

LEARNING AT SCHOOL:

Information for parents and carers about learning at Third and Fourth Level



When a young person is in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year at secondary school, most will be learning at what we call Third or Fourth Level. Learning across two Levels at school means that the teacher can decide what is the best approach for the class or individual young person.

It might be that your child will benefit from learning some subjects at Second level – your child’s teacher can talk to you about this. The difference between Third and Fourth Level is that learning at Fourth Level develops some of the topics a bit more.

Part of our learning with young people at school is about **relationships, being safe, growing up, their bodies, emotional wellbeing, gender, being a parent and sex and sexuality**. This is part of our Health and Wellbeing learning called *Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood* education. Here are the main things we learn about:

When it comes to relationships young people learn about:

- Loving relationships and being attracted to others
- Making relationships work
- Respect for others and the importance of being kind – in our face-to-face relationships and online.

When it comes to being safe young people learn about:

- Social media and being safe and smart online
- What we mean by consent
- Abuse in relationships – considering grooming, sexual exploitation, partner control, coercion and violence
- Pornography – what it is and what harm it does
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Who they can go to for help and support, including Sexual Health Services.

When it comes to growing up and learning about their body young people learn about:

- Puberty and how the bodies and emotions of both girls and boys change as they grow – this includes menstruation (periods) and masturbation.

When it comes to emotional wellbeing young people learn about:

- Feeling emotional
- Looking after themselves and others
- Body image and the pressures on young people.

When it comes to gender young people learn about:

- Gender stereotypes
- Equality
- That they can be any kind of boy or girl they want to be
- Feminism
- Sexual harassment.

When it comes to being a parent/carer young people learn about:

- Being a parent and thinking about what kind of parent they would be
- How having a baby changes the parent's life
- Important things about child development including the importance of nurture and play for babies and children.

When it comes to sex and sexuality young people learn about:

- The age of consent
- The pressures young people can feel about having sex
- That some people are lesbian gay, bisexual or transgender
- That sex should be something that is pleasurable
- Getting pregnant, contraception and condoms
- What we mean when we talk about human sexuality
- The idea of sexual rights.

How do we learn at school?

Young people at this age are curious. They are really interested in how people get on, thinking about relationships, thinking ahead about sex and learning about their bodies. While young people are becoming more independent, and learning at school is important, they also remain dependent on their parents and carers to look after them, love and care for them and help them learn behaviours and values for life. At school we will use conversations and online material to support learning about health and wellbeing.