



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Óige  
Department of Education  
and Youth

# Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme: Personal Care Curriculum Area

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.

Personal Care consists of one module. It is designed for a minimum of 60 hours of teaching time/class contact time over two years.

Module title	Recommended time in hours
Personal Care	60

## Rationale

Personal Care develops the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and dispositions needed to support students' physical, social, emotional and spiritual<sup>1</sup> wellbeing, now and in their future lives.

Young people experience changes and challenges as they move through this stage of their lives. The knowledge, skills, values and dispositions developed through Personal Care, enable students to better manage these changes and challenges. Learning in Personal Care is age, stage and developmentally appropriate and is focused on supporting students' health and wellbeing. Personal Care is designed to develop students' positive sense of self, build their capacity to care for themselves and support them in maintaining caring and healthy relationships with others. Through their learning in Personal Care, students can increase their capacity to make decisions that support their health and wellbeing and work towards becoming more independent as they move into adulthood. As such, Personal Care plays a central role in preparing students for a safer, healthier and more fulfilling life within and beyond school.

When challenges occur, developing and using a range of coping strategies and recognising how to ask for help, is important. Students also need to understand their rights and responsibilities with regard to protecting their wellbeing and how to access reliable, relevant information and supports from trusted sources.

Personal Care helps students prepare for the transition to life beyond school. It nurtures important self-care and self-management skills, as well as building their capacity to communicate in ways appropriate to the student. This supports their overall wellbeing and prepares them for the transition beyond school to adult services, further education or occupations.

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

<sup>1</sup> The spiritual dimension of wellbeing relates to being able to experience a sense of awe and wonder and knowing that life has meaning and purpose. (*Primary Curriculum Framework*, p12, NCCA, 2023) This is based on a human development approach to wellbeing that is holistic and interdisciplinary and recognises different aspects to wellbeing, including the spiritual aspect of life.

## Continuity and progression

The Personal Care module is designed to consolidate and progress students' learning and experiences from junior cycle, as well as develop students' increased awareness, knowledge and skills to enable them to better manage the demands of life now and prepare for experiences beyond school.

Personal Care is structured to provide continuity from the Primary Wellbeing curriculum, the Level 2 Personal Care Priority Learning Unit (PLU) at junior cycle, and the Junior Cycle SPHE specification. Personal Care enables students engaged in a L2LP to progress, enhance and deepen their learning about health and wellbeing in an age and stage appropriate manner throughout senior cycle.

Across all stages of learning, Personal Care supports the development of children and young people's positive sense of self, and their capacity to care for themselves and others. At each stage, important topics/themes are revisited, and new topics/themes introduced, thus ensuring both continuity and progression of learning. In revisiting topics/themes, care is taken to allow for deeper engagement relevant to the student's age, evolving needs and stage of development.

This module continues to build upon the key skills developed in junior cycle and provides progression through the development of relevant senior cycle key competencies. It also promotes students' ongoing development and learning in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)<sup>2</sup>, including, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and decision-making skills. Students are given opportunities to demonstrate how learning acquired in this curriculum area can be linked to prior learning, other curriculum areas, modules, wider school activities and life outside of school. This supports students beyond school and provides them with a sense of achievement and confidence as they transition to the world of occupations, study or further services beyond school.

<sup>2</sup> This module supports the development of social and emotional learning as set out in the CASEL Social and Emotional Skills Framework. What Is the CASEL Framework? – [CASEL](#)

## Teaching and learning

Personal Care should be carefully and collaboratively planned to personalise the intended learning for each student and ensure that learning is suited to their stage of development, strengths, abilities, learning needs, stage of development, and life experiences. The Student Support File is a key resource in this regard. Effective teaching and learning is supported when teachers collaborate and plan for learning thus enabling a shared vision and approach.

Personal Care has a practical focus, enabling students to build and practise skills that are important for them across a range of real-world scenarios. In particular, there is a focus on developing students' communication skills, problem-solving skills, skills of self-management and coping strategies. These strategies and skills should be practised in an informal yet structured and supportive setting within the classroom and can then be applied in wider contexts.

The learning outcomes within Personal Care should not be viewed in isolation. They are interconnected and overlap. Therefore, teachers may focus on a number of learning outcomes when planning learning activities and draw on a student's prior learning. As with all curriculum areas, some learning outcomes may need to be revisited to reinforce and deepen the learning. Learning outcomes should be viewed in tandem with the Progression Continuum. The Progression Continuum indicates where the student's progress is in relation to the learning outcomes. The progression continuum may be used to support teaching, learning and ongoing assessment in the student's daily activities

Parents<sup>3</sup> play a key role in all aspects of students' education. Collaboration between school and home is particularly important in supporting health and wellbeing education. Parents can provide invaluable insight into the most appropriate approach to take when working with their child.

Their unique and personal knowledge on how their child learns should inform a personalised approach to teaching and learning. Accessing student voice can also support student engagement and learning.

Teaching and learning requires multiple means of engagement and active pedagogies. This may involve use of audio or visual supports such as photos, video clips, storyboards, symbols or signs, role play, art, sensory activities or task analysis. Some students may need individual instruction to support their learning. Students are supported to express their learning through their individual, preferred way of communicating. These supports may include augmentative and alternative communication aids such as embossed symbols, writing devices, electronic devices, visual and object cues.

Teachers can also ensure that all language and imagery employed in the classroom is inclusive and promotes equality, respect and the rights of all individuals. This ensures students can see themselves, their families and their communities reflected across the learning and can learn that diversity is an important and enriching part of life. Guidance on how to create a safe and inclusive classroom can be found on the NCCA SPHE toolkits at [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)

<sup>3</sup> Parent encompasses parent, guardian, carer or other person acting in loco parentis of a child

# Module: Personal Care

## Module descriptor

This module focuses on deepening the student's knowledge, understanding, skills, values and dispositions in order to enable them to take care of themselves, in person and online, make healthy decisions and enjoy positive, caring relationships.

### Students learn about    Students should be able to

How to take care of themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. establish and manage a daily routine, including times of transition</li><li>b. explore ways to support their personal health and wellbeing including physical activity, nutrition, sleep, social connections and hobbies</li><li>c. describe personal hygiene routines and demonstrate increased responsibility for personal care</li><li>d. recognise positive and negative peer influence, both online and in person and demonstrate an appropriate response</li><li>e. recognise rights, responsibilities and protections before the law as they grow into adulthood</li></ul>
How to communicate more effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>f. communicate in a respectful and effective manner</li><li>g. demonstrate sharing and turn taking in different contexts</li><li>h. communicate needs and wants assertively and respectfully</li><li>i. demonstrate refusal skills appropriately and effectively</li><li>j. demonstrate how to address disagreements respectfully</li></ul>
How to recognise and manage emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>k. describe their emotions and recognise the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviours</li><li>l. recognise helpful and unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours and explore helpful ways of responding to and managing thoughts, feelings and behaviours</li><li>m. recognise sensory overload and identify ways of responding</li><li>n. explore ways of managing stress and anxiety</li></ul>
Skills needed to nurture and maintain healthy relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o. recognise and appreciate their own unique identities</li><li>p. explore the range of relationships that are important to them and ways to nurture these</li><li>q. demonstrate the skills needed for healthy relationships, both in person and online, including communicating respectfully, managing emotions, respecting boundaries</li><li>r. recognise examples/situations where people are treated unfairly or experience exclusion and identify helpful responses</li></ul>
Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>s. recognise what sexual activity is, in the context of an adult healthy, respectful relationship</li><li>t. appreciate the need to give and receive consent in the context of all interpersonal relationships, including within an adult sexual relationship</li><li>u. explore ways to support their sexual health</li></ul>

## Students learn about

## Students should be able to

Recognising and responding to risks or challenges

- v. identify places and/or situations where they do and don't feel safe and demonstrate skills for assessing and avoiding risks
- w. discuss ways to manage scenarios where they may feel pressure to engage in unhealthy or harmful behaviours
- x. identify ways in which substance use can impact on physical, social and emotional health
- y. understand the consequences, including legal consequences, of accessing or sharing sexually explicit material
- z. recognise health services and supports available locally and online and demonstrate how to access them

## Glossary of terms

Term	
<b>Boundaries</b>	In the context of interpersonal relationships, boundaries are the personal limits that individuals set for themselves to protect their own well-being. They express what a person is comfortable with and what they will not tolerate. Boundaries can be emotional, physical or material.
<b>Consent</b>	A core principle of all respectful interpersonal relationships; consent involves recognising and respecting one's own boundaries and the boundaries of others and always checking whenever one is unsure. Consent in a sexual setting is defined in Irish law as follows: <i>a person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act</i> . The age of consent to engage in sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17 years old. See appendix for further information relevant to consent.
<b>Emotional wellbeing</b>	Recognising, understanding and being able to express and manage our feelings and emotions in an appropriate manner. Emotional wellbeing is fluid and should not be equated with happiness which is subjective and transitory. Nor should it be understood as the absence of negative moods, feelings or thoughts.
<b>Health</b>	A state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
<b>Identity</b>	Identity is shaped by various factors including one's culture, ethnicity, values, beliefs, abilities, gender and sexual orientation. A person's identity can evolve and changes over time.
<b>Sexual activity</b>	A range of activities from kissing, touching, fondling to sexual intercourse which involve giving and receiving sexual pleasure. These activities can be solitary or involve other people. In the context of an adult healthy relationship, sexual activity includes consideration of contraception, safer sex and consent.
<b>Sexual health</b>	In the context of Personal Care at Level 2 this refers to awareness of sexuality as an aspect of being human, understanding sexual and reproductive behaviour and its consequences, and knowing how and where to seek sexual health advice and information.
<b>Skills</b>	Skills within Personal Care refer to social and emotional skills such as self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness as set out in the CASEL Social and Emotional Skills Framework.
<b>Social health</b>	Social health is our ability to interact and form meaningful relationships with others. Social relationships have an impact on our emotional and physical health.
<b>Substance use</b>	In the context of Personal Care at Level 2, substance use refers to alcohol, nicotine, vaping and drugs.

## Appendix 1: Sexuality education and the law

Ireland signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([UNCPRD](#)) in 2007 and ratified it in March 2018. This means that Ireland is committed to promoting and protecting the full enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to sexual health services and education programmes.

In addition to recognising this right, educators need to be aware of the legal framework which informs relationships and sexuality education. [The Criminal Law Sexual Offences Act 2017](#) defines consent as follows: *a person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act.* Section 21 focuses on 'sexual acts with protected persons' and a 'protected person' is someone who *lacks the capacity to consent to a sexual act.*

Accordingly such a person is *incapable of—*

- (a) *understanding the nature, or the reasonably foreseeable consequences, of that act,*
- (b) *evaluating relevant information for the purposes of deciding whether or not to engage in that act, or*
- (c) *communicating his or her consent to that act by speech, sign language or otherwise.*



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