

# St Joseph's Secondary School

Newfoundwell, Drogheda, Co. Louth

## Senior Cycle Choices 2024



**Transition Year**

**5<sup>th</sup> Year Subject Options**

**Leaving Certificate Vocational**

**Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)**

# Transition Year

Transition Year (TY) is a one-year programme that forms the first year of a three-year senior cycle in St Joseph's. It is designed to act as a bridge between the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes. Transition year in St Joseph's is optional and the number of classes are set by the Board of Management based on student demand each year.

## ***What are the advantages of doing TY?***

Transition Year offers students an opportunity to mature and develop without the pressure of an examination. It also provides an opportunity for students to develop real life skills, such as organising events, working as part of a team or group, giving presentations to groups, getting involved in charity events, doing paired reading in the primary school, helping out in a nursing home and stepping out of one's comfort zone by participating in the school musical.

Transition Year in St Joseph's is year where students mature, develop new friendships and explore new skills which they can use outside the classroom long after they leave school.

A strong academic focus is maintained throughout Transition Year. All students study English, Irish and Maths, as well as the continental language they studied at Junior Cycle.

Students who do TY are a year older when they sit their Leaving Certificate. This gives them a huge advantage of being more mature and disciplined when they are studying for their exams. Every year, when we analyse our Leaving Certificate results, the top results are always from students who did TY.

## ***What will I study in TY?***

The Transition Year program is reviewed each year. The modules on offer in St Joseph's are intended to give students as broad a range of academic, practical and real-life experiences as possible.

In recent years, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) modules have been increased on the TY timetable. These include modules in **Science**, Design & Manufacture, **Computer Studies**, CAD (computer aided design) & Solidworks, Applied Maths as well as Maths.

In previous years in **Coding & Robotics**, students took part in the Formula 1 in Schools competition, where they can learn how to design, race and build their own miniature Formula 1 car. They will design their car in their **CAD & Solidworks** class and learn to code it in their Coding class. In **Coding & Robotics**, students learn how to use Scratch coding, as well as block-based code using BBC Microbit. The aim is to allow students to develop real life

skills and give them an opportunity to experience subjects that may influence what they want to do after school.

Modules which seek to develop students' artistic talents are a significant part of TY in St Joseph's. All students currently study **Art, Performing Arts and Music**. Furthermore, all TY students will have a role in the upcoming school musical in May, whether it be on stage, backstage, building the set, painting the set, sound and lighting, or designing and marketing the tickets.

Modules designed to allow students to learn about health and wellbeing are a very significant part of the TY timetable. All students have a class of **SPHE** and **Religion** a week. In addition, all students will do a half year of **Home Economics** as well as a **Climate Action** module, where they examine various issues of concern in the world today, such as sustainability and climate change. All students take part in **Swimming** at Integral pool and **Jiu Jitsu** classes at Primal Fitness gym and a **Couch to 5K** module on the local Drogheda & District track, in addition to regular **PE** in school. **Career Guidance** aims to prepare students for life beyond school by allowing them to explore their options. They also develop their CVs and do mock job interviews.

All students have the option to take part in the **GAA Future Leaders** program. The "Future Leaders Transition Year Programme" is a joint initiative from the GAA and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). It is a cross-curricular programme comprising of a series of modules designed to encourage maturity, initiative, responsibility and leadership skills in pupils. The Programme gives pupils the knowledge and skills to support all roles required in the effective staging of Gaelic Games. As part of the Programme students are challenged to organise and run both on-field and off-field events for younger students. Further information can be found at <https://learning.gaa.ie/futureleaders>.

All students will study a module in **Enterprise** and St Joseph's have recently won some of the top prizes in competition in the AIB Build a Bank competition. More information on this can be found at <https://aib.ie/build-a-bank>. TYs have also taken part in the Young Entrepreneur competitions - <https://www.ibye.ie/>.

They also take part in debating in **English** which links in really well with this module. All students study a module in **Politics & Society** and this allows them to experience this subject if they wish to choose it for Leaving Certificate.

Life skills are taught through interesting modules such as **Car Maintenance**, where they will all, learn how to change a wheel, prepare for the theory test and receive driving lessons. All students continue to study English and Irish, as well as the continental language studied for Junior Cycle.

Furthermore, Transition Year allows students to have a taster of subjects which are available to choose at Leaving Certificate, but may have not studied before, or are unfamiliar with.

These include **Applied Maths, Music, Art & DCG**. The **Enterprise** module will go through the 3 business subjects that are available to choose at LC – Business, Accounting and Economics. Furthermore, the **Science** module gives students an experience of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Agricultural Science.

In addition to all of the fun and interesting modules listed above, all students will have 4 classes a week of **Maths, English and Irish**. The teachers of these subjects are focussing on catching up on key skills that may have been missed during the two periods of remote learning due to Covid closures. This allows all students to perform at a high level in these subjects in 5<sup>th</sup> year, having brushed up on key skills.

The table below outlines the Transition Year modules on offer in 2023/2024. **Please note that the TY timetable is reviewed annually and these modules may change next year.**

English	Applied Maths
Irish	Home Economics
Maths	Politics & Society
Performing Arts	Music
Design & Manufacture	Art
CAD & Solidworks	Car Maintenance
Continental Language	Climate Action
SPHE	Jiu Jitsu Lessons
GAA Future Leaders	Swimming Lessons
Religion	Couch to 5K
Science	Career Guidance
Computer Studies	Enterprise
PE	

### ***Why are some modules for a third of a year?***

Students take some modules for a third of a year and then swap it with another module. This allows for a broader TY experience by enabling students to study a varied TY programme as, outlined above.

### ***Who can I speak to in the school about doing TY?***

Mr McCole is the TY coordinator in the school and will answer any questions that you have on TY. You can also speak to our guidance counsellors in the school, Ms Daly, Ms Mulligan and Ms McDonald. Their offices are upstairs in the Whitaker building.

### ***Is there an application process to get into Transition Year?***

Yes, there is an application process to get into TY. The TY Admissions Policy is available in the Reports and Policies section of the school website [www.droghedacbs.ie](http://www.droghedacbs.ie). Third years

who wish to do Transition Year have to complete an application form online (Google Form). The link to the form will be sent to you after the parents/student information evening on January 27<sup>th</sup> 2024. All applicants must do an interview in the school. Applicants' teachers will also give a mark. Applicants who receive 60% or over will be offered a place in Transition Year.

***Do I have to have certain grades to get into TY?***

No. Transition Year is open to all students, regardless of academic ability or past test results. A student's past grades is not a feature in the TY admissions policy.

***Is there any assessment in TY?***

Transition Year students are constantly assessed both formally and informally. Students complete a Transition Year portfolio which is monitored by the Transition Year Coordinator on a regular basis. Subject teachers also assess students through a variety of ways – oral presentations, projects, tests, reports and assignments.

Parents will receive a continuous assessment report in December and June. This report is on the modules covered to date. Students have more formal exam style assessments in English, Irish and Maths.

Students must also upload assignments to an e-portfolio as part of The Future Leaders G.A.A. programme. These assignments are then graded by subject teachers and a Certificate awarded.

A Transition Year Showcase Evening will take place at the end of the school year. Parents and guests are invited to the evening where students display their work and present the highlights of their Transition Year experience. Students are also presented with their various certificates on the night

***I want to do LCA instead of traditional 5<sup>th</sup> year. Can I still do TY?***

Yes. Students who want to do LCA are welcome to do Transition Year and then move into LCA the following year.

***How many students are there in each TY class?***

There is a maximum of 24 students in each TY class. The number in each class cannot go over 24. Please note that this may mean that places may be limited in TY, depending on the number who apply for it in any given year.

***If I choose to go into 5<sup>th</sup> year, can I change my mind and do TY?***

Yes. However, as there is a maximum of 24 students in each class, there may be no places available in any of the classes if you change your mind. Therefore, it is important to research

TY and 5<sup>th</sup> year carefully and apply correctly when the application forms are handed out to avoid disappointment.

***If I get accepted into TY, can I change my mind and move into 5<sup>th</sup> year?***

Yes. If you change your mind, you can move in to 5<sup>th</sup> year with your parent/guardian's permission. However, the 5<sup>th</sup> year option lines will have been created at this stage and many subjects will be full. Your subject choices will be restricted only to what is available and it is unlikely, at this stage that you will get the subjects that you like. Therefore, it is very important to research TY and 5<sup>th</sup> year carefully to avoid disappointment.

***Do I have to do work experience as part of TY?***

Yes. All TY students do 3 separate weeks of work experience throughout the year. The dates for the current year are on the calendar on the school website. It is up to students to find their own work experience. Some work experience settings may require you to get Garda vetting if you are over 16. There are also a variety of placements in companies and universities that students can apply to do their work experience there.

***Are there any trips away in TY?***

Yes. There is a 3-day trip to Achill arranged each year, as well as a one-day trip to Carlingford. There are several other day trips that students take part in, such as a beach walk, a historical walking tour to Oldbridge and Millmount.

Each year students take part in the Glasnevin TY initiative where they train to be a tour guide at the cemetery for a day and gain enormous experience, not only in their history, but in public speaking and gaining confidence.

Each year, the TYs visit Irish Aid in Dublin and explore global issues such as food and hunger, sustainable development, the SDGs and the role of Irish Aid.

***I am concerned that if I do TY, I will find it difficult returning to studying in 5<sup>th</sup> after a year without exams. Should I consider not doing TY?***

No, this is a common misconception. The vast majority of students settle into studying in 5<sup>th</sup> year without any problems. 5<sup>th</sup> year teachers are familiar with this and will motivate students and help them get into good studying routines quickly when they return in September. As students are a year older, this often helps them to be more mature and organised about their studies.

***I am concerned that if I do TY, I will be too old when I do my Leaving Cert. Should I consider not doing TY?***

No. A lot of primary school children start school at the age of 5. If you do TY after 14 years of school, you will be 18 or 19 when you do your Leaving Cert. This is normal and every other student in your year will be the same age. This is nothing to be concerned about.

***How will the Senior Cycle Reform changes impact me if I do TY?***

The Department of Education is currently reforming each subject on the Leaving Certificate over the coming five years. The first tranche of subjects to be reformed will be for students entering 5<sup>th</sup> year in September 2025. These subjects are:

- Biology
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Business

There are also two new Leaving Certificate subjects being introduced on a phased basis to schools beginning in September 2025. These new subjects are;

- Climate Action & Sustainable Development
- Drama, Film & Theatre Studies

Each of these subjects will have a written exam worth 60% and a research project worth 40%. The research project will be examined externally by the State Exams Commission and not by your teacher in the school.

***How does me doing TY this year, or not, impact my 5<sup>th</sup> year subject choices?***

If you do TY in the 2024/2025 academic year, you will be entering 5<sup>th</sup> year in September 2025. Therefore, you will be studying the new subject specifications and will be following the new assessment model of a 60% written exam and a 40% project. St Joseph's will be applying to be one of the schools involved in the pilot phase of the two new subjects and they may be available for you to study in September 2025 after you have completed TY.

Students who are going directly into 5<sup>th</sup> year in September 2024 will not be studying the revised subject specifications. Business, Biology, Physics and Chemistry all have a written exam worth 100% of the marks. While this may suit some students, it suits many students to

take the pressure of the final exam. The research projects also enable students to learn in a practical way that make be of interest to you. The new subject specifications for Biology, Physics and Chemistry are available at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie). The senior cycle reforms are something that you must discuss with your parents. Your Business and Science teachers will also be able to give you advice. The school guidance counsellors, Ms Daly, Ms Mulligan and Ms McDonald are also available to answer any of your questions.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Year Subject Options

## ***How many subjects do I study for the Leaving Certificate?***

All students study English, Irish and Maths. In addition, every student chooses a further 4 subjects from a list of 22. The subjects on offer for students to choose from are outlined below.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Maximum Number of Students in Each Class</b>
Applied Mathematics	30
Business	30
Accounting	30
Economics	30
History	30
Geography	30
Politics & Society	30
Classical Studies	30
German	30
Spanish	30
French	30
Religious Education (Exam)	30
Technology	24
Construction Studies	24
Design & Communication Graphics (DCG)	24
Agricultural Science	24
Biology	24
Chemistry	24
Physics	24
Physical Education (Exam)	24
Art	24
Music	24
Home Economics	20

## ***Do I do any non exam subjects in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year?***

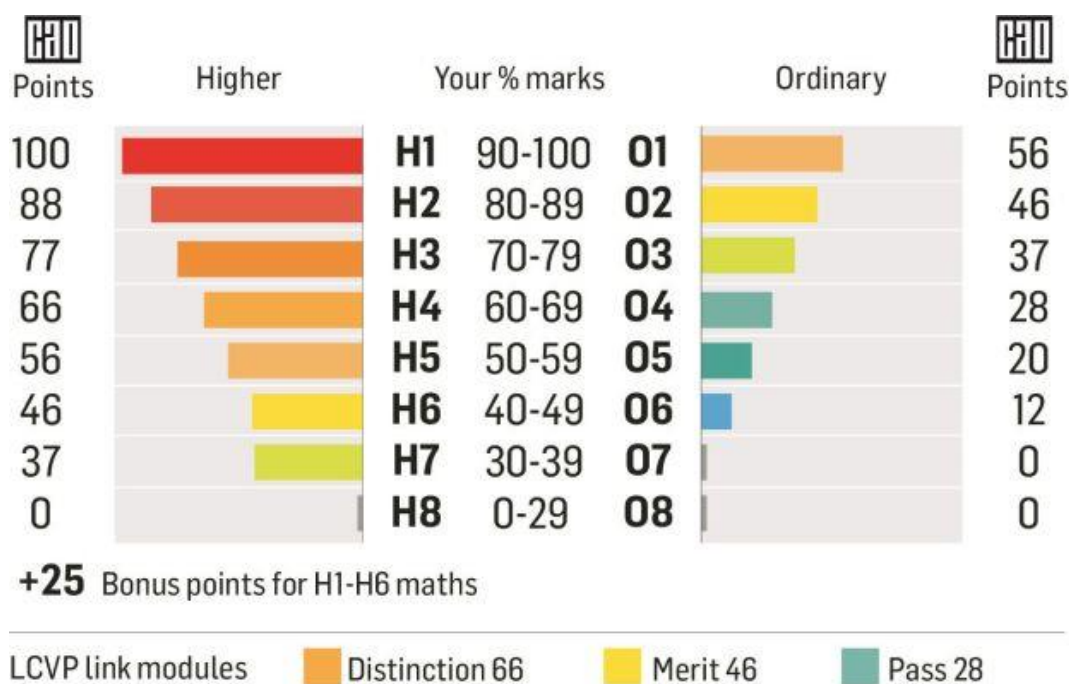
Yes. As well as the 7 subjects that you study for exams, there are a number of other non exam subjects. In 5<sup>th</sup> year, these are Religion, Career Guidance and non-exam PE. In 6<sup>th</sup> year, they are Religion, Career Guidance and SPHE.

**What is the most important thing that I should consider before I choose my option subjects?**

**Choose subjects that you like and are good at.** This is very important. If you have been doing well in a certain subject and have received good grades in it, then it is strongly advised that you continue with it in 5<sup>th</sup> year. The aim is to do as well as you can in the Leaving Certificate and this means that you will have a head start.

**What does 'CAO points required to get into college mean'?**

When you get your Leaving Cert results, your exam results will be converted into CAO points using the table below. You calculate your points based on your best 6 subject results. The majority of college courses require you to have a certain number of points to be able to do the course. These points requirements fluctuate and change each year based on the demand there is to do a course.



**Do some college courses require me to study certain subjects at Leaving Cert?**

Yes. Many college courses have subject entry requirements along with obtaining a minimum number of points. If you have an idea of what course you would like to study, you should check to see what are the subject requirements, before you choose your subjects. For example, Veterinary Science requires that you have studied chemistry at Leaving Cert, as well as getting the points to do that course.

### ***Who can I speak to in the school about college courses and choosing my subjects?***

Ms Daly, Ms Mulligan and Ms McDonald are the school guidance counsellors. They will answer any questions that you have on choosing your subjects and helping you understand college course requirements.

### ***Are there any websites that I can look at to help me choose my subjects?***

Yes. [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) is an excellent website that allows you to enter in any of the subjects from the table above and it will tell you what college courses definitely require you to study it as an entry requirement. It also gives very good information and advice on choosing your subjects. Every student should look at this website before choosing their subjects.

[www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) is another good website that gives information on senior cycle. The course syllabus for each subject at Leaving Cert is on this website. You can look and see what you will be studying if you choose this subject.

### ***What levels will I be doing in each of my subjects?***

Students continue on with the level they did for Junior Cycle in English, Irish and Maths. You don't choose your level for your option subjects until around the mocks in 6<sup>th</sup> year. Your option subjects allow you to start fresh and see what level suits you best, with the advice of your teacher in 6<sup>th</sup> year.

## **CHOOSING A CONTINENTAL LANGUAGE**

### ***Do some colleges require me to study a continental language to gain entry?***

Yes. The colleges of the National University of Ireland require a pass in a third language (other than English and Irish) to gain entry to a large number of their courses. These include University College Dublin, NU Maynooth, University Colleges Cork and Galway. Not all of the courses in these colleges require a third language. Therefore, you should check on [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) and ask Ms Daly, Ms Mulligan, or Ms McDonald before you decide to choose a language. If you know that you want to study a course in one of these colleges, or if you are good at your language and want to keep your options open, then it is a good idea to choose the language that you studied for Junior Cycle in 5<sup>th</sup> year.

### ***Can I choose a different continental language from the one I studied for Junior Cycle?***

No. French, German and Spanish at Leaving Cert is not at beginner's level and is a follow on from three years of study at Junior Cycle. Therefore, students are not permitted to choose a new continental language in 5<sup>th</sup> year. If you did not study a continental language for Junior Cycle, similarly, you are not allowed to choose Spanish, German or French as a subject in 5<sup>th</sup> year.

***I struggled with my continental language at Junior Cycle and did not do well in any of the exams in it, but I am concerned that I will limit my college choices if I drop it. Should I continue to study it anyway?***

A lot of college places do not require a continental language to gain entry. For example, DCU and DKIT do not require a third language. If you did not do well in your language for Junior Cycle, then it is probably not a good idea to continue with it at Leaving Cert. You may end up doing badly in the exam and reduce the number of points that you get and miss out on your college course. Remember to always pick subjects that you like and are good at. Speak to your teacher and Ms Daly, Ms Mulligan, or Ms McDonald for advice on this.

***I am fluent in another continental language other than German, French or Spanish. Can I study this as my third language to gain entry to a NUI college?***

Yes. The NUI colleges may accept a different language than the ones offered for study in St Joseph's. However, you **must check first** with Ms Daly, Ms Mulligan, or Ms McDonald if this language is offered as an exam at Leaving Certificate and if the colleges will accept it. Please note that you will be studying this language outside school and this may be an extra burden on your study workload that may see the grades in your other subjects suffer. You must also look carefully at past exam papers and the syllabus in this subject prior to deciding to study it. Do not assume that if you are fluent in a language that you will do well in an exam in it.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS**

***Is it important that I choose a science subject at Leaving Cert?***

Science at Junior Cycle is broken in 5 different subjects at Leaving Cert. These are Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Agricultural Science and Applied Maths. Check on [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) to see if you need one or more of these subjects to gain entry to a course that you are interested in. You can also speak to your Science teacher, or one of the 3 guidance counsellors to check which one you should pick. Many students like to choose a science subject to keep their options open, in case they may decide to apply for a college course that has a science subject as an entry requirement. If you did not do well in science at Junior Cycle, then you should consider the wisdom of choosing one of these subjects in 5<sup>th</sup> year.

***If I choose Exam PE as a subject, do I still do non-exam PE as normal?***

Yes. If you choose PE as an exam subject, you will still have a double class of non-exam PE, the same as every other student in your year. Students who are interested in picking Exam PE should speak to your PE teacher before making your choice.

***I am interested in studying a subject at Leaving Cert, but I didn't study it as one of my options at Junior Cycle. Does this mean that I cannot choose it in 5<sup>th</sup> year?***

The only subjects that you cannot choose if you didn't study them for Junior Cycle are French, German and Spanish. Each of the other 19 subjects are available for you to choose, even if you didn't study them for Junior Cycle. However, it is very important that you speak to your parents/guardians about this first. You must also speak to the teachers who teach the subject to get further information on it and research it thoroughly, to make sure you are making the right decision. If you are in doubt, you can also speak to Ms Daly, Ms Mulligan, or Ms McDonald.

***What are the three Business subjects?***

Business Studies at Junior Cycle is broken into 3 subjects at Leaving Certificate. They are Business, Economics and Accounting. If you did Business Studies at Junior Cycle, then you should speak to your teacher about which ones suit you to choose for Leaving Certificate. *These 3 subjects are available to all students even if you didn't study Business Studies for Junior Cycle.* There is nothing stopping you from picking Business, Economics or Accounting. However, it is very important to speak to one of the Business Studies teachers in advance of picking your subjects.

***What is Applied Mathematics?***

Applied Mathematics is a subject which suits students who like Maths and Physics. Transition Years have done a taster module in Applied Maths this year. You should speak to one of the Applied Maths teachers first and get advice before selecting Applied Mathematics. Applied Maths is classed as a Science Subject.

***Is it a good idea to study some subjects that have a project/practical component to the final mark?***

Yes. Many of the subjects that you can choose from have a project/practical component to them that comprises a percentage of the marks. This means that when the final exam in June arrives, you will already have obtained some of the marks for that subject. This also takes the pressure off relying on one exam on one day for all of the marks. Please note though, that every subject has an important written exam in June that requires a significant amount of study and that the practical element of only a portion of the marks. The percentages of practical exams are listed in the table below. You can see what the coursework/project/practical element of each subject involves on [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Written Exam in June</b>	<b>Practical/Project Element</b>
Applied Mathematics	80% written exam	20% Modelling Project
Business	100% written exam	N/A
Accounting	100% written exam	N/A
Economics	80% written exam	20% research study
History	80% written exam	20% research study
Geography	80% written exam	20% geographical investigation
Politics & Society	80% written exam	20% report on a citizen project
Classical Studies	80% written exam	20% research study
German	55% written exam (H&O)	Speaking – 25% HL, 20% OL Listening 20% HL, 25% OL
Spanish	55% written exam (H&O)	Speaking – 25% HL, 20% OL Listening 20% HL, 25% OL
French	55% written exam (H&O)	Speaking – 25% HL, 20% OL Listening 20% HL, 25% OL
Technology	50% written exam	50% project & Portfolio
Construction Studies	50% written exam HL 40% written exam OL	25% Project, 25% Practical Test HL 30% Project, 30% Practical Test OL
Design & Computer Graphics	60% written exam	40% student assignment
Agricultural Science	75% written exam	25% coursework
Biology	100% written exam	N/A
Chemistry	100% written exam	N/A
Physics	100% written exam	N/A
Physical Education	50% written exam	30% performance assessment 20% physical activity project
Art	37.5% written exam	25% imaginative composition/still life 25% design or craftwork 12.5% life sketching
Music	50% written exam	50% practical component
Home Economics	80% written exam	20% project work

## **CHOOSING MY SUBJECTS**

### ***How do I choose my subjects for 5<sup>th</sup> Year?***

In January, you will be choosing your subjects online via your parent's VSware log in. This will be available only after the student/parent information evening in January. You must choose 8 subjects, with number 1 being your favourite and so on. Your number 5, 6, 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> choice should be subjects that you are happy to do in 5<sup>th</sup> year. Your number 1 subject is very important. You are most likely to be offered your number 1 subject. Therefore, if there

is a subject that you really must study in order to get a place on a college course, then you should put this down as your number 1 to avoid disappointment.

***Why is the deadline for handing in my form on time so important?***

The deadline for filling in your subject choices on VSware is extremely important. Some subjects will fill up very quickly and therefore it is only fair to allocate places in the classes to students who have their form in on time. If your form is late, you will have to wait until all of the places in the classes are allocated and you may lose out on a subject that you want to do. The deadline is Friday February 9th 2024 to have all of your subjects entered on VSware.

***Why do I have to select my top 8 subjects when I will be doing 4?***

When you enter 8 subject choices, the school uses software to generate 4 option lines. The software works out the option lines so that the majority of students get their top 4 choices. A small number of students may not get one of their top 4 choices. This means that instead, they will be offered one of their 5-8 choice subjects.

***What are the subject option lines?***

The software generates 4 lines of roughly 5 to 7 subjects based on the demand from the students. Every student does one subject from each of the 4 lines. The option lines are based entirely on student demand and are not altered after the software generates the best solution so that the majority get their top 4 choices. Once the option lines are generated, they are final. The following table is the 2023 option lines. **This is for illustrative purposes only. The 2024 option lines will be different.**

<p><b><u>Block 1</u></b>            Business            Chemistry            Construction Studies            German            History            PE (exam)</p>	<p><b><u>Block 2</u></b>            Biology            DCG            Geography            PE (exam)            Politics &amp; Society            Technology</p>
<p><b><u>Block 3</u></b>            Accounting            Biology            Construction Studies            PE (exam)            Music            Physics            Spanish</p>	<p><b><u>Block 4</u></b>            Agricultural Science            Art            Biology            French            History            Spanish</p>

***Is it possible that one of my choices will not be in the final 4 option lines?***

Yes. The option lines are generated entirely on student demand for a subject. If there is very little demand for a subject, it may not be viable for the school to run a class in it. Therefore, that subject will not be offered to students. Last year, not enough students picked Classical Studies, Economics or Exam Religion to make viable classes and therefore they could not run these.

***Why else might I not get offered one of my top 4 choices?***

Once the option lines are generated, you may have two of your subject choices on the same line. As you must only have one subject from each of the 4 lines, this means that you must choose a subject from a different line.

Please also refer back to the table which shows the maximum number of students allowed in a class for each subject. For example, the maximum number of students allowed in a Construction Studies class is 24. If 27 students choose Construction Studies, then 3 will not be offered a place in it. The 24, who ranked it highest in their choices will be offered a place and the 3 lowest will not.

***What happens if I don't get one of my subject choices?***

If you don't get one of your subject choices, we will meet with you and go through what your choices are. We will help you choose a subject and give you a form for your parents/guardians to complete so that they are happy with your final choices as well.

***Can I change my mind and switch to a different subject in September?***

Yes. You can change your mind and switch subjects. Remember that you must have one subject from each of the 4 option lines, therefore your choices at this stage will be limited and many of the classes will be full at this stage. Therefore it is very important to research your subject choices before you choose them to avoid disappointment.

***Are there any don'ts when it comes to choosing my subjects?***

**Don't** choose a subject just because your friends are doing it, or you want to be in the same class as them. You may not end up in the same class as them. You may also dislike the subject and do badly in it, thus reducing the number of points you get overall.

**Don't** choose a subject because you think that a certain teacher will be teaching it. The teachers are not assigned to subjects until the timetable is made during the summer.



**Don't** choose a subject because you think that it will be easy. It is very important to research the subjects thoroughly that you choose as your 1 to 8.

# Leaving Certificate Vocational

## ***What is LCVP?***

The primary goal of the LCVP is to prepare young people for adult life by ensuring that they are educated in the broadest sense, with an ability to cope and thrive in an environment of rapid change. Participants in the programme are encouraged to develop skills and competencies fundamental to both academic and vocational success. The skills and qualities developed in LCVP are equally relevant to the needs of those preparing for further education, seeking employment or planning to start their own business. (ncca.ie).

LCVP students take their 7 subjects as normal for Leaving Cert, plus an extra subject, which is broken down into 2 link modules. More detailed information on the link modules can be found on [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie). The link modules are;

1. Preparation for the world of work.
2. Enterprise Education.

LCVP students follow the same subject syllabi and are assessed in the same way as their peers in the Leaving Certificate. For the Link Modules they are assessed by Written Examination (40%) and by Portfolio of Coursework (60%).

## ***If I do LCVP, can I still go to college/university, in the same way as other Leaving Cert students?***

Yes. LCVP students receive the same certificate as other Leaving Certificate students but their Certificate includes an additional statement of the results of the Link Modules. The Link Modules are recognised for points purposes by the Institutes of Technology and the Universities.

Students who do LCVP get CAO points for their link modules, which can be used as one of your 6 subjects used to calculate your overall CAO points for entry to a third level institution. The points that are awarded to LCVP are different to those awarded for other subjects at Leaving Cert. They are;

LCVP Grade	Points
Distinction	66
Merit	46
Pass	28

***Are the above CAO points an extra add on to my total points?***

No. Remember that you calculate your CAO points using your best 6 subjects in your Leaving Cert. LCVP can be used as one of the 6. In effect, you can replace one of your lowest scores with your LCVP score. It is not an add on extra.

***Why should I do LCVP?***

LCVP is a very good choice for students who are doing a number of subjects at ordinary level. If you take a look back at the table of CAO points, you will see that the maximum number of points you can get for an O1 is 56. This means that if you are doing a number of ordinary level subjects, your total number of points will be low, even if you get several O1's.

If you take a look at the Distinction grade at LCVP, it is worth 66 CAO points. Therefore you can replace one of your ordinary level subjects, which is only worth a maximum of 56 points, with a possible Distinction at LCVP which is worth 66 points.

***Do I have to study a continental language as one of my subjects to be able to do LCVP?***

No. The continental language requirement has been removed.

***Do I have to choose other certain subjects to be able to do LCVP?***

No. The subject requirements have been removed.

***How are the Link Modules assessed?***

The Portfolio of coursework must be submitted on the first Wednesday in March. The written examination takes place the first Wednesday in May of the Leaving Certificate Year. The examination is of two and a half hours duration and consists of three sections which are outline below.

The structure of the Written Examination is as follows:

**Section A** Audio Visual Presentation

**Section B** Case Study (received in advance by students)

**Section C** General Questions (4 out of 6)

The Portfolio of Coursework accounts for 60% of total marks. Students assemble the portfolio over the two years of the programme and it is assessed at the end of the final year

of the Leaving Certificate. The Portfolio and Written Examination are externally assessed by the Department of Education & Skills.

***What are the key things that I should consider before deciding to do LCVP?***

- You should have an interest in business and developing your own skills to prepare yourself for the world of work beyond school.
- You should look at your subjects and see how many that you will be taking at higher and ordinary level. If you are taking all of your subjects at higher level, then LCVP is perhaps not a good option for you. There is a heavy workload with higher level and an extra subject may cause some of your other subjects to suffer.
- If you are doing a few subjects at ordinary level, then the ability to replace one of your lower scoring subjects, with a possible Distinction which is worth 66 points may be a good option for you.

***Can I change my mind and take on LCVP in September of 5<sup>th</sup> year?***

Yes. You can take on LCVP in September only. After September, the option to take on LCVP closes with the Department of Education. There is a maximum of 24 students in an LCVP class and there may be no places available at this stage. Remember, that it is very important to research LCVP before you choose your options to avoid disappointment. You should speak to Mr McCole, who is the LCVP coordinator if you have any questions regarding LCVP.

# Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

## ***What is LCA?***

LCA is a 2 year programme for students who want to do follow a practical Leaving Cert and prepare themselves for the world of work. It has a strong focus on preparing students for lifelong learning and helping them develop real life skills for the world of work beyond school.

LCA is aimed at students who want to stay in school and get a Leaving Cert, rather than leave after Junior Cycle and go straight in to the world of work at a very young age.

LCA is aimed at students who may have become disillusioned with school and have low self esteem from struggling with big exams for 3 years. A strong component of LCA in St Joseph's is building students' self esteem by taking the pressure of terminal exams and motivating them to be successful.

LCA is aimed at students who prefer to learn by doing.

LCA is particularly aimed at students who want get work experience, as well as helping them develop skills to help them in their future career.

## ***What are the benefits of doing LCA in St Joseph's?***

- There is a small core group of LCA teachers in St Joseph's who are passionate about helping students in LCA feel welcome in school and helping them develop the skills that they need to be successful in their assignments. Teachers in St Joseph's recognises the talents of every student in the class and helps every student, regardless of educational needs or ability reach his full potential.
- The class size is small, typically around 12. This means that there is more individual help given to students.
- LCA students have their own, new computer room in the school.
- A large number of LCA students in St Joseph's receive distinctions and are successful in getting apprenticeships or going on to further study in DIFE.
- You are guaranteed a place in Drogheda Institute of Further Education (DIFE).

### ***Is work experience a part of LCA?***

Yes. LCA students do work experience on 2, two week blocks throughout the year. It is up to each student to find their own work experience. The benefit of work experience is that it allows students to sample a range of jobs and gives them firsthand experience of the world of work. The skills which students learn in school are transferable into their work experience. Similarly, the skills developed in the workplace can be used when students are doing their projects in school.

### ***Why should I consider doing LCA?***

- A lot of students find terminal exams difficult and struggle to learn of large quantities of material for a big exam. In LCA, there is less emphasis on final exams and a bigger emphasis on course work which is assessed throughout the two years and students gain credits as they go along.
- Students' work and skills are developed in different ways, including portfolios, interviews and practical work.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing ICT skills which can be used in everyday life and in the world of work.
- A wide range of skills are developed in LCA, such as;
  - Communication
  - Team Work
  - Enterprise
  - Organisation Skills
  - Confidence
  - Self Esteem
  - Motivation
  - Planning

### ***What do I study in LCA?***

All students in LCA do the following subjects;

- English and Communication
- Mathematical Applications
- Communicative Irish (5<sup>th</sup> year only)
- Vocational Preparation and Guidance
- Social Education
- ICT
- Art
- Leisure and Recreation
- Graphics and Construction Studies
- Level 1 Spanish (6<sup>th</sup> year only)

***Is attendance at school worth a portion of my marks in LCA?***

Yes. Attendance at school is very important in LCA. Every student in LCA must have a minimum of 90% attendance in order to pass.

***How is LCA assessed?***

As students submit their LCA course work, they are awarded credits. There are 200 credits in total that can be awarded, as follows;

Ongoing Attendance, Class work & Assignments	62 Credits	31%
7 Student Tasks (Project Work)	70 Credits	35%
Final Examinations in June 2022	68 Credits	34%

***How is the LCA awarded?***

Pass	120 – 139 Credits	60 – 69%
Merit	140 – 169 Credits	70 – 84%
Distinction	170 – 200 Credits	85 – 100%

***Do I get CAO points for my LCA awards?***

LCA students do not receive points on the CAO system like the established Leaving Certificate. All students who complete LCA are guaranteed a place in DIFE and other colleges which offer Level 5 courses. Once you complete a Level 5 course, you can progress on to any third level institution that you want to. You should check with Ms Daly, Ms Mulligan, or Ms McDonald first regarding third level course if you are considering doing LCA.

***Who can I talk to in the school about LCA?***

Mr McCole is the LCA coordinator. He will answer any questions that you have about LCA.

***Is there an application process to get into LCA?***

Yes. You must fill in the LCA application form in January when you are making your choices.

***If I choose the established Leaving Cert, can I change my mind early in 5<sup>th</sup> year and do LCA?***

Yes. You can change your mind and do LCA if you want to. However, the class size in LCA is small, so there may not be a place available. Therefore it is very important to research LCA first and make the right decision to avoid disappointment.

***Can I move out of LCA and do the established Leaving Cert if I don't like it?***

Yes. However, the option lines will have been created at this stage and many classes will be full. If you move at this stage, it is unlikely that you will get the subjects that you would like. Again, it is very important to research all your choices first and make the right decision to avoid disappointment.

Please note that the information in this booklet can change from year to year. If you have any questions, please contact the school.

**Key Dates:**

**Monday January 22nd - Senior Cycle Options Information Night for Parents of 3<sup>rd</sup> Years - 5pm via Google Meets.**

**Tuesday Jan 23rd - Senior Cycle Options Information Night for Parents of TYs - 7pm**

**Friday February 9<sup>th</sup> at 3pm – Deadline for all Senior Cycle Options forms to be completed online.**

