

Senior Cycle CSPE and SPHE Video Workshop

What is this resource?

This resource was developed by the Participation and Education Unit in the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO). It is designed to raise awareness of children's rights and the OCO to Senior Cycle students. This resource contains a video presentation and accompanying notes to be used by teachers. The video is presented by a member of the Participation and Rights Education team. It's extremely easy to use!

What can it be used for?

This resource can be used by CSPE and SPHE teachers. It has links to both curricula. The video can be played in class and paused for the students to carry out the activities. The integrated activities can run across a number of lessons. It can also be assigned as a home learning tool and includes activities that can be used at home to allow for blended learning arrangements.

What do I need?

This resource is a video workshop, so you will need a computer and projector with speakers or an interactive white board so the presentation can be played to the class. Some of the activities require specific materials outlined below:

- **Activity 1 Rights in Reality:** requires rights stickers. You can contact education@oco.ie and we will post these to your school. You can download a rights poster from [the OCO website](#).
- **Activity 2 Rights during COVID-19:** requires child friendly list of all [articles under the UNCRC](#), iPads or cameras to film news report, or computer to write short blog, option to use resources in the Wellbeing Toolkit.
- **Activity 3 Direct Division:** requires watching the OCO video [Direct Division](#). You may want to read this helpful guide on [how to handle sensitive topics](#) in the classroom.
- **Activity 4 Policy in Practise:** requires Child Friendly Concluding Observations from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to [Ireland 2016](#). (adapted from [NICCY activity](#)).
- **Activity 5 Get the Message Out:** requires art materials, optional rights stickers and posters. (adapted from [Amnesty International UK activity](#)).
- **Activity 6 Who wants to be the Ombudsman:** requires you to explain the [SMART methodology](#), (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Time-bound).

How to use this resource?

The video workshop is accompanied by these teacher notes. The video is presented by a member of the Participation and Rights Education team. The notes indicate where the video is to be paused to allow for class or homework activities and outlines how to facilitate the activities. The activities are optional but extremely useful to support the students' learning. You can use this resource over a series of classes in order to facilitate all of the activities or you can choose which you feel would be most suitable for your students.

Curriculum and Links and Integration

The following section outlines the curriculum links to Junior cycle CSPE, SHPE and the COVID-19 Wellbeing Toolkit.

CSPE Curriculum Links

The content of this presentation is linked to the Senior CSPE curriculum framework.

Key skills:

- Working with others
- Critical and creative thinking
- Communications - engaging in debate

Values:

- Human dignity and respect
- Equality and Inclusion
- Justice and Fairness
- Exercising autonomy in learning and independence
- Strengthen capacity to empathise with other people's situations

SPHE Curriculum Links

Key skills:

- Communication
- Critical and creative thinking

The activities through the lesson link to the objectives of the SPHE senior cycle:

- develop self-awareness through opportunities to reflect on thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings
- develop students' self-efficacy; the confidence to think and behave independently especially in the face of social pressure
- strengthen students' capacity to empathise with another person's situation, feelings and motives in order to enhance relationships with other people
- develop students' health literacy skills, including the ability to obtain, critically evaluate and act on health information in support of health and wellbeing
- develop a willingness to participate in the creation and maintenance of healthy communities and environments.

For SPHE portfolio

As a part of SPHE portfolio, schools are encouraged to make links with voluntary and statutory agencies in the community that have responsibility for aspects of health and wellbeing. As a human rights institution the OCO has responsibility to protect and promote the rights of children so they can live happy and fulfilling lives. Your students/class could use the Ombudsman for Children's Office as a case study for their SPHE portfolio. We welcome students to share their portfolios with our team. You can email questions or submissions to education@oco.ie

Wellbeing after Covid-19

In this presentation we invite students to express their views on what the COVID19 pandemic has been for them and how their rights were affected. This links to the Wellbeing Toolkit for post primary schools, available here: www.gov.ie/en/publication/0722b-wellbeing-resources/#wellbeing-toolkits-for-schools We urge teachers to use the student voice notebook page 42 and how it relates to Article 12 of the UNCRC, the voice of the child. It may provide valuable information to the teacher about their strengths and needs which is helpful in selecting strategies to support the young person.

Teacher Notes to accompany video workshop

Slide 1: Children's rights and the role of the OCO

This presentation was developed by the Participation and Education Unit in the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO). It is about Children's Rights and the role of the OCO. This presentation is linked to CSPE and SHPE.

Slide 2: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives from this presentation:

- To understand the role of the OCO.
- To learn about children's rights and the UNCRC.
- To know how the OCO protects and promotes children's rights.

Slide 3: What is the OCO?

The Ombudsman for Children's Office is a human rights institution that works to protect the rights of children under the age of 18 living in Ireland. Children don't have to be Irish to get help from the OCO – if they live in Ireland the OCO can help them.

Slides 4: What is the role of the OCO?

The OCO has two main roles; to promote the rights and welfare of children and living in Ireland, and to deal with complaints made by or for children about the actions of public organisations

Pause video

Slide 5: What is the OCO?

Copy and paste the link to watch the OCO video: <https://www.oco.ie/about-us/>

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Slide 6: Things to remember

The OCO is independent and it reports to the Oireachtas. The Oireachtas is made up of Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann and the President. The OCO is not answerable to a minister or a political party. It does not matter who is in government, the OCO can hold the government to account. The OCO is impartial which means it does not take sides in complaints but weighs up all the evidence and comes to its own conclusions.

Slide 7: Children's rights are human rights

Human rights are basic rights and freedoms that people have from birth based on principles such as equality, dignity and respect. This means that rights are:

- Inherent - to the human person: a person does not have to do anything to have them, you are born with rights.
- Inalienable - if something is inalienable it means that it may not be sold or parted with in any way, except under specified circumstances. For example, liberty can be taken away in respect of criminal offences.
- Universal - apply to all humans.
- Indivisible, interrelated and independent - the achievement or denial of any one right will impact on the achievement or denial of any other right. For example, the right to freedom of assembly will affect the right to express your culture, religion and language.

Pause video for activities!

Activity 1: Rights in Reality – who enjoys all of their rights?

Aim: To explore if there are some rights that have not been achieved by *all* children in Ireland.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: Set of rights stickers per group and A3 paper

Instructions: Split the class in small groups (size of group optional). Ask the groups to sort the rights into two columns:

1. Rights that all children in Ireland experience
2. Rights that not all children in Ireland.

Background for teacher: While Ireland has made a commitment to fulfilling children's rights, not all children are experiencing and enjoying their rights under the UNCRC. Even when Ireland has guaranteed a right, some children might have barriers preventing them from enjoying that right, for example, education is free in Ireland, but some children experience barriers in accessing education, such as a lack of Special Needs Assistants.

Questions for discussion: There are children in Ireland who don't have some of these rights, can you think of examples? What effect does it have on them? What should be done to make sure children can enjoy their rights?

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Slide 8: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The Convention has 54 articles made up of 42 rights. The rights can be categorised into four groups.

- **Survival** - Every child has the right to be alive and to have their basic needs met. These needs are food, water, shelter, healthcare, a name and a nationality.
- **Development** - Every child has the right to reach their full potential. This means they have the right to education and the right to develop their talents and abilities.
- **Protection** - Every child has the right to feel safe, to be protected from harm and to be cared for. The UNCRC also recognises that there are children in the world that need special protection, such as refugee children, because they live in very difficult circumstances.

Participation - Every child has the right to freely express their views when decisions are being made that affect them and to have these views given due weight.

The UNCRC also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights. Ireland ratified the UNCRC in 1992 and by doing so made a commitment under international law to respect, protect and fulfill children's rights under the Convention for all children under 18 living in Ireland. In Geneva, there is a UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which is made up of an elected group of experts from many different countries. All 196 who have ratified the Convention must send regular reports on the status of children's rights in their countries to the Committee. The Committee members review these reports and make recommendations on things that could be improved. Ireland last submitted a report in 2016 and will submit their next report in 2021.

Slide 9: General Principles

The four general principles of the Convention are considered necessary for the achievement of all other children's rights. If these are not achieved, then the achievement of all other children's rights is weakened. The general principals are referenced in Articles 2, 3, 6 12 of the UNCRC.

- **Article 2 Non-Discrimination:** All children have rights no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or a girl or non-binary, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are gay or straight, whether they are rich or poor. There are laws in Ireland to make sure children are not discriminated against. For example: The majority of Irish schools can no longer refuse a child a place based on their religion.
- **Article 3** is also known as the best interest principle. This means a child's best interest (what is best for the child) much be a primary consideration in all decisions that adults make that

affect them. They should think about how their decisions affect children. This is also included in the Irish constitution since The Children's Referendum in 2012. For example: In family court, judges must make decisions while considering what is in the child's best interest.

- Article 6 is the child's right to life, survival and development. This is, of course, one of the most basic rights in the Convention but again is linked to other rights such as access to health care, birth registration, family life or alternative care, protection from all forms of harm etc.
- Article 12 is possibly, in recent times at least, one of the most often quoted rights of the child. It's the child's right to express their views and for their views to be taken into account when decisions are being made that affect them. This right doesn't mean that adults need to always do what the child says, but it does mean they should ask for and consider the child's views. Children must be able to form a view on the matter at hand and be given enough information to help them do so. The child's age and understanding of the situation must be taken into account when their views are considered and weight attached to them. Views can be expressed through discussion, writing, play, art or other means and it is up to adults to make sure these methods are available to children and can be understood. For example: The Irish Secondary-Level Students Union gives support to student councils and is also a platform for students to express their views on issues about education.

Pause video for activities!

Activity 2: Rights in the time of COVID-19

Aim: Many children's rights were affected during the lockdown, this exercise aims to examine what rights were impacted and why they were impacted. The exercise and following reflection is meant to promote discussion, there are no right or wrong answers, the children can come to their own conclusions and reflect on their own experiences of lockdown.

Time: 15 minutes (but can be extended by using the Wellbeing Toolkit listed above).

Materials: iPads or cameras to film news report, or computer to write short blog, option to use resources in the Wellbeing Toolkit.

Instructions: What rights were affected during COVID19? Divide the class into groups to do a short news report, interview a classmate or write a short blog about what rights were affected.

Reflection and Issues for discussion: Explain to your class that rights are balanced against a lot of things including public health. Remind the class about the General Principles outlined above and in the video. The General Principles highlight the inherent right to survival and development. In the early days of the lockdown the Government decided that that it was in children's best interest to survive, therefore the decision was made to close schools. The best interest principle is included in the General Principles and it must be applied in all matters that effect children. After the initial phase of lockdown the Government has committed to keeping children in school.

- Is the Government applying the best interest principle again?
- What do you think about the Government's application of the best interest principle?
- Do you think that the Government applied the other General Principles?
- What about Article 12, the right to have a say? Has the Government applied this?
- If you were in Government would you have done anything differently?

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Slide 10: How does the OCO promote and protect children's rights?

- Promote awareness of children's rights through rights awareness education. The Office runs education workshops for schools and youth organisations
- Consult with and listen to children and highlight their concerns
- Advise the government on policy and laws affecting children

- Encourage public organisations to promote children’s rights in the work that they do
- Take complaints made by or on behalf of children about the actions of public services
- Communicate and help people understand the OCO’s views on issues relating to children’s rights
- Carry out research to get a better understanding of issues that are important in children’s lives

Slide 11: Participation and Rights Awareness and Education Programme

The rights awareness and education programme has a number of parts. The OCO produces resource materials for schools and in 2018 they launched a new pack of educational materials for teachers to use with all classes from Junior Infants to 6th Years. The Participation and Rights Education unit run a programme of education workshops for primary and secondary schools where groups of children come to the Office and the team provides information on children’s rights and do rights based activities. The Participation and Rights Education unit also deliver lectures and workshops to third level students who plan to work with children, such as trainee teachers, social workers and social care workers. The OCO has developed a website – [It’s Your Right](#) – which is aimed at educating children about their rights. There is a game on It’s Your Right called ‘Rights Runner’ to see how much you know about rights. It’s a useful revision tool!

Slide 12: Children’s Participation

Participation work is about hearing children’s views and using this to influence the office’s own work as well as the practice and policy of public organisations. Recent projects include children’s experiences of in-patient mental health care, children experiencing homelessness and the experiences of children living in Direct Provision accommodation. The OCO also produce participation resources to help and encourage other organisations to involve children in decision-making. The OCO offer advice and support to other organisations who want to hear children’s views and experiences.

Pause video for activities!

Activity 3: Direct Division, why it is important to hear from children?

Aim: The OCO has a statutory obligation to listen to the opinions and experiences of children. Additionally, it is a child’s right to have a say on matters that affect them under Article 12 of the UNCRC. This exercise should emphasise the importance to hear from children who have experience of a situation, as they are experts in their own lives. This activity also aims to raise awareness about the realities of children living in Direct Provision.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Watch short film [Direct Division](#). Students can also read the [report](#) and view the [art gallery](#) should they chose. *Please note* – This topic can be upsetting and could have a direct impact on pupils, who might be or have experience of living or have lived in Direct Provision or who might be connected to someone who has. Acknowledge this with the group and ensure they have a choice about whether or not they wish to do the activity and that there is someone people can speak with if they are upset. Before delivering the workshop, make sure you read this helpful guide on [how to handle sensitive topics](#) in the classroom. The discussions you have with your class need to be handled sensitively and with consideration given to participants’ backgrounds and experiences.

Instructions: Play the short film, if you have time allow your class to view the art gallery and read the report. Please discuss the issues raised using the following questions as a guide:

- Choose three adjectives to describe your thoughts and feelings, based on what you heard in the film.
- What did you find most surprising about the film? Did you learn anything?

- Why do you think that it is important for the OCO to speak directly to children?

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Slide 13: Policy, Research & Communications

The OCO Policy and Research team advise the government on policy and laws affecting children. The Policy and Research team carry out and contract others to carry out research on children's rights issues to ensure that the Ombudsman, the rest of the OCO team and all those concerned with children are informed about issues in children's lives, how these impact on their rights and what might be done to improve things.

The Communications team raise public awareness of children's rights issues through media engagement and across social media platforms. The OCO host events such as Child Talks. Child Talks is an annual event marking World Children's Day that features a number of children sharing important stories about their lives that highlight a children's rights issue that is important to them.

Pause video for activities!

Activity 4: Policy in Practice on UNCRC Concluding Observations

Aim: To encourage students to think about how well Ireland is fulfilling its obligations under the UNCRC.

Time: 30 – 60 minutes (can form a project or be held over two classes).

Materials: Child Friendly Concluding Observations from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to [Ireland 2016](#).

Instructions: Split the class into small groups and read the following to the students: Imagine that you work for a children's charity or the OCO. You want to encourage the Irish government to follow the concluding recommendations made to them by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Your task is to prepare a presentation aimed at persuading the Irish government to take action to fulfil one of these recommendations. You can pick the recommendation you want to work on. Come up with at least **3** reasons why it is important for the Irish government to follow this recommendation. You should think about the following:

- which human right is at stake (see the UNCRC);
- why that right is important;
- what might happen if this recommendation isn't followed.

Produce a presentation aimed at persuading the Irish government to follow your recommendation. Make sure your message is clear and persuasive. Use chants and slogans as appropriate and back up your arguments with sound reasoning. Present your work to the rest of your class.

Activity 3: Get the message out

Materials: Art materials

Aim: What is the role of government in protecting and promoting children's human rights?

Time: 30 minutes

Instructions: In small groups, students will think about the role of governments in protecting the rights within the UNCRC. Each group runs a very successful advertising agency. The OCO has hired the advertising agency to create an advertising campaign that reminds Ireland's leaders of what they signed up to when they adopted the UNCRC. The advertisement can be a poster, billboard, TV ad, whatever you or students choose, but it must stress the rights within the Convention and urge leaders to do much more to protect children's rights. For the last 5 minutes, invite groups to share their ideas and ask each other questions.

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Slide 14: Complaints and Investigations

The OCO's complaints and investigations team is responsible for this part of the work. Public services are delivered by organisations that are funded by the government. Some examples include schools, health services, hospitals, Tusla, or government departments. The Office looks into complaints about services for children paid for by the Government like schools or hospitals or family supports. The OCO provide a free, independent and impartial service. Impartial means that the OCO does not take sides. They want to find out what has happened and, if necessary, how it can be fixed.

Slide 15: Emily's Case Study

Emily was a 6-year-old wheelchair user. She had grown out of her old wheelchair and needed a new one. Emily's mother had tried to get a new wheelchair from the HSE but was told again and again that there was no money to buy one. When the OCO contacted the HSE they told us that the demand for things like wheelchairs far exceeds the budget available. In Emily's area there were 132 children waiting for wheelchairs and other essential equipment. Although Emily was high priority there was still not enough money to buy her new chair. After we got involved Emily got her new wheelchair as the HSE made savings in other areas. This was good news for Emily but there were still other children waiting to long for equipment. From this case study you can see it is important that people or children make complaints to the OCO because if they don't know about a problem that is affecting a child the office cannot help them.

Slide 16: Summary

To recap on important points to remember from the presentation:

1. Children's rights are human rights and are protected under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. The UNCRC has 54 articles and 42 rights
3. The OCO works to promote and protect the rights of all children living in Ireland through:
 - ✓ rights education and awareness programme
 - ✓ consultation with children to highlight their views
 - ✓ a free and independent complaints service
 - ✓ advising the Government on policy and legislation
 - ✓ raising public awareness

Slide 17: Contact the Ombudsman for Children's Office

There are a number of different ways to contact the Office:

Email: oco@oco.ie

Online complaint form: <https://www.oco.ie/complaints/make-a-complaint/online-complaint-form/>

Freephone :1800 20 20 40

Post: 52-56 Great Strand Street Dublin 1

Social media:

Instagram : [@ombudsmanforchildren](https://www.instagram.com/ombudsmanforchildren)

Twitter : [@oco_ireland](https://twitter.com/oco_ireland)

Facebook: [@OCOIreland](https://www.facebook.com/OCOIreland)

Slide 18: Any questions?

If you have any questions on this presentation you can contact us on education@oco.ie or visit oco.ie.

Optional Extension Activity

Activity 6: Who wants to be Ombudsman for Children

Aim: Now that the class have learned about the role and work of the OCO, this activity encourages the class to think about what they would do if they were the Ombudsman for Children.

Time: 30 – 55 minutes.

Materials: Pens, paper, outline of SMART methodology outlined in the What do I need section above.
Instructions: Explain what SMART means. Tell the class to imagine that the job of Ombudsman for Children is vacant. Create two teams and get the time to use the SMART methodology as a guide to create their objectives for the job. Encourage them to think about what issues and rights need to be addressed for children in Ireland today. Ask the teams to select a candidate from their team to present their SMART goals to compete for the job of Ombudsman for Children. Each team should interview the opposing candidate. The students should ask the candidates about the issues that concern them and what issue they will work on if they get into office. The entire class should vote in a secret ballot for which candidate should be appointed to the job of Ombudsman for Children.

Further study

- Short video by the OCO [What is the UNCRC](#)
- Child Friendly List of all [articles under the UNCRC](#)
- Report from OCO *Molly's Case*: <https://www.oco.ie/library/molly-two-years-on/>
- Report from OCO *Direct Division: Children's views and experiences of living in Direct Provision*: <https://www.oco.ie/directdivision/direct-division-report/>
- Report from OCO *Take My Hand: Young Peoples Experiences of Mental Health Services*: https://www.oco.ie/MentalHealthReport_2018.pdf
- Report from OCO *No Place Like Home: Children's views and experiences of living in Family Hubs*: <https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2019/04/No-Place-Like-Home.pdf>
- Amnesty International on video the indivisibility of rights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ew993Wdc0zo>
- Children's Rights Referendum case study (Politics and Society Podcast, Dr Jerome Devitt, The Kings Hospital School): <https://polsocpodcast.files.wordpress.com/2020/03/childrens-referendum-case-study-upload-version.pdf>
- Politics and Society Podcast (Dr Jerome Devitt, The Kings Hospital School): <https://polsocpodcast.com/2020/05/29/some-pol-soc-ideas-to-keep-you-going-over-the-summer/>