

Frequently Asked Questions

What time does the school start and finish at?

1st/5th 6th Class & Break Times

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
8:45 - 9:25					
9:25 - 10:05					
10:05 - 10:45					
10:45 - 11:00					
11:00 - 11:40					
11:40 - 12:20					
12:20 - 13:00					
13:00 - 13:40					
13:40 - 14:20					
14:20 - 15:00					
15:00 - 15:40					

2nd/3rd/TY Year Class & Break Times

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
8:45 - 9:25					
9:25 - 10:05					
10:05 - 10:20					
10:20 - 11:00					
11:00 - 11:40					
11:40 - 12:20					
12:20 - 13:00					
13:00 - 13:40					
13:40 - 14:20					
14:20 - 15:00					
15:00 - 15:40					

Are students allowed to leave the school at lunch time?

No, students are not allowed to leave the school at lunch time.

Small break for 1st years is 10:45 to 11:00. Big break is 1:00 to 1:40.

Does the school have a canteen?

Yes, the school has an excellent canteen and is very popular with the students in the school. The canteen service run by the company Get Fresh and is available at lunch break each day. Get Fresh have a new pre order and pre-pay online service for students. It is a cashless system using a card given to students by Get Fresh. The canteen is not open at small break and students must bring their own snack and drink to eat then.

How long should students spend on homework each night?

Students should spend 2 hours on homework each night. This includes homework that is given by teachers on a day to day basis, as well as studying for tests and assessments. Every student has a homework journal to write their homework in and to help them keep organised.

The school runs a supervised homework club from Monday to Thursday each week for first years who need support doing their homework.

The school also runs supervised after school study each evening for 2 hours Monday to Thursday.

Do students have lockers?

Students will be assigned a locker and a school lock when they begin first year. The locker is used to store books, coats and other school materials.

What are the CAT4 Tests?

Students will do the CAT4 tests in April 2023. These used to be known as entrance exams. They are not entrance exams and have no implication whatsoever on your child getting a place in St Joseph's. The CAT4 tests assess student's literacy and numeracy and give us a picture of what learning supports may be needed to put in place for students in 1st year. Students do not need to study or prepare for the CAT4 tests and there is nothing that students need to worry about regarding them.

Are classes in the school streamed?

No, first year classes in St Joseph's are not streamed. All classes are mixed ability and there are no top, middle or bottom classes. Students are assigned a class which will be one of 1F/1N/1R/1S/1T/1U. There is no distinction between any of the classes. Students will be streamed in Maths in second year based on their assessment results in 1st year. Students will be streamed in Irish in third year. All other classes are mixed ability.

What is the St Joseph's School Uniform?

Junior Cycle Uniform (1st/2nd & 3rd Years)

- Grey Trousers
- Light Blue Shirt
- School Tie
- Grey Jumper with the school crest
- Navy Blue School coat
- Black or Brown Shoes or Runners. No white soles or markings on runners are allowed.

Senior Cycle Uniform (TY/5th & 6th Years)

- Grey Trousers
- White Shirt
- School Tie
- Grey Jumper with the school crest
- Navy Blue School coat
- Black or Brown Shoes or Runners. No white soles or markings on runners are allowed.

The school jumper/coat/tie can be purchased at any of:

- Loop Clothing (beside Greenhills School),
- Bestwear on Shop Street
- The shirt and trousers can be purchased in Tesco, Penneys etc.

There is a new PE uniform introduced for our incoming 1st year. The PE uniform is compulsory for all students and will be worn in PE. Students will change out of their PE uniform after PE class is over – they will not be wearing it for the full day.

Can I monitor my child's attendance when they are at school?

Yes, we use the VShare administration system in the school and parents have their own VShare mobile app. This can also be accessed on the laptop or computer. Parents can monitor their child's class by class attendance and submit absence/late notes to the school via the app. Parents can also receive messages from the school, view their child's timetable and term reports on the app.

How does the Book Rental scheme work?

St Joseph's operates a comprehensive Book Rental Scheme and is open to all students in First, Second and Third Year. To avail of this service, parents pay a rental fee of €100 each year. In contrast with other schools, where only the textbooks of core subjects are included

in the scheme, in St. Joseph's, textbooks in every subject and in all levels, up to Third Year, are included.

This means that there will be no booklist issued to parents before your child starts in September and parents do not need to worry about buying textbooks. The school looks after buying all of your child's textbooks and they will be distributed to them in September. Some subjects may have specific equipment or supplementary texts, such as novels in English, that are not included in the book rental scheme. The teachers of these subjects will inform you of what needs to be bought in September.

What type of copies do I need to buy before students starts school?

The small A5 softback copies are the best ones to buy. Some teachers will ask students to have specific types of copies. We don't recommend buying hardback copies for each of their subjects, as these can make their school bag very bulky and heavy. Small copies which can fit inside their textbook are fine.

How can I pay the Book Rental and other fees?

All parents of incoming first years have been set up on way2pay. This is the method of payment which we use in the school and it works well for all other small miscellaneous fees that may occur over the course of the school year. Way2pay generates an electronic receipt for each payment processed. The link to way2pay is in the Parents section of the school website www.droghedacbs.ie.

The school office is not able to accept credit/debit card payment. Fees can be paid in cash, however please pay with way2pay if you can.

How do I return the forms and documentation to the school?

All forms are now electronic. Parents will receive a link to fill in various forms via text message.

My child has an exemption from doing Irish. What will they do when Irish class is on?

If your child has an exemption from doing Irish, then s/he will do two classes of literacy (English) support and two classes of numeracy (Maths) support each week when the 4 Irish classes are running. These classes are taught by English and Maths teachers and will be completely separate from the Irish class. Students will not be sitting at the back of an Irish class doing their own work. They will receive homework and assessment in these classes in the normal manner, just the same as every other subject. We also offer EAL support (English as an additional language) during this time for students whose first language is not English and would benefit from extra help in this area. If your child has an Irish exemption and would benefit from EAL support, please email us at info@droghedacbs.ie so that we can put this in place for them for when they start school.

My child does not have an exemption from doing Irish, but has mild dyslexia (or any additional educational need). Will they get any supports in school?

Ms Walsh, our Additional Educational Needs Coordinator is currently liaising with the primary schools to ascertain which students will need support when they start in August. Ms Walsh will contact parents of these students over the coming weeks to ascertain what their level of needs are and discuss with parents what supports can be put in place for your child when they start school. If your child has any additional educational needs, please email the school and Ms Walsh will give you a call. Please don't adopt a 'wait and see how s/he gets on' approach before letting us know. If you would prefer for us not to put any supports in place for your child initially, that is no problem. However, it is better that the school is aware of your child's needs, so we can monitor their progress and then, if necessary, make any interventions in consultation with parents.

My child is anxious about starting secondary school. Will there be any supports in place to help them settle in?

First years settle into secondary school at their own pace. Some students need a little more time and help than others. Some may be anxious that they do not know anybody else in the school, or that their friends have gone to a different school. There are several supports that we have in place in the school to help each of our first years settle in. The school's **Pastoral Care Policy** goes through each of these supports in detail. This policy can be accessed through the Incoming First Years section of the school website www.droghedacbs.ie. One programme designed specifically for first years in the Cara mentoring programme.

This programme has been set up in the school to help first years to settle into their new school environment. The Cara team agree at the beginning of the year to help initiate our first years. This team consists of a group of fifth year students. Each fifth year Cara Mentor is assigned approximately five students to look after. They meet each of their students on their first day in August and at regular intervals throughout the year particularly during the first term. The beginning of secondary school can be difficult for first years with so many new subjects and new faces to get used to. The Cara team aim to help first years with any concerns they may have at this challenging time and indeed, throughout the year the Cara team are present in the school to assist with the needs of their assigned first year group through group or individual sessions. They also assist in the preparation and organisation of school-based pastoral activities.

What platform does the school use online learning?

The school uses the GSuite (Google) platform which is sanctioned for use in the school by the Board of Management. Every student has their own school Gmail address which ends in @droghedacbs.ie. They will be given this email address when they start in first year and keep it until they leave the school. Google Classroom is the main feature that is used for remote teaching and learning and it is very user friendly and easy to use.

How do I get set up on VSware to view my child's attendance?

The school office will write to the parents of incoming first years in August to set you up on VSware. The office will send you instructions of how to access your log in details. Your child's timetable will be available for you to view a few days before they starts school and we will notify you when it is ready.

When will the incoming first years begin school?

The school calendar for the new school year will be made available to parents in late May/early June. The calendar will contain the start back dates for each year group. The school always reopens generally in or around the last week in August. First years will be brought in on their own on their first day. This is to give them a chance to settle in and get their bearings. They will be given a tour of the school, meet their Cara mentor and get their journal and timetable.

How can I stay informed of everything that is going on in the school?

The school uses VSware messaging and text message to communicate with parents. The school website www.droghedacbs.ie has a huge amount of information about the school, as well as an archive of past newsletters. We also use Twitter @Droghedacbs to post good new stories in the school and to celebrate our students' achievements.