




AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA

JUNIOR CYCLE

SOCIAL,
PERSONAL &
HEALTH EDUCATION



THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

Aims and Principles

1. The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in community and for leisure.
2. The Junior Certificate Programme is designed to meet the needs of all students in second-level education. Arising from this, every subject is offered at two levels, ordinary and higher. In the case of English, Irish and Mathematics a foundation level is also available.
3. The Junior Certificate Programme aims to
 - reinforce and further develop in the young person the knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies acquired at primary level;
 - extend and deepen the range and quality of the young person's educational experiences in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies;
 - develop the young person's personal and social confidence, initiative and competence through a broad, well balanced general education;
 - prepare the young person for the requirements of further programmes of study, of employment or of life outside full-time education;
 - contribute to the moral and spiritual development of the young person and to develop a tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others;
 - prepare the young person for the responsibilities of citizenship in the national context and in the context of the wider European and global communities.
4. The Junior Certificate Programme is based on the following principles:
 - Breadth and balance**
At this stage of their school career, every student should have a wide range of educational experiences. Particular attention must be given to reinforcing and developing the skills of numeracy, literacy and oracy. Particular emphasis should be given to social and environmental education, science and technology and modern languages.
 - Relevance**
Curriculum provision should address the immediate and prospective needs of the young person, in the context of the cultural, economic and social environment.
 - Quality**
Every young person should be challenged to achieve the highest possible standards of excellence, with due regard to different aptitudes and abilities and to international comparisons.
5. Each Junior Certificate Syllabus is presented for implementation within the general curriculum context outlined above.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

SOCIAL, PERSONAL
AND HEALTH
EDUCATION

JUNIOR CYCLE

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1. A RATIONALE FOR SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including the aesthetic, creative, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, religious, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for living in the community, and for leisure.

Commitment to education in the area of personal and social development arises out of this holistic aim of education and its underlying vision of the person. Such a commitment also emerges from a holistic vision of health—one that encompasses all the dimensions of life, including the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social and environmental, and the complex interplay between these dimensions which contributes to personal well-being and to positive inter-personal relationships.

Out of this holistic vision of the person, which is at the heart of our understanding of education and health, emerges a growing recognition that the social, personal and health education offered to our young people is as important as any other area of the curriculum. Just as support for personal and social development contributes to self-fulfilment, it is also a prerequisite for successful

learning; a young person who has a high degree of self-worth, a sense of security and a positive self-image will be more predisposed to school life and to the variety of learning situations it offers. He/she will be aware of the relationship between life-style, environment and health and well-being and conscious of the challenge to support personal, family and policy choices that promote health, in all its dimensions.

Social, personal and health education (SPHE) provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives, and social development. All these decisions must be made in the context of the wider community. Support from the Board of Management, from the wider community and in particular from parents will be necessary for the successful implementation of a school's programme of SPHE. With such support, students can be enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and the dignity of others.

2. THE AIMS OF SPHE

**Building on the aims of SPHE in the primary school,
at post-primary level SPHE aims**

- **to enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities**
- **to promote self-esteem and self-confidence**
- **to enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making**
- **to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion**
- **to promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.**

3. SPHE IN THE SCHOOL

3.1 THE WHOLE SCHOOL

The processes of all teaching and learning have implications for personal and social development. The ways in which members of the staff relate to one another and to the students, and the quality of relationships between the students themselves, form the foundation for personal and social development in a school. Therefore, every teacher and staff member, every class and extracurricular activity has offered and continues to offer opportunities for enhancing the personal and social development of the student.

A supportive school environment is essential if SPHE is to be effective. In such an environment,

- people feel valued
- self-esteem is fostered
- respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
- high expectations and standards are promoted
- there is support for those with difficulties
- open communication is the norm
- effort is recognised and rewarded
- uniqueness and difference are valued
- conflict is handled constructively
- initiative and creativity are encouraged
- social, moral and civic values are promoted.

The principles of fair play, respect, tolerance and reward for effort must permeate the whole school climate; they cannot be compartmentalised into SPHE.

The development of an appreciation for learning, respect and caring for self and others, a sense of belonging and a sense of social responsibility—these are tasks of the whole school community.

Curricular provision for SPHE can contribute to and benefit from a supportive school environment. However, the effectiveness of any SPHE programme offered is seriously undermined if principles such as those outlined above are not in operation in the whole school environment.

In addition to these whole-school factors there are a number of contextual and environmental factors that influence social, personal and health education. The socio-economic background of the students as well as their physical and cultural environment can have a significant impact on the range of choices and options that students may face. Schools should give due regard to these contextual factors in planning for social, personal and health education.

3.2 THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

The leadership of the principal is a significant factor in sustaining a supportive environment for SPHE in a school. The principal sets the tone for the school; her/his decisions and priorities have a direct impact on whole-school climate. In addition to the leadership given by the principal at a personal and professional

level, the priority given to SPHE by a Board of Management in a school plan can be seen as a clear statement of support at policy level. Many of the excellent SPHE programmes now established in schools are due to the conviction, commitment and continuing support of principals and Boards of Management.

The value of SPHE in the school will be expressed and perceived in timetabling, the assigning of teachers, and the provision of resources.

3.3 TIMETABLING

Circular M22/00 states that the recommended time allocation is the equivalent of one class period per week, organised in the manner that best meets the needs of the students and school organisation.

This curriculum has been prepared in the light of such an allocation.

3.4 CROSS-CURRICULAR SUPPORT

The value of cross-curricular support for elements of an SPHE programme and for the values and dispositions promoted by SPHE should not be underestimated. Subjects such as religious education, science and home economics may also deal with topics related to SPHE; but given the provision for choice within the junior and senior cycle at second level, and the methodological approach that is at the core of SPHE, the main focus of the programme should be on the designated class period. SPHE has a particular role as a key element of health promotion, and requires designated time in order to fulfil that function.

3.5 CORE VALUES

Many schools have worked on the development of a school plan or mission statement, which sets out the core values that inform school policy. Some schools have been introduced to such policy statements through the implementation of relationships and sexuality education. The core values articulated in a school plan will obviously inform every aspect of school life; but they will have particular relevance to a school's SPHE programme.

3.6 THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS

SPHE must be considered in the context in which the students find themselves and the changing social and cultural milieu in which they form relationships and make decisions and choices. While the principle of relevance is one that should inform the whole curriculum, it has particular implications for SPHE. Students should be challenged to critically examine this ever-changing context and given the skills that empower them "to participate fully and creatively in their communities" (*Charting our Education Future*, p.10.)

3.7 TEACHERS OF SPHE

Given the importance of the whole-school climate for successful SPHE, it is clear that in many ways every teacher in a school is a teacher of SPHE. Teachers directly involved in an SPHE programme in a school have a particular responsibility and require particular support. Teachers assigned to SPHE must have an understanding of and a familiarity with the methodologies associated with education in this area. SPHE should not be assigned to teachers without consultation. All teaching is challenging, but teaching an SPHE programme is a particular challenge,

demanding a range of skills and a high degree of sensitivity. Those involved in the SPHE programme in a school will need continuing support from their colleagues, from the principal and Board of Management, and from a range of other agencies that are in a position to offer in-career support.

Close links will be needed between the pastoral care system in a school and those involved in the teaching of SPHE. Some schools formalise these links by including the teaching of SPHE in the role of class tutor.

Planned communication and co-operation between those involved in SPHE and the guidance personnel in school will be essential for the effectiveness of both SPHE and guidance in the school.

3.8 HOME-SCHOOL LINKS AND SPHE

Links between home and school play a vital role in supporting the efforts of parents and guardians in the home and the work of the teachers in the classroom. Such links are particularly important in SPHE.

Beginning with pre-entry meetings before a student enters the school, schools need well-structured continuing links with the lives of the students outside the classroom and outside the school. Such links can inform an SPHE programme; they can help teachers to prioritise modules. These links can also provide parents with strategies for supporting the work of the school in its SPHE programme. Structured and continuing links can contribute to an SPHE programme that is relevant to the needs of students and the expectations of their parents and guardians.

4. SPHE PROGRAMMES AT POST-PRIMARY LEVEL

4.1 CURRENT PROVISION

It is clear that in recent years there has been a huge upsurge of interest in the broader aspects of the school curriculum. An ever-growing number of schools has come to the conclusion that, in order to meet the holistic aim of education and the curriculum, students should be exposed to a wide variety of learning experiences that will enable them to develop the qualities and dispositions necessary for effective learning at school and participation in adult life.

Over the years schools have adopted a variety of ways in which to meet the SPHE needs of the students. The Departments of Health and Children and Education and Science, in co-operation with other agencies, have made resources and training available in this area. Some schools offer pastoral care programmes, drawing on the expertise of a variety of individuals, institutes and training bodies for support and resource material. Resource material on a variety of topics has also been made available by voluntary and other groups and commercial interests.

The setting up of a tutor system in many schools, and staff training in effective tutor roles, have contributed to a positive climate and atmosphere in these schools. The leadership of principals has been a key factor in initiating and supporting this and any other pastoral care structure.

4.2 AN ENABLING CURRICULUM

The provision of a curriculum and teacher guidelines for SPHE at post-primary level is in no way intended to supplant or terminate the excellent and indispensable work already in progress. The curriculum offers a framework for many existing programmes and an incentive for schools to make formal provision for SPHE. It is an enabling curriculum which will support work already being done in SPHE and offer guidelines for that and future work. In this regard the NCCA course committee has drawn on the expertise of bodies and groups offering materials and training in this area.

4.3 RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE)

The Interim Curriculum and Guidelines for Relationships and Sexuality Education indicates that the context for RSE in post-primary schools will be within social, personal and health education. The outline for junior cycle suggested in the Interim Curriculum and Guidelines has been incorporated into the RSE module of each of the three years of this syllabus. In planning for this module, a school will be guided by its policy on relationships and sexuality education which will have been prepared in consultation with parents, teachers, and management authorities.

A section of the guidelines for social, personal and health education will incorporate the remainder of the topics addressed in the Interim Curriculum and Guidelines for Relationships and Sexuality Education.

5. ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF SPHE

SPHE will not be formally examined in the Junior Certificate examination as at present configured. The modes and techniques of assessment that have been in use for national certification purposes are not appropriate to the content or methodology of SPHE. Neither is it appropriate that students should be certificated at national level in SPHE, in the Junior and Leaving certificate examinations. However, as part of the school curriculum, with stated aims and outcomes, SPHE must be open to assessment and evaluation. These fall into three broad categories:

5.1 STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PEER ASSESSMENT

Such assessment might be done in class with the students provided with questionnaires and/or worksheets on which they might record their own perceived progress in a given skill. Rather than an end of module activity for students, such self-assessment should be seen as an integral part of the teaching, learning and assessment process. Self-assessment tools should be based on clearly stated criteria—criteria that must be clear to the students as well as to the teacher. Without such criteria, self-assessment can become a chore and even a hindrance to effective learning. When the criteria are clear and the assessment instrument relevant and stimulating, self-assessment can be a powerful motivator.

Some outcomes of self-assessment must be private. However, teachers, reacting effectively to some of the insights of the students, can modify or extend the SPHE programme in the light of those insights.

Peer assessment could be used by groups of students to evaluate how well they worked as a team, for example. It is facilitated by the teacher, and training in this skill might be provided in the context of training for SPHE.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

This might involve the assessment of the students' work and skills through specific tasks, homework, or project work. Samples of work done in SPHE might be kept by the students as a record of achievement. Such work might be shown and discussed at home.

Time spent on SPHE is important and valuable time. The possibility of a certificate of completion being awarded by a school at the end of a term, year or module of work should be considered. The provision of national certification for students who complete an SPHE programme in the junior cycle of post-primary schools is to be explored.

5.3 PROGRAMME EVALUATION

This would involve continuous evaluation of the programme structure and materials in a school. All involved in SPHE—parents, teachers, students, and management—might contribute to this.

THE STRUCTURE OF AN SPHE PROGRAMME

This curriculum for SPHE in the junior cycle is presented in ten modules, each of which appears in each year of the three-year cycle.

Belonging and integrating

Self-management: a sense of purpose

Communication skills

Physical health

Friendship

Relationships and sexuality

Emotional health

Influences and decisions

Substance use

Personal safety

PLANNING AN SPHE PROGRAMME

The outline that follows offers schools a flexible framework within which schools can plan for the SPHE programme most suitable for the students and the school.

The following points should be noted when planning an SPHE programme:

ALLOCATING TIME TO A TOPIC

The topics within each module are outlined and the aims and outcomes indicated. Not every topic would take a whole class period; other topics may require a number of class periods.

ORDERING THE MODULES

Schools or teachers may order the modules according to school or class needs and circumstances. However, it is strongly recommended that the modules on friendship and relationships and sexuality be closely linked.

OVERLAPPING OF AIMS OR TOPICS

Modules may contain topics or aims that are common to other modules in the three-year programme. Such an overlap is essential to an integrated and holistic programme; topics and skills should be revisited often under different headings and from a variety of perspectives within a spiral and developmental programme.

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Planning for the relationships and sexuality module should be undertaken in the light of school policy in this area.

The Teacher Guidelines for SPHE deal with programme planning in greater detail.

OVERVIEW OF YEAR 1

Modules	Topics
Belonging and integrating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coping with change 2. Joining a new group 3. Appreciating difference 4. Bullying is everyone's business 5. Coping with loss
Self-management: a sense of purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organising myself 2. Organising my work at home and in school 3. Balance in my life
Communication skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Express yourself 2. Learning to listen 3. Passive, assertive and aggressive communication
Physical health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body care 2. Healthy eating 3. Exercise
Friendship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making new friends 2. A good friend

OVERVIEW OF YEAR 1 (CONTINUED)

Modules	Topics
Relationships and sexuality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Me as unique and different 2. Friendship 3. Changes at adolescence 4. The reproductive system 5. Images of male and female 6. Respecting myself and others
Emotional health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognising feelings 2. Respecting my feelings and the feelings of others
Influences and decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My heroes
Substance use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why use drugs? 2. Alcohol: the facts 3. Smoking and its effects 4. Smoking: why, why not?
Personal safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking after myself

BELONGING AND INTEGRATING

Self-esteem depends on many factors; feeling secure is one of the most important. This module deals with two events that can affect that security: the transition from primary to post-primary school, and the experience of loss.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. Coping with change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to reflect on change in their lives—physical, social, emotional, etc. • To help the students to cope with the transition from primary to second-level education
<p>2. Joining a new group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build on the skills for working in groups introduced at primary level, with particular reference to the setting of rules for group work • To promote awareness of the needs of others
<p>3. Appreciating difference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to recognise and value their own gifts and talents and those of others
<p>4. Bullying is everyone's business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to identify and label bullying behaviour • To explore possible personal and group responses to such behaviour • To familiarise the students with the procedures in their school for responding to bullying
<p>5. Coping with loss</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to identify different types of loss • To help the students to identify the personal, emotional and social consequences of each type of loss

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have reflected on their current stage of development**
- **have further developed their group work and communication skills**
- **have a heightened sensitivity to their own talents and those of others**
- **be aware of their responsibilities as members of the school community**
- **be aware of the characteristics of bullying behaviour**
- **have a knowledge of school policy on bullying and a willingness to adhere to that policy**
- **be familiar with types and consequences of loss**
- **be able to identify the member of the staff to approach if necessary.**

SELF-MANAGEMENT: A SENSE OF PURPOSE

The focus of this module is on the development of good skills for personal organisation and effective work and leisure habits. The importance of teamwork is also addressed.

Topic	Aims
1. Organising myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate the development of planning and preparation skills
2. Organising my work at home and in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students to develop good study habits
3. Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students to identify the advantages of good teamwork and the challenge of being an effective team member To help the students to be aware of their own limitations and the necessity to seek help and advice from others
4. Balance in my life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students in the organisation of their time around work, leisure, and rest To explore what it means to be healthy

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **be able to plan and organise their school and homework efficiently**
- **have a greater awareness of the importance of teamwork**
- **have a broadened vision of what it means to be healthy.**

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The ability to communicate is essential for healthy personal and social development. The focus in this module is on reinforcing basic skills for self-expression and for listening. In addition, students are introduced to different types of communication and the contexts for their use.

Topic	Aims
1. Express yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable the students to develop skills for expressing their own opinions and asking constructive questions
2. Learning to listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students to develop skills for listening to others To develop awareness of the importance of sensitivity to the opinions of others
3. Passive, assertive and aggressive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students to differentiate between passive, assertive and aggressive forms of communication To help the students to be sensitive to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of different forms of communication in different contexts, in particular when relating to adults To further develop skills for conflict management

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have learnt and practised the skills of listening and of self-expression**
- **be more aware of the need to be sensitive to the opinions of others**
- **know and understand different types of communication**
- **be aware of the appropriateness of different types of communication**
- **have learnt skills for conflict resolution.**

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Physical health is one element of personal health and well-being. Other elements—including the emotional, sexual, and social—are addressed elsewhere in junior cycle SPHE.

The focus in this module is on life-style patterns that support good physical health.

Topic	Aims
1. Body care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To emphasise the importance of washing and body care, especially in adolescence • To explore the links between personal hygiene and positive self-image
2. Healthy eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make the students aware of the elements of a balanced diet and the importance of healthy eating for physical and mental well-being
3. Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop awareness of the importance of rest and exercise for health and well-being • To help the students to identify possibilities for daily and weekly exercise in their own lives

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have an appreciation of the importance of personal hygiene for self-esteem and confidence**
- **understand what is meant by a balanced diet and its implications for general health and well-being**
- **appreciate the importance of physical exercise, rest, and sleep**
- **have drawn up a personal plan for exercise in their own lives.**

FRIENDSHIP

The transition to post-primary school can separate students from their childhood friendships. There is added pressure on students who move from a single-sex into a co-educational environment. This module offers opportunities to explore these issues.

Topic	Aims
1. Making new friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students to explore the nature and meaning of friendship
2. A good friend ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify the characteristics of a good friend

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have a heightened awareness of the nature of friendship**
- **have examined the characteristics of a good friend.**

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

This module will be prepared in accordance with school policy on relationships and sexuality education. Further details are included in the Teacher Guidelines for Social, Personal and Health Education.

Topic	Aims
1. Me as unique and different	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop skills for promoting self-esteem
2. Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further explore the qualities valued in friendship • To help the students to identify their responsibilities in different types of relationships
3. Changes at adolescence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to understand the physical, emotional and psychological changes that take place during adolescence • To help the students to appreciate that these changes occur at different times and at different rates, depending on the individual
4. The reproductive system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to clarify their information on the male and female reproductive systems, intercourse, and conception
5. Images of male and female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to deepen their awareness of stereotyping and its influence on attitudes and behaviour
6. Respecting myself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify some contemporary attitudes to sexuality • To help the students to recognise the need for respect for sexuality

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have an appreciation of their personal talents and those of others**
- **have explored some aspects of sex stereotyping**
- **have a knowledge of the physical, emotional and psychological changes related to adolescence**
- **have a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive systems**
- **be sensitive to the need for respect for one's own sexuality and the sexuality of others.**

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

This module focuses on feelings—their sources and impact. It encourages students to recognise their own feelings, a fundamental element of good mental health.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. Recognising feelings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and label some common emotions • To help the students to recognise appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing these emotions
<p>2. Respecting my feelings and the feelings of others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to be conscious of their own emotional responses and the feelings of others

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have a heightened awareness of common emotions and associated words used to express them**
- **have explored their own emotional responses, and those of others around them**
- **be aware of the appropriate ways of expressing their emotions.**

INFLUENCES AND DECISIONS

Students examine the ways in which they are influenced, even without their being conscious of the influence on them. Being aware of these influences is the first step in developing the critical skills necessary for good decision-making.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. My heroes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to identify and name the significant influences in their lives—at home, in school, in the wider community, and in the media. • To explore how some of these influences can affect behaviour • To help the students to value individuality and difference

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have a heightened awareness of who influences them, how, and why**
- **have respect for the individuality and uniqueness of each person.**

SUBSTANCE USE

Schools will need to give consideration to local needs when planning this module of SPHE. It may be appropriate to include material from second or third year in first year, or to allocate extra time to this module. The focus initially is on the place of drugs in everyday life and their use in the treatment and prevention of illness. In addition alcohol, solvent and nicotine use are addressed specifically.

Topic	Aims
1. Why drugs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify the importance of medicines and drugs in our lives • To identify situations in which medicines and drugs can be misused • To explore the health and social implications of drugs
2. Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify patterns of alcohol use in Irish society • To explore some ways in which alcohol is abused
3. Solvents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify some of the health implications of solvent abuse
4. Smoking and its effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore the health and social implications of smoking
5. Smoking: why, why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to identify some of the reasons why young people smoke • To help the students to identify ways in which smoking can be avoided • To ensure that the students are familiar with school policy on smoking, alcohol, and drugs (as appropriate)

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have examined the place of medicines and drugs in human life**
- **be aware of how medicines and drugs can be misused**
- **have an understanding of the implications of alcohol use for personal health and social interaction**
- **have explored some of the reasons why people begin to smoke**
- **have examined ways of avoiding smoking.**

PERSONAL SAFETY

Opportunities for clarifying schools’ safety policy are offered in this module. Given that students may be travelling to a new school, it is advisable to revise road safety rules with all students in the first year of post-primary school. In addition, personal safety skills first learnt in primary school are revised and updated here.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. Looking after myself</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore with the students procedures for protecting their personal safety and security and appropriate responses when such safety and security are threatened • To introduce the students to fire and evacuation procedures in the school • To reinforce the basics of road safety, especially in relation to travelling to and from school

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have examined ways of keeping safe**
- **be aware of appropriate responses to a variety of threats to personal safety**
- **have practical knowledge of fire evacuation procedures**
- **have examined the potential hazards in travelling to and from school.**

OVERVIEW OF YEAR 2

Modules	Topics
Belonging and integrating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking back, looking forward 2. Group work 3. Family ties
Self-management: a sense of purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What motivates me? 2. Study skills
Communication skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assertive communication
Physical health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body care and body image
Friendship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The changing nature of friendship
Relationships and sexuality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From conception to birth 2. Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions 3. Peer pressure and other influences 4. Managing relationships 5. Making responsible decisions 6. Health and personal safety

OVERVIEW OF YEAR 2 (CONTINUED)

Modules	Topics
Emotional health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-confidence 2. Body image
Influences and decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive and negative influences 2. Making decisions
Substance use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The effects of drugs 2. Alcohol and its effects 3. Alcohol: why, why not? 4. Cannabis and its effects 5. Cannabis: why, why not?
Personal safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accidents at home and in school 2. Feeling threatened

BELONGING AND INTEGRATING

Students in the second year of post-primary school face a number of particular challenges. New patterns of friendships and allegiances have been formed: they are no longer the “new” students, work habits have been established, and at home the move towards independence has begun. All these issues are reflected in this module.

Topic	Aims
1. Looking back, looking forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to evaluate their experience of first year • To facilitate the setting of goals and targets for the coming year.
2. Group work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to further develop their skills for working in groups
3. Family ties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to identify the changes that have taken place in their role and relationships within their own families

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have participated in an evaluation of their first year**
- **have clear goals and targets for the term and the year ahead**
- **have further enhanced their group work skills**
- **have examined the dynamic relationships in their own families.**

SELF-MANAGEMENT: A SENSE OF PURPOSE

Now that the novelty of post-primary school has worn off, students need to identify positive sources of support and motivation in their lives.

Topic	Aims
1. What motivates me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage the students to identify sources of support and encouragement in their lives
2. Study skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further develop the skills required for effective study at home and in school

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have identified sources of personal support**
- **have reviewed effective work and study practices.**

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The focus in this module is on the skills of assertive communication. Students are given opportunities to practise this skill, with particular reference to dealing with people in authority.

Topic	Aims
1. Assertive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote the development of skills for assertive communication • To help the students to identify appropriate situations at school, in the family and in the wider community for the use of these skills • To explore the use of assertive communication when dealing with people in authority

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have practised skills for assertive communication**
- **be sensitive to the appropriate contexts for this form of communication.**

PHYSICAL HEALTH

This module revises basic hygiene practice and explores the link between good hygiene habits and self-esteem. It also deals with illness and its causes and with identifying when help is needed.

Topic	Aims
1. Body care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review basic hygiene principles • To reinforce the link between personal hygiene and positive body image
2. Feeling unwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to link common symptoms of illness to their causes, with particular reference to illnesses associated with adolescence • To help the students to appreciate the need to seek medical and other professional advice and help

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have reviewed principles of personal hygiene and their importance for positive self-image**
- **be able to name the symptoms of common ailments**
- **be aware of the occasions when help may be needed.**

FRIENDSHIP

Whereas first-year students considered the issue of bullying from the point of view of the victim, second-year students explore the behaviour of those who bully and the motives behind such behaviour.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. The changing nature of friendship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to reflect on and appreciate the changing patterns of friendship • To help the students to understand sources of bullying behaviour • To enable the students to recognise bullying behaviour and the potential for such behaviour in year 2 of post-primary school • To review procedures for dealing with bullying behaviour • To help the students to develop strategies and skills for use when confronted with bullying behaviour

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have reflected on changing friendships**
- **be able to identify the characteristics of bullying behaviour, especially in second year**
- **have explored some of the aspects of the relationships between siblings**
- **have developed their skills for dealing with bullying behaviour.**

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

This module will be prepared in accordance with school policy on relationships and sexuality education. Further details are included in the Teacher Guidelines for Social, Personal and Health Education.

Topic	Aims
1. From conception to birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To examine the stages of development from conception to birth
2. Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students to differentiate between different types of relationships To promote awareness of the feelings and emotions associated with a variety of relationships
3. Peer pressure and other influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students to explore the role of peer pressure and other influences in the area of sexuality
4. Managing relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable the students to develop skills for establishing and maintaining relationships at appropriate levels
5. Making responsible decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify skills necessary for making decisions—consistent with personal values and within a moral framework—about behaviour in relationships
6. Health and personal safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the students to develop an awareness of the potential risks involved in developing new relationships To enable the students to identify practical steps for personal security To raise awareness about sexually transmitted disease

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have a knowledge of the developmental stages from conception to birth**
- **have a heightened awareness of the emotional aspects of a range of relationships**
- **have analysed some of the influences that shape views of sexuality**
- **have developed their skills for communicating in relationships**
- **have further developed their decision-making skills**
- **be aware of the potential for danger in forming new relationships**
- **have a basic knowledge of sexually transmitted disease**
- **have a knowledge of some help agencies and their role.**

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Poor self-image and poor body image can lead to a host of difficulties for the adolescent. This module explores the factors that support positive self-image and then deals specifically with body image and the gap between the “real” and the “ideal”.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. Self-confidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to reflect on what makes them feel good about themselves • To develop skills for promoting a sense of well-being in others
<p>2. Body image</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students come to an understanding and acceptance of the wide range of normality in body type and shape

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have enhanced their skills for promoting their own self-esteem and the self-esteem of others**
- **have an understanding and acceptance of the wide range of body shapes, particularly in adolescence.**

INFLUENCES AND DECISIONS

This module sets the decision-making process in the context of influences—positive and negative. A responsible decision is not a matter of selecting from a range of equal options: it is a far more complex process. The module invites the students to engage in that process.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. Positive and negative influences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to evaluate influences as potentially positive or negative • To enable the students to develop awareness of the ways in which they influence the behaviour and attitudes of others
<p>2. Making decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To stress the need for reflection before, during and after the decision-making process • To enable the students to identify elements of the decision-making process • To promote the development of skills for responsible decision-making

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have evaluated some of the strongest influences on attitudes and behaviour**
- **be aware of their own role in influencing the behaviour and attitudes of others**
- **have further developed their decision-making skills and be aware of the need for reflection during the decision-making process.**

SUBSTANCE USE

As in planning for year 1, schools will need to give consideration to local needs when planning this module of SPHE. The effects—positive and negative—of drugs in society are explored. The decision-making skills addressed elsewhere in SPHE are applied here to the specific issues of alcohol and cannabis use in the life of the young person.

Topic	Aims
1. The effects of drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to come to an understanding of the physical and psychological effects of drugs • To explore the place of legal and illegal substances in society
2. Alcohol and its effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify the implications of the use of alcohol for personal behaviour and responsibility, especially in the life of the young person
3. Alcohol: why, why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to apply their new awareness to decision-making on issues relating to alcohol and its use • To identify and promote leisure pursuits that do not involve alcohol
4. Cannabis and its effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore the health, social and legal implications of cannabis use
5. Cannabis: why, why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to identify some of the reasons why some young people use cannabis • To help the students to identify the reasons why cannabis should be avoided

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have reviewed their understanding of the physical and psychological effects of drugs**
- **have an awareness of the personal and social implications of alcohol and cannabis use in the life of the young person**
- **be aware of some of the reasons why some people use cannabis**
- **have a clear understanding of the dangers of cannabis use.**

PERSONAL SAFETY

This module includes a review of school safety policy and procedure. Students are also asked to evaluate the risk of accidents in the home and on the farm, particularly if the students are given control of farm machinery and equipment. The module focuses in particular on risks over which the students may have less control: risk of attack, assault, abuse, or intimidation.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. Accidents at home and at school*</p> <p><i>*and on the farm (if applicable)</i></p> <p>2. Feeling threatened</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to recognise that every member of the school community makes a contribution to school safety • To raise awareness of the possible situations in which accidents occur and ways in which they may be avoided • To enable the students to explore the range of risks for young people: at home, in school, and in the wider community • To help the students to identify strategies for promoting security and safety, and sources of crisis support

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **be aware of their responsibilities for their own safety and the safety of others**
- **have an awareness of the causes of accidents in a variety of situations and the measures that can be taken to avoid them.**

OVERVIEW OF YEAR 3

Modules	Topics
Belonging and integrating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goal-setting for third year 2. Work contract
Self-management: a sense of purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organising my time 2. Planning for effective study 3. Coping with examinations
Communication skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning to communicate 2. Communication in situations of conflict
Physical health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical exercise 2. Relaxation 3. Diet
Friendship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boy-friends and girl-friends

OVERVIEW OF YEAR 3 (CONTINUED)

Modules	Topics
Relationships and sexuality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body image 2. Where am I now? 3. Relationships - what's important 4. The three R's: respect, rights, and responsibilities 5. Conflict
Emotional health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress 2. Feelings and moods
Influences and decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making a good decision
Substance use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ecstasy: the realities 2. Heroin: the realities
Personal safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognising unsafe situations 2. Violence 3. Help agencies

BELONGING AND INTEGRATING

This module enables the students to set realistic targets and to plan for their achievement. Such planning contributes to a sense of personal control and empowerment and thus enhances self-esteem.

Topic	Aims
1. Goal-setting for third year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to set long-term and short-term goals • To help the students to identify the factors that promote a good atmosphere for learning
2. Work contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate the drawing up of a personal and group work contract in the light of the factors identified above

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have identified specific personal goals for third year**
- **have a greater appreciation of the factors necessary for effective learning to take place**
- **have drawn up a personal and group work contract for the year.**

SELF-MANAGEMENT: A SENSE OF PURPOSE

Building on the belonging and integrating module, this module focuses on the development of good study skills and explores the sources of stress as the students face their first major examination.

Topic	Aims
1. Organising my time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable the students to reflect on how they spend their time each day and each week To enable the students to draw up a personal balanced schoolwork schedule
2. Planning for effective study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further develop skills for effective study
3. Coping with examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable the students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in previous examination experiences To help the students to develop strategies for enhancing examination performance

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- have drawn up a personal work schedule
- have further developed their study skills
- have an increased awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses with regard to examinations
- have developed strategies leading to improved exam performance.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Handling criticism can be difficult for everyone, but for an adolescent who is acutely self-aware and self-conscious it can be a particular challenge. This module explores the importance of sensitive communication and strategies for hearing criticism and responding in situations of conflict.

Topic	Aims
1. Learning to communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the development of a variety of skills for open, honest and sensitive communication
2. Communication in situations of conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable the students to identify the characteristics of constructive criticism To help the students to develop skills for self-reflection and self-evaluation To enable the students to reflect on personal and group reactions to conflict To look at the likely outcomes of some of these reactions to conflict To promote skills for negotiation

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- have further developed their communication skills
- appreciate that criticism can be helpful
- have practised skills of self-reflection and self-evaluation
- understand some of the ways in which individuals and groups respond to conflict
- have enhanced skills for dealing with situations of conflict.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

This module deals with physical exercise and the development of healthy patterns of exercise and relaxation in the life of the adolescent, particularly in the light of examinations. Healthy eating is also explored and the importance of a balanced diet stressed.

Topic	Aims
1. Physical exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop an appreciation of the central role of physical exercise in a healthy life-style
2. Relaxation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop awareness and appreciation of the importance of relaxation in the life of the young person To help the students to practise some techniques for mental and physical relaxation
3. Diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable the students to audit their own eating habits To enable the students to identify healthy and unhealthy elements of their diet and, where appropriate, to plan for change To examine the consequences of a pattern of poor eating habits

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- appreciate the need for physical exercise and relaxation
- have learnt and practised some techniques for physical and mental relaxation
- have reflected on their eating patterns
- be able to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy eating patterns
- have an understanding of the consequences of continuing a poor eating pattern.

FRIENDSHIP

This module explores the role of friendship in developing positive and balanced relationships, in particular with members of the opposite sex.

Topic	Aims
1. Boy-friends and girl-friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore the impact of sex roles on friendships • To help the students to come to an appreciation of the value of friends of both sexes

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have an enhanced appreciation of the impact of sex roles on friendship**
- **recognise the value of friends of both sexes.**

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

This module will be prepared in accordance with school policy on relationships and sexuality education. Further details are included in the Teacher Guidelines for Social, Personal and Health Education.

Topic	Aims
1. Body image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To offer opportunities for self-reflection • To enable the students to further develop their skills for enhancing self-esteem
2. Where am I now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate a review of the stages of human growth and development, with particular reference to growth and development at adolescence
3. Relationships: what's important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to identify the qualities they value in a relationship • To enable the students to examine some of the priorities in relationships as depicted in a variety of media
4. The three R's: respect, rights, and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to identify their rights and responsibilities in a relationship • To develop skills for protecting rights and promoting responsibilities in personal relationships • To develop awareness of the importance of respect in relationships
5. Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to identify possible sources of conflict in relationships • To help the students to apply conflict resolution and communication skills to those situations

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have practised communication skills and skills for enhancing self-esteem**
- **have reviewed their understanding of the adolescent stage of human growth and development**
- **have identified and recognised the importance of respect, rights and responsibilities in relationships**
- **be aware of the causes of conflict in relationships**
- **be prepared to deal with such situations of conflict.**

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Building on work done in second year, students are asked to identify the place of stress in their own lives and the potential for too much stress at different times and stages of life. Strategies for coping with stress are identified and promoted. Further work is done on the handling of emotions and their appropriate expression.

Topic	Aims
<p>1. Stress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to recognise the place of stress in day-to-day living • To help the students to recognise the effects of a high level of stress on themselves and others • To enable the students to identify factors that can reduce stress
<p>2. Feelings and moods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students come to an understanding of a variety of feelings and moods, particularly those common in adolescence • to promote the development of skills for expressing feelings appropriately

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **appreciate the place of stress in their lives**
- **understand the effects of too much stress on themselves and others**
- **have identified stress-reducing factors**
- **be aware of a range of feelings and moods common in adolescence**
- **have further developed skills for expressing feelings.**

INFLUENCES AND DECISIONS

This module emphasises the need to be positive in decision-making: to anticipate choices and decisions that may lie ahead, including career and subject choices as well as decisions about relationships and behaviour. Some schools may wish to work with guidance personnel on this module.

Topic	Aims
1. Making a good decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To stress the importance of anticipating particular situations before they arise as a key element of well-informed decisions • To challenge the students to apply their decision-making skills to decisions about subject and career choices, transition year, or Leaving Certificate options

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have examined how to apply decision-making skills to developing plans for their further education and career options**
- **be aware of the importance of thinking ahead in making good decisions.**

SUBSTANCE USE

Schools will need to give consideration to local needs when planning this module of SPHE. Here, the use of ecstasy and its consequences are the main focus of the module, which also deals with the nature of addiction to drugs such as heroin.

Topic	Aims
1. Ecstasy: realities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore with the students the personal and social consequences of the use of ecstasy
2. Heroin: realities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore with the students the personal and social consequences of heroin, with particular emphasis on its addictive nature

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **have an understanding of the personal and social dangers associated with the use of ecstasy**
- **have an understanding of the personal and social dangers of heroin, including addiction**
- **be able to apply their increased awareness and understanding to decision-making in relation to substance use.**

PERSONAL SAFETY

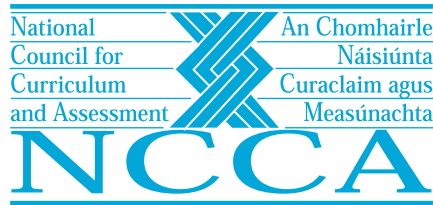
Simple rules for personal safety are revised in this module. Violence is explored, and situations that are potentially explosive are identified. Students are introduced to agencies that offer help and support in a variety of situations and are familiarised with the procedures for obtaining access to these agencies.

Topic	Aims
1. Recognising unsafe situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the students to identify situations in which their safety might be compromised • To enable the students to take steps to avoid such situations
2. Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the students to develop awareness of violence as a threat to personal and group safety and strategies for dealing with a potentially violent situation
3. Help agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote an awareness of help agencies and to help the students develop skills for obtaining access to these if appropriate

OUTCOMES

As a result of participating in this module, students should:

- **be able to recognise situations in which their personal safety might be threatened**
- **have a greater awareness of safety-enhancing behaviours**
- **be conscious of violence as a threat to personal and group safety**
- **have examined ways of avoiding potentially violent situations**
- **have developed some skills for handling violent situations**
- **have a knowledge of help agencies and how to contact them.**



Procedures for drawing up National Syllabuses

The NCCA's Course Committees for the Junior Certificate have the following membership*:

- Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
- Teachers' Union of Ireland
- Joint Managerial Body
- Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
- Irish Vocational Education Association
- Subject Association
- Department of Education and Science (Inspectorate)

* In the case of Religious Education, representation also included the National Parents' Council (post-primary), the Episcopal Conference, the Board of Education of the Methodist Church, the Church of Ireland Board of Education and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

On the basis of the brief provided by Council, the NCCA's Course Committees prepare the syllabuses.

Recommendations of Course Committees are submitted to the Council of NCCA for approval. The NCCA, having considered such recommendations, advises the Minister for Education and Science accordingly.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the NCCA at 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

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