

St Joseph's Secondary School

Newfoundell, Drogheda, Co. Louth

First Year 2024/2025



Core Subjects

Option Subjects

Wellbeing

Junior Cycle Assessment

What core subjects will I study in St Joseph's?

All students study the following subjects in first year and continue then for 3 years as part of their Junior Cycle;

Subject	Maximum Number of Students in Each Class
English	30
Irish	30
Maths	30
History	30
Geography	30
Religion	30
Science	24
Digital Media Literacy	30

What are option subjects?

In St Joseph's, every student chooses **three** option subjects from the list below. They study these for 3 years as part of their Junior Cycle. Typically, students choose a continental language (French, Spanish, German) and two other subjects from the list below.

Subject	Maximum Number of Students in Each Class
German	30
Spanish	30
French	30
Classics	30
Business Studies	30
Applied Technology	24
Wood Technology	24
Graphics	24
Visual Art	24
Music	24
Home Economics	20

Why is it suggested that I choose a continental language as one of my 3 option subjects?

College may be a long way away when you are entering secondary school for the first time. However, some colleges require you to have studied a continental language to gain entry to courses in that college/university. By studying a continental language from first year, you

are giving yourself the option of studying in one of these colleges when you leave school. We recommend that students choose a continental language to give them ability to study it at Leaving Certificate if they wish. Choosing a continental language is not compulsory – you do not have to pick a language if you don't want to.

Can I put off studying a continental language until I choose my subjects for my Leaving Certificate in 5th year?

No. If you choose to study a continental language for your Leaving Certificate, it is not at beginners' level. It is a continuation on from three years of study at Junior Cycle. Therefore, it is not possible to choose French, German or Spanish for the first time in fifth year. We recommend that each student studies a continental language for Junior Cycle and then makes up their mind whether to continue with it or not in fifth year.

Parent: My child has an exemption from doing Irish because of AEN. Should they still do a continental language as one of their option subjects?

If your child has additional educational needs and has an Irish exemption as a result, we recommend that you please contact the school to arrange a meeting with our AENCO (Additional Educational Needs Co-ordinator), Ms Walsh. Ms Walsh will advise you on what subjects best suit your child's needs.

What is the Option Subjects Video?

We have made a video which showcases each of the option subjects available. The video will allow incoming first years to watch the subjects being demonstrated and see the teachers speak about them. We hope that this will help enable you to make an informed decision on which 3 subjects you pick. The video is available on the school website www.droghedacbs.ie .

How do I choose my option subjects?

You parents will be texted the log in details to VSware. When you are happy with the subjects that you want to do, you enter your subjects in VSware. It is a very easy process and we have an information video to guide you through it. It is very important that the subjects are entered before the deadline, which is Wednesday January 31st at 3pm.

Why do I have to choose 6 subjects when I will be doing 3?

When you enter 6 subject choices, the school uses software to generate 3 option lines. The software works out the option lines so that the majority of students get their top 3 choices. A small number of students may not get one of their top 3 choices. This means that instead, they will be offered one of their 4-6 choice subjects.

What are the subject option lines?

The software generates 3 lines of roughly 5 to 6 subjects based on the demand from the students. Every student does one subject from each of the 3 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 3 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.**

<u>Line 1</u>	<u>Line 2</u>	<u>Line 3</u>
Applied Technology	Applied Technology	Applied Technology
Business Studies	Business Studies	Applied Technology
French	Classics	Applied Technology
German	Graphics	Business Studies
Graphics	Home Economics	French
Home Economics	Spanish	Home Economics
Spanish	Visual Art	Music
Visual Art	Wood Technology	Visual Art
Wood Technology	Wood Technology	Wood Technology
Wood Technology		

Can there be more than one class of a certain subject?

Yes, as you can see in the table above there can be more than one class of a certain subject, such as Wood Technology in Line 1. This is based entirely on student demand. When you choose your options, we will look at the numbers that want to do each subject. That will then determine how many classes of each subject we will run. This **changes from year to year** based on the demand at the time.

Why is the deadline for entering the option subjects to the school so important?

As you saw on page 2 of this booklet, there are maximum numbers of students that can be in each class. We cannot add any more students above the maximum for each specific subject. When the subject choices are returned to us, some classes will fill up and become full. We assign students to classes whose subjects are entered on time first. If your subjects are entered after the deadline, then it is possible that a subject that you want to do could be full and you may miss out on studying it. Therefore, we strongly recommend, to avoid disappointment, that all subjects are entered before the deadline, which is **3pm on Wednesday January 31st** .

Please note that the time/day before the deadline on **January 31st**, in which subjects are entered will have no bearing whatsoever on your child getting a place in a class. However, late entries may do.

Is it possible to change an option subject in September if I don't like it?

Yes, it is possible to switch a subject if you don't like it. Every student must give the subject a go and we don't allow students to move without consulting with the teacher first to see what the issue is.

All students and parents should be aware that it may not be possible to switch subject in the new school year. If you look back at the table of subjects, you will see that there is a maximum number of students allowed in each class. In the new school year, many of these subjects will be full and it will not be possible to move. The option lines will be formed at this stage and it may not be possible to move to a subject that you like on the same line. It is highly recommended that students consider this when choosing their subjects to avoid disappointment.

Wellbeing

What is Wellbeing?

As part of the new Junior Cycle, every student must receive 400 hours of Wellbeing across the 3 years of Junior Cycle. The school's Wellbeing policy is available on the school website www.droghedacbs.ie and clicking on the 'Reports & Policies' tab. We advise that all parents read this policy as it contains a lot of information on the various care structures that exist in the school. The Wellbeing modules being taught this year are available at www.droghedacbs.ie/wellbeing. Wellbeing is comprised of the following subjects;

Subject	Number of Classes a Week
PE	A double class
SPHE	1 class a week
CSPE	1 class a week
Wellbeing	A double class

The Junior Cycle Programme

The new Junior Cycle spreads assessment throughout the three years of Junior Cycle giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning away from the exam hall.

Classroom Based Assessments explained

What is a C.B.A?

Classroom-Based Assessments will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in a way which would not be possible in a formal examination. The tasks will cover a broad range of activities including oral presentations, written work of different genres, practical or designing and making activities, artistic performances, scientific experiments, projects or other suitable tasks. A particular purpose of the Classroom-Based Assessments will be to facilitate developmental feedback to students in a timely manner to reinforce their learning and aid them in reflecting on their progress. Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific tasks set out in the curriculum specification for each subject. They are completed within the teaching time allocated for each subject. All subjects with the exception of Gaeilge will have their first CBA in second year and their second one before Christmas in third year. Gaeilge will have both CBAs in third year.

In deciding the level of achievement for the Classroom-Based Assessments, there are four level descriptors of achievement for each CBA. Teachers use the Features of Quality set out in The Assessment Guidelines for each subject to decide the level of achievement in each CBA. The Features of Quality are the criteria used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following descriptors:

EXCEPTIONAL; describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

ABOVE EXPECTATIONS; describes a piece of work that reflects all of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of activity of the investigation, and the work is praised for its rigour. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of

the work in need of further attention or polishing, but on the whole, the work is of a high standard.

IN LINE WITH EXPECTATIONS; describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

YET TO MEET EXPECTATIONS; describes a piece of work that falls somewhat short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental errors that need to be addressed.

NOT REPORTED; describes when a student has not submitted any piece of work for assessment

It is important to acknowledge and affirm that it is not only the grade that matters but also what the students have actually learned about themselves throughout the CBA experience. In particular students should reflect about how their project work, experiments or presentations have helped them engage with their subjects and how the feedback they have received will enable them to progress further in the future.

Does the CBA count towards the SEC grade at the end of third year?

CBAs do not form part of the SEC component. The *Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement* will document achievement in CBAs and for the SEC component separately. The SEC component includes student achievement in *the Assessment Task* and the final assessment towards the end of third year. It should be noted that 'The Assessment Task' is directly related to the nature and focus of the second Classroom-Based Assessment, which will vary in each subject.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

The JCPA reports on the broad spectrum of student learning and experience over the three years of the Programme. Although there are plans by in place by the State Examinations Commission to expediate this, it is currently awarded in January of TY/5th year.






CBAs: Classroom-Based Assessments.

SEC: State Examination awarded grades (90% from the terminal exam & 10% from the Assessment Task).

WELLBEING; has become a core part of the Junior Cycle programme. This area of learning includes, amongst others, Physical Education, Civic, Social and Political Education, Social,

Personal and Health Education and Guidance as well as a vibrant Wellbeing programme which is established here in St. Joseph's.

OAL: Other Areas of Learning

 JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT		2017	
John Kelly		DOB: 21 June 2001	
STATE CERTIFIED FINAL EXAMINATIONS Examination number: 456985		Classroom-Based Assessments - English	
English (O)	Distinction	Oral Communication	Above expectations
		Collection of Texts	In line with expectations
Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses			
Irish (O) ⁽²⁾	A	Coding	In line with expectations
Mathematics (H)	B	Physical Education	Above expectations
History (H)	C	Artistic Performance	Exceptional
Geography (H)	D	Philosophy	In line with expectations
French (O) ⁽²⁾	C		
Business Studies (H)	B		
Science (H)	B		
C.S.P.E. (C)	A		
Other Areas of Learning 			
The school has flexibility to report on other learning experiences/events that the student has participated in outside the formal timetabled curriculum such as;			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with co-curricular or extra-curricular activities such as a science fair, school's sporting activities or debating. Specific learning opportunities that do not form part of subjects or short courses, i.e; leadership training; activities relating to guidance; membership of school clubs or societies; membership of school's student council. Engagements that form part of the formal timetabled curriculum but not reported on in other sections of the JCPA i.e; engagement with a school's own religious education programme or with elements of the PE, SPHE curriculum and CSPE. 			
Principal Ms Mary Ryan 	Year Head MR Jack Quigley 	Roll Number: 60090Q Anytown Secondary School Anytown, Co. Anytown V94HXW5	 Anytown Secondary School
This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.			

New Grading system explained

With the rollout of the Junior Cycle a new language of learning has been introduced which takes the emphasis off grades-based achievement for students. As well as formative assessment and feedback language being a core aspect of the classroom experience, the final award is described in a different manner. Please see the table below which breaks this down for you.

The core subjects (English, Irish and Maths) are assessed at Higher and Ordinary Level and all other subjects are now assessed at common level for all students.

The L1LP (Level 1 Learning Programme) and L2LP (Level 2 Learning Programme) programmes are also available to some students.

State Examinations	Classroom Based Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinction (90 -100%)• Higher Merit (75 – 89%)• Merit (55 – 74%)• Achieved (40 – 54%)• Partially Achieved (20 – 39%)• Not Graded (0 – 19%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exceptional• Above expectations• In line with expectations• Yet to meet expectations• Not reported

For further information, please see:

www.curriculumonline.ie

www.ict.ie

www.ncca.ie

