

The background of the slide features a large, faded crest of Columba College Killucan. The crest is shield-shaped with a decorative border. It contains a central vertical element, possibly a cross or a stylized 'C', with a red and white color scheme. The shield is flanked by two white figures, possibly angels or saints, holding the shield. At the bottom, there is a banner with the college's name.

# Columba College Killucan

## Subject Choice Policy

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Mission Statement
3. Background
4. Rationale
5. Junior Cycle Subject Choice – Support structures and selection procedures
6. Senior Cycle Subject Choice – Support structures and selection procedures
7. Change of subject in exceptional circumstances
8. Additional subjects and expectations to student the full Leaving certificate curriculum
9. Appendices
10. Declaration



## **Introduction**

Columba College seeks to create an inclusive school community where values, behaviours and attitudes are consistent with our mission statement:

‘Columba College, as a Post Primary School aims to provide a learning environment which allow all pupils to achieve their full potential and enable them to develop into caring and responsible adults/citizens capable of contributing to and fulfilling their roles in the community/society.’

## **Background**

This document outlines the rationale and procedure for subject choice at Junior and Senior Cycle in Columba College.

## **Rationale**

Option subject selection is an important process. Students and parents are asked to give careful consideration to the subject choices they make. Columba College will make every effort to facilitate subject preferences as indicated on their subject choice form, this however is influenced by the following factors:

- The allocation of resources from the Department of Education and Skills/ Longford/Westmeath Education and Training Board.
- The school's ability to offer a subject in a given year.
- The availability of teaching staff qualified to teach a particular subject.
- The demand for a subject relative to the student cohort in a given year.

Every effort is made to meet the preferences of students and there are support structures in place to ensure that students make informed choices. The process of subject choice and timetabling is a very rigorous and time consuming thus there is limited scope for change of subject after the submission of student subject choice form.

Only in exceptional circumstances will changes be accommodated up until the deadline of September 30<sup>th</sup> in 5<sup>th</sup> Year and the third Friday of October for 1<sup>st</sup> Year students following the taster programme.

Students who enrol in the school after these dates will upon meeting with the Principal choose from the bands formulated, subject to the conditions outlined to all 1<sup>st</sup> Year and or 5<sup>th</sup> year students regarding subject choice.

Students must attend class and fully participate in all of their timetabled subjects throughout the entirety of their Junior and Leaving certificate cycle.

## **Junior Cycle Subject Choice – Support Structures and Selection Procedures**

### ***Curriculum Provision***

During the Taster Programme which will occur in Term 1 (August – Midterm October) of First year, all students will study a range of seven subjects.

For the academic year 2019-2020 the subject options are Art, Business Studies, French, Home Economics, Materials Technology (Metal), Materials Technology (Wood) and Music. In addition to the cores subjects of Irish, English, Maths and additional compulsory subjects of History, Geography, Science, Religion and Wellbeing cohort of CSPE, SPHE and PE. Subjects in the Taster Programme may vary from year to year in accordance with the factors mentioned under the heading Rationale on page 1 of this document.

### ***AEN (Additional Educational Needs)***

Students with AEN may on the advice of the AEN Coordinator and in consultation with the parents/guardians, the Care Team and the Principal be granted a reduced curriculum. In which case, students will complete Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP) or short courses to meet the requirements of the Junior Cycle. If a student is granted a subject exemption by the DES this will be fully accommodated.



### ***Support Structures for Parents***

During Term 1 members of the Care Team will host a Parent Information Morning during which time the Guidance Counsellor will provide information relating to subject choice to Parents/Guardians. Parents may also make an appointment to speak with the Guidance Counsellor.

### **Procedures for Selecting Junior Cycle Options**

- A week before the completion of the Taster Programme students will select on subject from each of the three bands as their top three choices.
- Students will rank order of preference within the three bands (one being highest preference – three being lowest preference)
- Students are also asked to rank order of the existing four subjects in the event that any one of their top three may not be offered.

In the event that over subscription should occur the following criteria will be considered to inform an outcome:

- Student progress to date in each class
- Student aptitude for the subject (CAT Scores)
- Student rating for each subject
- Prompt return of completed form
- Lottery

Completed lists are countersigned by Parents/Guardians, dated and returned to the Guidance Counsellor.

## **Senior Cycle Subject Choice – Support Structures & Selection Procedures.**

### ***Curriculum Provision***

Incoming 5<sup>th</sup> Year students select four option subjects from the following list of 11 options, Art, Biology, Chemistry, Business Studies, Agricultural Science, Construction Studies, Engineering, French, Geography History and Home Economics.

Senior Cycle student will study a total of four option subjects and the core subjects of Irish, English, Maths, Religion, RSE, PE, Guidance and LCVP<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Support Structures for Students***

There are many support structures in place to ensure students make informed decisions on their option choices for Senior Cycle. A 5<sup>th</sup> Year subject choice options morning is scheduled annually in February for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year and Transition Year students. This consists of presentations by all subject teachers followed by a question and answer session. Transition Year students are timetabled for Guidance once a week which also supports option choice and subject requirements for Third Level courses. Students can also avail of individual Guidance appointments with the Guidance Counsellor to support option choices for Senior Cycle.

### ***Support structures for Parents***

A parent information evening on Senior Cycle subject options consisting of presentations by the Guidance Counsellor, Transition Year Programme Coordinator and the Principal/ Deputy Principal further supports the selection process and provides an opportunity to address parent's questions. We would encourage all parents to attend this Information Evening.

Guidelines for Making Option Choices

---

<sup>1</sup> \*Students must meet the SEC eligibility criteria (Appendix) where students do not meet the criteria they will remain in the LCVP class and use this class as a study period.

- Be aware of minimum entry requirement and specific course requirements for 3<sup>rd</sup> level courses.
- Identify the subjects you like; it is easier to study something you enjoy
- Take note of the subjects you are good at
- Speak to subject teachers and view leaving certificate syllabus, books and exam papers
- If uncertain about future careers, choose a balance of subjects to keep options open
- Consider the assessment components of all subject option subjects
- Discuss options with your parents, older siblings, people pursuing careers you are considering and Guidance Counsellor
- Research online career websites.

The process of making option choices can be summarised as follows.



### **Procedure for selection Senior Cycle Option Choices**

- Students will select 4 option subjects for 5<sup>th</sup> Year from a suite of option subjects offered
- Students complete the 5<sup>th</sup> Year Option Subject Choice Form (See Appendix)
- The final day for return of the 5<sup>th</sup> Year options form (late March early April) will be specified on the form
- Parents are required to countersign the form
- When a student fails to return his/her preference form by the specified deadline then the process of subject band formulation will continue without his/her preferences accounted for. He/she will then select a subject from each of the lines generated.
- Following the deadline date option bands are created based on student preferences and timetabling commences.



- As the process of subject choice, banding and timetabling is a very rigorous and time consuming there is limited scope for change of subjects after submission of the 5<sup>th</sup> Year option subject choice form.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will changes be accommodated up until a deadline of September 30<sup>th</sup> in 5<sup>th</sup> Year.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Year students who enrol in the school after the deadline will, upon meeting with the Principal make their choices from the bands formulated.
- Students must attend class and participate fully in all of their subjects throughout the entirety of the Leaving Certificate Cycle.

### **Change of Subject in Exceptional Circumstances**

There is limited scope for changing subjects after the submission of the subject choice options form. Only in exceptional circumstances will options be considered. The process outlined below must be complete on or before the deadline of September 30<sup>th</sup> annually.

- The student will arrange a meeting with the Guidance Counsellor to discuss his/her possible change of subject.
- Following this meeting the student will be asked to apply in writing to the Principal and Guidance Counsellor stating reasons why there are requesting a change. This must be countersigned by Parents/Guardians.<sup>2</sup>
- The Guidance Counsellor will discuss the students request with both teachers – (teacher of the current subject and teacher of the new subject), the Principal and or the Deputy Principal.
- If both teachers agree with the change a Subject Transfer form will be completed, signed and submitted to the Principal.
- In a situation where by any teacher involved in the change process feels it is necessary to discuss the matter with the Parents/Guardians, Guidance Counsellor and the Principal. In the event whereby a student reaches the age of 18 on or prior to September 30<sup>th</sup> of 5<sup>th</sup> Year and they have not granted the school permission to



contact Parents/Guardians, the Principal or Guidance Counsellor will communicate the decision directly to the student.

- Where this situation does not arise the Principal or Guidance Counsellor will communicate the decision to the students and Parent/Guardians as soon as possible after receipt of application and the required meeting have taken place.<sup>3</sup>
- Final decision is at the discretion of the Principal.
- Subject change will not be accommodated in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Year.

### **Additional Subjects and the Expectations to study the full Leaving Certificate Curriculum**

Studying additional subject outside of the school curriculum is the sole responsibility of students and their Parents/Guardians. Students may register for additional subjects on their SEC Examinations Form. The completion of projects/coursework to the responsibility of students and SEC official submission and signing of SEC forms will be accommodated by the Deputy Principal/Post holder assigned with the task of State Examinations.

Any decision to study additional subjects should not adversely impact on the studied school and are not deemed as exceptional circumstances for subject change.

The following expectations to study the full Leaving Certificate school curriculum apply:

- All students are required to take the core subject for Leaving Certificate, English, Maths and Irish (unless students have been granted an exemption for Irish)
- All students must also take four optional subjects for the Leaving Certificate from the list provided and in accordance with preferences stated on their 5<sup>th</sup> Year Subject Choice form
- Students deemed eligible for LCVP will be obliged to follow the programme in fully
- Students are required to continue studying these subjects for Leaving Certificate and are expected to fully engage in coursework and complete homework for all of their subjects.

---

<sup>3</sup> Note Section 28 of the Education Act allows for Appeal of the Principal's decision to the Board of Management.

- Students cannot opt out of a subject on the basis of studying an additional subject outside of school.
- Students cannot opt out of a subject with a view of joining the class group of a subject they have decided to take as an additional subject.
- Students cannot opt out just because they wish to do 6 subjects. (Students with specific learning difficulties/AEN may on the advice of the AEN Coordinator and in consultation with Parents/Guardians, the Care Team and the Principal be granted a reduced curriculum. If a student is granted a subject exemption by the DES this will be fully accommodated.)

