



Parents' Subject Choice Information Booklet

Bush Post Primary School

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Dear Parent,

This booklet has been created as a guide to the Parents of our incoming first year students to help them on their transition to Post Primary school. As you are aware, this year is an extremely important year for your child and Parents serve as a major influence in their children's education.

Things a parent can do to help:

- Read up on the relevant subjects on the <https://www.qualifax.ie/> and <https://careersportal.ie/>
From an adult perspective you may have some questions that your child has overlooked.
- If possible, talk to your son/daughter about your experience of the various subjects. Perhaps arrange for them to talk to someone currently taking the subjects in Bush Post Primary School.
- Talk to your son/daughter about their experience of these subjects at primary school. What subjects do they enjoy most and feel most comfortable in? Choose subjects that they are interested in and prepared to work at.
- It is important to consider your child's personal strengths and learning styles when making your decisions. There is no such thing as 'an easy subject' at Junior Cycle as each subject requires a considerable amount of regular study.
- It is also a good idea to select a range of subjects which will leave your child's career choices open for as long as possible.

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1. Core Curriculum -The Subjects everyone will study in First Year

English
Irish (unless exempt)
Maths
History
Science
French/ Spanish (MFL)
Physical Education (Short Course)
Digital Media Technology/ Coding
Civic Social and Political Education
Religion
Social Personal and Health Education (Short Course)

Questions you may have:

- **What is a short course?**

The short course is a new curriculum component in Junior Cycle. A short course is designed for approximately 100 hours of student engagement and provides opportunities for schools to broaden the range of educational experiences they offer in Junior Cycle.

- **What is Digital Media Technology?**

Creating and sharing media in a digital environment has become an increasingly important feature of how young people communicate and engage with each other and with the wider world. Young people are actively manipulating digital media to participate in social and cultural life, to pursue their interests and to express themselves online. Through studying this digital media literacy short course, students will learn to use digital technology to engage in self-directed enquiry, to discriminate between multiple sources of information and to participate safely and effectively in an online environment.

- **What is Coding?**

Computer science is present in every aspect of modern society. Correctly functioning software systems allow airplanes to fly from one city to another, give out money at the ATM and diagnose the level of glucose in your blood. Understanding how computer hardware and software operate and relate to everyday life is an increasingly important area of learning for students. Problem solving and computational thinking skills are developed in this course as students build and create software projects using their own ideas and imagination. The course looks to build on any coding skills that primary students might have acquired while offering insight into possible future studies in computer science and software engineering.

- **What is Civic Social and Political Education?**

Civic, Social and Political Education aims to prepare students for active participatory citizenship. This is achieved through comprehensive exploration of the civic, social and political dimensions of their lives at a time when pupils are developing from dependent children into independent young adults. It should produce knowledgeable pupils who can explore, analyse and evaluate, who are skilled and practised in moral and critical appraisal, and capable of making decisions and judgements through a reflective citizenship, based on human rights and social responsibilities. Such pupils should be better prepared for living in a world where traditional structures and values are being challenged, and where pupils are being confronted with conflicting interests, impermanent structures and constant questioning.

- **What is Social Personal and Health Education?**

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in Junior Cycle provides a unique opportunity where students can develop the skills and competences to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their overall health and wellbeing. SPHE also provides the context within which students can learn about the important moral, physical, social and emotional issues around relationships, sex and sexuality including where to get reliable information from trusted sources. SPHE is not formally assessed in the Junior Cycle.

2. Modern Foreign Language at Bush Post Primary School.

Students at Bush Post Primary can choose one of the following Modern Foreign Languages – French or Spanish. In lessons students will learn how to read and speak the language. Learning a modern foreign language is a really good way to exercise your memory and problem-solving skills as so many parts of your brain are involved in learning a language.

What will I learn in language lessons? Some of the things you will learn include:

- * How to speak about yourself, your family, friends, hobbies, sports, school...etc in that language
- * How to listen and understand what other people speaking the language are saying
- * The skills of listening, reading and writing in that language. The grammar and vocabulary of that language
- * Some information about the countries where people speak the language and their way of life

Career Note: The biggest advantage in learning a foreign language is the flexibility and freedom it provides with regards to employment and travel. Due to globalization of markets, employers are always looking for people with skills and the ability to speak a foreign language. Travel is much more enjoyable when you can communicate with the local people of the country you are visiting. There are many career opportunities in modern foreign languages such as; Tourism, Catering, Education, Business and Translation Service.

3. Your son/daughter will also study three subjects from the following list:

Option Subjects
Art
Business
Geography
Home Economics
Engineering
Wood Technology
Music
Graphics

- **Art**

This subject welcomes nurtures and enables students to learn and explore the creative world of Art, Craft & Design and reach their full potential.

Who would this subject suit? This subject suits all levels and abilities, especially those with a creative outlook and imagination.

Type of Homework: Projects / Assignments Drawing, painting, design, and craft and research.

Other points: - Students must be enthusiastic, interested and be able to apply themselves to projects when necessary. Natural ability alone is not enough. At Junior Cycle, students develop their skills, explore their creative side and maximise their possibilities.

Career Note: Not all colleges require art as an essential subject for entry to art courses; however, any student considering a career in art & design, graphics, industrial design, craftwork, etc., would be strongly advised to consider it for Junior Cycle and for Leaving Cert. It is also very useful for primary school teaching and apprenticeships. Please note that it is a strong advantage to have Leaving Cert. Art when applying for courses in architecture (more so than Technical Graphics).

Progression after the Junior Certificate: to do Art, Craft & Design at Leaving Certificate Level, it is preferable that the student has studied Art for Junior Cycle.

- **Business**

Who would this subject suit? Business is a very important subject in our modern society. It gives a grounding in general business practices and principles.

Career Note: This subject builds on skills and knowledge that are particularly useful for careers in the following Career Sectors: Accountancy & Taxation, Advertising, Marketing & Public Relations, Banking & Financial Services, Business Management & Human Resources, Clerical & Administration, Government, Politics & EU

Progression after the Junior Certificate; Business divides into three specialised subjects at Leaving Certificate level: Business, Economics and Accounting.

Type of homework: The syllabus has three strands: Personal Finance, Enterprise and Our Economy. Homework will reflect these strands.

- **Geography**

Geography brings an appreciation of the environment and the impact of daily living on the world around us.

Who would this subject suit? Young people who are interested in basic physical systems that affect everyday life (e.g., earth-sun relationships, water cycles, wind and ocean currents). Also, people who like to learn the location of places and the physical and cultural characteristics of those places in order to function more effectively in our increasingly interdependent world. It is helpful to develop a mental map of your community, province or territory, country and the world so that you can understand the “where” of places and events.

Career Note: If you are interested in pursuing a career in an area that genuinely makes a difference to the world we live in; you should consider geography. From understanding everything from how and why volcanos are formed to the impact of overcrowding in urban areas, geographers are integral to help find solutions to some of the biggest issues in the world, such as climate change, urban over-development and natural disasters. Drawing on many other related disciplines geography offers a broad range of career outcomes and, with the increasing global focus on the issues geographers are equipped to address, employment opportunities are growing exponentially.

Progression after the Junior Certificate: to study Geography at Leaving Certificate Level, it is preferable but not necessary that the student has studied Geography for the Junior Cycle. Geography is recognised as a lab science subject in many colleges.

- **Home Economics**

Who would this subject suit? Home Economics is a subject where you will learn how to take care of yourself, others, your home and your environment. As Home Economics is a very practical subject, you will carry out a lot of activities in school and at home.

Career Note: This subject builds on skills and knowledge that are particularly useful for careers in the following Career Sectors: Business Management & Human Resources, Community & Voluntary, Education & Teaching, Farming, Horticulture & Forestry, Psychology & Social Care.

Progression after the Junior Certificate; to study Home Economics at Leaving Certificate Level, it is preferable but not necessary that the student has studied Home Economics for the Junior Certificate.

Type of homework: The course consists of three strands: Food, Health and Culinary Skills, Responsible Family Living and Textiles & Craft. Homework will be based on these strands.

- **Engineering**

Engineering is a practical, hands-on subject, which gives students a good foundation in design and technology. Students learn traditional metalworking skills but also learn how to use modern engineering machinery such as computer-controlled machinery (C.N.C.).

Who would this subject suit? Engineering would suit students who might like a subject with a large practical element. Being good with your hands helps, however remember that theory is also part of this course.

Career Note: Engineering would be a useful subject if a student is considering studying technology, engineering, plastics, industrial design, engineering technology, or metalwork teaching (University of Limerick). It is also useful for many apprenticeships.

Progression after the Junior Certificate Many Engineering students proceed to Engineering at Leaving Certificate level; however, while this is obviously of benefit, it is not necessary to have done Engineering at Junior Cert to proceed to Engineering at Leaving Certificate.

- **Wood Technology**

Wood Technology is a practical, hands-on subject, which gives students a good foundation in woodworking and graphical skills to enable students design and manufacture wooden items.

Who would this subject suit? Wood Technology would suit students who might like a subject with a large practical element. Students who like working with wood and using their hands would enjoy this subject.

Career Note: Wood Technology would be of benefit to those hoping to study courses in Architecture, Civil Engineering, Quantity Surveying, Site Management. It would be particularly useful for work in the Building Trades, or for training as a Carpenter or a Wood Technology Teacher.

Progression after the Junior Certificate: To do Construction Studies at Leaving Certificate level, a student would benefit from having Wood Technology for the Junior Certificate.

- **Music**

The music course is not entirely about classical music, but covers all types of music, including traditional music, film music, musicals, etc.

Who would this subject suit? It is not necessary for a student to be able to play an instrument to successfully complete the course, but it does require the student to have an aptitude for and interest in music. A student's ability to sing can be substituted for by a musical instrument.

Type of Homework/Projects/Assignments: Harmony exercises and other written exercises can be given.

Career Note: Music at Leaving Certificate Higher Level is essential for some, but not all, music degrees. Music would be a useful (but not essential) subject for students thinking of careers in media, multimedia, film, radio and television, dance, and generally in the entertainment, sports and leisure industries.

Progression after the Junior Certificate to study Music at Leaving Certificate Level, it is preferable that the student has studied Music for the Junior Certificate.

- **Graphics**

Graphics is a problem-solving subject that challenges the student to use his or her imagination to solve problems graphically. The understanding of the different topics in the course is achieved by practising drawing different examples. Every problem needs the drawing rules applied in different ways, so practice is the best means of learning. Students are encouraged to attempt questions before viewing answers.

Who would this subject suit? This subject would suit students who have a love of drawing and problem solving. Being able to draw neatly and clearly is essential. It would suit students who are practically and academically minded.

Type of Homework/Projects/Assignments. There is no theory in this subject, all the classes are practical, and students will be drawing and drafting. Students will use a variety of media to produce from freehand sketching, drawing with equipment and Computer Aided Design.

Career Note: Graphics is not essential for architecture, engineering, or quantity surveying but any student thinking of a career in these areas would benefit much from the skills learned. It is also desirable for courses in technology and town planning, and it would be very useful for any students interested in trades such as mechanic, electrician or plumber.

Progression after the Junior Certificate: Graphics leads to Design & Communication Graphics (DCG) at Leaving Cert level. It is a recommended subject for entry to the Wood Technology and Engineering teacher-training courses at the University of Limerick.

4. Assessment procedures for Junior Cycle

You are probably aware of new assessment procedures at junior cycle. What are these changes?

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) emphasises the importance of valuing, acknowledging and affirming all students' learning opportunities and experiences during the three years of junior cycle. The new assessment procedures at junior cycle value the different aspects of students' learning and the range of approaches, both formative and summative, that generate evidence of this learning by students. Student achievements will be reported to students and parents/guardians on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). The JCPA will capture the different assessment elements undertaken over the three years of junior cycle, including the grades which are issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

What's new?

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

- contribute to and build on the use of formative assessment in the classroom
- happen during normal class time
- resemble the learning that happens daily
- capture the knowledge and skills that are not easily assessed in a timed pen and paper type examination
- will be assessed at a common level by the class teacher

There will be two CBAs for each subject; the first one in 2nd year and a second one in 3rd year. These could range from project tasks, oral language tasks and investigations, to practical or designing and making tasks, field studies and artistic performances. Student achievement in CBAs will be reported on using the following descriptors:

Exceptional
Above expectations
In line with expectations
Yet to meet expectations

The results of the CBAs will be communicated to students and parents and a record kept in the school. They will also feature on your child's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Assessment Task (AT)

This is a written assessment that assesses what students have learned, and asks about skills that they have developed, from their experience of having completed the second Classroom-Based Assessment. The Assessment Task will be completed during class time under the supervision of the teacher and will take place over two lesson periods. The AT script is sent, along with the final assessment at the end of third year, to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to be marked. It will account for up to 10% of the state-certified examination and will be incorporated into the grade that a student receives for their final SEC examination

Final Examination

The final examination will be:

- no longer than two hours in duration
- taken in a maximum of ten subjects only
- available at a common level apart from English, Mathematics and Irish where there will be two levels (higher and ordinary).
- assessed by SEC using the following set of grades:

Distinction - 90 to 100 %
Higher Merit - 75 to 89%
Merit- 55 to 74%
Achieved - 40 to 54%
Partially Achieved - 20 to 39%

Levels English, Irish and Maths will be offered at two levels, higher and ordinary, and the externally assessed state certified exam will reflect this. The CBA in second year and third year will be set at a common level. All other subjects in Junior Cycle are common level.

The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement:

The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement will report on student achievements across a broad range of areas of learning in Junior Cycle such as:

- SEC examinations of subject results -90% written exam and 10% Assessment Task
- Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) results
- Other areas of learning (extra-curricular and co-curricular activities) e.g. School Basketball/Football team, Student Council, Young Scientist Competition, School Musical and Fundraising.