

FIRST YEAR SUBJECT CHOICE INFORMATION BOOKLET



CBS THURLES

November 2023


Dear Students and Parents / Guardians,

In preparation for the junior cycle first year students are now faced with the important decision of choosing your Optional Subjects. Students can be overawed when they learn that they must study nine subjects for examination at Junior Cycle, and two short courses of which are completely new. However, in our experience, students adjust quite quickly to the new challenges of second level.

The notes and links attached will assist you in choosing the subjects that you will study at Junior Cycle in CBS Thurles.

We ask you to read the contents in detail and pay careful attention to the advice we offer you on subject choice.

If you require more detailed information than the information contained in this guide, or on the websites linked, please contact the school at reception@cbsthurles.ie.



Tiernan O'Donnell

Principal

Junior Cycle in CBS Thurles

Core Examination Subjects

- English
- Gaeilge
- Mathematics
- Science
- History

Optional subjects (Choose 2)

- Business Studies
- French
- German
- Engineering
- Geography
- Graphics
- Music
- Visual Art
- Wood Technology
- Home Economics

Short Course (Choose 1)

- Coding
- Digital Media Literacy
- Artistic performance

Wellbeing

- Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
- Physical Education (PE)
- Other areas of Learning

Students will study **nine** subjects (**five** core and **four** optional subjects) for their Junior Cycle examinations including two short courses (PE and one other from short source list).

Core Junior Cycle Examinations Subjects

English

English in junior cycle aims to develop students' knowledge of language and literature, to consolidate and deepen their literacy skills and make them more self-aware as learners. It encourages all students to be creative through language and to gain enjoyment and continuing personal growth from English in all its forms. It aims to develop an informed appreciation of literature through personal encounters with a variety of literary texts and allows students to use their literacy skills to manage information needs, and find, use, synthesise, evaluate and communicate information using a variety of media. English also gives students the opportunity to gain an understanding of the grammar and conventions of English and how they might be used to promote clear and effective communication.

[NCCA Junior Cycle English](#)

[Specification Junior Cycle Information on English](#)

Irish / Gaeilge

In junior cycle Irish, students consolidate and deepen their understanding of the Irish language. Students are enabled to communicate in an effective, interactive, confident manner in formal and informal settings in the language community. Junior Cycle Irish seeks to consolidate and develop the skills students bring to post primary school. Students are empowered to assume ownership of Irish; an important life skill. They are encouraged to use the language effectively and confidently, both personally and in communicating with other users in the language community. Students enjoy creative and innovative communication in Irish and have the opportunity to express themselves through consolidation of their literacy skills. Students also gain a better understanding of Irish culture and have respect and understanding for other cultures and languages.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Irish Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Irish](#)

Only students who have an official exemption from Irish are considered to be 'exempt' from the subject. Irish is mandatory for all other students.

Mathematics

The aim of junior cycle mathematics is to provide relevant and challenging opportunities for all students to become mathematically proficient so that they can cope with the mathematical challenges of daily life and enable them to continue their study of mathematics in senior cycle and beyond. This subject is underpinned by the conception of mathematics as an interconnected body of ideas and reasoning processes that students negotiate collaboratively with teachers and their peers and as independent learners. Number, measurement and geometry, statistics and probability are common aspects of most people's mathematical experiences in everyday personal, study and work situations. Equally important are the essential roles that algebra, functions and relations, logic, mathematical structure and working mathematically play in people's understanding of the natural and social worlds, and the interaction between them.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Mathematics Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Mathematics](#)

Science

Science in junior cycle aims to develop students' evidence-based understanding of the natural world and their ability to gather and evaluate evidence: to consolidate and deepen their skills of working scientifically; to make them more self-aware as learners and become competent and confident in their ability to use and apply science in their everyday lives. More specifically it encourages all students to develop a sense of enjoyment in the learning of science, leading to a lifelong interest in science. It gives students the opportunity to develop a scientific habit of mind and inquiry orientation through class, laboratory and/ or off-site activities that foster investigation, imagination, curiosity and creativity in solving engaging, relevant problems, and to improve their reasoning and decision-making abilities.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Science](#)

[Specification Junior Cycle Information on Science](#)

History

The study of history at junior cycle aims to enable students to develop the necessary conceptual understanding, disciplinary skills and subject knowledge to investigate the actions of people in the past and to come to a deeper understanding of the human condition. Students also come to see the world, and their place in it, from a historical perspective; and understand how the people and events of the past have shaped the contemporary world. By exploring the past from a historical perspective, students also develop an interest and enthusiasm for history and acquire values and attitudes that shape their view of people in the past, including a regard for heritage and their cultural inheritance, and a sense of historical empathy, where people are judged in the context and values of the time in which they lived. Hearing and telling the stories of people who lived in the past helps students to understand more about how people live today; and can help students to learn from the past when thinking about how to address the problems of today.

[NCCA Junior Cycle History](#)

[Specification Junior Cycle Information on History](#)

Optional Junior Cycle Examination Subjects - Choose FOUR

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

Business Studies

Business studies encourages students to develop skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life. It supports the development of analytical and critical thinking skills, encouraging students to be problem solvers. It reinforces the development of students' numeracy, literacy and digital technology skills by providing a real-life context for their application. Business studies explores the interdependence of economic prosperity, societal well-being and the environment and encourages students to think and act as responsible and ethical citizens. They will be provided with a set of foundational skills, understandings and personal attributes, which will help them to engage with the dynamic business environment and fulfil their potential in their personal and professional lives, now and into the future.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Business Studies Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Business Studies](#)

Geography

Geography is the study of the Earth's landscapes, peoples, places, and environments. It adheres to the scientific method and pursues scientific principles and logic. The study of geography empowers the person to explore and understand the world around them. Engagement with the subject promotes a deep understanding of people and place. Students develop the skills to read their environment, enabling them to interpret the physical landscape, observe climatic events with an informed eye and discuss world events in a knowledgeable manner. Learning in geography supports students in making informed decisions, giving the ability to make valuable contributions to the economic, social, and cultural life of their communities, localities and countries. It develops knowledge, skills, values and behaviours that allow students to explore the physical world, human activities, how we interact with our world and to recognise the interconnections between systems.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Geography Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Geography](#)

Graphics

Graphics is recognised as the underpinning language of the technology disciplines and is transferable across a wide range of subjects such as mathematics, science and art. Throughout the course, students will explore the geometric world to gain an appreciation of the importance of graphics in the world around them. They will develop cognitive and practical skills such as graphical communication, spatial visualisation, creative problem solving, design capabilities and modelling, both physically and through the use of computer aided design. Students will develop their creativity as they investigate and solve design challenges. Abstraction, and spatial reasoning are fundamental to this process; graphics provides multiple and varied opportunities for students to develop these high level cognitive and creative skills in engaging contexts. Accurate technical drawings are essential in the design and manufacture of components and artefacts. Producing accurate drawings requires significant attention to detail and a patient and resilient mind-set.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Graphics Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Graphics](#)

Home Economics

In home economics, students learn how to address these practical, real-world, perennial problems of individuals, families, households and society in socially responsible ways. Practical perennial problems or concerns are endured from generation to generation by families and require critical decision-making skills to resolve them. Home economics education uses a systems approach to empower individuals and families with the knowledge and skills to address these real-life concerns of everyday living. Home economics draws on diverse disciplines integrating social, physical and human sciences. It strives to solve everyday challenges using a blend of knowledge and skills acquired from multiple disciplines. Home economics education develops students' essential life skills and personal independence. It supports the development of students who are critical, creative thinkers and encourages students to be problem-solvers capable of making ethically and socially responsible decisions.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Home Economics](#)

Music

Junior Cycle Music aims to contribute to the development of artistic awareness and understanding, self-expression, self-esteem, imagination and multicultural sensitivity, and therefore, to the development of the whole person. Students will develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to produce and engage with authentic and original music that is both theirs and the music of others. In doing so, they will develop the music literacy, critical skills and language necessary to engage with today's musical world. With music, students can immerse themselves intellectually, emotionally, physically and kinaesthetically in the learning experience. Music performance and composition are collaborative and interpersonal activities, where social skills are developed through the sharing of ideas, skills, or instruments.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Music Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Music](#)

Visual Art

Visual Art at junior cycle aims to provide the student with a set of personal attitudes and qualities as well as skills and processes and a sense of the aesthetic. Through practical engagement in the areas of art, craft and design students will develop self confidence, inquisitiveness, imagination, and creativity. They will also develop authentic, real world problem-solving capacities and the capacity to work over time, as an individual and in groups, on the design and execution of artistic and aesthetic tasks. Within the safe space of the art class, students will experience the authentic visual art processes of imagining, investigating, experimenting, making, displaying and evaluating. They will sometimes fail, and learn that failure can often be a hugely positive learning experience. Students will develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to produce and to engage with authentic and original art, craft and design work. In so doing, they will begin to develop the visual literacy, critical skills and language necessary to engage with contemporary culture. This will further contribute to the students' understanding of the rich and diverse roles of art, craft and design in historical and contemporary societies and cultures.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Visual Art Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Visual Art](#)

Wood Technology

The study of Wood Technology at junior cycle aims to enable students to develop the necessary conceptual understanding, disciplinary skills and subject knowledge to design and create artefacts of value. It empowers students through designing and making, whilst developing an awareness of sustainability and the use of natural resources. Wood Technology gives students the opportunity to develop a range of core design skills and relevant manipulation skills through modelling and processing wood and other materials. It develops the confidence and resilience of students through engagement with the uncertainty of design challenges. It encourages students' innovation and creativity through recognition and appreciation of their capacity to design and create.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Wood Technology Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Wood Technology](#)

Engineering

Engineering offers students a lens through which to view the role and impact of engineering within their classroom, community and the world. Through the study of engineering, students will have the opportunity to behave as engineers, and develop an engineering mindset. The engineering process is both reflective and systematic. It is reflective in that students continually test their design and modify it based on what they have learned. It is systematic in that students undertake several characteristic steps in reaching a solution. Students identify problems, integrate ideas for how to solve identified problems, and try to improve the design or devise a better one.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Engineering Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Engineering](#)

Modern Foreign Languages

Students have the option of choosing between **French** or **German**.

The Specification for Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages aims to develop communicative language skills broadly aligned with the A band (A1 to A2, basic user) of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its descriptors. It also aims to enable students to explore the interdependence between language and culture, to develop their appreciation of the relevance of languages to their lives for personal, social, educational, vocational and leisure purposes, and to derive enjoyment from language learning. More specifically it encourages all students to

- actively engage in language activities and tasks, developing the capacity to understand written and spoken language
- communicate effectively and confidently in the target language in familiar contexts through a range of media
- develop their capacity to use appropriate structures and vocabulary for the purposes of communication, both written and oral
- enjoy a language-learning experience that will facilitate and encourage them to continue learning languages in future
- be reflective and autonomous in their language learning, and become actively involved in monitoring and assessing their progress
- appreciate their own and other cultures
- develop skills that they can apply to other areas of study and to their lives. NCCA Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages Specification Junior Cycle Information on Modern Foreign Languages

[NCCA Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages Specification](#)

[Junior Cycle Information on Modern Foreign Languages](#)

Short Course (Choose one)

Students will also complete a CBA in PE as their 2nd Short Course

Coding

Computers are an everyday part of modern society. Software systems allow us to communicate, calculate, create, design, learn and play. Through gaining an understanding of how these digital systems work students will build up a bank of knowledge for use in the creation of their own programs. Samples of student work, demonstrating the approaches taken will become available over time.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Coding Specification](#)

Digital Media Literacy

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.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Digital Media Literacy Specification](#)

Artistic Performance

Learning about and through the arts is fundamental to an education that aspires to support the development of the whole person. An arts education fosters the development of skills specific to arts activities and skills that may apply to other collaborative endeavours. Through movement, sound, symbol and image, the arts can transform people's creative ideas into expressive works that are communicated to an audience.

[NCCA Junior Cycle Artistic Performance Specification](#)

Junior Cycle Wellbeing

The wellbeing of all is at the heart of what we do at CBS Thurles. We define Wellbeing as care of the individual in the school to ensure they are contented, healthy and successful. This is reflected in Edmund Rice Charter and Mission Statement. The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) states that the junior cycle years are a critical time in young peoples' lives. Students are exposed to a range of influences, including peer pressure. They require support to make positive responsible decisions relating to their health and wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Wellbeing in junior cycle is about young people feeling confident, happy, healthy and connected.

CBS Thurles endeavours to ensure that this is a reality for everyone in our school community. A dedicated Wellbeing curriculum is implemented in junior cycle. This aims to ensure that all students engage in important learning about wellbeing through key curriculum areas. Students engage in three compulsory timetabled Wellbeing subjects/short courses known as the three pillars (CSPE, PE, SPHE including RSE) as well as a timetabled tutor class.

Other activities complement our Wellbeing programme including school induction programmes, school retreats, visiting speakers and workshops. Further information on Junior Cycle Wellbeing can be found on the NCCA's Wellbeing page of their website:

<https://ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/wellbeing/>



Making informed decisions for Junior Cycle optional examination subjects

Discuss subject options carefully with your family before you choose your subjects.

- Ask your teacher for advice.
- Speak to other students you might know who are already studying these subjects.
- Choose the subjects which you have an interest in.
- Choose subjects you think you might be good at.
- Do not choose a subject just because your friend is choosing it.
- Read all the information provided about each subject carefully.
- Look at how this subject is examined at junior cycle level

