supported by a strong evidence base, be reflected in the child's *Student Support Plan* (SSP) in consultation with parents and reviewed regularly.

To support coherence and progression in learning and to avoid unnecessary repetition or gaps in learning opportunities, schools should consider the sequencing of learning across each stage through whole-school planning and ongoing teacher collaboration. Children will progress at different rates. Progression includes periods of new learning, practice, and consolidation, and therefore every outcome, or every aspect of an outcome may not need to be addressed each year. What is important is that, across the two-year stage, Learning Outcomes are intentionally prepared for, revisited as appropriate, and used to support children's progress towards expected learning. Across all contexts, the aim is to ensure that every child experiences meaningful progression in their learning and is supported to work towards the Learning Outcomes of the curriculum.

What this means for Whole-School Curriculum Planning for the *Wellbeing* specification

Learning should reflect broad and balanced engagement with all strands each year and all strand units across each stage. The specification supports children to revisit and deepen their understanding of knowledge, skills, concepts, dispositions, attitudes and values as they progress through the stages. Aspects of the Learning Outcomes can be achieved over shorter or longer periods of time. For instance, fostering a skill of 'perseverance' may take a longer time to develop than the ability to 'name parts of the body using anatomical terms'. Most Learning Outcomes in the *Wellbeing* specification present the intended learning and development at the end of a stage. Some Learning Outcomes span two or more stages. For example, some Learning Outcomes in the *Movement and me* strand unit span all four stages of the specification, supporting children to develop confidence and competence over time. When Learning Outcomes span stages, teachers should adapt Learning Experiences appropriate to each stage.

Depending on emerging needs or issues within a class (e.g. friendship dynamics), some strands or strand units may require more time. Teachers may:

- select which aspects of the Learning Outcomes to prioritise
- design meaningful Learning Experiences responsive to children's readiness and learning context.

To support meaningful learning progression, Learning Experiences should be deliberately sequenced and built upon over time.

In parallel with assessment information, consideration of the use of Additional Support Pathways (ASPs) in Chapter 6 may assist a teacher in identifying appropriate and meaningful entry points to support children's learning and in creating inclusive Learning Experiences for every child. ASPs are a tool designed to support more individualised learning for children with SEN. They outline different ways children might engage with or demonstrate progression towards Learning Outcomes.

Focus(es) of Learning

In working with the Learning Outcomes in the *Wellbeing* specification, a teacher should identify a clear Focus(es) of Learning which includes the knowledge, skills, concepts, dispositions, attitudes and/or values that children will learn or develop next. Drawing on their knowledge of the children and their prior learning, together with their knowledge of the curriculum and knowledge of pedagogy and assessment, teachers identify the most appropriate focus.

There may be more than one Focus of Learning within a Learning Experience. The Focus(es) of Learning may include new learning, consolidation of prior learning, or both. In identifying the Focus(es) of Learning, a single Learning Outcome or aspects of more than one Learning Outcome may be selected from within and across specifications, facilitating integration where meaningful and appropriate. In a teacher's short-term preparation, they may record the Focus(es) of

Learning in their own words, ensuring it is drawn from the relevant Learning Outcome(s). Assessment should provide opportunities for children to reflect meaningfully and demonstrate their learning in ways that are aligned with the Focus(es) of Learning.

Teachers are best placed, given their knowledge of the children in their bespoke context, to identify a Focus(es) of Learning that supports children to work towards Learning Outcomes.

When identifying a Focus(es) of Learning teachers consider:

- The children and their prior learning (what they know, understand or can do now) as identified through assessment information
- Next steps in progression (for example, as exemplified in Toolkit progression supports).

Learning Experiences

Once a teacher has identified the Focus(es) of Learning, a range of appropriately playful and engaging Learning Experiences should bring the focus to life. These experiences encompass what the children will do, will engage in, will experience, will create, etc., as they work towards the Focus(es) of Learning. Through their knowledge of the children, the curriculum and pedagogy, teachers prepare for the Learning Experiences.

When preparing for the Learning Experiences, it is important that they:

- Reflect the children's prior learning, abilities, interests and needs

- Support inclusion and meaningful learning
- Are enhanced by pedagogical approaches and the Elements of the *Wellbeing* specification
- Provide meaningful and engaging opportunities for the children to actively respond to, demonstrate, contribute to, record and apply their learning.

While Learning Outcomes, Focus(es) of Learning and Learning Experiences each play a distinct role in teachers' preparation, they are interconnected so that the children's learning is purposeful.

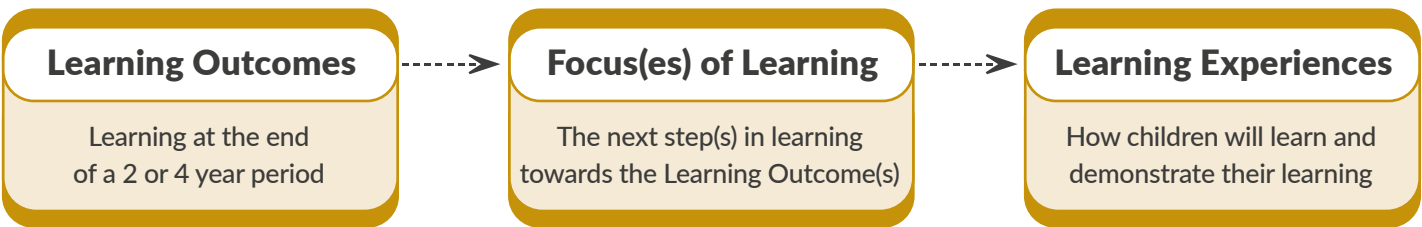


Figure 4: Learning Experiences

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- establish agreed approaches in Wellbeing while supporting teachers to exercise professional judgement in responding to children's needs, interests and context
- develop shared understandings of how Key Competencies are fostered through Wellbeing
- develop a shared understanding of the use of the Additional Support Pathways to create inclusive Learning Experiences in Wellbeing
- use assessment information to support the continuity of the children's learning as they progress through the school.

The following example illustrates how a teacher may prepare for a Focus(es) of Learning and Learning Experience in Wellbeing.

This sample content is illustrative only, to demonstrate connections between the Learning Outcomes, Focus(es) of Learning and Learning Experiences.

It is not intended as an example of a teacher’s recorded preparation.

Stage 3 - Wellbeing - Community and belonging (Sense of belonging)		
A 4th Class teacher observes that the class has a good understanding of what it means to belong to their class, school and wider community. In 3rd class, they engaged in learning focused on understanding and appreciating diversity, including culture, abilities, backgrounds and perspectives. The children have some knowledge of how individual actions and shared responsibilities help create a positive and inclusive environment, however the teacher notices that they have less understanding of the strategies they can use to include others, show respect and support a sense of belonging for everyone.		
Learning Outcome	Sample Focus(es) of Learning	Sample Learning Experiences
Through appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences, children should be able to:		
recognise the important role each person plays in creating a sense of belonging within their class, school and community. Appreciate <u>diversity</u> and adopt both individual and collective strategies to contribute to positive and inclusive learning environments. W, AC, AL	Developing and practising individual and collective strategies that help children actively include others and strengthen a sense of belonging within their class.	(PE): Children develop strategies for cooperative challenges involving all team members. e.g. In the activity area of Outdoor and adventure education, this could be through team challenges designed by the teacher. In the activity area of Games, this could be finding ways to work well together as a team. The teacher could lead a discussion on what strategies they have found useful while working as a team and one thing that they could improve on next time. (SPHE): Children begin by completing in a short personal reflection thinking about a time when they felt they belonged, supported by prompts such as “What did that feel like? Why did you feel this way? How did others help create that feeling?” Next, the children engage in carousel activity, collaborating in small groups to respond to questions such as “What helps people feel included?” or “What might make someone feel left out?”, discussing and adding to the ideas recorded at each station. This is followed by a whole-class discussion on inclusive behaviours and how actions can support belonging.

Table 1: Identifying a Focus(es) of Learning and Learning Experiences

Wellbeing learning and teaching

The three contexts for Wellbeing

Wellbeing is supported by three interconnected contexts: discrete learning, integration, and a positive school and classroom culture and climate. Together, these support a coherent and holistic approach to children's learning and development.

Discrete learning provides structured opportunities to develop key knowledge, skills, concepts, dispositions, attitudes and values. Curriculum

integration, both within PE and SPHE in the *Wellbeing* specification and with other curriculum areas, enables children to apply and deepen their learning across contexts. A positive culture and climate ensures that Wellbeing is experienced in the everyday life of the school. This section outlines discrete learning and a positive culture and climate. The section on integration begins on p.27.



Figure 5: The three contexts of Wellbeing

Discrete learning

Each week, children participate in PE and SPHE-related Learning Experiences as part of their learning in Wellbeing. These weekly Learning Experiences provide discrete teaching in each subject, enabling children to develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, dispositions, attitudes and values that support their physical, social, relational, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

While PE and SPHE are presented as distinct subjects at stages 3 and 4, they are closely connected and complementary as highlighted by the integrated outcomes at stages 1 and 2. PE focuses on learning through movement, while SPHE supports children's social, personal and health development. Together they contribute to learning 'about' and 'for' wellbeing.

Preparing for Discrete learning

Preparing for discrete learning in Wellbeing is guided by the Learning Outcomes of the Wellbeing specification, which are intentionally planned for and revisited as appropriate across each two-year stage. Teachers identify a clear Focus(es) of Learning and design Learning Experiences that are purposeful, developmentally appropriate and responsive to children's needs.

Learning is structured across a two-year stage allowing children to experience new learning, revisit

key concepts and deepen their understanding over time. Not all Learning Outcomes may be addressed each year; however, all are expected to be planned for across the stage.

Teachers use their professional judgement to sequence learning, respond to children's interests and make meaningful connections within Wellbeing (between PE and SPHE) and across the wider curriculum.

Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Learning in Wellbeing is most effective when it is active, engaging and meaningful. Playful and experiential approaches support children to participate fully, explore ideas and apply their learning in relevant contexts. In providing for playful and engaging learning experiences, it is essential to offer opportunities for children to engage with the elements of the Wellbeing specification: Communicating, Exploring and applying, Moving and Reflecting and understanding.

Effective approaches include:

- Active and experiential learning
- Discussion and collaborative learning
- Play, stories and scenarios
- Problem-solving and reflection.

Care should be taken to ensure children feel safe and supported, particularly when engaging with sensitive topics. Teachers should anticipate possible questions and plan how to respond in a developmentally appropriate way. Guidance on preparing for sensitive discussion is outlined later in this section. More information on teaching in Wellbeing, including appropriate pedagogies can be found in Chapter 6b of the specification and on the Wellbeing Toolkit.

Physical Education

PE supports children to develop movement competence, confidence and enjoyment in physical activity, it contributes to children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development encouraging positive engagement in active and healthy lifestyles.

A focus on Movement competence

Within the *Wellbeing* specification, learning in PE is organised across four strands, with particular emphasis on *Movement competence*.

Movement competence focuses on enabling children to move with confidence and understanding across a range of contexts (e.g. indoor and outdoor). It emphasises participation, individual progress and enjoyment, rather than performance in a specific activity.

Movement competence includes:

- **Movement skills:** Developing and refining skills (e.g. running, balancing, throwing)
- **Movement concepts:** Understanding how movement works (e.g. body awareness, spatial awareness, sequencing, relationships with others and the environment)
- **Movement strategies:** Solving movement challenges and using appropriate tactics
- **Movement and me:** Reflecting on effort, progress and meaningful participation.

Learning across the specification

Learning relevant to PE is distributed across all strands of the *Wellbeing* specification.

For example:

- *Emotional and relational education* (e.g. teamwork, cooperation, emotional awareness in movement)
- *Health education* (e.g. understanding the physical effects of activity, safety in movement)
- *Community and belonging* (e.g. fair play, participation, roles in teams)

These strands are interconnected and Learning Outcomes are frequently developed simultaneously within a single Learning Experience or sequence of Learning Experiences.

Preparing for PE

The *Wellbeing* specification adopts a “flipped” approach to PE, where preparing begins with the Learning Outcome, rather than the activity. This shifts the focus of preparation from what activity is being taught, (e.g. Gymnastics) to what learning is being developed through the activity (e.g. Movement skill of balance).

Preparing for PE involves four essential steps:

1. identifying the Learning Outcome
2. establishing the Focus(es) of Learning
3. selecting an appropriate PE activity area
4. designing engaging, movement-rich Learning Experiences.

The PE activity areas (Games, Athletics, Aquatics, Gymnastics, Dance, Outdoor and adventure education and Active living) provide the context through which learning is developed.

This approach supports teachers to:

- maintain a clear focus on movement learning
- select contexts that best supports children's needs and prior learning
- revisit and extend learning across different activity areas.

Supporting effective learning in PE

Effective PE learning:

- maintains a clear focus on Learning Outcomes
- supports progression over time
- provides inclusive and engaging experiences
- enables children to apply and extend their learning across different activity areas, environments (e.g. indoor and outdoor) and contexts within and beyond the school environment.

Through thoughtful preparation and responsive teaching, PE contributes significantly to children's overall wellbeing and development.

The PE activity areas



Figure 6: PE activity areas

The *Wellbeing* specification includes seven PE activity areas which provide the context for achieving Learning Outcomes across all stages.

Children should experience a broad and balanced range of activity areas across each stage, with opportunities to revisit and develop learning over time. Every effort should be made to offer at least one block of water-based aquatic experience during primary education. Many Learning Outcomes can be addressed through more than one PE activity area, supporting the transfer and reinforcement of learning. Examples of movement skills, concepts

and strategies and how they might be linked with PE activity areas are available in Appendix A of the specification on pp. 60-63.

Teachers use their professional judgement to select PE activity areas based on:

- the intended Learning Outcome(s)
- children’s needs and prior experiences
- a balanced experience across the PE activity areas
- available time, space and resources.

Strand:	Movement competence
Strand unit:	Movement skills
Stage:	4
Learning Outcome:	<i>Through appropriately playful and engaging Learning Experiences, children should be able to:</i> adapt and apply, in context, a range of locomotor movement skills such as walking, dodging, mobility wheeling, hopping, running, skipping, jumping and side stepping through a range of the PE activity areas. W, AL, M
Focus of Learning:	The children will focus on developing the locomotor skill of jumping.
Selecting PE activity areas	After consideration of the focus of learning and children’s past experiences of activity areas, the class teacher considered Athletics as the most appropriate activity area to provide context for this learning.

Table 2: An example of selecting a PE activity area

Key considerations for practice in PE

When preparing for and teaching PE, teachers are encouraged to consider the following:

- **Engagement:** Prioritise experiences that support participation and a sense of achievement
- **Maximum participation:** Ensure all children are activity involved, minimising waiting time
- **Broad and balanced:** Provide a range of activity areas across the stage
- **Skill development and understanding:** Develop movement skills, concepts and strategies through purposeful activities
- **Opportunities for success:** Provide tasks that support progress and success for all children
- **Inclusive and equitable activities:** Adapt activities to suit different strengths, needs and interests so all children can participate meaningfully.

Adapting to individual school context

PE should be responsive to the individual school context.

Where schools face challenges due to limited indoor or outdoor space, teachers may:

- use available indoor and outdoor areas creatively
- access local or community facilities where possible
- consider using two activity areas per week when working towards a Learning Outcome(s).

Flexible approaches, such as using two activity areas in a week can help maximise available indoor and outdoor spaces and create varied and engaging learning experiences.

Aquatics

Schools are required to cover six of the seven PE activity areas within each stage. However, every effort should be made to ensure that all children experience at least one block of water-based aquatic activity during their primary years. While these lessons are often delivered by external swimming instructors and lifeguards, teachers are encouraged to work closely with them so that the intended Learning Outcomes are fully addressed.

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- review the breadth and balance of the PE activity areas across the school
- identify suitable indoor and outdoor areas within the school suitable for PE and consider additional local areas (e.g. parks) that may be used
- decide the stage(s) at which children may engage with aquatics.

Social, Personal and Health Education

SPHE supports children's intrapersonal and interpersonal development, enabling them to recognise and accept themselves and others as unique individuals, build and maintain healthy relationships and empower them as active citizens with an understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

SPHE contributes to both learning 'about' and learning 'for' wellbeing, recognising that children's learning and development in SPHE is shaped not only through planned Learning Experiences, but also through their everyday experiences, interactions and the classroom culture and climate.

Learning in SPHE

Learning relevant to SPHE is distributed across the following strands of the *Wellbeing* specification:

- Emotional and relational education
- Health education
- Community and belonging

These strands are interconnected and multiple Learning Outcomes may be developed within a single Learning Experience or across a series of experiences.

Learning is shaped by children's experiences, backgrounds and the contexts in which they live and learn. It is therefore important that learning experiences are meaningful, inclusive and responsive to children's needs.

Preparing for SPHE

Preparing for SPHE is guided by the Learning Outcomes of the *Wellbeing* specification. Teachers identify a clear Focus(es) of Learning and design Learning Experiences that support children to build, revisit and deepen their understanding over time. Across a two-year stage, time is provided for new learning, consolidation and practice, supporting progression and depth of learning over time.

Teachers use their professional judgement to:

- sequence learning appropriately
- respond to children's interests and needs
- make connections within Wellbeing and across the wider curriculum.

Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Learning in SPHE is most effective when it is active, engaging and experiential.

Approaches may include:

- Discussion and dialogue
- Collaborative and cooperative learning
- Play, stories and scenarios
- Drama and role-play
- Creative and reflective activities
- Discovery-based approaches

These approaches support children to:

- participate meaningfully in learning
- explore ideas and perspectives
- develop self-awareness and understanding of others
- make sense of their experiences
- take increasing ownership and responsibility for their learning
- apply their learning in real-life contexts.

Key considerations for practice

When preparing and teaching SPHE, teachers should:

- **create a safe and inclusive learning environment:** Ensure learning experiences reflect children's diverse backgrounds, identities and experiences
- **use appropriate language:** Model accurate, inclusive and respectful language
- **promote participation:** Provide opportunities for children to express their views and engage in decision-making
- **foster relationships:** Support the development of empathy, respect, positive interaction and a sense of belonging
- **work in partnership:** Engage with families to support continuity between home and school learning.

Preparing for sensitive discussion, topics or questions

Aspects of SPHE involves exploration of personal and potentially sensitive themes. The use of appropriate strategies, such as using a fictional lens, can support children to explore issues safely. Some topics can give rise to challenging questions and discussion. It is helpful to anticipate discussion in advance (e.g. anticipating how different children might respond or the questions they might ask) and consider how to respond appropriately and effectively.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an aspect of SPHE that involves learning and teaching about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of relationships and sexuality. Learning related to RSE is embedded within the Learning Outcomes across strands and stand units of the *Wellbeing* specification and developed over time. In particular, learning related to sexuality education is primarily found in the strand unit '*Human development*', while learning related to emotional and relational development is primarily found across the strands '*Emotional and relational education*' and '*Community and belonging*'. As teachers engage with the Learning Outcomes in the *Wellbeing* specification, they are inherently supporting children's learning in RSE in a developmentally appropriate way. The *Wellbeing* specification adopts an inclusive, holistic and rights-based approach to RSE, supporting children to develop self-awareness and self-esteem; nurture emotional wellbeing; build healthy relationships; make informed choices in relation to their health and wellbeing; and understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to themselves and others.

Mandatory and recommended programmes

Stay Safe is the mandatory child abuse prevention programme. Learning Outcomes in SPHE were designed to align with and complement the *Stay Safe* programme. When teaching the programme, teachers are naturally working towards a number of Learning Outcomes, in particular, those within the strand units of '*Relationships*' and '*Safety*'.

All schools must teach the *Stay Safe* programme with topics taught consecutively in one block. Schools organise the teaching of *Stay Safe* in different ways. Some schools may choose to teach the programme in the first year of a stage and revisit the key messages the following year for consolidation. Many schools adopt a Whole-school approach where the programme is taught at the same time across the school. These decisions are informed by the school's context and the Whole-school Plan.

Teachers may also draw on established and recommended resources to support specific areas of SPHE. These include: the *Walk Tall* Programme, which can be adapted to support learning related to '*Substances*'; the *Resource Materials for Relationships & Sexuality Education* which can be adapted to support learning in '*Human development*'; and resources developed by Webwise to support learning in '*Media and digital wellbeing*'. Further information on SPHE related resources is available on the Wellbeing Online toolkit.

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- agree an approach to how the *Stay Safe* programme will be taught across the school
- review which additional resources will be used to support learning in SPHE.

Culture and climate

Learning for Wellbeing is shaped by both the culture and climate of the school and the everyday experiences within the classroom and the school environment. A positive environment supports children to feel safe, valued, respected and included, enabling them to participate fully in learning.

A whole-school approach that values positive relationships, respect, fairness and inclusion supports children's wellbeing in their everyday experiences. This culture is reflected in school policies and initiatives, and most importantly in the quality of interactions between children, staff and the wider school community. At a class level, the teacher plays a central role in shaping children's everyday learning experiences through their interactions, expectations, use of language, and the learning experiences they design.

Inclusive and respectful environments

Teachers foster safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments through clear expectations, consistent approaches to behaviour and positive interactions. Thoughtful use of language affirms children's identities, promotes inclusion and supports respectful communication. When children see their identities, families and backgrounds positively reflected in classroom interactions, resources and displays, they develop a strong sense of belonging and confidence to participate. These welcoming environments support children to express ideas, engage in dialogue, take appropriate risks in their learning, and learn with and from others, experiencing wellbeing in action as they grow.

Reflecting on professional practice

Ongoing reflection is an essential part of preparing for and teaching in Wellbeing. Teachers should reflect on their own experiences, attitudes, values and beliefs, and consider how these may influence their teaching and interactions with children. Reflection can support teachers in becoming more aware of their own perspectives, including assumptions or unconscious bias, and support inclusive and responsive practice.

Relationships

Learning in Wellbeing is relational. Positive relationships between teacher and children, and among peers, are foundational for learning in PE and SPHE. Teachers intentionally prioritise the quality of relationships, modelling respectful interaction and supporting positive peer relationships. Opportunities for collaboration and discussion help children develop empathy, communication skills and respect for others.

Developing democratic practices, child agency and participation

When children are given meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their learning they develop a strong sense of ownership, agency and active citizenship. Creating a Learning Environment where children can share their opinions, contribute to decision-making, set goals and co-create aspects of the learning space supports independence, responsibility and engagement.

By designing structured opportunities for participation and ensuring that all children can engage in ways that are meaningful to them, teachers help make the concepts of democracy and citizenship real. When children's views are genuinely heard and, where appropriate, influence learning experiences and practices, they experience themselves as capable contributors within their community.

Shared responsibility and a whole-school approach

Learning and development in Wellbeing is shaped by children's experiences both within and beyond the school environment. Wellbeing is a shared responsibility among school, family and the wider community. Strong partnerships with parents and guardians support consistency and continuity in children's learning.

Within school communities, a whole-school approach ensures that wellbeing is embedded in all aspects of school life. This is reflected in school policies, practices and everyday interactions. Through a positive culture and climate, children experience wellbeing not only as something that is taught, but as something that is lived and experienced in their daily lives.

Effective practice includes:

- open and respectful communication
- sharing information about learning, including sensitive topics
- providing opportunities for parental involvement
- valuing parents' insights into children's experiences.

It is important for teachers to be familiar with the school's relevant policies and procedures, for example, *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* and others, including behaviour and child safeguarding, to support safe and inclusive environments. When preparing for SPHE, it is important to consider the school's agreed approach, for example, choosing resources that align with the school's approach, or choosing a focus(es) of learning (e.g. digital safety skills) to align with a whole-school initiative. Additionally, many schools have an agreed approach for aspects such as safety and child-abuse prevention, for example teaching the *Stay Safe* programme across all stages simultaneously.

Working towards Learning Outcomes across a two-year stage

Learning Outcomes describe expected learning and development across a two-year stage. Schools and teachers should consider how learning experiences support children to build, revisit and deepen their understanding over time. Professional judgement should be used to decide how best to sequence and pace learning across a two-year stage based on the school context and the children's strengths, interests and needs.

Progression in *Wellbeing* will include periods of new learning, practice and consolidation. Therefore, not every Learning Outcome, or aspect of an outcome, may be addressed each year. However, across each two-year stage, every Learning Outcome should be intentionally planned for, and revisited as appropriate, across a two-year stage, ensuring both breadth and depth of learning.

To support coherence and avoid unnecessary repetition, consideration should be given to the sequencing of learning across each stage as part of the whole-school plan. Depending on the needs of the children, some schools may place greater emphasis on certain aspects, perhaps including these across both years, while other aspects or Learning Outcomes may be achieved within a shorter timeframe and can be planned for in a single year.

The following prompts may support preparation across the two-year stage:

- Are all Learning Outcomes planned for across a stage to ensure a broad and balanced learning experience?
- Are there aspects of learning that would benefit from being included in both years? How will learning develop across the stage?
- Are there aspects of learning that could be effectively addressed within one year of the stage?
- Are there aspects which are best approached at a whole-school level (e.g. child-protection and safety)?

- How might children's interests, needs and experiences influence the sequencing or emphasis of learning?
- Where can meaningful connections be made within the *Wellbeing* specification or across other curriculum areas?
- How can preparations remain flexible to emerging needs or teachable moments?

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- promote a school environment that supports children to feel safe, valued, respected and included, enabling full participation in learning
- promote positive relationships, respect, fairness and inclusion in everyday experiences
- promote a positive culture and climate in school policies, practices and interactions across the school community
- create opportunities to explore aspects of Wellbeing at a whole-school level (e.g. community or whole-school events).





Organising time

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* provides the suggested time allocations to assist teachers and schools in their work with the curriculum. They are intended to be used flexibly as teachers prepare rich Learning Experiences and respond to the learning needs of children. They comprise two categories: Minimum Curriculum Time and Flexible Time. The minimum suggested weekly time allocation for Wellbeing is outlined in Table 3.

Stage	Suggested minimum time allocations
Stage 1	2 hours 30 minutes per week
Stage 2	3 hours per week
Stage 3	3 hours per week
Stage 4	3 hours per week

Table 3: Suggested Weekly Minimum Time Allocations for Wellbeing

Proportionally, as teachers prepare for PE and SPHE Learning Experiences, it is recommended that a ratio of 2:1 should be used for PE and SPHE learning, with the greater amount of time being given to PE. It is essential that children engage in active PE as well as SPHE learning every week. A single PE Learning Experience is not recommended, instead it is suggested that children engage in PE on at least two days per week.

Wellbeing should feature every week, so schools will need to consider how best to allocate facilities and resources. Ultimately, schools are encouraged to use curriculum time flexibly, as outlined in the

Primary Curriculum Framework. This enables teachers to respond to children’s needs, seize unexpected learning opportunities, and provide meaningful and engaging learning experiences for Wellbeing

Teachers should plan for and provide weekly learning experiences in both SPHE and PE to support children in developing the full range of knowledge, skills, and learning experiences set out in the specification. The *Wellbeing* specification highlights the natural connections that exist between these two subjects, and teachers are encouraged to identify and make use of meaningful opportunities for integration. For example, in PE when children are expressing emotions by creating dance routines, opportunities arise to support them in recognising, naming, and exploring a broad range of emotions and feelings within SPHE.

There are natural connections across the five curriculum areas. These connections can be used to meaningfully integrate Learning Outcomes, resulting in time being used more efficiently, while also supporting learning, teaching and assessment in more than one curriculum area. Integration across the curriculum areas offers flexible approaches to working with time allocations. For example, when covering the locomotor skill of jumping in PE and measurement in Mathematics, instructional time may be drawn from both Wellbeing and Mathematics provided that Learning Outcomes from both areas are being addressed purposefully.



Time for PE is time spent moving

Time allocated to PE is movement-focused time. While brief moments for instruction, demonstration, discussion, questioning or reflection in various formats can be important aspects of PE Learning Experiences, the majority of PE time should involve children developing movement skills, concepts and strategies through participating in active, playful and engaging physical Learning Experiences. This ensures that the weekly time allocation for PE genuinely supports children in developing movement competence, confidence and enjoyment through active participation.

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- plan how the school timetable allocates weekly PE and SPHE time in relation to available facilities and resources.

Integration

Integrated learning, both within and across curriculum areas and subjects, is an important part of the curriculum. It helps children see connections between ideas, deepen their understanding and apply knowledge, skills, concepts, dispositions, attitudes and values in real-world contexts. There are multiple approaches to effective preparation for integration. Below are some suggestions to help guide teachers' preparation and make integration meaningful and engaging for children's learning.

No matter where a teacher starts, they should always ask – *Will this be authentic and purposeful for the children in my class and does it offer the potential for meaningful learning?*

As a teacher prepares for integrated Learning Experiences, consideration may be given to:

- **Agency:** How have the children's interests, strengths, questions and choices as well as the teacher's professional judgement shaped the focus and resources used?
- **Relevance:** Does an integrated approach reflect the children's abilities, interests and needs in the curriculum areas or subjects being integrated?
- **Learning Outcomes:** Which specific Learning Outcomes will be addressed across the curriculum areas and subjects being integrated?
- **Focus(es) of Learning and Learning Experiences:** What is the Focus(es) of Learning and how will playful and engaging Learning Experiences support these Focus(es) of Learning?
- **Duration:** Is this a unit of integrated learning over several weeks, or a shorter integrated Learning Experience?
- **Time and balance:** How is time allocated across subjects and will one curriculum area or subject lead or be emphasised more?
- **Assessment:** How will the teacher know what children have learned or experienced and also identify the next steps in learning in the respective curriculum areas/subjects?

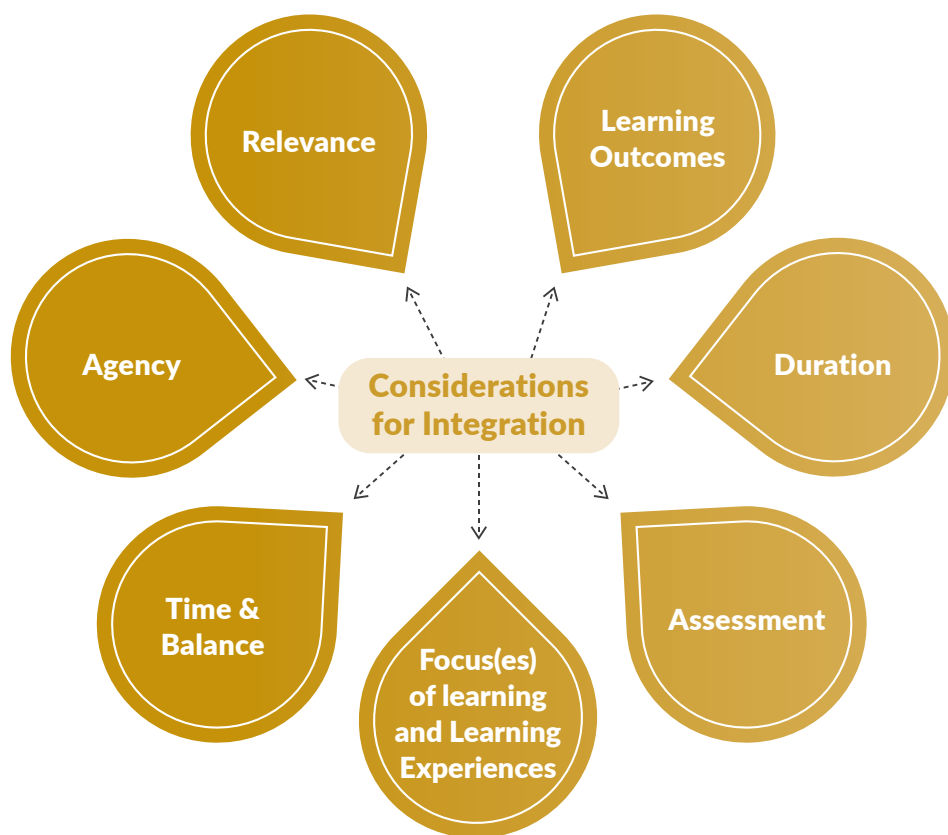


Figure 7: Considerations for Integration

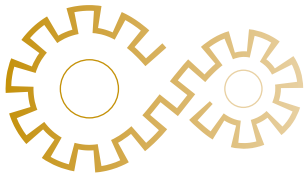
When preparing for successful integration:

- Start with meaningful links – avoid forcing connections or the ‘tokenistic’ inclusion of curriculum areas or subjects
- Keep the integrity of each curriculum area or subject by ensuring that each one is clearly addressed through the Focus(es) of Learning
- Embrace spontaneous opportunities when they arise.

Integration and the Wellbeing specification

Curriculum integration within Wellbeing brings PE and SPHE together to support a holistic approach to children’s learning and development. While the Movement competence strand relates solely to PE,

the other three strands include integrated Learning Outcomes, especially in Stages 1 and 2. Strand units that connect across both PE and SPHE are identified by the following symbol in the specification.



Relevant and applicable to both PE and SPHE contexts

Table 4: PE and SPHE connections within the *Wellbeing* specification in Stages 1 and 2

Integration involves making meaningful connections both within the *Wellbeing* specification (between PE and SPHE) and across other curriculum areas. Within the *Wellbeing* specification, integration between PE and SPHE allows children to experience connections between physical, social and emotional learning. For example, concepts such as cooperation and respect can be developed through both discussion and movement-based activities, allowing learning to be applied, reinforced and deepened in various contexts.

Integration also extends across other curriculum areas, including Arts Education, STEM Education, SEE and Language. These connections provide opportunities for children to apply learning in authentic, meaningful situations. This integration should always be purposeful and guided by the Learning Outcomes. It enhances but, does not replace, discrete learning.

Teachers should prepare for Wellbeing Learning Experiences that involve integration within the curriculum area itself. Table 5 presents a non-exhaustive set of examples of integration within Wellbeing. It is not intended as an example of a teacher’s recorded preparation. The samples used have been chosen by way of illustration only.

Learning Outcomes Through appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences, children should be able to:	Sample Focus(es) of learning	Sample Learning Experiences
Stage 1 Wellbeing Strand: Emotional and relational education Strand Unit: Relationships recognise the importance of different relationships for wellbeing, including with self, family, friends, peers and teammates. W, AL, CL	Recognising different types of relationships (self, family, friends, peers, teammates) and developing their cooperation and teamwork skills.	Through SPHE, the teacher explores a story about friendship with the children and leads a discussion about how friends can help one another. Through role play, the teacher guides the children to practise inviting a friend to join a game. Through PE (e.g. in the activity area of Outdoor and adventure education), the teacher provides opportunities for the children to work together in different groups to solve challenges.
Stage 2 Wellbeing Strand: Community and belonging Strand Unit: Relationships discuss the importance of rights, <u>equity</u> , <u>equality</u> and fair play, and explore examples from their lives and/or the wider community, demonstrating fairness in interactions and activities. W, AC, AL	Talking about fairness and helping children understand and apply fairness in real situations.	Through SPHE, the teacher supports children to explore the concept of fairness through story, video and role-play. The teacher facilitates discussion on what fairness looks like in different situations and how fairness helps everyone feel included. Through PE (e.g. in the activity area of Games), the teacher designs activities where children can explore and experience the importance of fair play, for example through turn taking, following agreed rules and respectful interactions.

Learning Outcomes <i>Through appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences, children should be able to:</i>	Sample Focus(es) of learning	Sample Learning Experiences
Stage 3 PE and SPHE Strand: Emotional and relational education Strand Unit: <u>Resilience</u> demonstrate commitment and confidence to persevere with appropriate challenge, reflecting on the link between effort and improvement, demonstrating coping skills that support <u>resilience</u> and the ability to seek support when necessary. W, AL, CL	Developing perseverance and <u>resilience</u> through challenge.	Through PE (e.g. in the activity area of Active living), the teacher introduces a new and challenging activity, such as juggling. As the children work through juggling tasks, they show perseverance as they experience challenge, make mistakes and persist. Through SPHE, the teacher supports the children to explore strategies to help them persevere when they experience challenges in learning, for example, setting goals, breaking down tasks and asking for support.
Stage 4 PE and SPHE Strand: Health education PE Strand Unit: Healthy living experience, explain and monitor the physical effects of being active on the body, such as changes in heart rate, breathing, temperature, flexibility and coordination. W, CL, M PE and SPHE demonstrate a willingness to nurture their wellbeing in areas such as physical activity, outdoor experiences, food, hygiene, sleep, rest and relaxation, recognising changing needs as they grow and the importance of a balanced lifestyle. W, CL, AL	Developing an understanding of how physical activity affects the body and how balanced lifestyle choices support overall wellbeing.	Through PE (e.g. in the activity area of Athletics), the teacher supports children to practically explore and describe the physical effects of being active, for example, prompting them to notice changes as they run or stretch. Through SPHE, the teacher supports the children to explore the importance of physical activity as part of a balanced lifestyle. Working in pairs or small groups, children engage with a range of scenarios illustrating active and inactive lifestyles, considering how the person might feel, why they feel this way and how their choices may be influencing their wellbeing.

Table 5: Examples of integration within Wellbeing

Integration with other curriculum areas

Teachers should prepare for Wellbeing Learning Experiences that involve integration with other curriculum areas and subjects. Integrated Wellbeing Learning Experiences should be prepared for in parallel and should interact with other curriculum areas and subjects rather than be subsumed into them. Table 6 presents a non-exhaustive set of examples of integration across curriculum areas and subjects. It is not intended as an example of a teacher's recorded preparation. The samples used have been chosen by way of illustration only.

Integration	Learning Outcomes <i>Through appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences, children should be able to:</i>	Sample Focus(es) of Learning	Sample Learning Experiences
Wellbeing and Language	Stage 1 Wellbeing Strand: Movement competence Strand unit: Movement skills explore and develop a range of locomotor movement skills such as walking, dodging, mobility wheeling, hopping, running, skipping, jumping and side stepping through a range of the PE activity areas. W, AL, M Irish (L2) aird a léiriú, éisteacht le hathrá ar dhánta, rannta agus amhráin ghearra Ghaeilge, agus páirt a ghlacadh iontu.	Exploring a range of <u>locomotor skills</u> (walking, hopping, jumping and running) through games. Practising use of vocabulary in the song 'Tá Teidí ag Siúl' (walk, run, jump, hop, turn).	Through the PE activity area of games, children work on developing their vocabulary in Irish in their warm up to the games lesson based on the movements in the song 'Tá Teidí ag Siúl' (walk, run, jump, hop, turn) as provided by the teacher.
Wellbeing and STE	Stage 2 SPHE Strand: Health education Strand unit: Human development recognise ways human bodies change as they grow. Understand that variation is to be expected, and that birth, life, growth and death are all part of the human life cycle. W, CL, AL Science Strand: Living things understand and record the difference between living and non-living things. Identify and discuss the basic needs of humans to grow and thrive, including the importance of food for energy and growth. AL, CL, W	Understanding human growth and development, including the basic needs required to grow and thrive.	Through SPHE, the teacher leads the children to explore growing and changing, for example, things the body could do when they were babies compared to now, recognising that growth and development are unique to the individual. Through Science, the teacher explains the basic needs that humans have so that the children can understand that food is needed for energy and growth to thrive.

Integration	Learning Outcomes <i>Through appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences, children should be able to:</i>	Sample Focus(es) of Learning	Sample Learning Experiences
Key Competency: Being creative	Stage 3 PE Strand: Movement competence Strand unit: Movement concepts adjust and apply the concept of <u>body awareness</u> and <u>dynamics</u> such as movement quality, weight and transfer of weight through a range of the PE activity areas. W, AL, C Music Strand: Responding and connecting listen to, follow, interpret, respond, reflect on and analyse a variety of songs, musical pieces and excerpts in a range of active, sensory and embodied ways. AL, CL, C	Learning how to apply <u>body awareness</u> and movement <u>dynamics</u> while interpreting and responding to movement through dance.	Through the PE activity area of dance, the teacher guides the children through developing their movement concepts while developing understanding of Music concepts such as <u>dynamics</u>, tempo and structure.
SPHE, History, and MFL	Stage 3 SPHE Strand: Community and belonging Strand unit: Sense of belonging recognise the important role each person plays in creating a sense of belonging within their class, school and community. Appreciate <u>diversity</u> and adopt both individual and collective strategies to contribute to positive and inclusive learning environments. W, AC, AL History Strand: My locality research aspects of the story of their locality and the island of Ireland, including significant events, people, customs and the origins of place names. AL, CL, W Language MFL: Building an awareness of languages and cultures explore and develop a curiosity about and an appreciation of the languages used in the classroom, school, wider community and wider world, sharing examples from everyday experiences.	Developing a sense of belonging and identity through engagement with community, heritage and cultural <u>diversity</u>.	Through SPHE, the teacher supports the children to explore ways people in the community support and care for one another. They identify ways they can contribute to collective wellbeing within the community and develop respect for <u>diversity</u> in the community. Through History, the teacher invites community members to share stories about the locality and supports the children to research an aspect of the locality, such as exploring customs/ traditions including stories, music and dance associated with the community. Through MFL, the teacher helps the children to become aware of and appreciate languages used in their community as they engage in discussions about home languages and cultural experiences with others.

Integration	Learning Outcomes <i>Through appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences, children should be able to:</i>	Sample Focus(es) of Learning	Sample Learning Experiences
PE, Geography and English (L1)	Stage 4 PE Strand: Movement competence Strand unit: Movement strategies adapt and apply problem-solving, tactics and strategies through a range of the PE activity areas. W, AL, C Geography Geographical skill: Mapping/Graphicacy Geographical skill of mapmaking and map-reading, applying the fundamentals of mapping – location, scale, symbols, perspective and direction. English (L1) Strand: Oral language listen and speak with increasing confidence, independence and skill in order to work collaboratively with others and to share feedback, ideas, decisions and outcomes in a range of contexts with familiar and unfamiliar audiences.	Developing collaborative problem-solving skills through the application of mapping and communication strategies.	Through teacher designed activities in the PE activity area of Outdoor and adventure education, children work together to use their problem-solving skills to follow maps and find their way around an orienteering course. Through Geography, the teacher supports the children to develop their map-reading skills and learn the fundamentals of mapping (e.g. scale and symbol). Through English (L1), the teacher guides the children in justifying their opinions when orienteering and reading the map (e.g. justifying choice of route).

Table 6: Examples of integration within Wellbeing and other curriculum areas and subjects

Not all integration needs to be formally prepared for or anticipated. Everyday integration and 'teachable moments' can also offer valuable and authentic opportunities for children to build connections across the curriculum. In Wellbeing, examples of natural and spontaneous integration include:

- observing an activity in PE, the teacher notices a conflict between children. The teacher uses this as a teachable moment to introduce and model conflict resolution strategies, such as taking turns, listening to others and using respectful language (Stage 3, Relationships)
- looking at lunches provides opportunities for the teacher to promote learning about healthy eating through informal and planned discussions. This supports children in developing an understanding of balanced diets and recognising nutritious food choices (Stage 1, *Healthy living*)
- observing that some children are regularly left out during play during breaktime. The teacher uses this opportunity to focus on friendship skills and inclusion, teaching children strategies such as inviting others to join in, sharing and being kind and supportive (Stage 4, Sense of belonging)
- walking in the school corridor, the teacher notices some litter on the floor and the teacher uses this as a teachable moment to talk about taking responsibility for the school environment. The teacher encourages children to pick up litter and explains how keeping the school clean helps everyone feel safe and proud of their school community (Stage 2, Citizenship). This could be followed up later with a series of planned Learning Experiences on litter and caring for our school and community.



Artificial Intelligence and teacher preparation

Informed, purposeful and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can present opportunities to augment and support teachers' preparation for learning, teaching and assessment (e.g., *aiding teachers' understanding of unfamiliar topics, generating and providing feedback on ideas for Learning Experiences or assessment approaches, etc.*). As with all digital tools in education, teachers should be aware of the limitations and risks associated with the use of AI in preparation (e.g., *misinformation, bias, hallucinations, data privacy, copyright, etc.*). Before using tools or programmes which incorporate AI, they should be reviewed for accuracy, alignment with the curriculum, pedagogical relevance and most importantly, safety and trustworthiness.

The management of educational data must be secure and protect the privacy of children, teachers and wider members of the school community. Where a decision is made to use a tool incorporating AI, teachers remain in the lead ensuring the tool supports rather than directs their professional decision-making and judgement.

There are a number of important considerations when exploring the potential use of AI tools to support teacher preparation:

- Does the tool adhere to the relevant policies and guidelines of your school? Is the tool GDPR compliant?
- Will the AI tool or programme meaningfully support teachers' preparation?
- Can you guide and shape AI outputs so they support, rather than replace, teacher professional judgement?
- Are outputs relevant and contextually appropriate to your school setting?
- Before using the output from the tool, have you checked it against other sources and adapted as appropriate?

In all instances, the teacher is responsible for overseeing the output of any AI tools used and ensuring informed, purposeful and ethical use. Further, and evolving, information on the use of AI in schools is available from the Department of Education and Youth's *Guidance on AI in Schools* and through supports provided by Oide and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).



Parents and families

Establishing and maintaining partnerships between schools and families will enrich children's experience in Wellbeing. Schools are encouraged to engage in proactive communication with parents. It is important that parents are made aware of the meaningful contribution that learning in Wellbeing makes to their child's overall development.

A partnership approach is grounded in open, reciprocal communication where both teachers and parents play a vital role in supporting children's learning in Wellbeing. This approach recognises parents as their child's primary educator, with unique insights into their abilities, interests and needs. Parents' active interest in helping their children to learn and develop in Wellbeing is invaluable. They should be assured of the importance and impact of their contribution. It also supports parents to consolidate and extend learning at home.

This respectful and trusting partnership is especially important in Wellbeing, where teachers may not always be aware of experiences or information from home that may influence a child's learning and development, for example trauma, bereavement, illness, family circumstances or other factors that may affect a child's participation, responses or engagement in learning. Schools are encouraged to communicate proactively, particularly when addressing topics like family, substance misuse, abuse or human development. Sharing this information in advance fosters trust and allows parents to engage meaningfully, while also supporting continuity of conversation at home. This could take the form of newsletters, communication through apps or notes home ensuring that Wellbeing is visible. A school may also have an introductory class meeting or provide a letter for parents and families at the beginning of the school year outlining information on different topics that will be covered throughout the year and how these might be approached. At formal and informal parent/teacher meetings, information could be shared on children's progress in Wellbeing.

An effective partnership model also recognises the diversity of families. Sensitivity to differing circumstances, cultural backgrounds, languages, values and beliefs is essential. Building trusting and inclusive relationships requires a responsive approach, for example, using varied communication methods to meet different needs. Above all, schools should actively listen to and seek to understand parents' perspectives. It is important for schools to give parents and families the opportunity to ask questions about the area of Wellbeing and opportunities to share relevant information about their child that would be useful for the teacher. It may be useful to invite parents to collaborate on or review Wellbeing related policies to ensure a shared understanding of the school's approach. It may be helpful for schools to promote an 'open door' approach where parents feel welcome to ask questions, clarify their perspective and share relevant insights to support their child's learning in Wellbeing. It may also be helpful to include information about the school's approach to Wellbeing as part of the enrolment process.

Teachers can involve parents and families by encouraging at home conversations about PE and SPHE. Schools might share simple prompts or active challenges that invite family participation such as designing a poster, learning an outdoor game from a previous generation or dramatising a story on friendship. Written or reflective activities could be provided to parents and families or resources to support conversations at home.

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- develop shared approaches for communicating with parents and families that support children's learning and strengthen connections between home and school, while recognising the diverse contexts of families
- share information about Wellbeing with parents (e.g. introductory meetings, written communication)
- involve parents in the development and review of Wellbeing-related policies.

Guest speakers and external facilitators

The specification is purposefully designed for enactment by teachers, as committed, skilful and agentic professionals. It is grounded on the teacher's knowledge of the children, the children's prior learning, and their professional understanding of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and the specification.

Where a specific need is identified, external facilitators or guest speakers may play a complementary role, working in collaborative partnership with teachers to support aspects of the curriculum. Any decision to involve external providers or guest speakers should consider the progression of the children's learning and whether an external facilitator or guest speaker will meaningfully enhance this. Alignment with the specification must also be considered.

If the decision is made to work with an external facilitator or guest speaker, a collaborative approach to preparation is essential. The class teacher retains responsibility for ensuring that the Focus(es) of Learning and all Learning Experiences align with the Learning Outcomes.

External facilitators and guest speakers must work under the guidance and supervision of the class teacher, who remains present with the children at all times. Clear communication between the class teacher and external facilitator/guest speaker is vital. Where appropriate, learning developed during these experiences can be reinforced by the class teacher across other contexts and curriculum areas and subjects.

In Wellbeing, the classroom teacher is uniquely and best positioned to enact the *Wellbeing* specification due to their established relationships with the children and their professional pedagogical and curriculum knowledge. In this role, the teacher can sensitively and consistently support children's wellbeing. It is acknowledged that, where a specific need is identified, an external facilitator may support aspects of children's learning in Wellbeing as part of a collaborative approach with the teacher.

When considering the involvement of an external facilitator, it is important that school leadership and teachers evaluate the facilitator's experience, skills, and suitability to ensure their input is appropriate and beneficial for the children. Careful consideration should also be given to ensuring alignment with the *Wellbeing* specification, including consistency with relevant Learning Outcomes, appropriate pedagogical and assessment approaches and responsiveness to the developmental stage and individual needs of the children.

Preparation for such input should be collaborative and include adherence to child protection procedures, consideration of the school context and awareness of the children's prior learning, ensuring all learners are supported in an inclusive manner. The frequency and duration of external inputs should be managed appropriately so that the classroom teacher remains central to the delivery of the *Wellbeing* specification.

During external inputs, the classroom teacher continues to play an active role by supporting the children, facilitating meaningful engagement, and helping them make connections with their prior learning. Following these experiences, the teacher provides opportunities for reflection, supports children in consolidating and applying their learning in other contexts, gathers feedback where appropriate and reflects on the effectiveness of the external input in contributing to children's holistic wellbeing and ongoing development.

When considering the involvement of an external facilitator or guest speaker in Wellbeing, schools may find it helpful to reflect on the following questions to ensure that their decision is purposeful, aligned with the *Wellbeing* specification and responsive to children's needs:

Purpose and alignment with the *Wellbeing* specification

- What specific learning need has been identified?
- Which Learning Outcome(s) will this input support?
- How will this enhance children's learning?
- Are the pedagogical approaches consistent with those described in the specification?
- Is the input age-appropriate and responsive to the developmental stage of the children?

Role of the class teacher

- How will the class teacher remain central to the Learning Experience?
- How will the teacher prepare children before the session and consolidate learning afterwards?
- How will continuity and progression be ensured beyond the external session?

Inclusion, safeguarding and school context

- Has the facilitator's suitability, experience and safeguarding compliance been reviewed?
- Does the input reflect the school's approach to Wellbeing as outlined in the relevant policies?
- Is the approach inclusive and sensitive to the diversity of children and families within the school?

Impact

- How will the school evaluate whether the external input contributed meaningfully to children's learning and wellbeing?
- Is this a once-off input, or part of a planned progression of learning?

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- develop shared approaches for engaging with guest speakers and external facilitators that ensure quality, align with the context of the school, adhere to safeguarding requirements, and enrich children's learning experiences
- ensure that any external input reflects the school's approach to Wellbeing as outlined in the relevant policies
- adopt an approach that is inclusive and sensitive to the diversity of children and families within the school.

For more information and guidance please see relevant circular on use of external facilitators.



Safe practice in Wellbeing

Understanding risk

Two understandings of risk are presented in the Learning Outcomes in this specification:

- Healthy risk refers to a challenge or action taken in a safe and constructive way that promotes personal growth, learning, and resilience.
- Risk assessment is the process of evaluating a situation to identify potential hazards and assess the likelihood and severity of negative outcomes. It involves recognising dangers, analysing potential impacts, and making informed decisions to reduce risks and ensure safety.

Safe practice in PE

Risk-taking and adventure are important aspects of PE. Children should be encouraged to make good choices when using equipment that requires extra preparation and supervision beyond standard safety procedures.

Safety precautions cannot remove all risk but should eliminate unnecessary hazards. The following prompts may help teachers and schools plan for safe practice in PE:

Indoor and outdoor spaces

- Ensure the selected space (e.g. yard, hall, field) is appropriate for the planned activity in terms of size, layout and suitability
- Check that the ground is clean, hazard free and safe for movement
- Clearly mark zones and boundaries to support structure, safety and spatial awareness during activities
- Keep fire exits and access routes clear at all times.

Equipment safety

- Ensure equipment is age-appropriate, regularly maintained and thoroughly checked before use to ensure safety and functionality
- Use all items strictly for their intended purpose with setup and dismantling procedures safe and manageable for both staff and children
- Maintain a safe and organised storage system for equipment before and after use
- Provide additional support or adaptations for children who require them to ensure inclusive participation e.g. use alternative equipment like lighter balls or larger targets to support coordination and success for a child with limited mobility.

Supervision and child awareness

- Ensure children understand safety rules and know how to use the equipment correctly (e.g., carrying and moving mats and benches)
- Teach children how to move safely within space including awareness of rules, boundaries and designated zones
- Appropriate clothing and footwear should be worn by children participating in PE to allow for mobility during all activities. Jewellery should not be worn.

Safe Practice in SPHE

Safeguarding obligations

Children’s safety and wellbeing are central to the *Wellbeing* specification. When preparing for learning, teaching, and assessment in Wellbeing, schools must have regard to relevant circulars, policies and procedures.

In particular, the *Child Protection Procedures for Schools* and the *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools* provide guidance on best practice and outline schools’ statutory obligations regarding child protection and safeguarding, including the requirement to implement the *Stay Safe* programme within SPHE.

The Learning Outcomes within the *Wellbeing* specification were designed to align with and complement this mandatory content; however, the child abuse prevention programme must continue to be taught in full.

Schools have a duty of care to safeguard children and to support them in developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to recognise and respond appropriately to unsafe or abusive situations.

Due to the sensitive nature of some SPHE topics, children may make a disclosure related to child protection or safeguarding. It is essential that all staff follow the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* when responding to disclosures or concerns. Teachers should respond calmly and supportively, and report concerns in line with the school’s child protection procedures.

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- identify the most appropriate spaces in the school for PE to take place
- establish systems to organise, maintain and routinely check equipment to ensure safety and functionality
- clarify appropriate clothing and footwear expectations to support mobility during all activities
- ensure all staff are familiar with the *Child Protection Procedures for Schools* and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools*.



Resources

When preparing for Wellbeing, it is important to recognise that the children, the teacher and the learning environment are the primary resources. Beyond these, all other resources can be considered as tools to support children's learning and their value lies in how well they help children develop understanding, skills and ways of thinking in Wellbeing. High-quality physical and digital resources play an important role in supporting children's learning. Children should experience a wide range of resources and are encouraged to demonstrate choice and express preference in selecting and using these, where appropriate.

The following prompts may be useful to consider when selecting resources:

- **Alignment with the specification:** Do they support children's progression in learning as described in the specification?
- **Playful and engaging learning:** Are they motivating for children and reflective of the introductory text to each Learning Outcome in Chapter 5?
- **Accessible:** Are the resources accessible to support meaningful participation for every child?
- **Inclusive:** Are they inclusive of the abilities, interests and needs of the children?
- **Flexible:** Can they be used in different ways and adapted to enact the curriculum and respond to the local school context. Do they support and encourage children's choice in selecting learning activities?
- **Practical:** Are they practical to use, store, and maintain and are they suitable for individual, group or whole-class use?

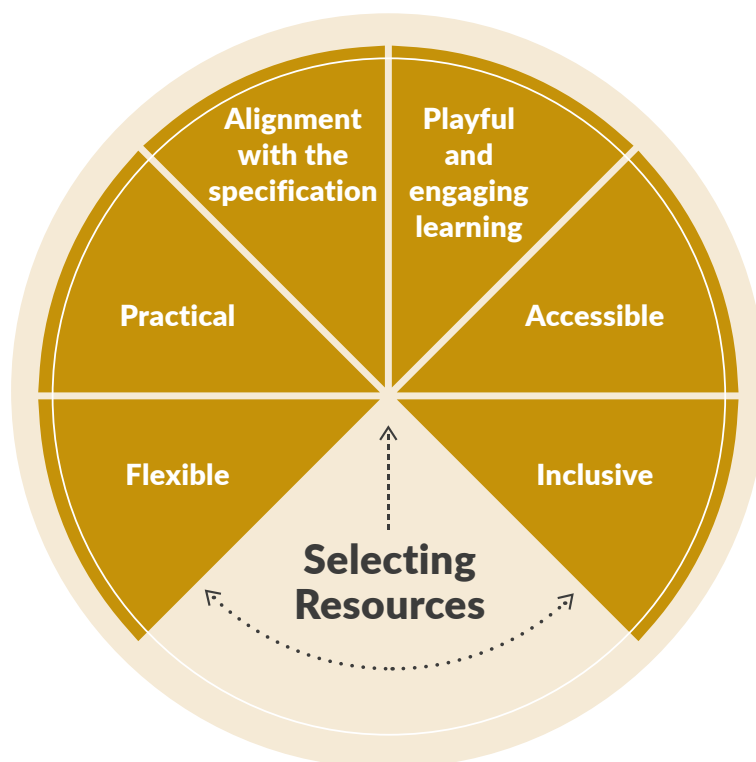


Figure 8: Selecting resources

Existing school resources

Reviewing existing school resources helps identify gaps and prevent duplication.

For PE, consider:

- **collaboration and support:** Can another teacher or class assist with setting up or expertise?
- **suitability of equipment:** Is the equipment appropriate for children's size, strength and ability?
- **curriculum relevance and alignment:** Is the equipment relevant for the curriculum stage and is the resource aligned with the aims, approaches and Learning Outcomes of the specification?

For SPHE, consider:

- **curriculum alignment:** Is the resource aligned with the aims, approaches and Learning Outcomes of the specification?
- **inclusivity and accessibility:** Does it reflect diverse family structures, cultures, identities and children's lived experiences? Is the resource available in home languages where possible?
- **equality and quality:** Is it free from bias and stereotypes and aligned with the school policy?
- **credibility and transparency:** Has it been developed by a reputable source and is it free from hidden or commercial messages?

Considerations for Whole-School Curriculum Planning

Schools can:

- plan for the provision, organisation and effective use of resources to support continuity, progression and equitable access for all children.



Programmes

Teachers and schools work with the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and the *Wellbeing* specification for curriculum preparation purposes. To support curriculum enactment, schools and teachers may also choose to work with programmes to guide their practice, informed by the Whole-School Curriculum Plan. While carefully selected programmes can be of benefit to children's learning in Wellbeing, they do not replace the *Wellbeing* specification or teachers' professional judgement. It is important to distinguish between commercial programmes and those that are required or recommended as part of Wellbeing provision. The *Stay Safe Programme* is the mandatory child protection and abuse prevention programme within SPHE and must be implemented in all schools. Schools may also draw on recommended programmes for aspects of SPHE, including the Walk Tall Programme for substance misuse prevention and the Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education can be used and adapted to align with the *Wellbeing* specification.

At the heart of the curriculum is the child, their interests, curiosities and prior learning, and the relationships and interactions developed through rich Learning Experiences. Learning, teaching and assessment must therefore remain responsive, playful and engaging. This involves teachers adapting, modifying or supplementing any programme to ensure it aligns with the Wellbeing specification and meets the needs of the children in their unique classroom context.

Additional programmes can support learning, teaching and assessment when they:

- are used judiciously to support breadth and balance in children's learning
- are used selectively and purposefully, rather than followed prescriptively
- allow flexibility so teachers can connect the Focus(es) of Learning with children's abilities, interests, needs
- offer opportunities for meaningful playful and engaging learning
- support the enactment of the *Wellbeing* specification.

Glossary

Agency (child)	Agency is the ability of children to actively influence their own lives and surroundings. It involves respecting their views, offering choices and including them in decision-making. For young children, agency includes having a say in their learning and is evident in how they impact others, shape relationships, and contribute to their social environments.
Bias	Bias refers to a tendency to like or dislike certain individuals, groups or ideas in a way that is often unconscious and not based on objective reasoning.
Body awareness	Body awareness is being conscious of different body parts that move, different shapes the body can make, such as round, narrow, wide, curved, twisted, stretched, star, pike, straddle, tuck, and different actions the body can make, such as travel, rotate, weight transference, swing, push, pull.
Democratic practices	Democratic practices involve children having a say in matters that affect them based on the principles of democracy.
Diversity	Diversity refers to individuals and group differences in society.
Dynamics in movement	Dynamics in movement involves awareness and exploration of how the body moves and weight transference, for example, fast or slow, sudden or sustained, strong or light.
Emotions and feelings	Emotions are complex biological responses to specific stimuli or situations. They are often brief and intense and are usually accompanied by bodily changes such as increased heart rate, facial expressions and hormone releases. Feelings are the conscious experience of emotions. They are usually subjective, can be influenced by personal experience, and can vary widely from person to person.
Empathy	Empathy involves perspective taking, understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and sometimes vicariously experiencing the emotions, feelings, thoughts and experiences of another.
Equality	Equality refers to the importance of recognising, respecting, and engaging with the diversity of individuals and group needs, and of ensuring equality in terms of access, participation, conditions and benefits for all people.
Equity	Equity refers to fairness and justice in the way people are treated. It recognises and addresses the diverse needs of individuals or groups. It can involve providing different resources, opportunities or levels of support based on specific requirements or individual circumstances, aiming to ensure that everyone can thrive.
Family structures	Family structures refer to the many ways families are formed, such as, mother-and father- headed families, co-parenting families, one-parent families, same-sex parent families, adoptive families, blended families, extended families, foster families, stepfamilies and others.
Interpersonal	Interpersonal development relates to one's relations with others.
Intrapersonal	Intrapersonal development refers to self-knowledge and understanding.
Locomotor skills	Locomotor skills involve moving the body in any direction from one point to another. For example, walking, mobility wheeling, running, hopping, skipping, jumping for height/distance, dodging or side stepping.
Relationships in movement	Relationships in movement refers to the way a child interacts with others in movement. For example, working in partners/groups, leading/following, mirroring, in unison/contrasting or canon. It also incorporates movement in relation to objects such as over, under, through and around.
Resilience	Resilience is the ability to cope with the normal stresses of life, and to adapt and navigate through challenges, setbacks, or difficult situations.

Risk	Risk involves embracing challenges and opportunities for exploration and development by stepping outside one's comfort zone, making mistakes, building resilience, confidence, creativity and problem-solving. Additionally, risk assessment involves evaluating situations to identify potential dangers and make informed decisions, to mitigate negative consequences and ensure safety. Together, a broad understanding of risk supports children to manage risk responsibly while embracing opportunities for personal growth and development.
Spatial awareness	Spatial awareness involves the exploration of where the body can move, for example, personal and general space, directions, low medium and high levels as well as curved, zig zag and straight pathways.
Spiritual wellbeing	Spiritual wellbeing is concerned with love for life, others, and a sense of connection with oneself, others, nature, the world and, for some, a larger purpose or higher power. It involves personal beliefs and practices that may or may not be linked to organised religion.
Stereotypes	Stereotypes are images or ideas about a person, group, or culture that are based on assumed characteristics, behaviours or activities.



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