



## Subject Choice Policy

### **Ratified by the Board of Management on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

Signed: A Phelan  
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: W O'Hagan  
Principal and Secretary to the Board of Management

### **Amendment: Approved by Board of Management 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Addition of Paragraph 5, Page 6

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Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: W O'Hagan  
Principal and Secretary to the Board of Management

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## Introduction & Rationale:

In Clonturk Community College, we are committed to providing a comprehensive and effective learning environment which is child-centred and empowers young people to make informed decisions with the support of their parents, guardians. We also aim to acknowledge the particular importance of the professional role subject teachers and guidance counsellors play in supporting students in making informed decisions around subject options and level choice in line with their best interests. Students are empowered to work collaboratively with parents, guardians, subject teachers guidance counsellors as they form their decisions. Students are encouraged to develop personal responsibility, initiative, personal growth and leadership during their time in Clonturk.

We endeavour to support all students to select subjects, programmes and levels that are best suited to their interests, aptitudes and abilities. The Subject Choice Policy will play a key role in ensuring a culture of collaboration between students, parents, guardians, teachers, the guidance department and senior management to support the best interests of each student.

As a new and growing school, we are continuously formulating and reviewing policies based on what is happening in the present but with an understanding that change is a normal part of the school development process.

In line with our democratic principles this policy has been formulated with thorough consultation and input from students, parents, and staff. This policy is subject to periodic review through the appropriate channels such as Student Council, Staff Meetings, PGTA, Senior management and the Board of Management.

### **This policy is informed by:**

1. Educate Together Blueprint
2. DES Circular Number: 0059/2021 Arrangements for the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle.
3. The Admissions Policy
4. The Whole-school Guidance Plan
5. The Transition Year Admissions Policy
6. The LCA Admissions Policy
7. The LCVP Admissions Policy
8. The Learning & Language Support Policy
9. The Inclusion for Learning Policy

## Subject Choice Supports

A comprehensive career guidance and counselling service is available to all students at Clonturk Community College. The guidance department helps students with study skills, subject choices, provides information regarding Further Education (FE) and third level institutions, and supports students with wider educational and personal matters. Clonturk's dedicated [Guidance Counselling Website](#) provides support information and relevant websites for students to conduct independent research on third level courses, further education training and subject selection.

### Guidance supports at Junior Cycle

- Career Guidance Module in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- In 3<sup>rd</sup> year, students are invited to attend an in-house Careers Fair as well as a Senior Cycle parent/guardian evening.

### Guidance supports at Senior Cycle

Transition year:

- Students are invited to attend an in-house Careers Fair.
- Students take part in year-long subject sampling.
- Aptitude testing is conducted with all students.

5<sup>th</sup> Year:

- Part Year Rotation of Career Guidance – one hour per week.

6<sup>th</sup> Year:

- Full Year Module of Career Guidance – one hour per week.

## Programme Criteria

### Junior Cycle Criteria

- Students will study a maximum of ten subjects for assessment by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).
- Most students will study between eight and ten subjects or their equivalents.
- Where students are studying a combination of subjects and short courses, a maximum number of eight subjects can be studied for assessment by the SEC for students studying three or four short courses.
- A maximum number of nine subjects can be studied for assessment by the SEC for students studying one or two short courses.
- The Level 1 Learning Programme (L1LP) and Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP) are offered to students as per the Learning & Language Support Policy.

The range of subjects to be offered in the Junior Cycle programme in individual schools will vary in accordance with the teaching resources in the school and the needs and interests of the students<sup>1</sup>. Currently students in Clontarf Community College study eight subjects and three short courses (Digital Media Literacy/Coding, SPHE & CSPE).

### Junior Cycle Core Subjects

<b>The following subjects are core at Junior Cycle:</b>			
Maths	English	Irish*	History
Geography	Modern Foreign Language*	Science	Student Enrichment*
SPHE*	CSPE	Coding/Digital Media Literacy	

\*Students may be withdrawn for additional supports as per our Inclusion for Learning policy.

### Junior Cycle Choice Subjects

<b>Students complete two of the following:</b>			
Business Studies	Music	Graphics	Visual Art
Wood Technology	Applied Technology	Classics	Home Economics

### Modern Foreign Languages

<b>Students complete one of the following Modern Foreign Language:</b>		
German	French	Spanish

We would encourage 1<sup>st</sup> years who already speak a modern foreign language (for example a native speaker or someone who has access to the language at home), to choose a different language to study in school. This is with the understanding that they could sit the exam for at senior cycle. This gives students the opportunity to student two languages at Senior Cycle, if feasible.

There may be exceptional circumstances, for example where a student coming to the school is learning English for the first time, being permitted to attend classes in their native language if it is offered.

### Senior Cycle Criteria

Students participating in Leaving Certificate Applied, please refer to LCA Policy.

Students sitting the traditional leaving certificate (Level 5) must sit:

- 6 subjects with at least 2 at H5 and 4 at O6 for entry to level 8 courses.
- 5 O6 in Leaving Certificate for entry to Level 6/Level 7 courses.

<sup>1</sup> Reference <https://ncca.ie/media/3249/framework-for-junior-cycle-2015-en.pdf>

- For entry to a Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) course, requirements can vary between courses. For example, some may require certain Leaving Certificate results (such as 5 passes). Some may require an interview or portfolio.
- In Clonturk Community College, we recommend students study a minimum 7 exam subjects to 6<sup>th</sup> year. Students wishing to withdraw from a subject will be required to meet with a member of the guidance department to discuss the implications for this decision. Approval is provided on a case-by-case basis.

#### Senior Cycle Core Subjects

<b>The following subjects are core at Senior Cycle:</b>				
Maths	English	Irish*	Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)*	Student Enrichment (SE)

\*Students may be withdrawn for additional supports as per our Inclusion for Learning policy.

#### Senior Cycle Choice Subjects

<b>Students study an additional four subjects from the following options:</b>					
Geography	French	Spanish	German	Agricultural Science	Biology
Chemistry	Physics	Applied Mathematics	Construction Studies	Design & Communication Graphics (DCG)	Business
Economics	Art	Home Economics	Music	Classical Studies	Society & Politics
History	Computer Science	Accounting	Leaving Certificate Physical Education (LCPE)	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). While technically a separate programme, this can be studied as an optional subject on the timetable where the demand exists.	

Due to limitations on teacher allocation, class size, student preference and specialist rooms, we will be unable to run all subjects each year. Clonturk Community College is committed to maintaining student preference as the primary consideration when what subjects will run each academic year.

As new subjects are offered by the Department of Education, Clonturk Community College will endeavour to offer these subjects to students.

## Subject Specific Considerations

Taking up a subject at senior cycle having not studied the subject previously:

It is not usually recommended that students study a Leaving Certificate subject having not studied it at Junior Cycle. It is important that students and parents/guardians are aware of the very significant level of additional time and independent work outside of the classroom that will be required to sit a subject at Leaving Certificate, having not studied the subject at Junior Cycle. Students will have to catch up on 3 years of course knowledge, in addition to keeping up with their current coursework.

Any student wishing to take up a subject at Leaving certificate level, having not studied it previously, may be required to meet with parents/guardians and head of subject department before approval is provided. Responsibility for catching up on Junior Cycle course work will lie solely with the student in question.

Exceptions may be made where the student demonstrates proficient knowledge, skill, required to take up the subject at Leaving Certificate level. Students may be asked to sit a Junior Cycle level exam or similar assessment to demonstrate their proficiency.

Students taking up music or a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) for the first time at Senior Cycle should be able to demonstrate a level equivalent to the Junior Cycle State Exam or prove a period of residence in the country where the curricular language is spoken in the case of MFL.

All students are encouraged to fully engage with a Modern Foreign Language during first year. Only in exceptional circumstances can a student discontinue their Modern Foreign Language in first year. Students who wish to discontinue their Modern Foreign Language, both during and after first year, must have an Irish exemption and there must be written agreement from the parents/guardians.

## Subject/Programme Changes

Subject and Programme Changes are permitted in 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year **until the first week of October each academic year, where space is available**. It is felt that by this date, students have had sufficient time to engage with the curriculum and make an informed decision. After this date, it is felt that students have missed significant content which may constitute a permanent barrier to achieving in this subject to the best of their ability.

Student change of subject/programme must be supported by a written letter from home confirming a discussion has taken place and the change is warranted. See Appendix B.

Any change to subject(s) is subject to class size and availability. Every effort will be made to accommodate student choice.

Exceptions may arise where a student has transferred to the school and has missed career guidance opportunities.

## Subject level changes

In Clonturk Community College, we encourage all students to sit subjects to the highest level possible. With this in mind, there may be circumstances that arise outside of the school's or student's control where it would be considered within the best interest of the student to sit a subject at a lower level. When a decision is made to change level, this should be done in consultation with the student, parent/guardian, and teacher. This will be kept on the student file with the head of the subject department.

It is important to note that while every effort will be made to support the student in making decisions regarding levels throughout their time in Clonturk, they may still change their exam paper level on the day of the state exam without any consultation. Equally, a student can change their level on the State Examinations Commission E-Portal without any consultation. Changes in these cases are the sole responsibility of this student.

### Junior Cycle Common Level Subjects

At Junior Cycle, the following subjects are completed at common level:

English	Classics
Science	Modern Foreign Languages
Wood Technology	Home Economics
Art	History
Graphics	Geography

### Junior Cycle Higher and Ordinary Level subjects

At junior Cycle, the following subjects are completed at higher and ordinary level:

Maths	Irish
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### Senior Cycle Levels

#### Leaving Certificate Established (LCE)

The following subjects are offered at both Ordinary Level and Higher Level for students studying the Leaving Certificate Established (LCE), also known as the Leaving Certificate (LC):

Geography	French	Spanish	German	Agricultural Science	Biology
Chemistry	Physics	Applied Maths	Construction Studies	Design & Communication Graphics (DCG)	Business
Economics	Art	Home Economics	Music	Classical Studies	Society & Politics
History	Computer Science	Accounting	Leaving Certificate PE		



The following subjects can be completed at Higher, Ordinary and Foundation Level:

Maths	Irish
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## Additional subjects outside school

Students sitting additional subjects outside school should let the school know at the earliest available opportunity.

### Junior Cycle

It is worth noting that while students can sit additional subjects within the framework of the JCPA, outlined above, the maximum grade received will be 90% due to the limitations of the assessment task. Where subjects involve Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) and project work, teachers cannot oversee or signoff on work that is completed outside of school.

### Senior Cycle

Students sitting an additional subject outside of school (including native languages), must let the school know in September of 6<sup>th</sup> year. This is to ensure the relevant examination requirements are submitted to the State Examinations Commission.

Limitations may apply in certain subjects where project work is a requirement, such as construction studies.

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## Appendix A:

### Confirmation in writing of decision to drop optional subject

Request to drop (insert subject) \_\_\_\_\_ at Leaving Certificate.

Checklist (Please tick to confirm):

We have read the subject change policy in full.	
We have discussed dropping this subject with the class teacher and head of subject department.	
Our child has had a meeting with the guidance department regarding the decision to drop this subject.	
We understand that this decision may impact matriculation to third level and have discussed this with our child.	

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Head of Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Guidance Counsellor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of Senior Management: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B:

Taking up a subject at Leaving Certificate without having studied it at Junior Cycle

Request to study (insert subject) \_\_\_\_\_ at Leaving Certificate.

Checklist (Please tick to confirm):

We have read the subject change policy in full.	
We have discussed studying this subject with the class teacher and head of subject department.	
Student has demonstrated proficient knowledge/skill for the head of Department.	
We understand that it is the responsibility of the student to catch up on junior cycle content while also keeping up with current course content.	

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Head of Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Guidance Counsellor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of Senior Management: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_