Oide

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Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

SPHE Updates & Supports

Presentation to Deputy Principals

19th January 2024

Facilitator: Brighid Hennessy

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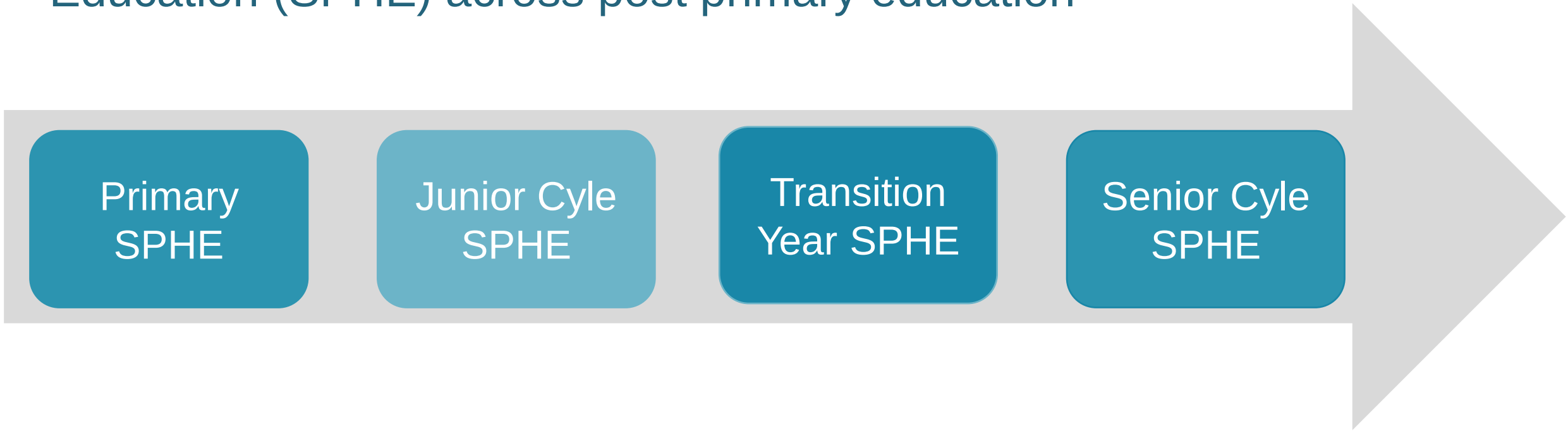
Welcome

Brighid Hennessy
Professional Learning Leader
Wellbeing & SPHE

Focus of this Event

To explore the continuum of learning in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) across post primary education



Employee Assistance Service

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Folláine le Chéile
Wellbeing Together

spectrum.life

New Employee Assistance Service

Accessible 24/7, 365 days in the year

Up to 6 free counselling sessions

Wellbeing Portal and App – online services, live chats, videos, podcasts, blogs

Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Freephone 1800 411 057 Email eap@spectrum.life

WhatsApp/SMS: Text ‘Hi’ to 087 369 0010

Why is SPHE Important?

The teaching and learning of SPHE provides a unique space where students can develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values needed to support their physical, emotional, social and spiritual, wellbeing, now and in the future.

All young people need knowledge and skills to help them develop a strong sense of self, make informed and healthy decisions, be able to take care of themselves and others, and manage life's challenges.

The SPHE specification is grounded in values of respect, equality, inclusivity, responsibility, dignity, compassion and empathy.

This course places a strong focus on the development of important life skills that young people need growing up in a fast changing and complex world.

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Supporting the Professiona Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Key Circulars and Policies

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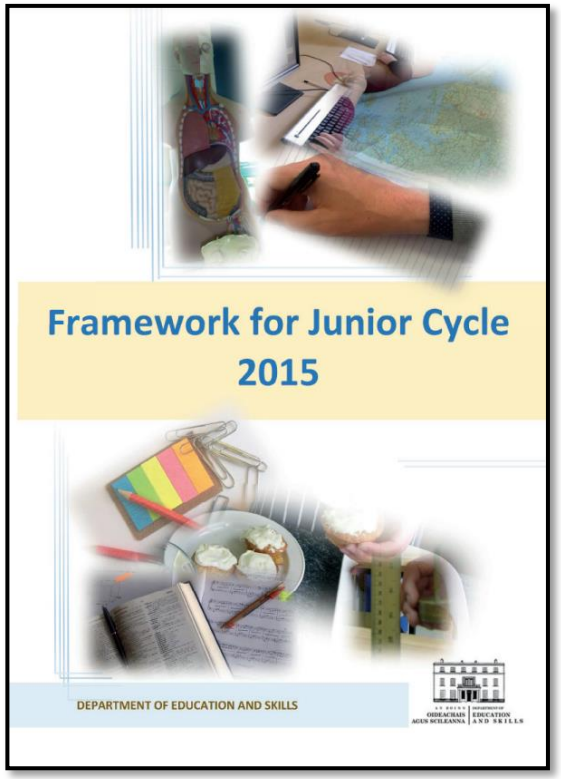
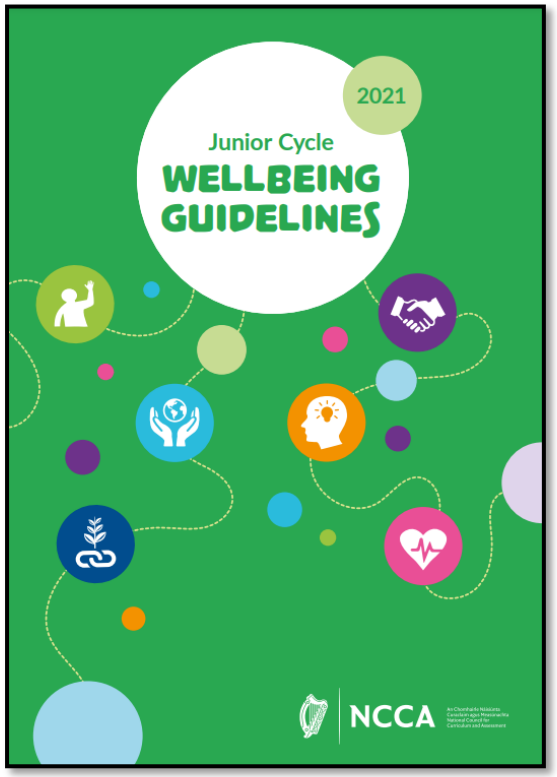
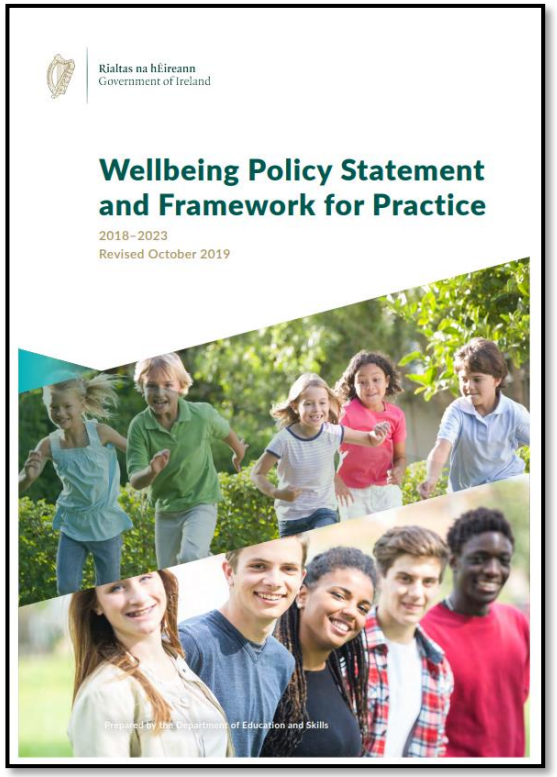
Key Documents





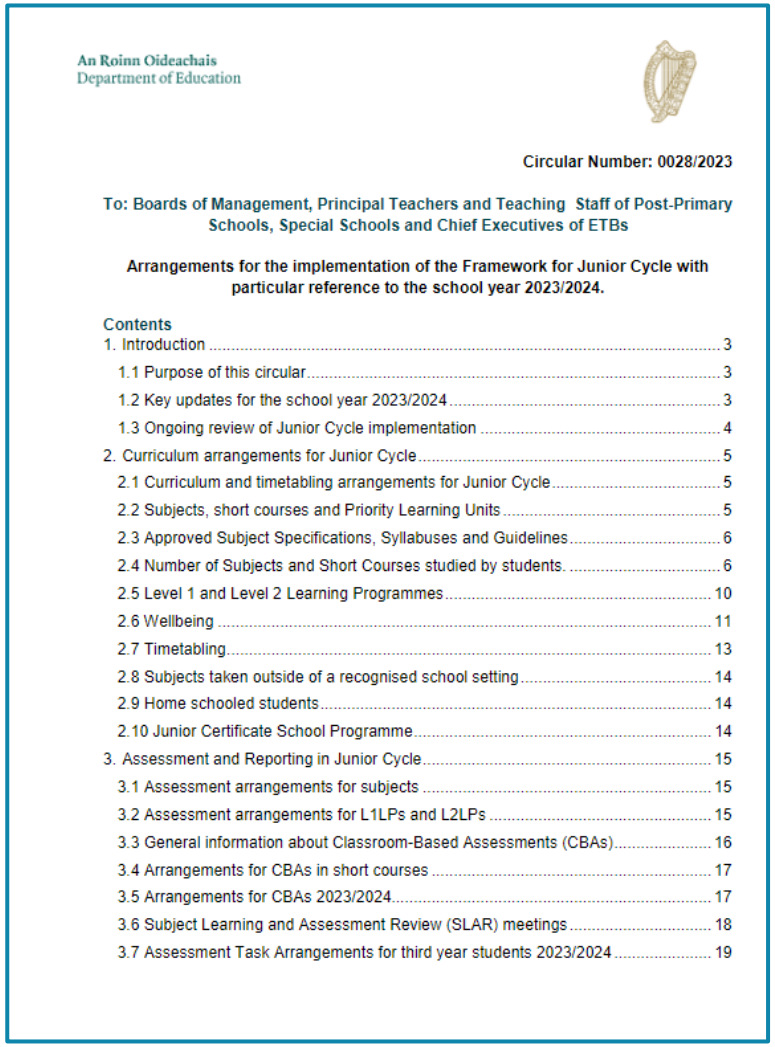


Key Circulars

Oide

- 27/2008
- 37/2010
- 43/2018
- 54/2023

Circular 0028/2023



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Circular Number: 0028/2023

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Post-Primary Schools, Special Schools and Chief Executives of ETBs

Arrangements for the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to the school year 2023/2024.

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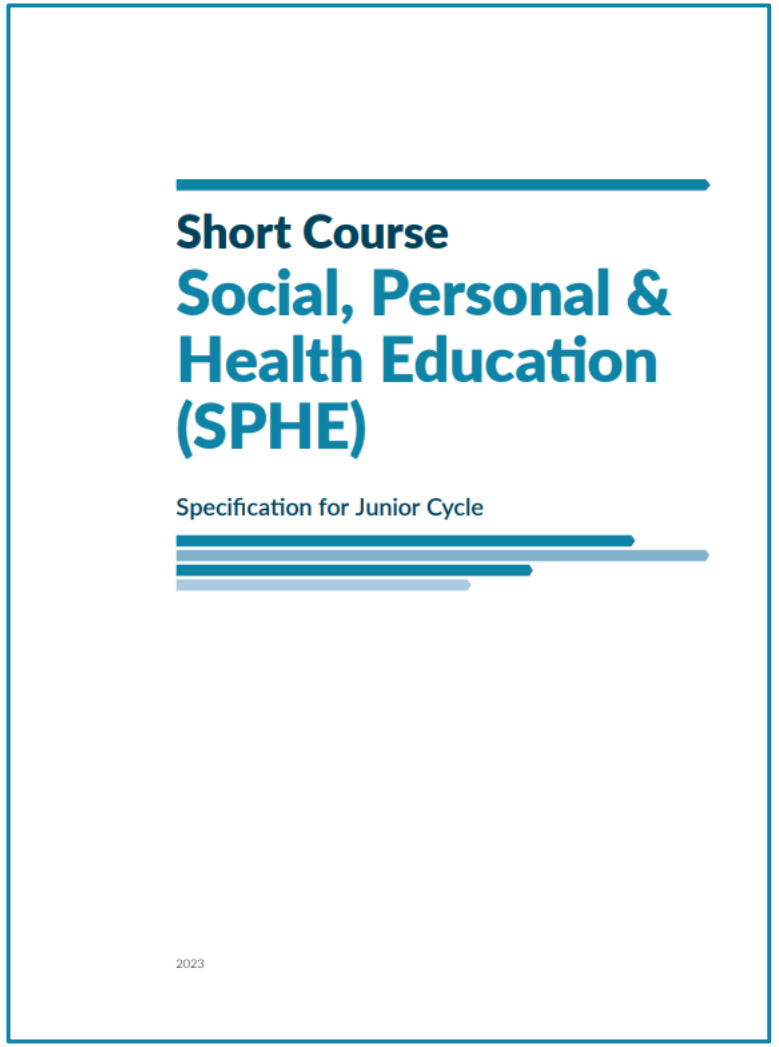


Short Course

Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)

Specification for Junior Cycle

2023

Relevant Policies

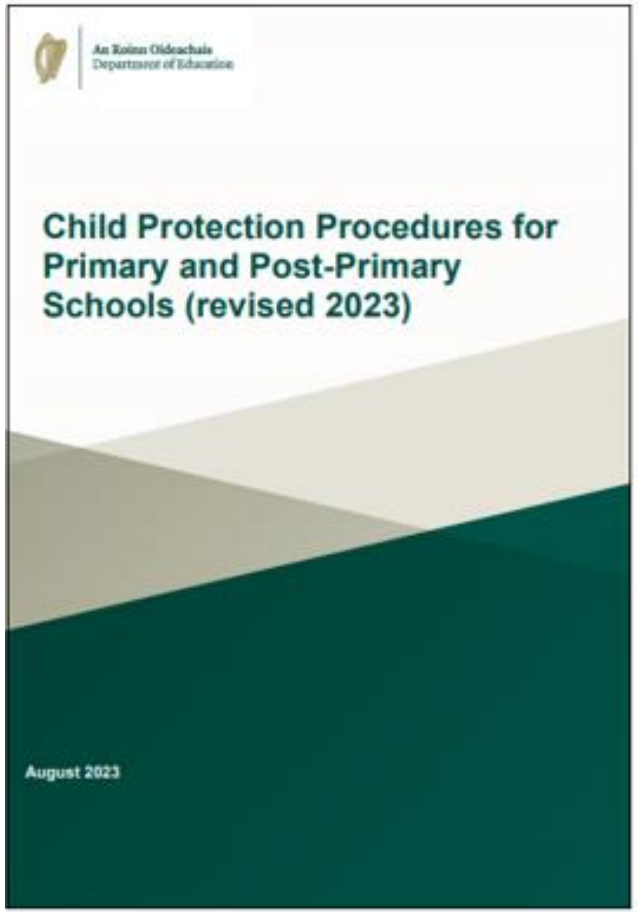
Oide

- Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
- RSE Policy
- Code of Behaviour & Anti Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Inclusion Policy & AEN Policy
- Substance Use Policy

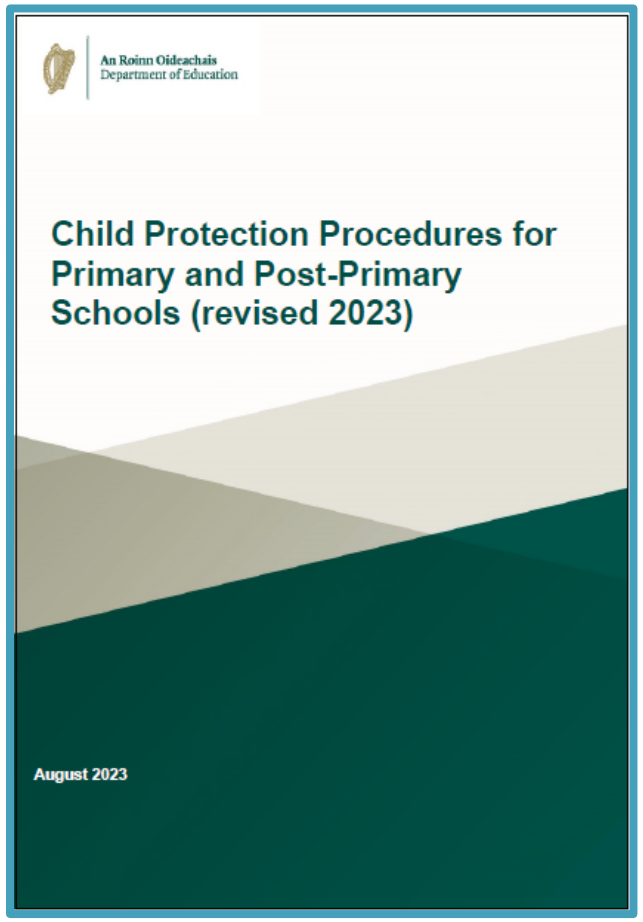
Child Protection Safeguarding Inspections

Ensuring that children enjoy a safe and secure learning environment in schools and education settings is a key concern for everyone that supports the development of children.

The DE has an important oversight role to play in ensuring that all our children receive the highest quality of care and protection in our schools. As part of the oversight and quality assurance role of the Department, the Inspectorate is required to implement CPSI.



Child Protection Safeguarding Inspections



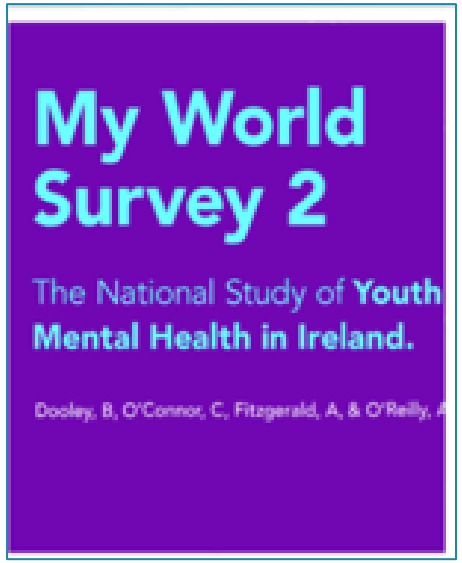
Check 10	Sub-checks
The quality of planning for and implementation of the **SPHE curriculum** and the ***Stay Safe*** programme in primary schools and of the **SPHE curriculum** and the **Relationship and Sexuality Education** (RSE) programme in post-primary schools, as evident during the inspection.	There is a Social Personal and Health Education Programme for all children in the school (Primary)
	The Stay Safe Programme is implemented within the school (Primary)
	There is a Social Personal and Health Education Programme for all children in Junior Cycle (Post-primary check)
	There is a Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme for all children in the school (Post-primary check)
	Whole-school planning documents indicate that the school has planned appropriately for the implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the Stay Safe programme (Primary) SPHE subject planning documents, RSE programme planning documents and school timetable information indicate that the school has planned appropriately for the implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE programme (post-primary check)
	The individual teacher planning documents reviewed indicate that the teachers are implementing the SPHE curriculum and *Stay Safe* programme appropriately (Primary)
	The interactions with pupils indicate that pupils have a satisfactory or better understanding of a number of the key topics of SPHE and Stay Safe (Primary) and of SPHE and RSE (Post-primary)

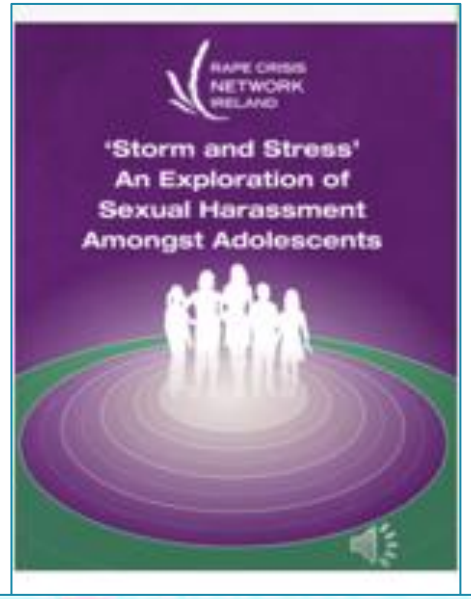
Why Now?

- What new complexities are presenting at your office door since 2016?
- What changing needs have you observed in that time?

Why Update?

Growing Up in Ireland
COHORT '08
Report on the Pilot for Wave Six of the Cohort '08 Survey (at 13 Years of Age)

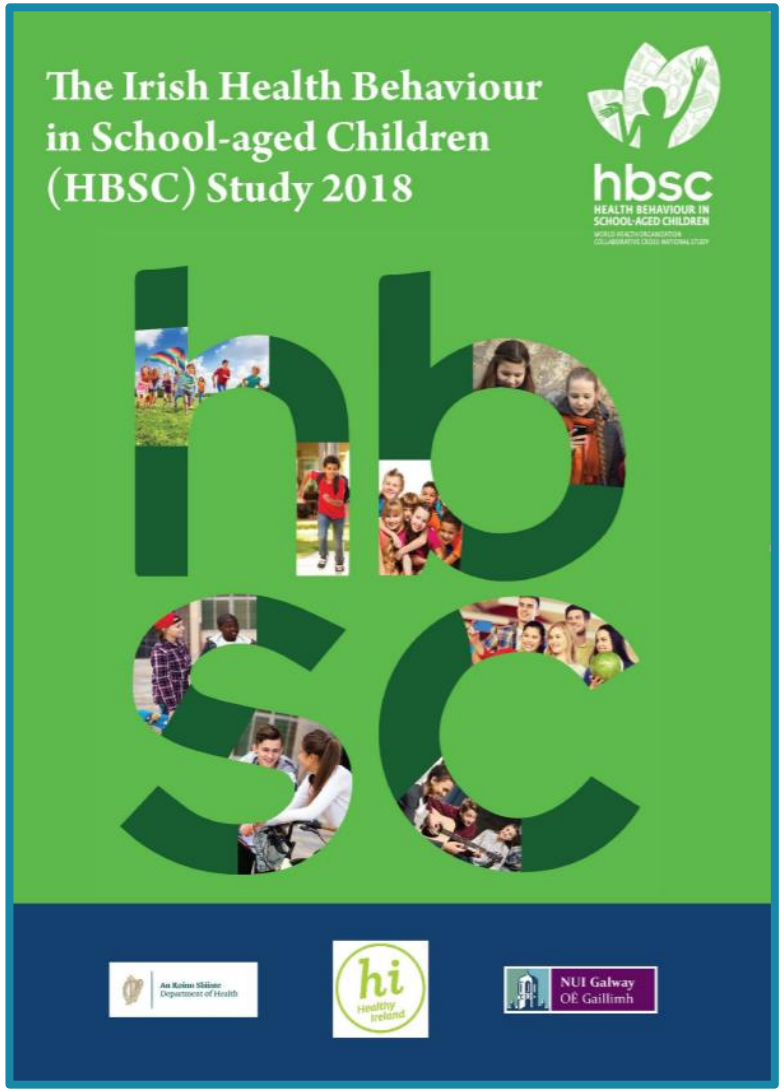

My World Survey 2
The National Study of Youth Mental Health in Ireland.


RAPE CRISIS NETWORK IRELAND
'Storm and Stress'
An Exploration of Sexual Harassment Amongst Adolescents

Growing Up in Ireland
THE LIVES OF 17/18-YEAR-OLDS

hbsc
HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION COLLABORATIVE CROSS-NATIONAL SURVEY

HBSC Findings 2018



HAVING HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Young people aged 15 to 17 were asked about engaging in sexual intercourse. The findings here present the percentage of young people who reported that they have ever had sex.

Findings

Between 2010 and 2018 there was a small decrease in the percentage of 15-17 year old girls who reported having ever had sex, the trend was stable for boys. The decrease is evident among girls in the middle social class group.

International ranking (15 year olds only)*

	Ireland %	HBSC 35 AVG %	HBSC 35 Rank
2018	14.5	19	29
2014	16.7	20.6	27
2010	22.3	25.5	24

*See technical note 11

Figure 13: Percentage of 15-17 year olds who reported having ever had sexual intercourse, overall and by gender from 2010-2018

Table 13: Percentage of 15-17 year olds who reported having ever had sexual intercourse, by social class from 2010-2018

		2010	2014	2018	Trend
Girls	SC 1-2	20.2	20.9	18.9	-
	SC 3-4	25.3	19.5	16.8	↓ ↓
	SC 5-6	20.1	18.6	22.1	-
Boys	SC 1-2	26.0	29.5	25.1	-
	SC 3-4	30.7	30.9	28.0	-
	SC 5-6	29.9	24.6	26.5	-

Oide

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Supporting the Professiona Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Overview of Junior Cycle SPHE

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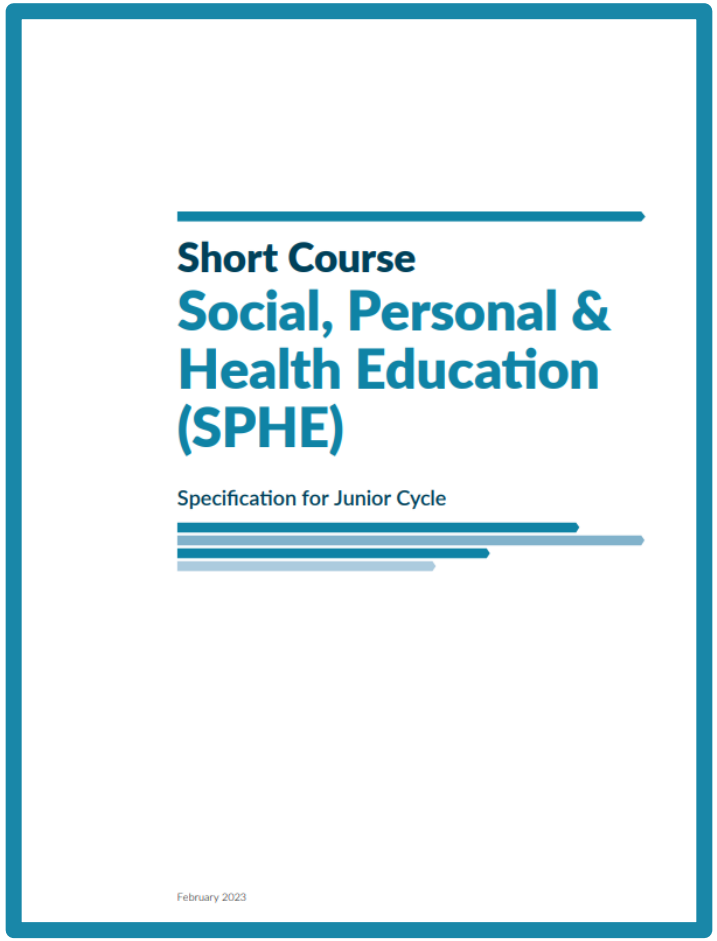
Aim of SPHE

"This course aims to build students' self-awareness and positive self-worth; to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives; empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others; and enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society."

(NCCA, Short Course, SPHE, Specification for Junior Cycle, 2023, p.5)



SPHE Specification 2016

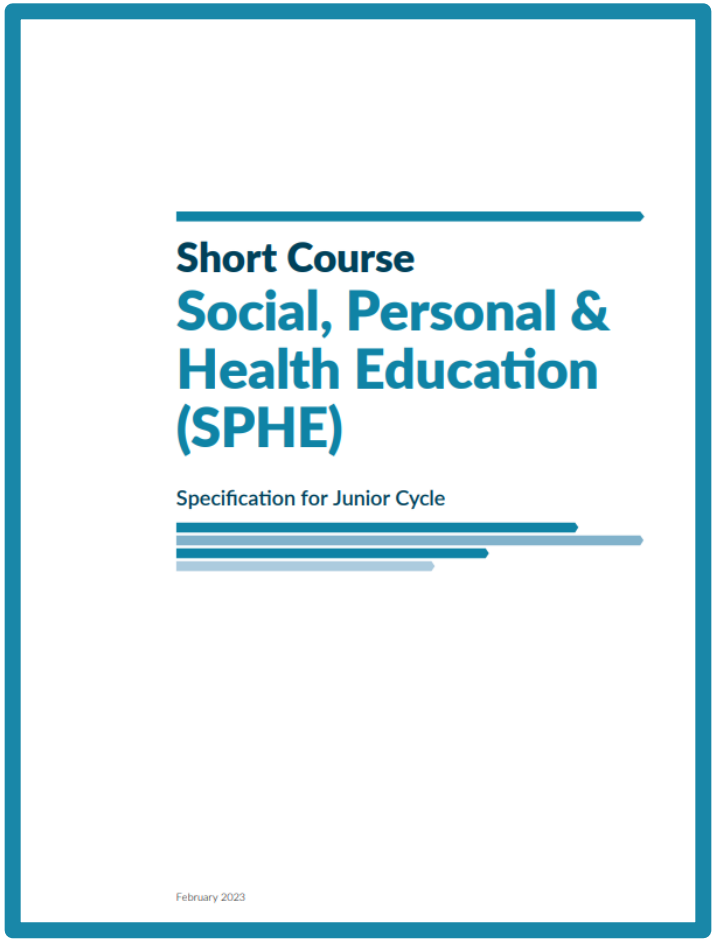
SPHE Specification 2023

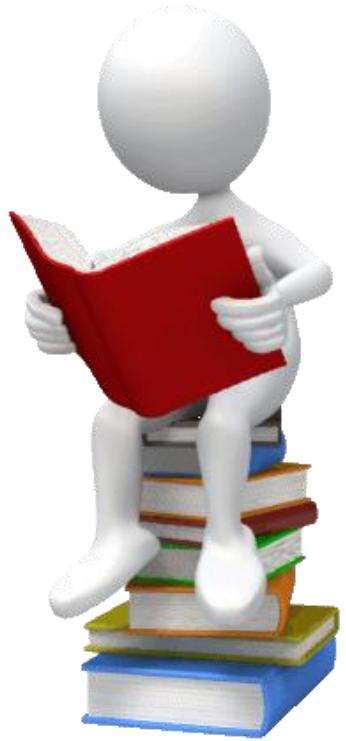
2023 SPHE Specification

Overview

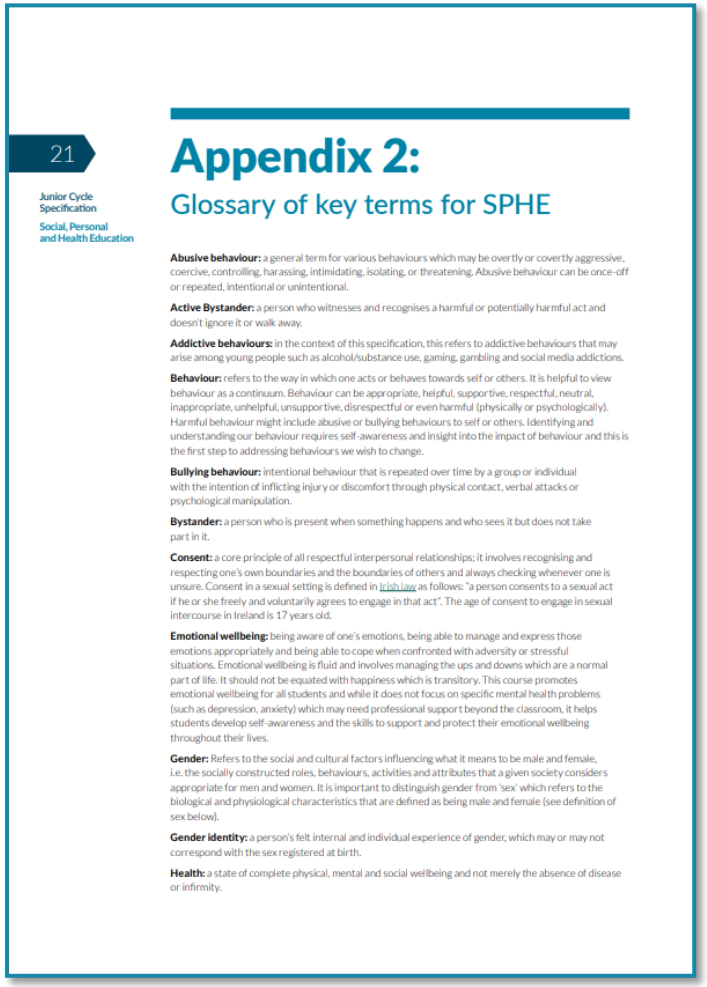
SPHE is designed around four interconnected strands and three cross-cutting elements.

Introduction to the Learning Outcomes Book Walk





Glossary of Key Terms for SPHE



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Junior Cycle Specification

Social, Personal and Health Education

Appendix 2:

Glossary of key terms for SPHE

Abusive behaviour: a general term for various behaviours which may be overtly or covertly aggressive, coercive, controlling, harassing, intimidating, isolating, or threatening. Abusive behaviour can be once-off or repeated, intentional or unintentional.

Active Bystander: a person who witnesses and recognises a harmful or potentially harmful act and doesn't ignore it or walk away.

Addictive behaviours: in the context of this specification, this refers to addictive behaviours that may arise among young people such as alcohol/substance use, gaming, gambling and social media addictions.

Behaviour: refers to the way in which one acts or behaves towards self or others. It is helpful to view behaviour as a continuum. Behaviour can be appropriate, helpful, supportive, respectful, neutral, inappropriate, unhelpful, unsupportive, disrespectful or even harmful (physically or psychologically). Harmful behaviour might include abusive or bullying behaviours to self or others. Identifying and understanding our behaviour requires self-awareness and insight into the impact of behaviour and this is the first step to addressing behaviours we wish to change.

Bullying behaviour: intentional behaviour that is repeated over time by a group or individual with the intention of inflicting injury or discomfort through physical contact, verbal attacks or psychological manipulation.

Bystander: a person who is present when something happens and who sees it but does not take part in it.

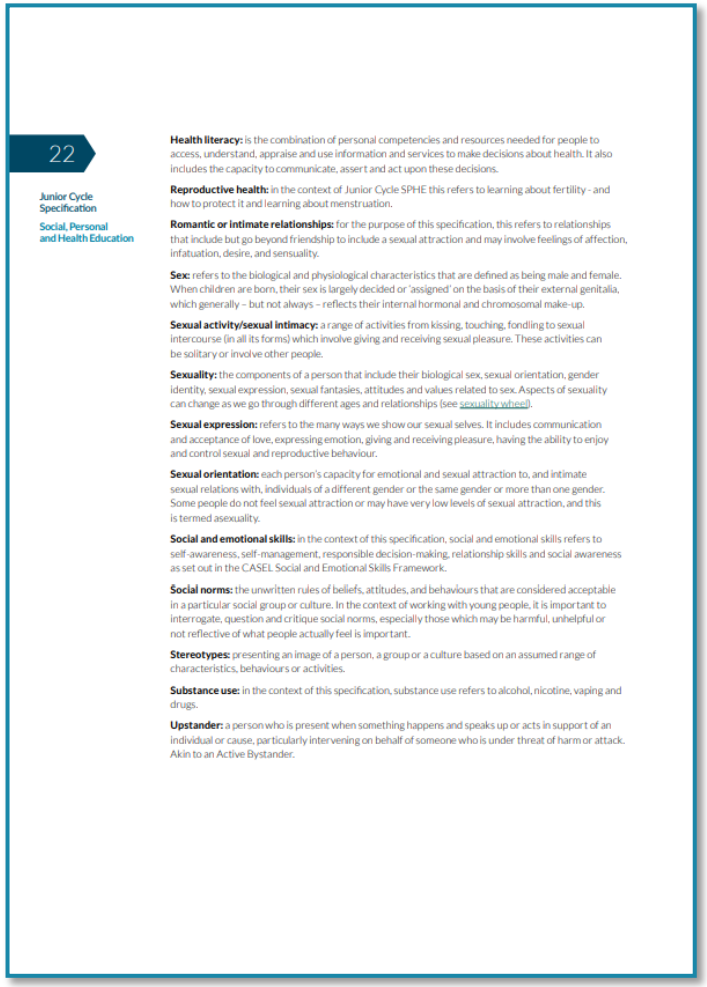
Consent: a core principle of all respectful interpersonal relationships; it involves recognising and respecting one's own boundaries and the boundaries of others and always checking whenever one is unsure. Consent in a sexual setting is defined in Irish law as follows: "a person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act". The age of consent to engage in sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17 years old.

Emotional wellbeing: being aware of one's emotions, being able to manage and express those emotions appropriately and being able to cope when confronted with adversity or stressful situations. Emotional wellbeing is fluid and involves managing the ups and downs which are a normal part of life. It should not be equated with happiness which is transitory. This course promotes emotional wellbeing for all students and while it does not focus on specific mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety) which may need professional support beyond the classroom, it helps students develop self-awareness and the skills to support and protect their emotional wellbeing throughout their lives.

Gender: Refers to the social and cultural factors influencing what it means to be male and female, i.e. the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. It is important to distinguish gender from 'sex' which refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are defined as being male and female (see definition of sex below).

Gender identity: a person's felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex registered at birth.

Health: a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.



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Junior Cycle Specification

Social, Personal and Health Education

Health literacy: is the combination of personal competencies and resources needed for people to access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make decisions about health. It also includes the capacity to communicate, assert and act upon these decisions.

Reproductive health: in the context of Junior Cycle SPHE this refers to learning about fertility - and how to protect it and learning about menstruation.

Romantic or intimate relationships: for the purpose of this specification, this refers to relationships that include but go beyond friendship to include a sexual attraction and may involve feelings of affection, infatuation, desire, and sensuality.

Sex: refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are defined as being male and female. When children are born, their sex is largely decided or 'assigned' on the basis of their external genitalia, which generally – but not always – reflects their internal hormonal and chromosomal make-up.

Sexual activity/sexual intimacy: a range of activities from kissing, touching, fondling to sexual intercourse (in all its forms) which involve giving and receiving sexual pleasure. These activities can be solitary or involve other people.

Sexuality: the components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual expression, sexual fantasies, attitudes and values related to sex. Aspects of sexuality can change as we go through different ages and relationships (see sexuality wheel).

Sexual expression: refers to the many ways we show our sexual selves. It includes communication and acceptance of love, expressing emotion, giving and receiving pleasure, having the ability to enjoy and control sexual and reproductive behaviour.

Sexual orientation: each person's capacity for emotional and sexual attraction to, and intimate sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender. Some people do not feel sexual attraction or may have very low levels of sexual attraction, and this is termed asexuality.

Social and emotional skills: in the context of this specification, social and emotional skills refers to self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness as set out in the CASEL Social and Emotional Skills Framework.

Social norms: the unwritten rules of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that are considered acceptable in a particular social group or culture. In the context of working with young people, it is important to interrogate, question and critique social norms, especially those which may be harmful, unhelpful or not reflective of what people actually feel is important.

Stereotypes: presenting an image of a person, a group or a culture based on an assumed range of characteristics, behaviours or activities.

Substance use: in the context of this specification, substance use refers to alcohol, nicotine, vaping and drugs.

Upstander: a person who is present when something happens and speaks up or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly intervening on behalf of someone who is under threat of harm or attack. Akin to an Active Bystander.

(NCCA, Short Course, SPHE, Specification for Junior Cycle, Appendix 2)

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Supporting the Professiona Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Considerations in Planning for SPHE

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Planning Across the Three Years of Junior Cycle- A Spiral Approach

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'This course employs a spiral approach that will be familiar to SPHE teachers. This spiral approach allows students to revisit important themes over the three years in order to allow for deeper engagement relevant to the students' evolving needs and stage of development. **In revisiting learning outcomes, it is important to ensure that there is a progression of learning.**'

(NCCA, Short Course, SPHE, Specification for Junior Cycle, 2023, p.5)

Why Planning is Important in SPHE?

- Generates a clear roadmap for planning SPHE across all 3 junior cycle years
- Ensures a spiral, developmental approach is taken
- Ensures planning is responsive to students emerging needs
- Maintains a high standard of teaching, learning and assessment and ensures no omissions

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Supporting the Professiona Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Senior Cycle SPHE

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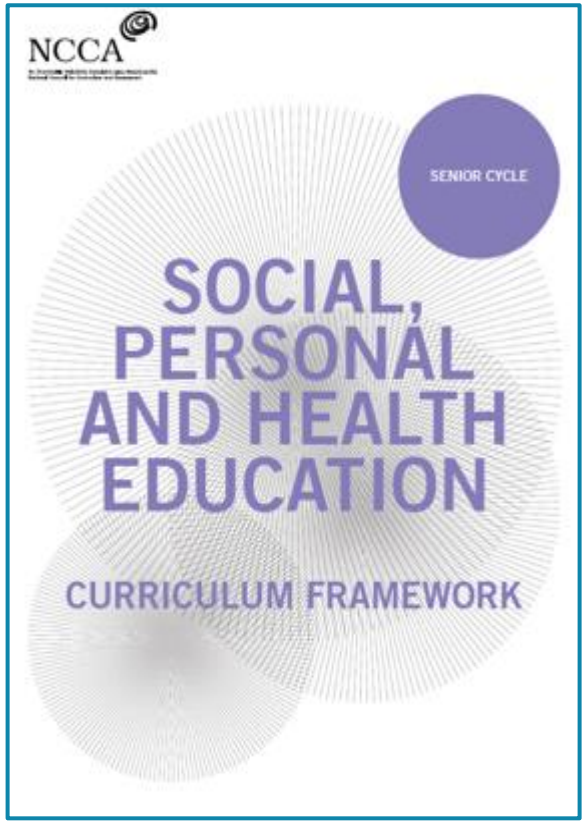
Senior Cycle SPHE Draft Specification



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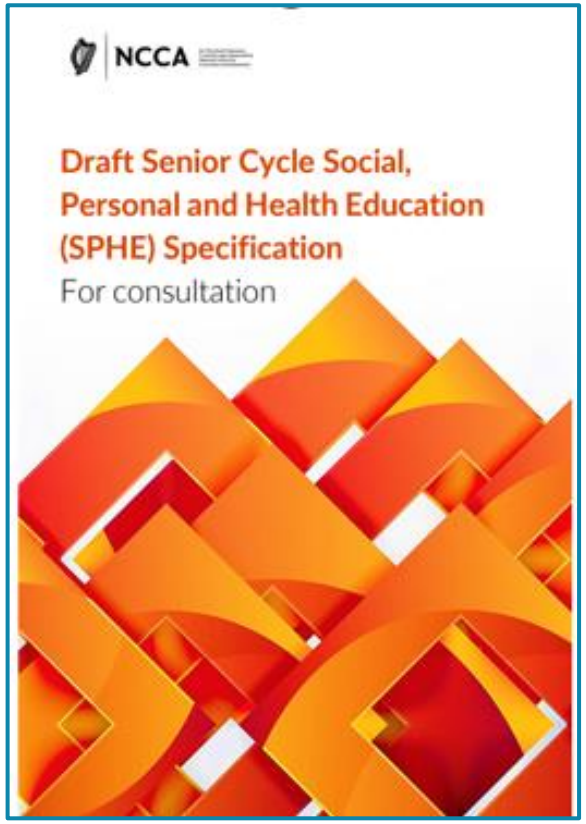
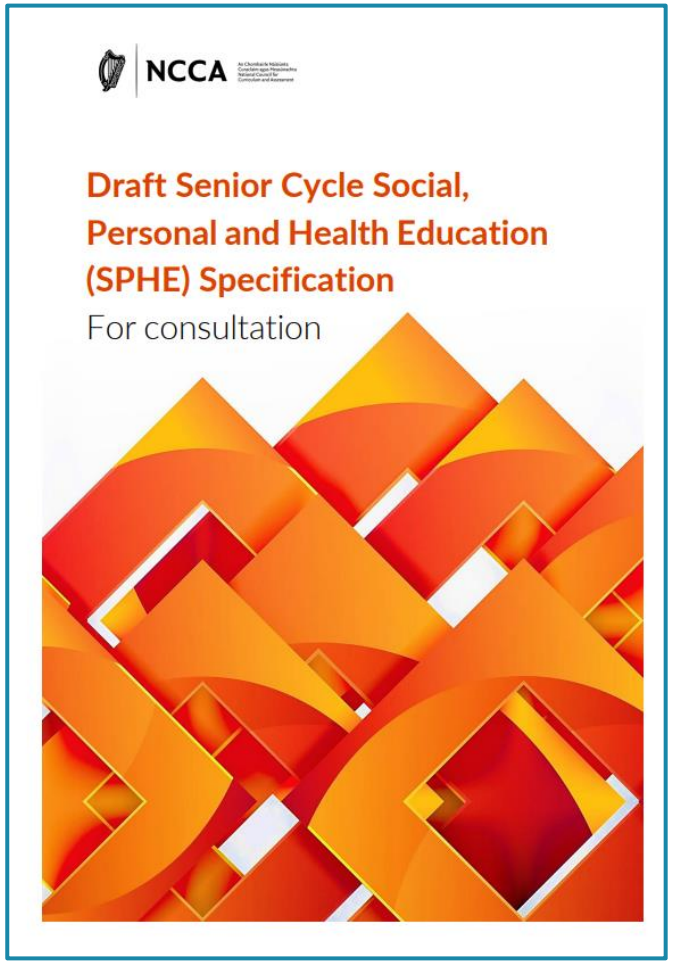


2022

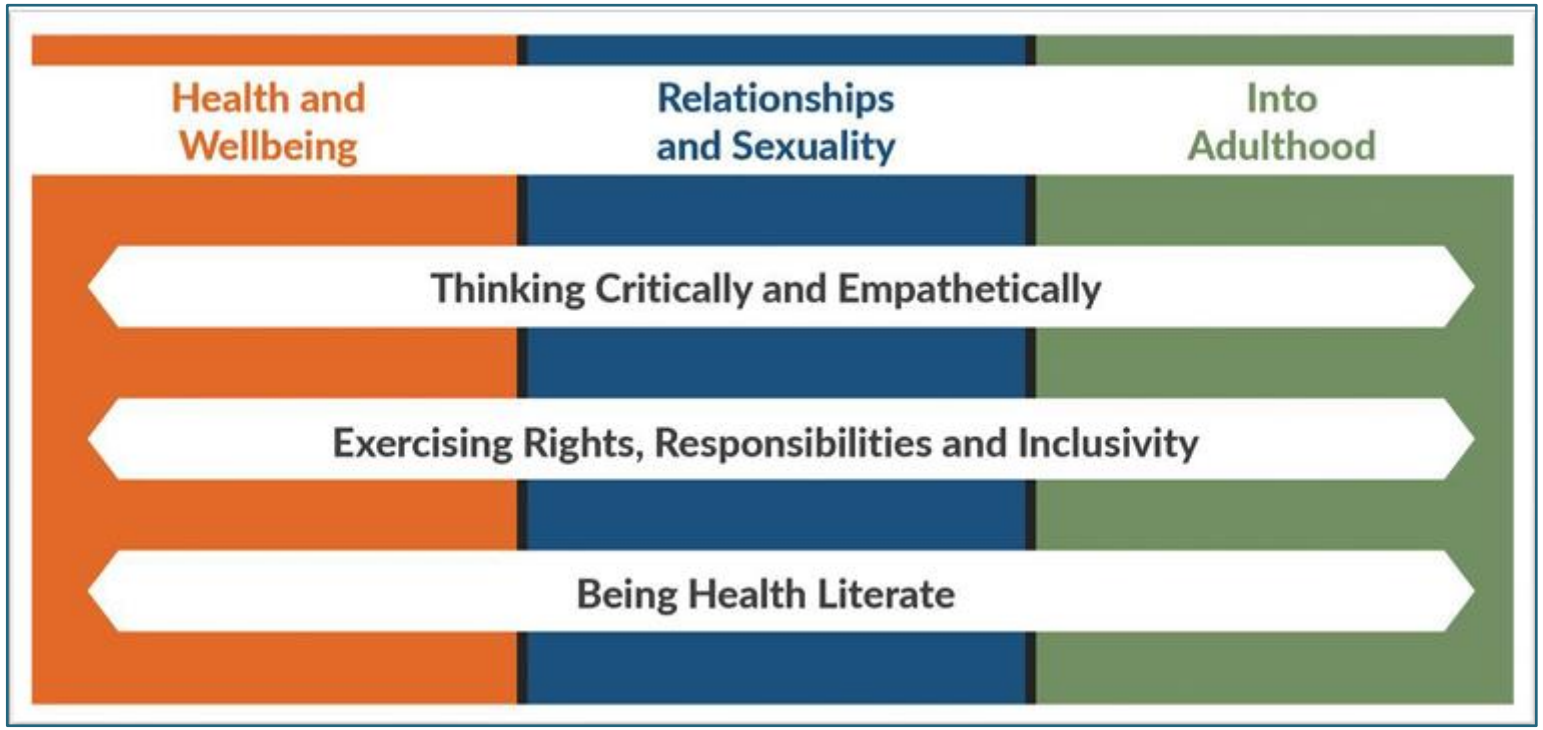
Draft Senior Cycle SPHE Specification



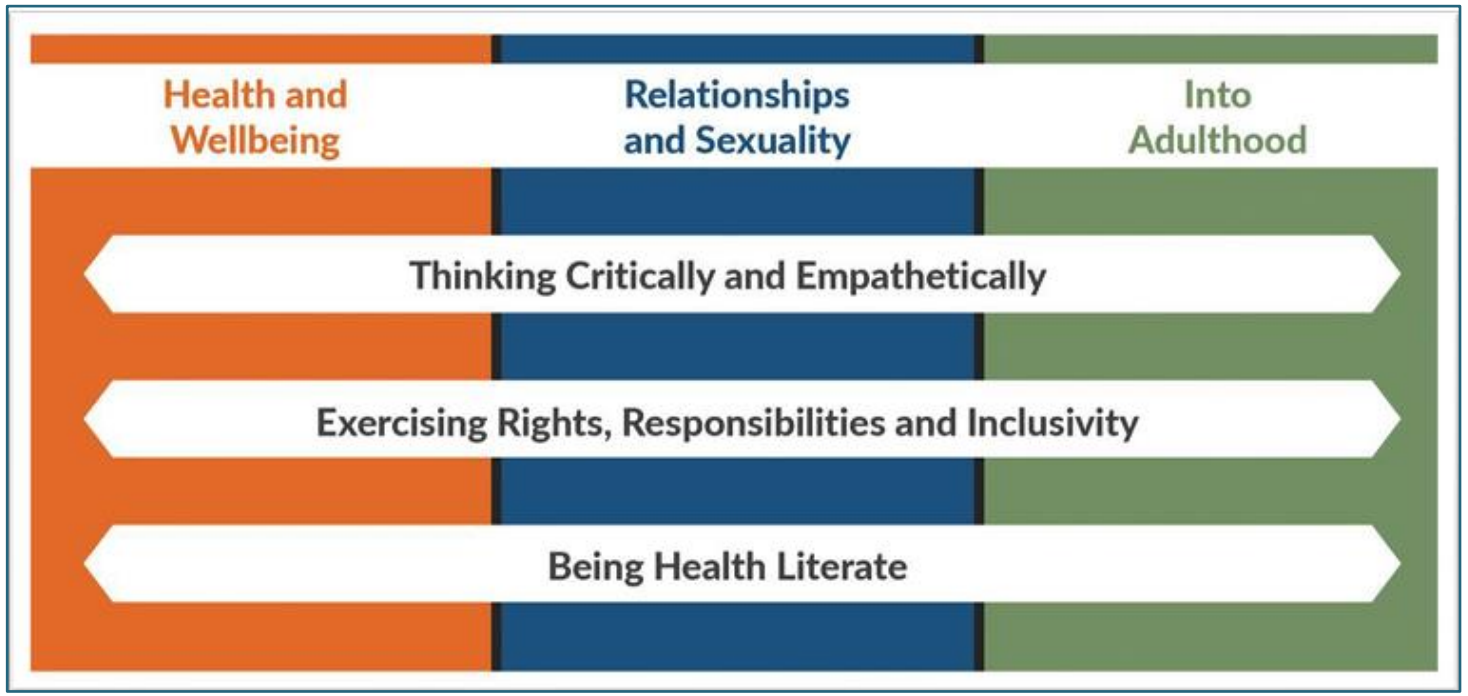
This course aims to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will empower students to become healthy, resilient, responsible and empathetic young adults; nurture respectful and caring relationships; and prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life now and beyond school. (DE, 2023, p.7)

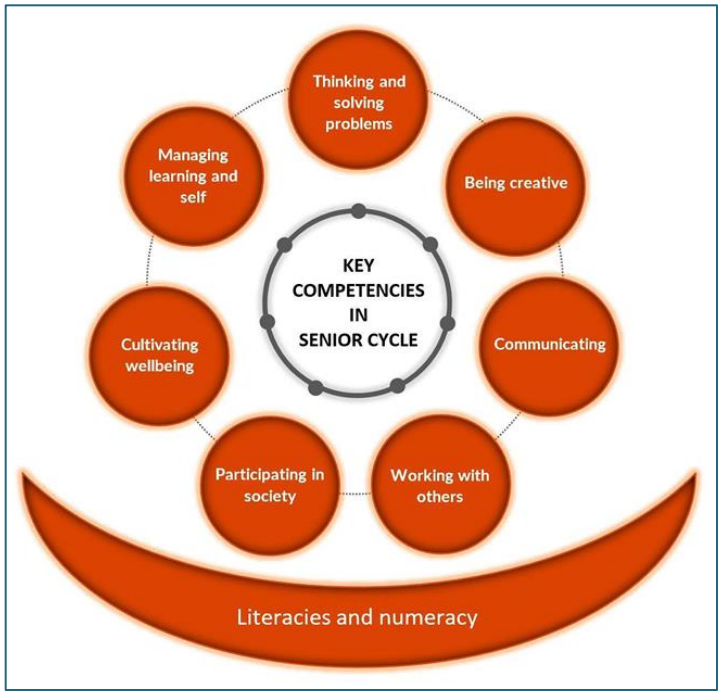
Draft Senior Cycle Specification

The Senior Cycle SPHE specification is designed around three strands and three cross-cutting elements



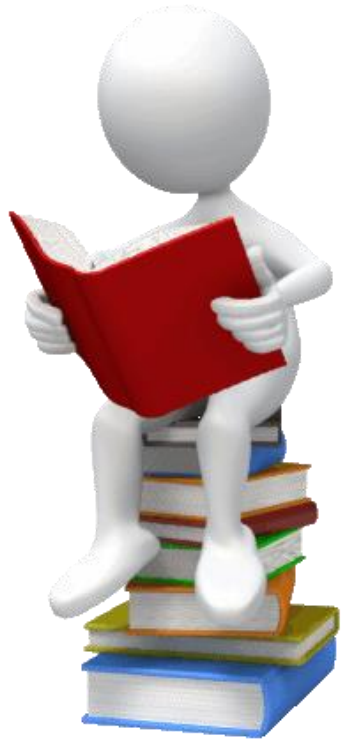
Cross-cutting Elements and Key Competencies





Introduction to the Learning Outcomes

Book Walk



Glossary of Terms for Senior Cycle SPHE

Appendix 2 Glossary of terms used in Learning Outcomes

Abusive relationships: a general term for relationships which may be overtly or covertly aggressive, coercive, controlling, demeaning, harassing, intimidating, isolating, or threatening. Abusive behaviour can be once-off or repeated, intentional or unintentional.

Addiction pathway: refers to how engaging with addictive substances or behaviours changes the reward pathway of the brain (that releases dopamine) and describes the effects of this over time.

Allyship skills: refers to the actions, behaviours, and practices used to support, advocate and collaborate with others, in support of justice and equity. Allyship involves recognising and using one's privileged status (for example as white or male or Irish person) to support individuals from minority identity groups.

Bullying behaviour: intentional behaviour that is repeated over time by a group or individual with the intention of inflicting injury or discomfort through physical contact, verbal attacks or psychological manipulation.

Consent: 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: *a person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act*. The age of consent to engage in sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17 years old.

Determinants of health: whether people are healthy or not is greatly determined by their circumstances and environment. To a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our physical environment, genetics, gender, our income and education level, access to health services, and our relationships and social support networks, all have considerable impacts on health.

Emotional wellbeing: refers to recognising, understanding and being able to express and manage our feelings and emotions. 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.

Gender: gender means the socially constructed roles, responsibilities, characteristics, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men. Gender is socially and culturally constructed, so understandings of gender differ across contexts and over time

Gender identity: a person's felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex registered at birth.

Gender-based violence: is an umbrella term for all forms of violence that are directed against a person on the basis of their gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. The vast majority of cases of gender-based violence are perpetrated against women and children.

Health: a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Image-based abuse: online harassment and image based sexual abuse includes the non-consensual distribution of intimate images including the taking, distribution, publication or threat to distribute intimate images without consent, the sending of or threatening to send grossly offensive communications with intent to cause harm to the victim.

LGBTQI+: an umbrella term to signify gender and sexuality diversity and refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people. The 'plus' is used to signify additional gender identities and sexual orientations that are not specifically covered by the five initials.

Mental health: mental health is as a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community (WHO 2001d, p.1)

Mental ill-health: mental ill-health is used to describe moderate to severe mental health difficulties which are having a significant impact on a person's life and for which they are likely to require some kind of intervention or support. (Cannon et al., 2013) It is possible to live with mental health difficulties and have a sense of wellbeing.

Positive mental health: positive mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. It implies 'full functioning' and includes satisfaction with life, optimism and hope, self-esteem, resilience and coping, social functioning and emotional intelligence (NHS Scotland 2008). This specification promotes positive mental health by fostering social and emotional learning - the process through which young people enhance their ability to integrate thinking, feeling and behaving – and strengthening individual protective factors, such as self-esteem, emotional resilience, positive thinking, problem solving, social skills, stress management skills and feelings of mastery or self-efficacy.

Self-care: refers to the ability to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider. Most of us already practice self-care that protects our health every day, for example in eating healthily, exercising or ensuring we get enough sleep. In a nutshell, it's about taking care of ourselves.

Self-management skills: refers to the abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations in order to achieve goals and aspirations. This includes executive functioning skills that enable students to practice self-discipline and self-motivation, set personal and collective goals, use planning and organisational skills, and show the courage to take initiative.

Sexual activity: a range of activities from kissing, touching, founding to sexual intercourse (in all its forms) which involve giving and receiving sexual pleasure. These activities can be solitary or involve other people.

Sexual assault: is an act of physical assault that has a sexual aspect or motivation. It includes groping, forcibly kissing someone or touching someone in a sexual manner without their consent.

Sexual harassment: is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. It can take the form of actions, gestures, spoken or written words, pictures etc. It can involve text messages, email, phone calls or other electronic or social media communication.

Sexual and reproductive health: in the context of Senior Cycle SPHE, this refers to learning about male and female fertility, contraception options, ways to avoid sexually transmitted infections, responding to an unplanned pregnancy, and sign-posting where young people can access sexual and reproductive health advice and services.

Sexuality: the components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual expression, sexual fantasies, attitudes and values related to sex. Aspects of sexuality can change as we go through different ages and relationships. (See sexuality wheel).

Sexual expression: refers to the many ways we show our sexual selves. It includes communication and acceptance of love, expressing emotion, giving and receiving pleasure, having the ability to enjoy and control sexual and reproductive behaviour.

Sexual orientation: each person's capacity for emotional and sexual attraction to, and intimate sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender. Some people do not feel sexual attraction or may have very low levels of sexual attraction, and this is termed asexuality.

Social and emotional skills: in the context of this specification, social and emotional skills refer to self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness as set out in the CASEL Social and Emotional Skills Framework.

Social norms: the unwritten rules of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that are considered acceptable in a particular social group or culture. In the context of working with young people it is important to interrogate, question and critique social norms, especially those which may be harmful, unhelpful or not reflective of what people actually feel is important.

Stereotypes: presenting an image of a person, a group or a culture based on an assumed range of characteristics, behaviours or activities.

Oide

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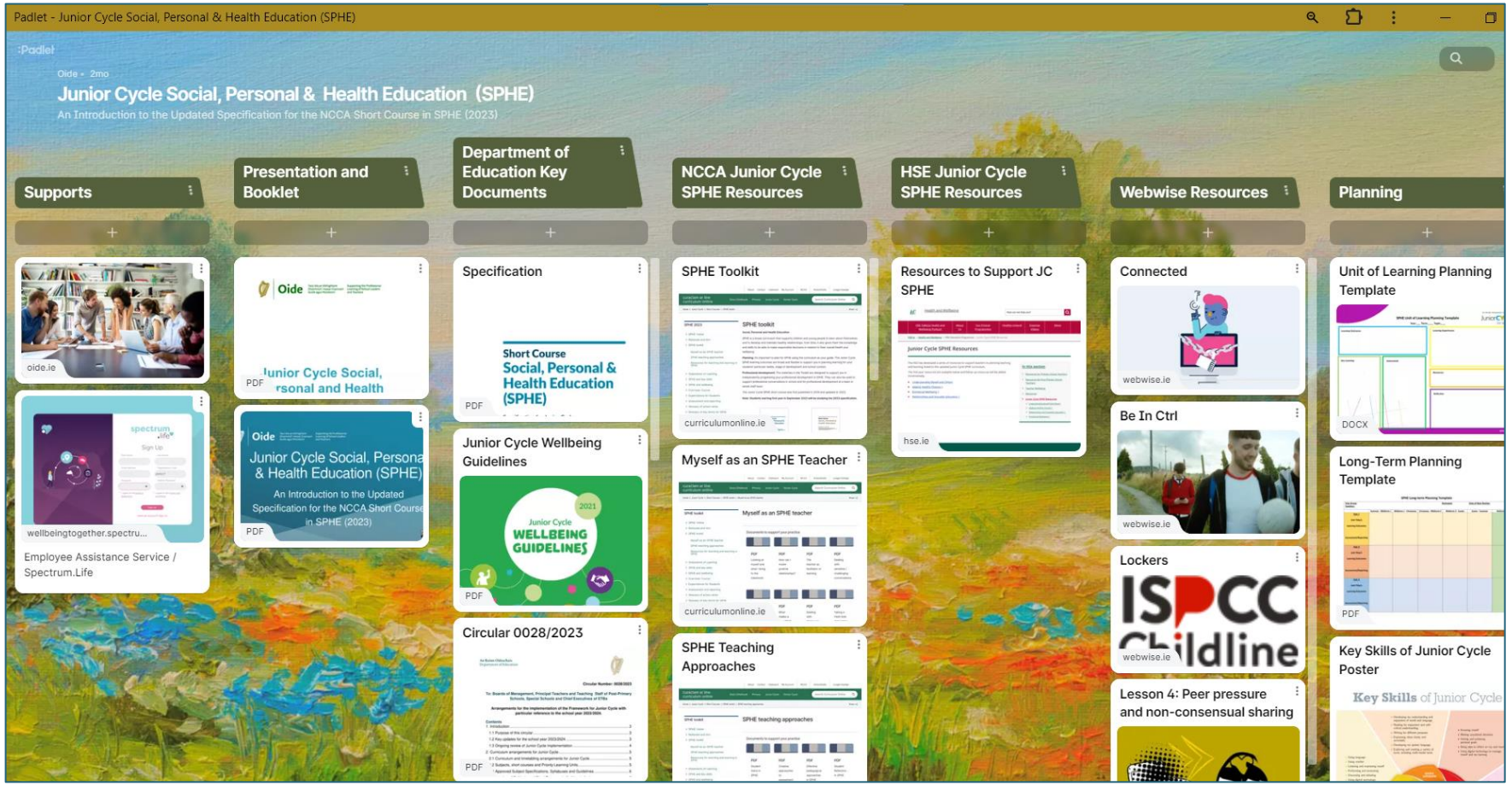
Supporting the Professiona Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Exploration of Resources and Supports

CC BY NC

Junior Cycle Padlet Wall



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Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Junior Cycle RSE Padlet Wall

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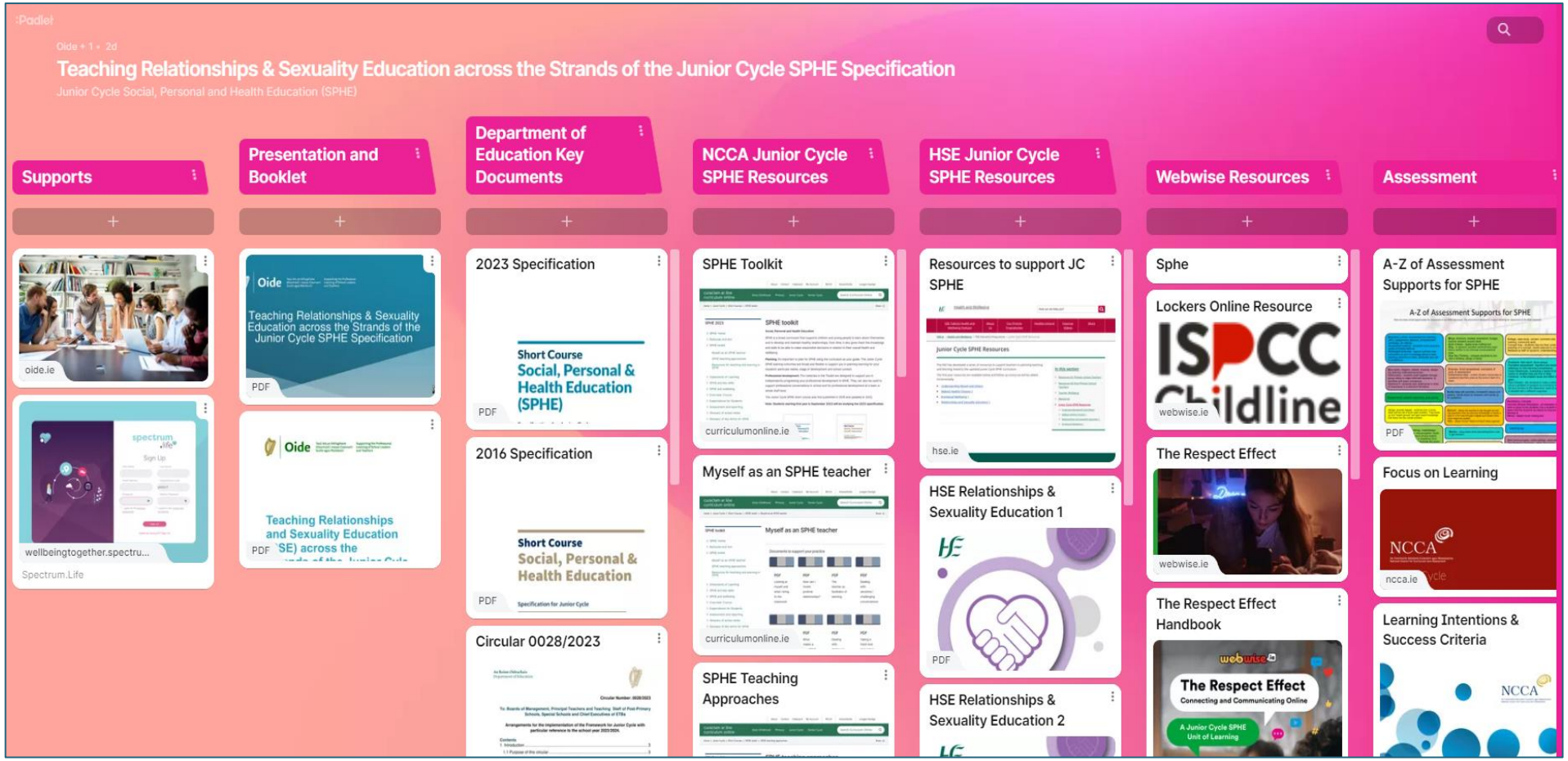

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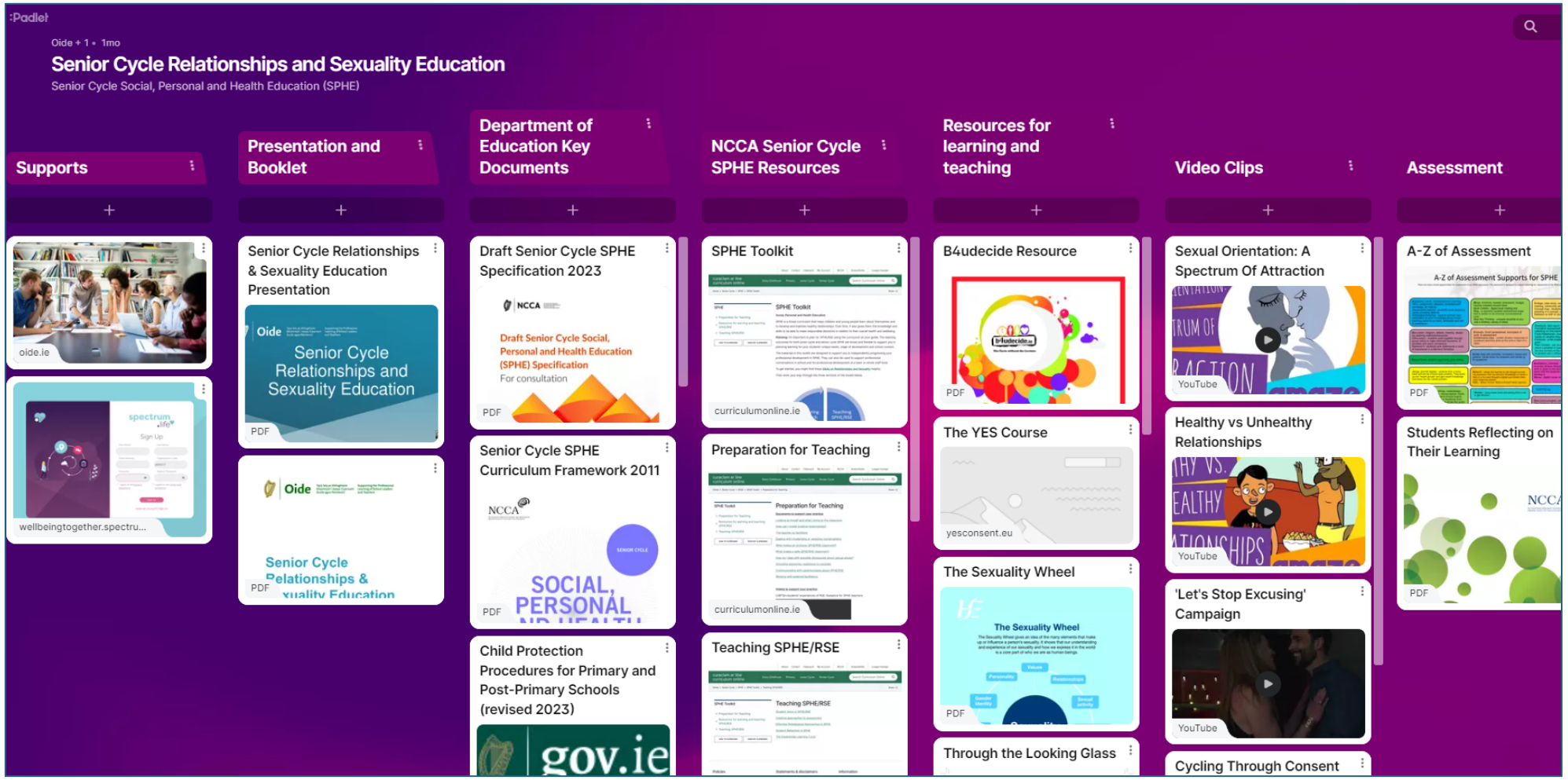

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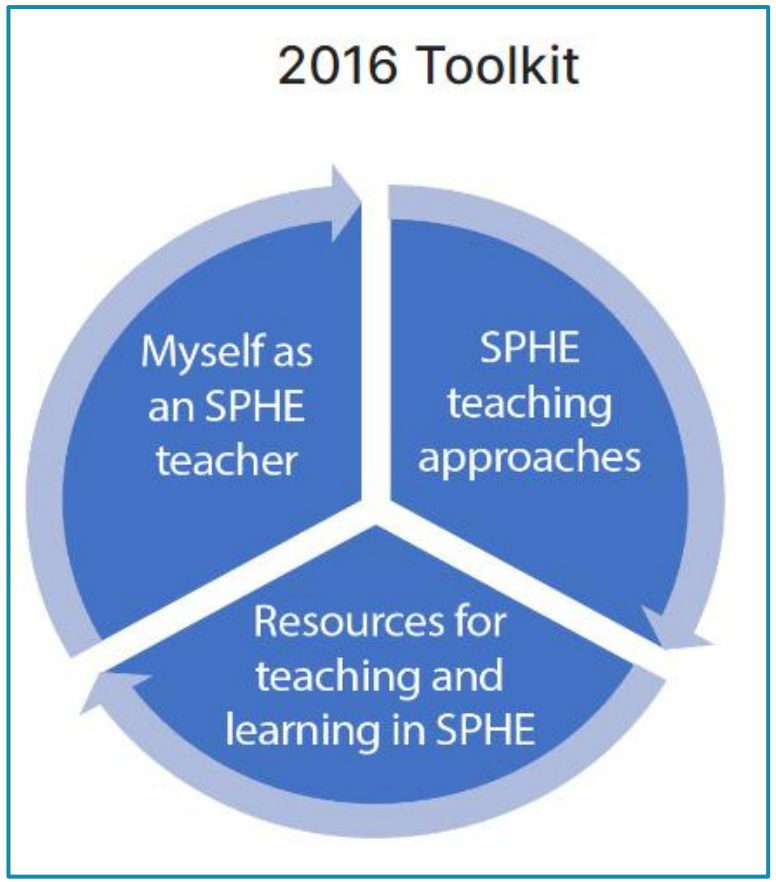
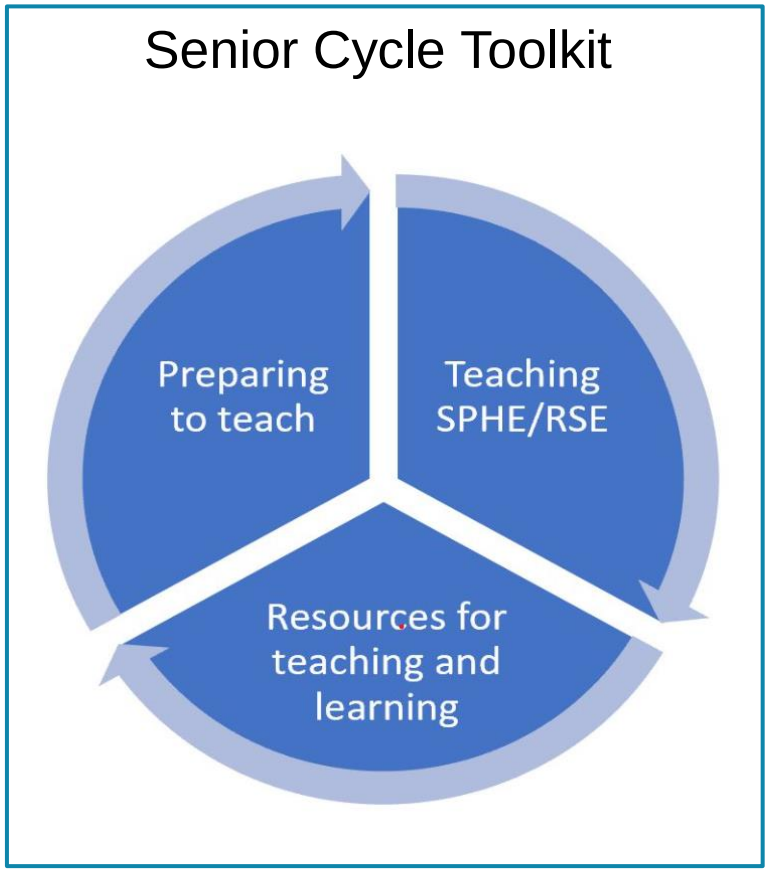
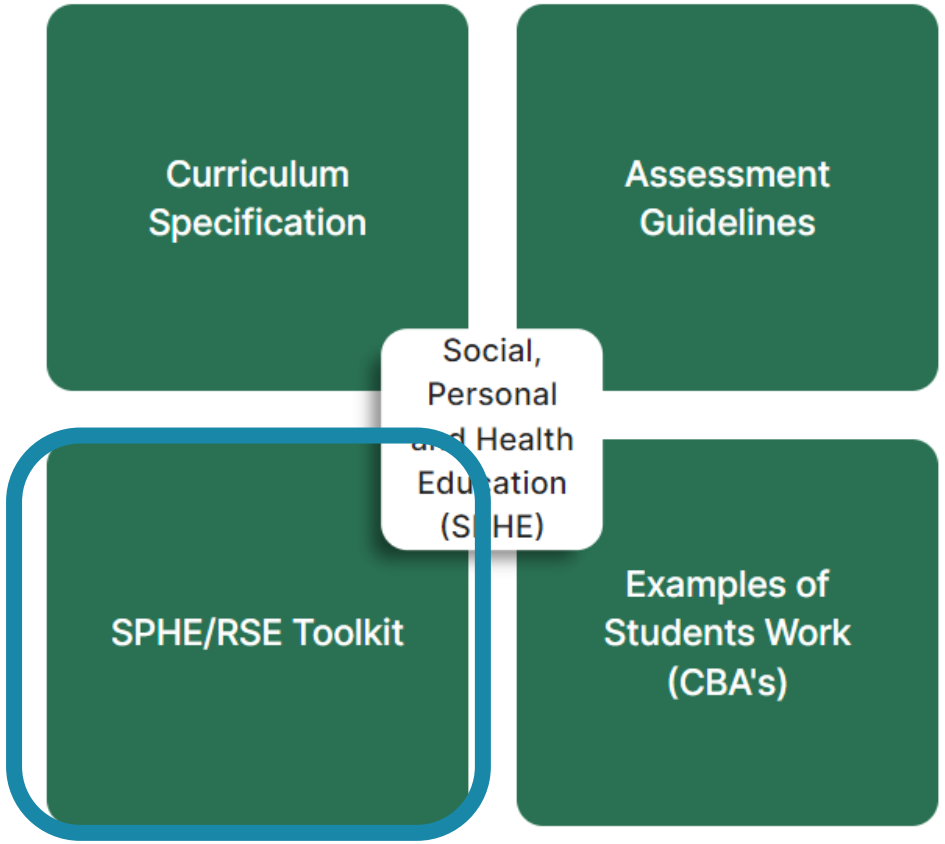
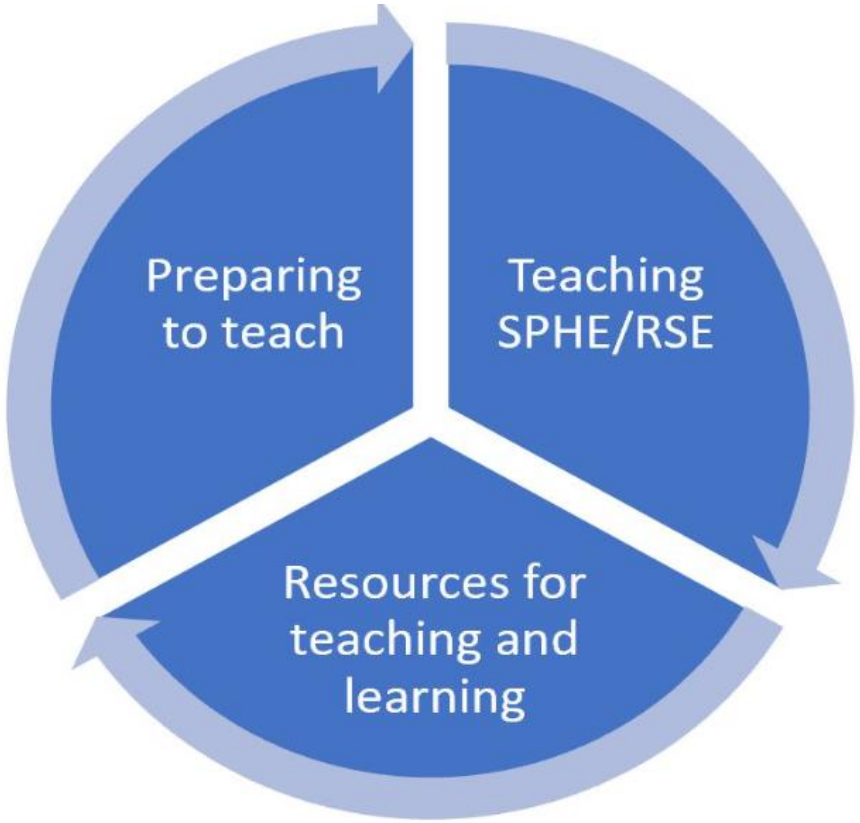
NCCA Curriculum Online SPHE Toolkits





Supporting the SPHE/RSE Teacher





Myself as and SPHE Teacher

CNQ Exercise- Connection-New-Question

Documents to support your practice

Looking at myself and what I bring to the classroom
How can I model positive relationships?
The teacher as facilitator of learning
Dealing with challenging/sensitive conversations
What makes an inclusive SPHE classroom?
What makes a safe SPHE classroom?
Dealing with disclosure about sexual abuse
Choosing resources – questions to consider
Communicating with parents/carers about SPHE
Working with external facilitators

SPHE Resources for Junior Cycle

https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-Cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE/

https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/hse-education-programme/junior-cycle-sphe-training-resources/

Further Elaboration and Guidance on Learning Outcomes (NCCA, 2023)

Learning Outcomes: 3.6, 3.8, 3.10 and 2.10, 3.11 & 4.9

NCCA Junior Cycle SPHE

Strand 3 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 3.6:	Students should be able to appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways.
Pre-learning:	Before addressing Learning Outcome 3.6, students need to have engaged with related learning outcomes, such as learning about **the physical, social and emotional changes that happen during adolescence** (1.1), **factors and influences that shape young people's self-identity**, such as (family, peers, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnic background, dis/abilities, religious beliefs/world-views (1.4) and **gender equity and gender stereotypes** (1.5)

What is the important learning?

It is a normal part of adolescence to question different aspects of one's identity. *'Figuring out the kind of person you are becoming is the major developmental task of adolescence'.* (Gaffney, M. 2021. *Your One Wild and Precious Life*, p53). As part of this figuring out, it is not uncommon for young people to question aspects of their identity which may include their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Experts advise that the adults in their lives need to acknowledge that this questioning is normal and allow the young person the time and space to work it through.

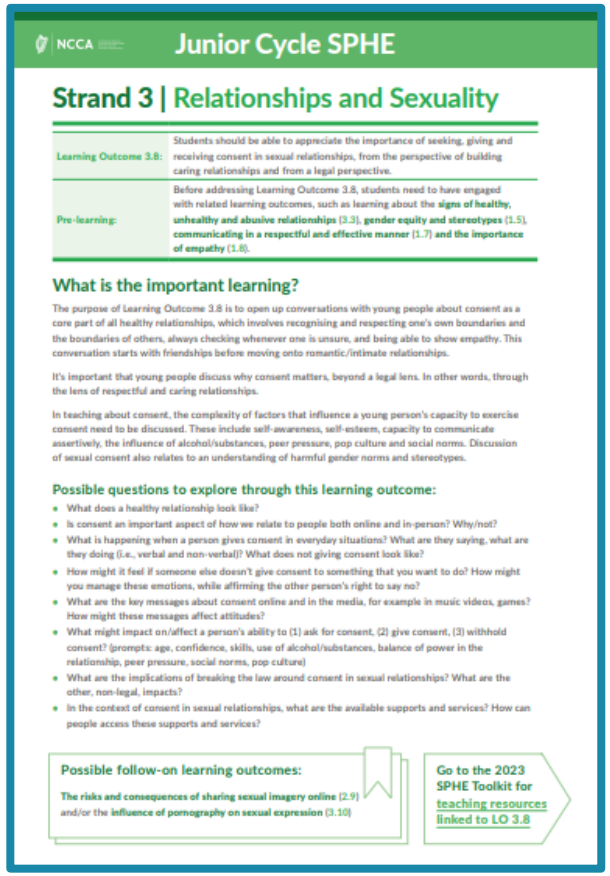
The purpose of Learning Outcome 3.6 is to open up conversations with young people about the breadth of ways that people can experience and express human sexuality. Human sexuality is broad and holistic and includes our gender identity, our sexual orientation, our relationship with ourselves and our relationships with others. Sexuality is part of who we are as humans, whether we are sexually active or not. Sexual activity is just one way that people can express their sexuality. (See the Sexuality Wheel)

In SPHE, teachers are most supportive when they adopt a non-judgmental, sensitive and open approach that acknowledges the diversity and complexity of life and seeks to create a classroom environment in which empathy and understanding can grow.

As part of these discussions, it is important to acknowledge that sexual orientation and gender identity are two distinct aspects of our personhood (see definitions It's inappropriate to assume, label or categorise a person, including their sexual orientation or gender identity. As per guidance, Being LGBT in school, teachers and students are advised to respect the language and terms that young people use to identify themselves as this is one way of creating an inclusive environment and supporting students who identify as LGBTQ+.

The most common age for young people to identify themselves as LGBTQ+ is 12, and the most common age for young people to tell someone they are LGBTQ+ is 16. This is a crucial time for LGBTQ+ young people. Experts assert that all young people need to be given the opportunity and space to develop their unique identities in environments of support and affirmation. Teachers can play a powerful role in this regard by acknowledging the diversity and complexity of life and modelling understanding and empathy.

In the context of discussing gender identity it is important to acknowledge that while most people's gender identity matches their sex registered at birth, this is not the case for everyone. It's important to let teenagers know that there are different ways of experiencing and expressing our gender. Furthermore, it's normal and healthy to question gender norms and stereotypes and many young people may not wish to conform to the way society expects them to look or behave. For the vast majority of young people, gender non-conformity and gender questioning does not mean that the person will go on to identify as transgender. It is also important to keep in mind that, as with other aspects of identity, one's gender identity can change over time.



NCCA Junior Cycle SPHE

Strand 3 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 3.8:	Students should be able to appreciate the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships, from the perspective of building caring relationships and from a legal perspective.
Pre-learning:	Before addressing Learning Outcome 3.8, students need to have engaged with related learning outcomes, such as learning about the **signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships** (3.3), **gender equity and stereotypes** (1.5), **communicating in a respectful and effective manner** (1.7) **and the importance of empathy** (1.6).

What is the important learning?

The purpose of Learning Outcome 3.8 is to open up conversations with young people about consent as a core part of all healthy relationships, which involves recognising and respecting one's own boundaries and the boundaries of others, always checking whenever one is unsure, and being able to show empathy. This conversation starts with friendships before moving onto romantic/intimate relationships.

It's important that young people discuss why consent matters, beyond a legal lens. In other words, through the lens of respectful and caring relationships.

In teaching about consent, the complexity of factors that influence a young person's capacity to exercise consent need to be discussed. These include self-awareness, self-esteem, capacity to communicate assertively, the influence of alcohol/substances, peer pressure, pop culture and social norms. Discussion of sexual consent also relates to an understanding of harmful gender norms and stereotypes.

Possible questions to explore through this learning outcome:

- What does a healthy relationship look like?
- Is consent an important aspect of how we relate to people both online and in-person? Why/not?
- What is happening when a person gives consent in everyday situations? What are they saying, what are they doing (i.e., verbal and non-verbal)? What does not giving consent look like?
- How might it feel if someone else doesn't give consent to something that you want to do? How might you manage these emotions, while affirming the other person's right to say no?
- What are the key messages about consent online and in the media, for example in music videos, games? How might these messages affect attitudes?
- What might impact on/affect a person's ability to (1) ask for consent, (2) give consent, (3) withhold consent? (prompts: age, confidence, skills, use of alcohol/substances, balance of power in the relationship, peer pressure, social norms, pop culture)
- What are the implications of breaking the law around consent in sexual relationships? What are the other, non-legal, impacts?
- In the context of consent in sexual relationships, what are the available supports and services? How can people access these supports and services?

Possible follow-on learning outcomes:

The risks and consequences of sharing sexual imagery online (2.9) and/or the **influence of pornography on sexual expression** (3.10)

Go to the 2023 SPHE Toolkit for teaching resources linked to LO 3.8

NCCA Junior Cycle SPHE

Strand 3 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 3.10:	Students should be able to discuss the influence of popular culture and the online world, in particular, the influence of pornography, on young people's understanding, expectations and social norms in relation to sexual expression.
Pre-learning:	Before addressing Learning Outcome 3.10, students need to have engaged with related learning outcomes, including learning about the **factors that influence and shape young people's self-identity** (1.4), **the meaning and importance of empathy** (1.6), **gender equity and gender stereotypes** (1.5), **sharing sexual imagery online** (2.9), **signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships** (3.3) **and the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships** (3.8).

What is the important learning?

The purpose of Learning Outcome 3.10 is to open up conversations with young people about the prevalence and influence of sexual messages and images in popular culture and online and to help them look critically at how this might be influencing their emerging understanding of sexuality, sexual norms and expectations. Begin by helping students to reflect on their own values and expectations of sexual relationships and what they consider to be the features of a healthy adult sexual experience, such as care, consent, equality, respect, trust, mutual pleasure. Then, discuss how messages and images in popular culture and online affirm, or are at odds with, their values and expectations.

Key messages to highlight through the learning activities include that we live in an increasingly sexualised world, surrounded by sexual messages and images and these need to be critically examined. While it is normal to be curious about sex, pornography is not a good place to learn about sex because it is not reflective of sex in the real world and can be disturbing and even damaging for young people. In fact, given the violent and harmful nature of the majority of freely accessible pornography, not watching pornography is a very healthy choice for a young person. It would be important to acknowledge, without judgement, that students may/not have seen pornography.

Possible questions to explore through this learning outcome:

- What are the dominant messages and images about sex in popular culture (e.g., advertising, movies, music videos, social media)?
- Who benefits from promoting sexual messages and images (prompt: the porn industry), and who loses out (prompt: everyone in society)?
- How might the portrayal of sex in popular culture influence young people as they develop their understanding of sexuality?
- What does the law say about the sharing of intimate or sexually explicit images?
- How do you think viewing pornography might influence people's attitudes, behaviours and expectations?
- What does the research say about the impact of viewing pornography, particularly during adolescence (e.g., adolescent brain development and susceptibility to addictive behaviours)?
- How does pornography feed into harmful gender norms and stereotypes?

When teaching about pornography, it is appropriate to show sexually explicit content, or refer to specific websites with sexually explicit content in class.

Possible follow-on learning outcome:

The **pressures to become sexually intimate** and **ways to show respect for people's choices** (2.9)

Go to the 2023 SPHE Toolkit for classroom resources linked to LO 3.10

NCCA Junior Cycle SPHE

Health Literacy | A set of cross-cutting learning outcomes

	Students should be able to:		
Learning Outcome 2.10, 3.11 and 4.9	2.10 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information, supports and services about health and wellbeing	3.11 demonstrate how to access and appraise trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health	4.9 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information and services aimed at supporting young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health

What is health literacy?

Health literacy within SPHE entails building young people's knowledge, competencies and confidence to access, understand, appraise, and use health information, and fostering their ability to apply this knowledge in making decisions about health and wellbeing.

While teenagers are very adept at using technology to source and share information, they are less able to critically evaluate the material they encounter online. A variety of media are feeding young people a constant stream of information and messages which need to be critically appraised to ameliorate their potentially harmful influence, for example, material saturated with images promoting body modification products, fast food, alcohol, sexual violence and quick-fix solutions to physical and mental health problems. Equally, there are some very helpful supports and sources of information.

Health literacy allows young people to step back and question the reliability, relevance and trustworthiness of information they encounter and thus supports them in making healthier choices. Health literacy (including critical digital media literacy) is an important aspect of health promotion and education. For this reason, ***health literacy needs to be integrated across all teaching and learning in SPHE.***

How to foster health literacy within junior cycle SPHE?

- Remind students to ask these questions when searching for information linked to their learning in SPHE:
  1. **Who?** Can you trust the source of the information? Who produced it? What is their level of expertise in the field? Are they medical or health professionals? Why have they produced it – have they a commercial motive? Who owns or funds the initiative? Remember that social influencers are not experts and often get paid for promoting products or services!
  2. **What?** Can you trust the information? Is it accurate and reputable? How can you check? Does it provide reliable sources of evidence for the information, or the claims being made? Are there experts supporting the ideas/claims? How do you know they are actually experts? Is the author stating facts or opinions? Where a product or solution is suggested, does it seem too good to be true?
  3. **When?** When was the information published? Is it up-to-date and still relevant?
- When they are accessing health information, recommend to students that they compare and contrast information from more than one source using critical media literacy questions (see above).
- Alert students to the fact that when they use a search engine to find online information the top results that appear are generally sponsored. Students may need to scroll past the sponsored search results to find independent and reputable sites further down the list.
- Remind students to always question the source of the information and consider if it is being provided by a commercial company or interest group. Such sites may still provide useful information, although it is worth remembering that they may be trying to influence our thinking or behaviour in a particular way.
- Facilitate students to learn how and where they can access the support of a health professional or other trusted adult if they have a serious health worry, rather than relying solely on online support.

Alert students that the intended audience for most health and relationships websites is over 16s and this needs to be kept in mind when searching for relevant and suitable information.

Oide

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Supporting the Professiona Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Communicating with Parents and Guardians

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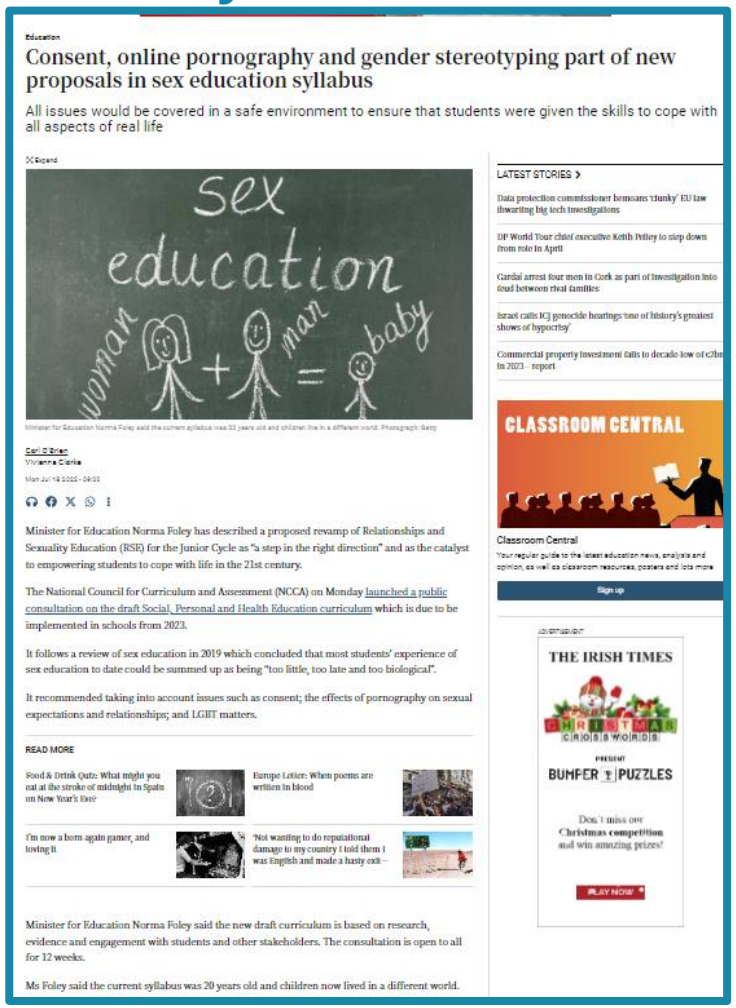
Dealing with Challenging Situations

Case Study- Think, Pair, Share, Square



Education

Consent, online pornography and gender stereotyping part of new proposals in sex education syllabus

All issues would be covered in a safe environment to ensure that students were given the skills to cope with all aspects of real life

Minister for Education Norma Foley has described a proposed revamp of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) for the Junior Cycle as "a step in the right direction" and as the catalyst to empowering students to cope with life in the 21st century.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on Monday launched a public consultation on the draft Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum which is due to be implemented in schools from 2023.

It follows a review of sex education in 2019 which concluded that most students' experience of sex education to date could be summed up as being "too little, too late and too biological".

It recommended taking into account issues such as consent; the effects of pornography on sexual expectations and relationships; and LGBT matters.

READ MORE

Minister for Education Norma Foley said the new draft curriculum is based on research, evidence and engagement with students and other stakeholders. The consultation is open to all for 12 weeks.

Ms Foley said the current syllabus was 20 years old and children now lived in a different world.

The principal of a large school receives a letter from a concerned parent who wishes to withdraw their young person from Junior Cycle SPHE because they are worried about the curriculum. They have heard that students will be learning about pornography.

What should this school leader do?

Support Documents for School Leaders- Communicating with Parents/ Guardians

Myself as an SPHE teacher

1

Communicating with parents/guardians about SPHE

SPHE learning is a shared responsibility that does not begin or end in the classroom. It is most effective when there a partnership approach between the school and home. This involves regular communication that builds mutual understanding about the role and value of SPHE in young people's education.

Some considerations

Communication with parents/guardians about SPHE should occur throughout the school year, for example, through...

Meetings

Consider sharing information about SPHE during information evenings for new parents as this is an important signal of the value that your school places on SPHE. Similarly, SPHE teachers should be available to meet with parents during parent-teacher meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity for you to share the scope of the SPHE curriculum and discuss progress in learning. It also offers parents the opportunity to mention specific issues or challenges that their teenager might be dealing with, which can help you in planning future SPHE learning and teaching.

Consultation

Planning for learning and teaching in SPHE must be rooted in the students' real and identified needs. Therefore, consulting with young people about what they need to learn about in SPHE is vital. A summary of the needs identified by the students can be presented to parents and used as the basis for an awareness raising workshop and/or consultation with parents. Alternatively, the results of student consultations can be shared electronically with parents alongside a parent survey, inviting parents to give their views on what they think is important for their child's learning in SPHE.

Workshops

Occasional information sessions/workshops on specific aspects of SPHE can help parents to understand the needs of young people today and support them in developing their own skills and knowledge to help them talk to their teenage children. Useful workshop topics might include emotional wellbeing/mental health, substance abuse, managing social media and aspects of relationships and sexuality education. The parents' association can play a role in identifying topics of relevance and organising these events.

An example of effective practice

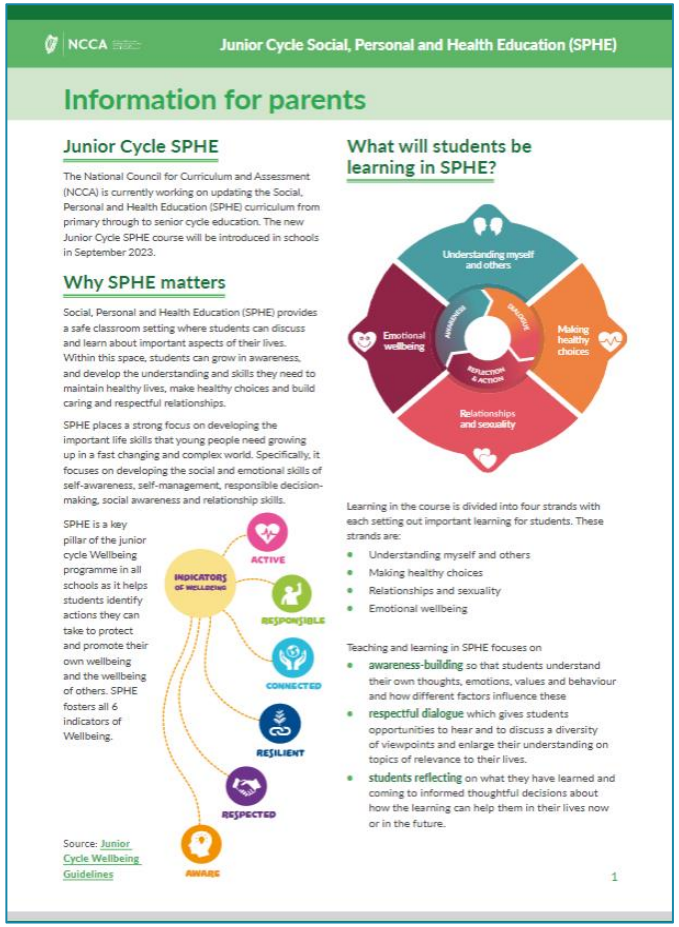
Gather evidence of young people's behaviour and attitudes on a topic of interest to parents. This may be found in national research reports by the Health Service Executive (HSE) or ERSI. Design a survey to gather related information about aspects of your students' behaviour and/or attitudes. Anonymise the survey data and invite students to discuss and compare the findings at national level with the local findings. Organise a meeting for parents to share and use the data as the basis for a conversation. When the findings relate to their own children, parents are likely to be very interested.

Provide sources of information

Provide parents with links to useful websites and sources of information related to SPHE topics through your school website, newsletter, text messages and other communication tools. Community/local resources, supports and services should also be shared with parents. Consider setting up a dedicated space for SPHE on the school website for this purpose.

www.curriculumonline.ie

NCCA



NCCA

Junior Cycle Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

Information for parents

Junior Cycle SPHE

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is currently working on updating the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum from primary through to senior cycle education. The new Junior Cycle SPHE course will be introduced in schools in September 2023.

Why SPHE matters

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides a safe classroom setting where students can discuss and learn about important aspects of their lives. Within this space, students can grow in awareness, and develop the understanding and skills they need to maintain healthy lives, make healthy choices and build caring and respectful relationships.

SPHE places a strong focus on developing the important life skills that young people need growing up in a fast changing and complex world. Specifically, it focuses on developing the social and emotional skills of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness and relationship skills.

SPHE is a key pillar of the junior cycle Wellbeing programme in all schools as it helps students identify actions they can take to protect and promote their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. SPHE fosters all 6 indicators of Wellbeing.

Source: Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines

What will students be learning in SPHE?

Learning in the course is divided into four strands with each setting out important learning for students. These strands are:

- Understanding myself and others
- Making healthy choices
- Relationships and sexuality
- Emotional wellbeing

Teaching and learning in SPHE focuses on

- **awareness-building** so that students understand their own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour and how different factors influence these
- **respectful dialogue** which gives students opportunities to hear and to discuss a diversity of viewpoints and enlarge their understanding on topics of relevance to their lives.
- **students reflecting** on what they have learned and coming to informed thoughtful decisions about how the learning can help them in their lives now or in the future.

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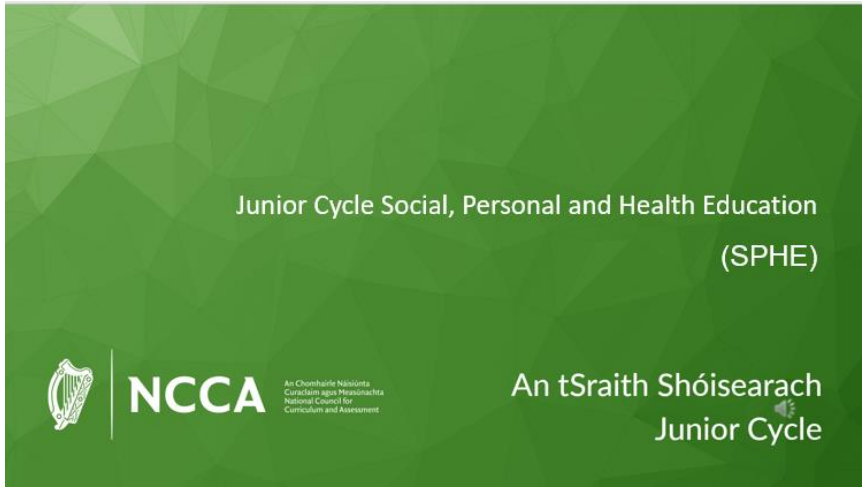

Junior Cycle Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

NCCA An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

An tSraith Shóisearach
Junior Cycle

https://ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/curriculum-developments/social-personal-and-health-education-sphe/

Oide

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Supporting the Professiona Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Assessment and Reporting

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Assessment and Reporting

Assessment in SPHE is not about setting tasks in order to accumulate a record of marks. Nor is it about teachers assessing where the student is situated on the continuum of wellbeing or making a judgment about a student's physical, social or emotional wellbeing. The focus of assessment is on allowing students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, dispositions and values they have gained through their engagement in learning in SPHE.

SPHE Teaching Approaches

1

Creative approaches to assessment in SPHE/RSE

Why is assessment important in SPHE/RSE?

Giving students opportunities to demonstrate their learning benefits both the teacher and students.

- For the teacher - It enables you to feel confident that learning has taken place, be able to affirm progress and identify future learning needs.
- For the students - It creates an awareness of the development of their knowledge, attitudes and skills, signifies the value of learning in SPHE and increases their motivation for further learning.

"The focus of assessment is to enable students to show evidence of their learning journey."

Senior Cycle SPHE specification

The main purpose of assessment is to support learning. It is anticipated that most assessment in SPHE will be classroom-based and formative in nature. Being clear about the purpose of any assessment activity is really important as this allows you to share the goal with your students and provide relevant feedback.

Planning ongoing assessment in SPHE allows you, the teacher, and your students to engage in ongoing conversations about their learning.

Other relevant guidance on this toolkit

Student voice in SPHE

Supporting student reflection in SPHE

Effective pedagogical approaches.

Ongoing assessment – what does it look like?

Assessment in SPHE is not about setting tasks in order to accumulate a record of marks. Nor is it about teachers assessing where the student is situated on the continuum of wellbeing or making a judgment about a student's physical, social or emotional wellbeing. The focus of assessment is on allowing students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions they have gained through their engagement in learning in SPHE.

Assessment activities should provide opportunities to assess:

- an increase in knowledge (Before I knew ... now I also know ...)
- an increase in understanding (I always knew ... but now I can see how it connects to ... and now I can see how I could use this in my life)
- a change or reconfirmation of a belief/attitude (I used to feel ... and I now feel ...)
- improved communication skills (Before I would have said ... but now I can say ...)
- increased competence/skills (Before I didn't how to ... but now I know how to ...)
- new strategies acquired (Before I wouldn't have known how to ... but now I know new/more effective ways to ...)
- changed or challenged assumptions (Before I thought that ... but now I realise...)[1]

And remember – not everything needs to be assessed. You simply want to help students show evidence of their learning journey.

[1] Adapted from guidance published by PHSE Association, UK

www.curriculumonline.ie

NCCA

(NCCA, 2023)

Junior Cycle Classroom-Based Assessment

- Completed in 2nd or 3rd year

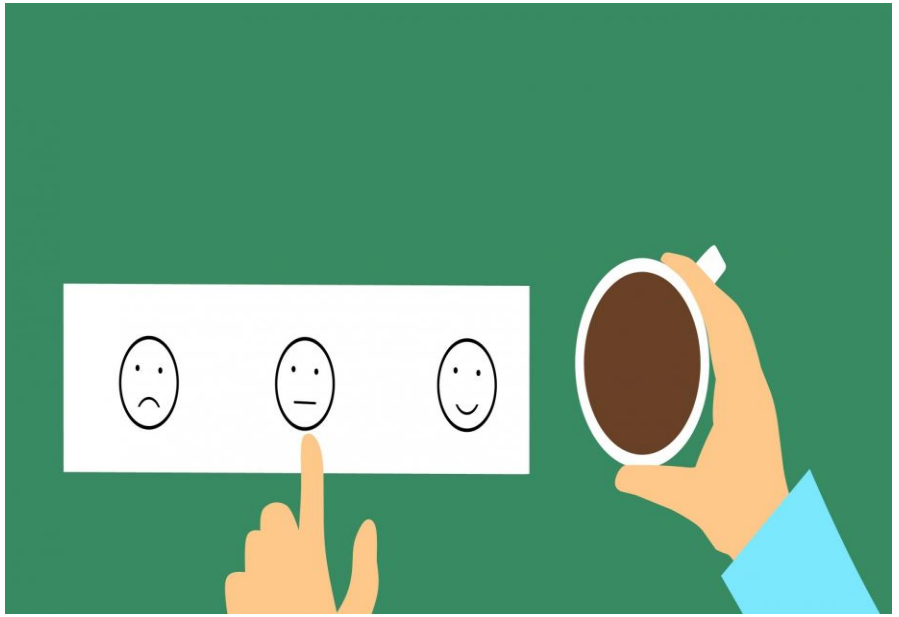
- Choice of Project:

Portfolio of my learning and reflection in SPHE

or

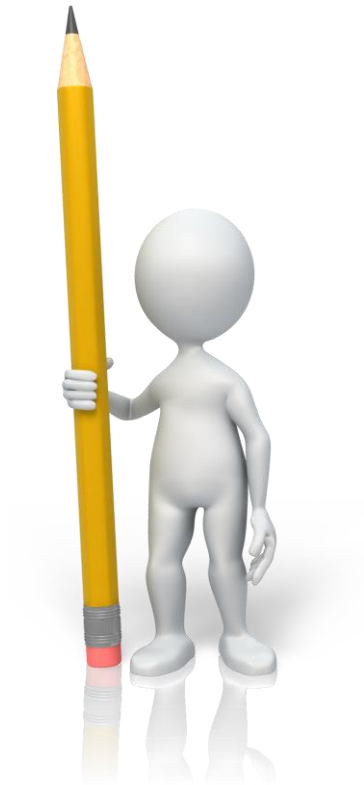
Taking action for SPHE

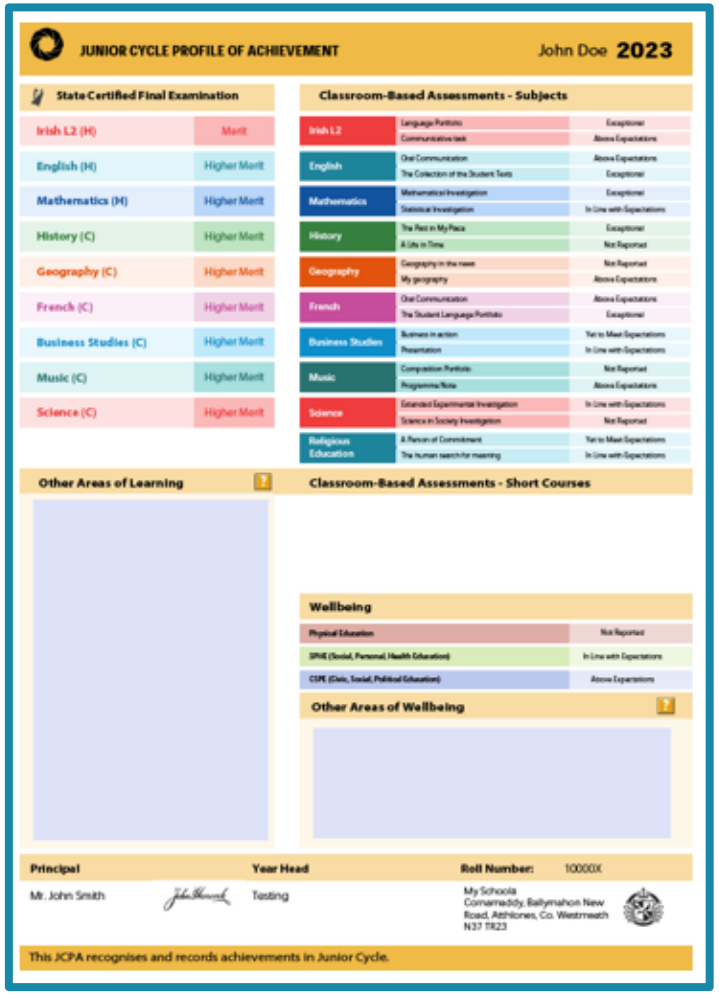
- Wide range of formats to suit a diversity of learner



Classroom-Based Assessment Reporting

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)





JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT — John Doe 2023

State Certified Final Examination

Irish L2 (H)	Merit
English (H)	Higher Merit
Mathematics (H)	Higher Merit
History (C)	Higher Merit
Geography (C)	Higher Merit
French (C)	Higher Merit
Business Studies (C)	Higher Merit
Music (C)	Higher Merit
Science (C)	Higher Merit

Classroom-Based Assessments - Subjects

Irish L2	Language Portfolio	Exceptional
	Communicative task	Above Expectations
English	Oral Communication	Above Expectations
	The Collection of the Student Texts	Exceptional
Mathematics	Mathematical Investigation	Exceptional
	Statistical Investigation	In Line with Expectations
History	The Past in My Place	Exceptional
	A Life in Time	Not Reported
Geography	Geography in the news	Not Reported
	My geography	Above Expectations
French	Oral Communication	Above Expectations
	The Student Language Portfolio	Exceptional
Business Studies	Business in action	Yet to Meet Expectations
	Presentation	In Line with Expectations
Music	Composition Portfolio	Not Reported
	Programme Note	Above Expectations
Science	Extended Experimental Investigation	In Line with Expectations
	Science in Society Investigation	Not Reported
Religious Education	A Person of Commitment	Yet to Meet Expectations
	The human search for meaning	In Line with Expectations

Other Areas of Learning

Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses

Wellbeing

Physical Education	Not Reported
SPHE (Social, Personal, Health Education)	In Line with Expectations
CSPE (Civic, Social, Political Education)	Above Expectations

Other Areas of Wellbeing

Principal	Year Head	Roll Number: 10000X
Mr. John Smith	Testing	My Schoola Cornamaddy, Ballymahon New Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 TR23

This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.

Thank You

Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers