

Colaiste Lorcaín Community College: Junior Certificate Subjects

Subject to demand from students, qualified staff being in place and the directions of the Department of Education and Skills, the school normally offers the following Junior Certificate curriculum:

A. Core / Compulsory Subjects

Examinable

English*
Irish*
Maths
History
Science*
Civic, Social & Political Education (C.S.P.E.)
French* OR German*

Non-Examinable

Physical Education (P.E.)
Religious Education
Social, Personal & Health Education (S.P.H.E.)

B. Optional Subjects

Students choose **three** Subjects from the following list:
Art, Craft and Design*
Business*
Geography
Home Economics
Materials Technology (Wood)
Music
Technical Graphics
Technology

*The subjects marked with an asteriks will be examined as part of the new Junior Cycle Programme.

ENGLISH

English is one of the core subjects, which must be studied from first year to Leaving Cert. At Junior level, there are seven areas for study. These are:

- Reading / Comprehension
- Personal (Essay) Writing
- Functional Writing
- Media Studies
- Drama
- Fiction
- Poetry

1. Reading / Comprehension: This area focuses on reading passages and answering questions to show understanding of the text.
2. Essay Writing: Most students will have written compositions by the time they reach secondary school. Plenty of practice opportunities will be provided in this area of personal writing, ranging from story writing to more factual composition writing.

3. Functional Writing: This section of the course includes letter writing, reviews, writing instructions and other tasks.
4. Media Studies: Advertisements, newspapers, magazines and many other areas of the media are studied and analysed in this section.
5. Drama: In first year we study short drama pieces and, at the moment, for Junior Cert., we study well known plays.
6. Fiction: Short extracts from stories are read in first year followed in second and third year by reading and analysis of a text chosen at the teacher's discretion.
7. Poetry: We study a variety of poems under thematic headings such as nature, love, war, childhood, etc.

Exams: At present, there are changes being made to the exam structure to facilitate better student engagement. There will be classroom based assessment in 2nd Year and 3rd Year, with a final state examination in June of 3rd Year.

IRISH

Irish is one of the core subjects which must be studied from 1st Year.

Students have the opportunity to experience and enjoy all aspects of Irish culture, heritage and language through classroom teaching and learning and many other school activities. The language class at all times is focused on foghlaim agus forbairt (learning and development) and ensures the student experiences the key concepts of eisteacht (listening), labhairt (spoken word), leitheoireacht (reading) and scribhneoireacht (writing skills).

The learning experience includes the use of drama, poetry, music, I.C.T., media studies and a variety of exciting methods to enjoy the language.

During Seachtain na Gaeilge a variety of activities take place in the school and students have the opportunity to become involved in the extensive range of cultural learning activities that form the school's contribution to this week of local and national celebration.

“Tir gan Teanga – Tir gan anam”

MATHEMATICS

There are eight areas in Junior Certificate Mathematics:

- **Set Theory:** Which tests the student's problem-solving and organisational skills. Pupils are presented with information, which they must interpret, manipulate and arrange into interlocking

circles. There are, also, a series of symbols which students must be able to understand and apply.

- **Number Systems:** Students dealt with only Natural numbers in primary school. They are now introduced to the range of number systems they will use throughout their mathematical life. The usage of calculators is continued from primary school. Other concepts studied are estimation, approximation, fractions and decimals.
- **Applied Arithmetic and Measure:** This section covers the calculation of area and volume of objects such as cubes, cuboids, cylinders, cones and spheres, etc. Topics such as taxation, percentages, ratios and proportion are also covered.
- **Algebra:** Involves mathematical equations using letters and numbers. Students must be able to solve an equation to find the value of the letters. This topic is needed in other areas of the maths course and, also, in other school subjects.
- **Statistics:** Students learn how to calculate percentiles and averages, learning, also, how to represent statistical information in the form of bar charts, pie charts and so on.
- **Geometry:** This is an extension of the section on space, shape and symmetry studied at primary level. It ranges from transformations and co-ordinate geometry to angles and proofs.
- **Functions & Graphs:** Students learn how to represent mathematical statements in graphical form. They complete neat accurate graphs and students are, then, asked a series of questions, which they must use their graphs to answer.
- **Trigonometry:** This involves the study, measurement and construction of angles and triangles. The usage of every day examples is important here.

Assessment: Junior Certificate Maths is examined at three levels: Higher, Ordinary and Foundation Level. The exam consists of two papers.

HISTORY

The study of History introduces students imaginatively to the past as a means of helping them to understand the future. The syllabus provides students with an insight into both Irish and European affairs.

The Irish course deals with the earlier phase, incorporating the Celts and Ancient Ireland and moves up to the Foundation of the State and Modern Irish history.

The European course looks at Europe in the wider world and specifically looks at Germany, Italy and World War 11. Students will be examined as part of the J.C., and, on the whole, most students do very well.

History is obviously an invaluable subject, and, in many cases, the only way in which students develop a knowledge of their past and world affairs. Many students opt for History as a Leaving Certificate subject.

In general, History appeals to all levels of ability and is thoroughly enjoyed by students.

SCIENCE

The Science syllabus has been designed to cater for students of all abilities. It is activity-based and emphasises the practical experience of science. Through a series of investigations and experiments, students develop science processing skills and knowledge of the underlying concepts.

The Junior Certificate exam now comprises both written and practical elements. The practical part is in the form of experimental projects worth 25% of the overall mark and a further 10% for the laboratory booklet.

The course has been broken into three main sections as follows:

Biology: Students learn about human and plant biology. They learn how the human body functions, develops and changes over time. Plants, as the main source of food to all living things, are, also, studied in detail as well as micro organisms.

Chemistry: The study of chemistry allows students to have a better understanding of materials all around us and the processes by which materials change. Students can, also, learn about how some materials occur naturally and how they can be combined to form new materials. Classification of substances, air, oxygen, carbon dioxide and water, as well as atomic structure, reactions and compounds are, also, studied.

Physics: Students explore and investigate the laws and relationships that govern our world and how things work. Topics such as: force & energy, heat, light and sound, magnetism, electricity and electronics are studied.

CIVIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION (C.S.P.E.)

Civic, Social and Political Education (C.S.P.E.) is a course of learning about what it means to be a citizen in one's local community, county, country within the E.U., and as part of the wider world.

Students study topics such as human rights and responsibilities, caring for our environment, stewardship, politics, democracy, law and how development(s) in our locality can influence or be influenced by what happens elsewhere in the world.

C.S.P.E. students are encouraged to develop a variety of skills such as written and verbal communication, teamwork and planning. These skills can then enable students to undertake action(s) and to respond to issues and developments that may affect us as citizens of our localities, our country, the E.U. and of the world at large.

In the Junior Certificate, C.S.P.E. is assessed at one level only: Common

All students complete a compulsory action project and write up a Report which is 60% of the overall Junior Certificate mark. This is usually undertaken in second year. The Junior Certificate examination in C.S.P.E. accounts for the remaining 40% of the Junior Certificate mark.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The aim of Religious Education is for students to recognise the importance of understanding and appreciating why people believe, as well as tolerance and respect for their own beliefs and the beliefs and values of all. It invites students to explore the way in which religion is lived and practised in their own communities, in their country and in the world. It, also, seeks to develop an appreciation of the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life.

In conclusion, our hope, through the Religious Education programme, is to promote personal growth and to facilitate the spiritual development of all our students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

It is our aim that the physical education that the pupils receive will develop their physical competence and confidence and that they will develop their ability to use these to perform in a range of activities.

We aim to promote physical skilfulness, physical development and knowledge of the body in action through our physical education programme. Our physical education course provides opportunities for

pupils to be creative, competitive and to face up to different challenges as individuals and in groups and teams.

It promotes positive attitudes towards active healthy lifestyles. Pupils learn how to think in different ways to suit a wide variety of creative, competitive and challenging activities. They learn how to plan, perform and evaluate actions, ideas and performances to improve their quality and effectiveness. Through this process pupils discover their aptitudes, abilities and preferences and make choices about how to get involved in lifelong physical activity.

The Department of Education and Skills is currently reviewing the possibility of Physical Education as an exam subject based on the Pilot Junior Cert. Physical Education Programme.

Our programme involves work in areas such as Invasion Games – Basketball, Football, Soccer and Hurling; Net and Fielding Games such as Badminton, Tennis and Rounders, and Adventure activities such as Orienteering, Campcraft and Gymnastics, Dance and Health Related Activities.

It is the view of the physical education department that physical education is about pupils learning about themselves, their capabilities, their potential and their limitations. It is the foundation of all sports participation. But it goes beyond the individual and understanding themselves – it's learning how to work with and to respect others.

SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (S.P.H.E.)

Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) is an aspect of the curriculum which is health promoting. It provides students with time and space to develop the skills and competencies to learn about themselves and care for themselves and others. It helps students make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. It promotes physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. It, also, seeks to promote self-esteem and self confidence which will enable students to participate as active and responsible members of society.

Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) is a non-examination subject. It involves the following areas:

1. ***Belonging & Integrating*** – This includes the transition to a new school & coping with change.

2. ***Self Management*** – Encourages management and organisational skills, which give students a sense of control over their own time and work.
3. ***Communication Skills*** – This give students the opportunity to develop and practice a range of good communication skills.
4. ***Physical Health*** – This area focuses on the physical dimensions of health.
5. ***Friendship*** – This offers students an opportunity to examine the nature and role of friendship itself.
6. ***Relationships & Sexuality Education*** seeks to promote a positive attitude to sexuality and respectful attitudes and behaviour towards oneself and others.

CONTINENTAL LANGUAGES - FRENCH / GERMAN

The school offers both French and German to Junior and Leaving Cert. students at both Ordinary and Higher level.

FRENCH

In the language class, students will be involved in various activities – role-play, dialogue, listening to native French speakers, describing him / herself, your family, where he / she lives and his / her hobbies. Students will, also, learn about French culture, French family life and the French school system.

There are a number of cultural activities for students throughout the Junior Cycle, including a French breakfast morning, French cinema trip and (occasionally) trips to France.

In the Junior Cert. French Higher level exam, students are expected to write a letter, a message / postcard in French to their penpal. In addition, there are 9 comprehensions (7 short pieces and 2 longer ones) to be completed, answers to be given in English. Students, also, have a listening comprehension test, evaluating their aural understanding.

GERMAN

In the German language class, students will be involved in various activities – role play, dialogue, listening to German speakers, describing themselves, family, where they live and their hobbies. Students will, also, learn about German culture and develop a greater insight into German family life and the German school system.

At Junior Cycle, students participate in cultural activities, such as a German Breakfast morning, cinema trip, e-mail exchanges and project work. On-line activities are, also, undertaken as appropriate.

In the Junior Certificate German Higher Level exam, students are expected to write a letter, a message / postcard in German to their pen-pal. In addition, there are seven comprehensions (five short pieces and two longer ones) to be completed, answers to be given in English. Students, also, have a listening comprehension test, evaluating their aural understanding.

The practical value of a continental language is obvious in an increasingly united Europe; it is, also, an entry requirement for some university courses, that students have passed a continental language at Leaving Certificate level.

ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

Art, Craft and Design is a subject which suits students who like crafts, drawing, painting and generally being creative. Art students learn skills in many different areas; Drawing, Painting, Poster Design, Puppet Making, Pottery, Mask Making, Collage, Lino Printing and many more.

Students also spend some time learning about artists from the past and present.

Junior Cert. Art Project and Exam

1) Art Project:

In third year, students have to do a project. This project begins in October and is completed in April, a month or so before the Junior Cert. written exams take place.

There are three parts to the project

A) Painting or

Graphic Design (Poster, Bookcover, etc.)

B) 3D Model (Clay Model, Puppet, etc.)

C) Option (Lino Printing, Embroidery, Packaging, etc.)

- Students also have to do some research on artists, past and present.
- The project is worth 75% of the total Junior Cert. Art marks.

2) Art Exam:

The Junior Cert. drawing exam takes place in May and is worth 25% of the total Junior Cert. Art marks. There are two sections to the Drawing exam

- A) Life Drawing: A model (usually a Junior student) poses and students must draw him / her.
- B) Drawing from natural / man-made forms; students must draw an **object** from a list given to them a week before the exam.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Business is designed to prepare students for the commercial world. It gives students an insight into managing money on a personal and national level, as well as an understanding of the economic environment. The course can be divided into 4 main sections:

Business of Living

In this section, students learn about

- Budgeting – income, expenditure and household budgeting and accounts.
- Consumer Education – students are made aware of consumer rights / protection.
- Financial Services – money and banking, credit, borrowing facilities and insurance.

Economic Awareness

In this section, students learn about

- National Business – a look at economic resources and the economy.
- The National Budget, the importance of international trade and membership of the EU.
- Business Units – Students learn about the different types of business organisations such as sole trader, private and public companies, semi state bodies, etc.
- Work – Students learn about the organisational structure of the workplace, rights and responsibilities of employers, trade unions, industrial relations, calculate wages, tax forms, etc.

Enterprise

This section looks at

- Marketing – various marketing techniques used by businesses.
- Transport – a study of distribution and delivery systems.
- Business Documents – Students learn how to complete invoices, quotations, orders and delivery notes.

- Bookkeeping – Students learn how to keep accounts. This involves Day books such as sales, purchases and cash books. It also involves preparation of Final accounts – Trading, Profit and Loss Accounts and Balance Sheets.

GEOGRAPHY

Geography is the study of people and their relationships with their environment. It is a very important subject in helping people to understand our fast changing world.

Geography at Junior Cert involves the study of physical and human geography.

In *physical geography* we study:

- The earth & plate tectonics;
- Earthquakes & volcanoes;
- Rocks & weathering;
- Erosion by rivers & the sea and
- Weather & climate.

In *human geography* we study:

- Population;
- Settlement;
- Urbanisation;
- Farming, Forestry, Fishing, Industry, Tourism and
- Economic Inequalities i.e. developing countries.

The practical element of the course is based on skills development in mapwork and aerial photography. The skills and knowledge that students will learn will help and be used by them throughout their life.

This subject is examined in the Junior Certificate at both Ordinary and Higher Level. All students sit one written examination two hours in length.

HOME ECONOMICS

Home Economics is a practical subject and most areas of learning are activity based. Much of this subject is taught through problem solving, resource management and discovery learning which makes home economics both fun and creative, therefore making it relevant to all aspects of daily life.

The aim of the 1st year Home Economics course is to equip students with lifelong skills. The main areas studied are:

<i>Food</i>	<i>Textiles</i>	<i>Health</i>
Cookery Skills.	Basic Sewing Skills.	Physical Health.
Meal & Menu Planning.	Making of Simple	Mental Health.
Nutrition and Diet	Household Items.	Personal Hygiene
including Healthy Eating.		
Consumer Studies.		

Home Economics is examined by the State Exams Commission, at Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate levels.

Written paper	50%
Practical Cookery	35%
1 Project consisting of the following options:	15%
• Childcare	
• Design & Craft	
• Textiles	

The skills & knowledge that students will learn and develop in this subject will, also, always be used in their daily lives.

MATERIALS TECHNOLOGY - WOOD

Materials Technology wood is the study of practical woodwork as well as the theory of trees, timber, metals, plastics, ceramics, electronics and timber finishes. In Junior Cert., the practical project is worth half of the overall marks.

To gain the necessary skills, students will make various useful projects. This will allow them to use a wide variety of hand tools and some power tools e.g., lathes, drills and jigsaw. Students will also use various timbers, e.g., red deal, oak, ash, mahogany as well as some manufactured boards e.g., plywood, pine board and M.D.F.

Students will be encouraged to use their own creativity in the woodwork room to add variety to their projects. This can be in designing a one off project or adapting a given project to suit his / her individuality.

On the theory side of the course students can learn about every stage of a tree's life from when it is a seed until it is used in the woodwork room.

With this students can collect seeds and plant them in class and see them grow. Students will, also, do a lot of sketches and drawing in Materials Technology wood.

Materials Technology wood is an excellent subject which can go hand in hand with Technical Graphics and leads the way towards Architecture, Engineering, Civil Engineering, Draughtsmanship, Construction skills, etc.

MUSIC

Everybody has their favourite music! While music for Junior Certificate can be great fun for students – they get the opportunity to do computer “PowerPoint” projects on their favourite bands and artists and can select a general study of their own choice for the Junior Certificate exam itself – it, also, involves learning about music theory (being able to read the dots on the page), the history of classical music, the instruments of the orchestra, introduction to music technology and Irish traditional music. Studying this subject helps students to think seriously about music and the benefits of these studies will last a lifetime.

There are three parts (components) to the Junior Certificate Music Course:

1. **Composing:** Students learn about music theory and how to read music notes, write melodies and harmonise simple tunes;
2. **Listening:** Students learn about different types of songs and music from different periods, countries and cultures. They, also, learn how to recognise the elements of music and identify instruments played from a recording and
3. **Performing:** Students learn how to play an instrument. The school, currently, teaches recorder to all students and offers an introduction to music technology using *Encore* and *Sibelius* notation programmes. 25% of Junior Certificate Music involves a practical (performing) exam.

While most students take the exam at Higher Level, the Ordinary Level option is also available.

Our Music Department promotes the development of a vibrant community of musicians working together for the love of music. If a student shows any interest at all, then encourage it! It may surprise him / her!

TECHNICAL GRAPHICS

In today's world, everything which is built or made – cars, houses, television sets, roads, rockets, etc. – is planned and drawn before it is built. Today, graphics can be seen everywhere, for example, sports logos, car design, kitchen design, house design, etc.

From Architects who design buildings; Engineers who design roads and bridges; Graphic Designers who design world known logos e.g., Nike, Addidas, etc. to Cabinet Makers who design one off pieces of furniture – Technical Graphics is the corner stone of all these occupations.

The skills students learn from this subject will allow them to produce many forms of graphics. Using graphics, students will be able to communicate and study shape and form whether by computer or drawing board.

“A picture tells a thousand words”.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is mainly about using a design process to solve technological problems. In Technology, you will use the design process to work through a task or problem in order to arrive at a solution, which is usually in the form of an artefact or finished product. You will learn how to safely use the tools, materials and equipment necessary to make this product.

In Junior Certificate Technology you will build upon some of the work you did in Maths in primary school, i.e. in Technology you will be working out problems and reading measurements on drawings. You will also be able to use many of the things you learned in Science in primary school. For example, you will have learned about various materials and where they are used. You will also have designed and made things in order to solve problems. All this learning will be useful in Technology

Technology is closely related to the other three technology subjects; Materials Technology Wood, Metalwork and Technical Graphics. All the technology subjects involve practical skills, drawing skills and theory.

Co-Curricular Activities

Colaiste Lorcaín provides a wide range of activities in addition to the academic curriculum followed in the classroom. The teachers are delighted to provide these activities and are happy with the enthusiastic response from the students. We feel it is important to the full development of students that they take part in both individual and group activities outside the classroom. All teachers welcome every student who shows an interest in the activity they provide.

Among the activities we have offered are the following:

Adventure Sports	Amnesty
Athletics (Track & Field)	Art Exhibitions
An Gaisce (The President's Award)	Badminton (Boys & Girls)
Basketball (Boys & Girls)	Boys' Gaelic Football
Boys' Soccer	Camogie
Choirs	Class Trips
Cross Country Running	Debating
Drama / School Play	Girls' Gaelic Football
Green School's Committee	Hurling
Leadership Skills / Training (5 th Years)	Mini-Companies
Musical Activities	Prefects
School Magazine	Speech and Drama
Student Council	Swimming
Table Tennis	Volleyball
Young Scientists' Exhibition	

The above list is subject to minor adjustment from time to time.

We ask parents and guardians to discuss what level of co-curricular involvement is appropriate with the student in their care. A healthy balance between curricular and co-curricular will be of most benefit to the student. Students, whose involvement is high in these activities, should significantly reduce their participation in years when they are sitting state examinations.

It is imperative for students to catch up on work missed due to absence caused by their participation in these activities. This is achieved, primarily, by students finding out about and doing the homework they were assigned while they were absent.