



Abbey Community College

Important Information on Subject Choices for Incoming First Years September 2020

Under the Patronage of:
Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board
&
The Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary

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To parents and new pupils of Abbey Community College for September 2020

We are delighted to welcome you into 1st Year 2020/2021. Following from the *Entrance Assessment*, you are now faced with the important decision of choosing your optional subjects.

These notes will assist you in choosing the subjects that you will study at Junior Cycle in Abbey Community College.

We ask you to read the contents in detail and pay careful attention to the advice we offer you on subject choice. It is vital that you consider this carefully so that you have all the information you will need to help you be ready for September 2020.

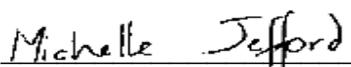
Should you require further information please visit the Guidance and Counselling Website accessible on www.abbeycommunitycollege.com.

The *Information Evening* which will take place on Monday 24th February at 7.00pm will offer further assistance. Our Guidance Counsellors will be in attendance on the night to answer questions you may have.

In a change to previous years, there is no cap on the number of French or Spanish classes. In the event that there are insufficient numbers opting for a subject, that subject may not be offered.

Please note that your subject choice form does not have to be completed on the night. The deadline for return of this forms is Thursday 27th February 2020. Late applications will be considered after all on-time applications have been processed.

Looking forward to meeting you on the night.


Michelle Jefford,
Principal

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parents Association

Abbey Community College *Parents Association* was formed in November 2000 and has since been busy working on a number of projects that will enhance the life and education of our students. We ask that you give them your full support while your child is in our school and thus become active partners in the education process.

Chairperson:	Ms. Anita Maher
Vice Chairperson:	Ms. Margaret Morrissey
Treasurer:	Ms. Mary Hennigan
Secretary:	Ms. Phyll McNichol
P.R.O.:	Ms. Elizabeth Blanche

Parents' Members of Board of Management

Mr. David Phelan and Ms. Marie Skehan.

Bus Transport

The school transport eligibility for all pupils newly entering a post primary school will be determined by reference to the distance they reside from their nearest Post Primary Education centre. To be considered eligible, pupils must reside not less than 4.8km from the nearest Post Primary Education Centre.

Book Rental Scheme

The book rental scheme is managed by the school and the *Parents Association*. The current fee is €70 per student per year. This covers textbooks and consumable classroom materials. Workbooks, reference books, exam papers etc. are not included.

Student Record Book

Each student will be given a student record book. This book costs €10, and contains a copy of the school rules, personal details, permissions re: school outings etc., absence slips, behaviour record, message section, achievements section and a school diary. Each student must be in possession of his/her record book during class time and parents bring this to the parent teacher meeting. The relevant sections of this book must be signed by a parent/guardian.

Locker Rental

Students rent a locker from the school at a cost of €10 for the year. This fee is paid on the day of the *Entrance Exam* together with the *Book Rental* and *Student Record Book*.

Family Contribution

To cover the cost of photocopying, student insurance, communication with home, games and school reports, an annual sum is paid each year. The family contribution supports many activities and events in the school which would not be possible without this contribution. At present, the voluntary fee is €70 per student and €120 per family. We can only offer these services if the contribution is paid.

The POD

The POD is our special education centre. All students who attend the POD will have access to Level 2 Learning Programme. Where possible, students will engage in both Junior Certificate Level 2 and Level 3 Learning programmes. Students who attend the POD will be taught in a mixed ability setting. Students will have the opportunity to develop an array of skills while taking part in programmes including Yoga, Taking Care of Plants in our Sensory Garden, Music Therapy & Woodwork in small groups with their peers in the POD.

NOTES ON SUBJECT CHOICES:

Please read these notes very carefully.

In keeping with Abbey Community College's policy of equality of educational opportunity, all subjects in the bands are available to boys and girls. All students take the following Department of Education and Skills programmes for the three years of Junior Cycle: Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography, Science, French **or** Spanish, and Religious Education.

Students have a choice of 2 subjects from the following examination subjects: Business Studies, Music, Materials Technology Wood or Metal, Technical Graphics, Art and Home Economics.

Students also study: Wellbeing: Physical Education, Information Technology, C.S.P.E. (Civic Social & Political Education), SPHE (includes Pastoral Care, relationship & sexuality education, substance misuse, anti-bullying and more).

- While we cannot guarantee all your choices, we will attempt to facilitate you as best we can.

Important Guidelines for Picking Subjects:

- **Discuss** your ideas fully at home before you choose your subjects.
- **Choose** the subjects at which you think you might be good at and in which you have an interest.
- **Do not** choose a subject because your friend is choosing it.

It is important that each student chooses a 'spread' of subjects. This will give him/her a wider subject and career choice in Senior Cycle. In addition to these subjects, we will have a Learning Support Programme for students in need of extra support with English and Maths.

THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS ARE CORE SUBJECTS:

You will study all these subjects.

Irish

Irish is taught to foster and develop communication skills in the language. Students study listening, speaking, reading and writing. Two different levels are offered, and students choose a level that best suits their ability. Students are encouraged to spend time in the Gaeltacht to experience Irish as a living community language and to practice its usage. We are fortunate in Abbey Community College that we can offer a number of scholarships to the Gaeltacht every Summer.

English

English could be described as the key subject on the curriculum. Proficiency in English is the foundation on which progress in all other subjects is built and is the key to lifelong learning. In 1st Year, we read and write stories, poems, letters and reports and touch on public speaking and drama. Studying English is learning to think, speak, analyse and summarise clearly and concisely. It is also entering the exciting world of the great thinkers and writers.

Maths

The new junior cycle mathematics course provides students with access to important mathematical ideas to develop the mathematical knowledge and skills that they will draw on in their personal and work lives. The course provides students with the basis on which further study and research in mathematics and many other fields are built. The junior cycle mathematics course builds on students' prior learning and focuses on developing increasingly sophisticated and refined mathematical understanding, fluency, reasoning, computational thinking and problem solving.

Science

Using scientific methods, students will learn facts, see demonstrations and participate in experimental and enquiry-based work. Science involves the following areas:

- Biological World– the study of living things, plant and animal.
- Chemical World – the study of how substances interact & combine with each other.
- Physical World – the study of measurement, energy and matter.
- Earth & Space—the study of solar & planetary systems.

The topics become separate individual subjects at Leaving Certificate level.

History

History is the story of everything that has ever happened: science and art, exploration and exploitation, war and peace. The new junior cycle course encourages students to see the "big picture" in history, work the sources and develop a deep appreciation of our past. The course looks at a wide range of events from Ancient Rome to the Space Race, from the Renaissance to the Famine. Students will examine why these events are relevant today, how these events relate to their community and what life was like for the ordinary people of the past, as well as learning the discipline of the historian.

Geography

Geography is the study of the Earth and the people who live on it. There are three main sections - Physical Geography is the study of our planet, examining how external and internal forces interact to

create and destroy new landscapes. Social Geography focuses on population, urbanisation, food supply etc. Economic Geography examines human economic activity like industry, agriculture, transport etc.

Religious Education

The aim of Religious Education is to support the development of students by helping them to explore how religious and other beliefs are expressed, engage with life's big questions, and reflect on moral values for life. It encourages respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living, including both the religious and non-religious response to human experience. Religious Education is an examination subject and we will follow the NCCA syllabus. This class is not a Religious Instruction class and does not contain any element of religious instruction or worship as outlined in circular letter 13/2018.

Computer Studies

The aim is to instruct students in the key concepts of computers and provide them with competency in a wide range of computer applications including Office 365. They will also study internet safety, on-line research, basic file management, word processing, spreadsheets and presentation applications. They will study Internet and Communication Technologies and learn how to access, filter, analyse and transmit information using the internet.

Wellbeing

We define 'wellbeing' as the care of the individual in the school, to ensure that they are contented, healthy and successful. Our efforts are focussed on developing the talents and abilities of each person. Through a variety of modules, students feel valued and are challenged to develop in a holistic way as an individual. Our 'Well Boy, Well Girl' initiative takes place each morning for all students during tutor time, focussing on one of the six Wellbeing Indicators each week.

The following classes are part of our Wellbeing Programme:

- **Civic, Social and Political Education (C.S.P.E.)**

Students learn about issues that concern them and the wider world, and consider the role and responsibility of all citizens in bringing about positive change. Students gain an understanding of the causes and consequences of a range of global challenges. They also explore the role and relevance of economic and political structures to their lives. Finally, the course allows students to examine the contribution citizens can make to creating a more equal, just and sustainable future. Student-led action, based on an understanding of human rights and responsibilities, is encouraged.

- **S.P.H.E.**

Social, Personal and Health Education contributes to developing the work of the school in promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young adults. S.P.H.E. includes topics such as healthy eating, alcohol, drugs, environment issues, safety and social responsibility and relationships and sexuality education. S.P.H.E. aims to give clear information and build self-esteem.

- **P.E.**

Wellbeing in junior cycle is about young people feeling confident, happy, healthy and connected. PE contributes to the Wellbeing programme by providing learning experiences which support students in being better able and more motivated to include regular physical activity in their lives, thereby contributing to their overall experience of wellbeing.

LANGUAGES:

A modern foreign language is compulsory in Abbey Community College for Junior Cycle. In a change to previous years, there is no cap on the number of French or Spanish classes.

You chose either French **or** Spanish.

French

French is an academic language highly sought after in the world of business, offering students many pathways for future employment on the international job market. It is the second most widely learned language after English and the fifth most widely spoken language in the world. French is also both a working and official working language of the United Nations, The European Union, UNESCO, NATO, the International Olympic Committee, the International Red Cross and International Courts. Students who take French for Junior Cycle are introduced to language and culture in an exciting colourful format through group work, pair work, role play and audio skills that are designed to improve oral communication skills. This communicative element is most important in our multi-lingual European society. Allez-y!

Spanish

Spanish is the official language in 22 countries and is spoken by more than 400 million people worldwide. Students, therefore, will find practical use for the knowledge and skills learned in Spanish for the Junior Cycle. Through role plays, group work and listening tasks, students will learn how to communicate and interact with Spanish speakers and will gain an insight and understanding of Hispanic culture and society.

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS:

Two subjects must be chosen from the list of 1-7 below:

1. Business Studies

Business Studies focuses on improving students' understanding of the business environment and on developing skills for life, work and further study through the three inter-connected strands: Personal Finance, Enterprise and Our Economy. Business Studies lays the foundation for the later study of Accounting, Economics and Business at Leaving Certificate Level.

2. Music

The Music course is for any student who has an interest in music. No previous musical training is necessary (you do not need to be able to play an instrument to take this subject in first year). The course focuses on composing, performing, listening and experiencing music through movement. 30% of the exam in 3rd Year consists of a practical performance.

3. Visual Art

Areas studied in Art include painting, graphic design, collage, printing, sculpture and calligraphy. An advantage of choosing Art, is that there is no theory in Junior Cycle: instead the course is all practical work that culminates in a project completed during 3rd year. Students may choose to carry on the subject to Leaving Certificate Art is an important choice for many careers.

4. Materials Technology – Wood

Materials Technology - Wood is a subject where the student works with many materials, but mostly with wood. The design process is followed in all projects. A practical project is completed for assessment as well as a written exam. Construction Studies for Leaving Certificate follows.

5. Materials Technology – Metal

This programme aims to give students an insight into the area of metalcraft and engineering. It gives students hands-on experience with practical work and the chance to learn life-long practical skills. Students will experience a wide range of materials such as metal, wood and plastic, learn to use machine tools (drills, lathes) and hand tools (hacksaws, files etc.) in a correct and safe manner. A major project must be completed in 3rd Year. Engineering follows on at Leaving Certificate level.

6. Technical Graphics

This subject aims to give students the opportunity to learn graphic skills. Students will learn to use drawing equipment correctly and safely, produce neat, tidy drawings and to interpret both 2D and 3D drawing. The programme will develop students' spatial and graphic skills. Students will use a variety of media to produce from freehand sketching, drawing with equipment and Computer Aided Design. It leads to Design & Communication Graphics (DCG) at Leaving Certificate level.

7. Home Economics

Junior Cycle Home Economics develops the knowledge, understanding, skills and values necessary to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for every person as an individual, and as a member of families and society. It is studied through three interconnected strands: Food, Health and Culinary Skills; Responsible Family Living; and, Textiles and Craft. The final examination consists of a practical food skills examination and a written examination. Students may choose to carry the subject to Leaving Certificate.