



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme: Looking after my Environment Elective Module

For introduction to schools in September 2025.

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

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Introduction

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

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

Module title	Recommended time in hours
Looking after my Environment	60

Rationale

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

This module aims to develop in students an interest in their environment, cultivating environmental awareness and encouraging students to make informed choices that support sustainability in their daily lives. Students gain an appreciation for nature and learn about environmental care, including the impacts of human activities on plants and animals. By integrating sustainability principles into their daily lives, including energy and water conservation, waste reduction and recycling, students are equipped to contribute positively to a more sustainable future.

The nurturing of students' understanding of their environment contributes to the development of key competencies in senior cycle. When this happens, all learning across senior cycle is supported and the development of important life skills that are essential to student independence are promoted. Students stand to benefit in many ways as they progress in learning pathways and as they transition to life beyond school.

Continuity and progression

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

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

Students are given opportunities to demonstrate how learning acquired here can be linked to prior learning, to other senior cycle modules, curriculum areas, wider school activities and life outside of school. Students can extend their learning from the PLU Living in the Community and Junior Cycle Geography, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Science and History and apply their learning across senior cycle modules such as The past in my place, the student's area of special interest, Communication and Literacy, Numeracy, PE and Visual Art. This helps to reinforce learning and progress students' ability to communicate, interact, be creative, to express themselves, to explore their emotions, feelings and ideas and the perspectives of others in a variety of ways. This helps to provide a continuous learning experience for students throughout senior cycle. This supports students beyond school and provides students with a sense of achievement and confidence as they transition to the world of occupations, study or further services.

Teaching and learning

Students should engage in a range of activities which enable them to appreciate the physical world around them. These activities are the medium through which the learning outcomes can be achieved. While some examples are listed, schools have the flexibility to provide their own activities depending on their own unique contexts.

Examples of activities may include but are not limited to:

- improving an indoor or outdoor area
- composting
- rainwater collection and reuse
- nature walks
- planting and gardening
- creating and maintaining bird feeders
- participating in a class group, school or community environmental project or activity.

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

Providing students with tactile and interactive learning experiences may engage multiple senses and help enhance the learning experience. Students might feel the texture of soil, smell flowers, see the colours of plants and hear the various sounds of nature. Where appropriate, digital and assistive technology can be used to support learning and participation. Visual aids, adaptive tools and communication devices, electronic devices, visual and object cues, enhance learning and students' ability to engage with and enjoy the learning activity.

Module: Looking after my Environment

Module descriptor

Students will explore, engage with and enjoy many features of their natural and human-made environments. They will develop an awareness and an appreciation of how the features of human-made and natural environments relate and depend upon one another. This module supports students' growing awareness as they become more curious about their locality, understand the importance of a safe and healthy environment and develop strategies to care for their environment.

Students learn about

Students should be able to

Their local environment. Students recognise and appreciate the physical world around them. Students appreciate their place and the place of others within their environment.

- a. recognise the distinctive natural and human-made features of their local areas, region and county
- b. recognise the names and relative location of some natural and human-made features of their local areas
- c. recognise cardinal directions during exploration of the local areas
- d. use and record directions and routes on maps
- e. use and recognise maps and photographs of a variety of scales and purposes from their local areas
- f. appreciate the people, occupations and communities who live and work in their locality
- g. recognise and record changes in natural features in their locality
- h. explain the importance of local habitat for flora and fauna
- i. investigate the influence of natural features on plants, on the lives of animals and on people
- j. describe ways that natural features have been altered by people, plants or animals
- k. observe and recognise different flora and fauna
- l. describe strategies to protect flora and/or fauna
- m. record and display simple weather observations in systematic way using graphs, charts and common meteorological symbols
- n. recognise weather patterns and the impact of weather on people and places

Caring for their environment. Students make connections between people, places and activities. Students further their awareness of their role in caring for their environment.

- o. use appropriate tools and equipment safely and effectively while undertaking an environmental activity
- p. recognise symbols and signs relating to recycling
- q. recognise and sort categories of recyclable materials (plastic, paper, metal, etc.)
- r. identify everyday items that can be reused or upcycled and design solutions for reuse or upcycle
- s. recognise how our consumer choices affect the environment

Students learn about

Students should be able to

- t.** recognise various ways to look after and protect places of significance (e.g. conservation, preservation, restoration)
- u.** explain why certain places are significant to different people (e.g., social, emotional, cultural, historical, personal significance)
- v.** describe a place of personal significance and explain their personal connection
- w.** demonstrate actions they can take to help care for and enhance special places (e.g., picking up litter, following rules, participating in preservation activities)
- x.** explore organisations that help to improve the local environment and/or significant places
- y.** describe the importance of the organisations that help to improve the local environment and/or significant places
- z.** demonstrate safe working practices while undertaking an environmental activity.



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