

## Junior Cycle: A broad education for your child

The new junior cycle will place the student at the centre of the learning process. It allows for new ways of learning and a broader range of skills to be properly assessed. This leaflet aims to inform parents of post-primary school students about the key changes underway.

### Principles, Key Skills and Statements of Learning

Underpinning the new junior cycle are a set of principles, key skills and statements of learning. These will ensure that your child receives a rich educational experience that has both breadth and depth. Your child will have access to a varied curriculum of knowledge, understandings, skills and values.

Eight principles underpin the framework for Junior Cycle. These inform the planning for, as well as the development and implementation of, junior cycle programmes in all schools. The eight principles of Junior Cycle are:-

- *Learning to Learn*
- *Choice and Flexibility*
- *Quality*
- *Creativity and Innovation*
- *Engagement and Participation*
- *Continuity and Development*
- *Inclusive Education*
- *Wellbeing*

Eight key skills permeate across the entire curriculum

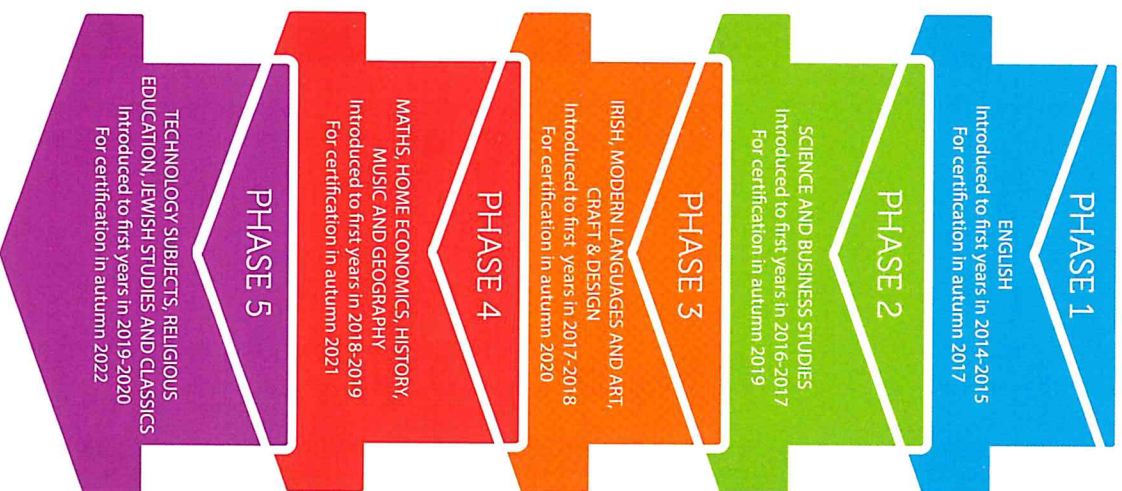


Through engaging with the key skills students will:

- be more actively engaged with learning
- take greater ownership of their learning
- have a critical engagement with digital technology
- be encouraged to problem solve and think critically and creatively

The twenty-four statements of learning describe what your child should know, understand and value having participated in junior cycle. Schools will ensure that all statements of learning feature in the programme offered to their junior cycle students.

### New subject specifications are being implemented in schools on a phased basis



### How student achievement at Junior Cycle will be assessed

The most significant change in the new Junior Cycle is in the area of assessment. A dual approach to assessment, involving classroom-based assessment across the three years and a final externally-assessed, state-certified examination can enable the appropriate balance between preparing students for examinations and facilitating creative thinking, engaged learning and better outcomes for students. From Autumn 2017, junior cycle students will receive a new Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). The JCPA will reflect a much wider range of your child's achievements over the three years of junior cycle. The JCPA will report on a number of areas, including:-

1. Subjects (State Examination and Assessment Task)
2. Classroom Based Assessments
3. Short courses
4. Other Learning Experiences

### Subjects

Schools will be able to choose from a total of 21 different subjects for inclusion on their junior cycle programme. All subjects are being revised and each one will have its own specification replacing what was previously known as a syllabus. Each specification describes the learning that takes place as part of the student's study of a subject in junior cycle. By 2019 all new subject specifications will have been introduced. Students can study a maximum of 10 subjects for the JCPA, and if their school offers short courses they can study 9 subjects plus 2 short courses or 8 subjects plus 4 short courses for certification purposes.

The state examination that students sit in their subject at the end of their junior cycle will also be graded differently. Instead of A, B, C, D, E, F and NG the following descriptors will now be used:

<b>Distinction</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Higher Merit</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>Merit</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Achieved</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Partially Achieved</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>(not graded)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>19%</b>

### Classroom Based Assessments

Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning and skills in ways not possible in a pen and paper examination, for example, their verbal communication and investigation skills. CBAs will be undertaken in subjects and short courses and will be facilitated by the classroom teacher.