



**INCOMING 1<sup>st</sup> YEARS**  
**Information Booklet for Option Subjects**



Next September, your daughter will engage with a variety of new and interesting subjects as part of the broad curriculum we offer at Our Lady's School. Your daughter has the opportunity to choose her preference in a number of subject areas in what are called "Option" subjects. As part of this process, your daughter will select preferences for two subjects out of a pool that includes Art, Business, Home Economics, German and Music.

To select the two subjects to be taken your daughter must complete a Google Form survey. This will be sent to you on the night of the meeting via the email address aforementioned. It is important that the two most favoured subjects be given the highest ranking in the survey.

Together with selecting two "Option" subjects, your daughter must also select a Modern Foreign language. Languages on offer include French and Spanish (*German is a Modern Foreign Language that we are offering in the Options category*). A modern foreign language is guaranteed as a Core Subject, however, please note that the language offered for September may be impacted by the numbers choosing one or other of the languages specified above.

Please note that it may not be possible to satisfy all students' requests within the resources available to the school; however, every effort will be made to do so.

A brief description of the Option subjects and the Language subjects is attached for your reference. Please take time to consider the subjects available before making your choice.

**COMPLETED FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE CLOSE OF THE SCHOOL DAY ON MONDAY 12TH APRIL**

## **SECTION 1: CHOOSING TWO "OPTION" SUBJECTS**

Your daughter has the opportunity to choose her preference in a number of subject areas in what are called "Option" subjects. As part of this process, your daughter will select preferences for **two subjects** out of a pool that includes Art, Business, Home Economics, German and Music. Please see below information relating to Option subjects.

### **MUSIC**

#### **What is the Aim of Junior Cycle Music?**

Junior Cycle Music provides an exciting opportunity for students to develop existing and new musical skills over a three year period.

Music students will learn about creating and exploring new sounds, participate in individual and group music-making activities, and develop skills in appraising and responding to a variety of musical excerpts. In music, students can immerse themselves intellectually, emotionally, physically and kinaesthetically in the learning experience.



#### **How will Music be assessed?**

The specification is designed for classroom-based learning, and as such students are not required to have any previous instrumental skills. We encourage the development of multiple practical skills in the classroom, including singing, recorder and ukulele. We also enhance the students learning through the use of digital technology in the classroom. This will allow students to take ownership of their learning in a creative, collaborative environment.

Over the course of the three years students will undertake two classroom-based assessments, a practical examination and a final written examination.

Our Lady's School has a longstanding tradition of encouraging the development of strong musical skills in our students. Students are encouraged to take part in choir, orchestra and other instrumental groups. Learning music supports the development of the whole person, through artistic awareness and understanding, building self- esteem and relationships, and supporting the individual's imagination and emotional intelligence.

# BUSINESS

## What is the Aim of Junior Cycle Business Studies?

Business studies focuses on the development of analytical and critical thinking skills, encouraging students to be problem solvers. This develops skills for learning, life, work and further study. This is done through three inter-connected strands:

- Personal Finance
- Enterprise
- Our Economy



Business Studies enables students to make informed decisions, to better manage their personal financial resources and to be adaptable, creative, and enterprising.

Entrepreneurship enhances the quality of our collective and individual lives, often changing the way we work, communicate and live. Business Studies provides an awareness, insight and positive attitude to entrepreneurship, demonstrating how it can improve our goods, services and institutions.

## How will Business Studies be assessed?

- Classroom-based assessments
  - CBA 1: 2<sup>nd</sup> year - group project (over a 3-week period)
  - CBA 2: 3<sup>rd</sup> year individual presentation (over a 3-week period)
  - Assessment task - reflection on their work. (10%)
- A final 2-hour exam will take place in June of 3<sup>rd</sup> year worth 90%.

Students will be provided with a set of 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.

# GERMAN

## What is the Aim of Junior Cycle German?

The Junior Cycle has taken a new approach to languages. Spanish, French and German are collectively known as Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). This means that for students, they will be achieving the same goals across the three languages. This facilitates a connection between languages and a more wholesome understanding of the language.

The MFL Junior Cycle focuses on studying languages across three strands: *Communicative Competence, Language Awareness and Socio-Cultural Knowledge and Inter Cultural Awareness.*



In terms of assessment, the Junior Cycle focuses on a dual approach to assessment: continuous assessment and a final exam.

### Continuous assessment:

Students are asked to create a portfolio of work in written and oral format. Students choose the work they are most proud of, therefore giving them ownership of their learning (This is known as Classroom Based Assessment 2 and due at the end of third year). Students will use this portfolio to carry out their Assessment task at the end of Third year,

which will be assessed by the SEC, this is 10% of the final grade.

The portfolio is graded based on a descriptor and this will appear on the JCPA. There is also an oral presentation which is carried out in second year. This is on a topic which the student finds interesting based on the target language country. This is also graded with a descriptor and appears on the JCPA. The final exam is in June of third year and contributes to 90% of the final result.

A dual approach to assessment, involving classroom-based assessment across the three years and a final externally-assessed, state-certified examination enables the appropriate balance between preparing students for examinations and also facilitating creative thinking, engaged learning and better outcomes for students

**Oral Communication  
CBA 1**  
.....  
Year 2  
Final Term  
.....  
School based  
assessment, followed  
by SLAR. Reported in  
JCPA using  
Descriptors

**Student Language  
Portfolio  
CBA 2**  
.....  
Year 3  
End of Term 1  
.....  
School based  
assessment, followed  
by SLAR. Reported in  
JCPA using  
Descriptors

**Assessment Task**  
.....  
Year 3  
End of Term 1  
.....  
Based on the  
Learning Outcomes of  
CBA2. Set by  
NCCA & marked by  
SEC. Accounts for  
10% of Final  
Examination

**Final Examination**  
.....  
End of Year 3  
.....  
Based on a sample of  
the Learning  
Outcomes.  
Set and marked by the  
SEC.  
Breakdown of final  
mark awarded by SEC:  
10% Assessment Task  
90% Final Examination  
(35% of which is  
allocated to an aural  
component)

# HOME ECONOMICS

## What is the Aim of Junior Home Economics?

Home Economics is a broad and very interesting subject encompassing practical and theoretical aspects. It endeavours to develop a wide range of valuable life skills.



- develop students' knowledge, attitudes, understanding, skills and values to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for every person as an individual, and as a member of families and society
- develop practical food and health literacy skills so that students are enabled to adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed decisions that positively impact their health and wellbeing as individuals as well as within their families and society
- nurture students' resourcefulness, innovation, adaptability, and competency as consumers
- develop students' creative design and textile skills
- develop students who are environmentally conscious and dedicated to a sustainable and responsible way of life

## How will Home Economics be assessed?

The Classroom Based Assessments are completed during normal class time. It is envisaged that through the CBAs students will actively engage in practical and authentic learning experiences. CBA 1 (Year 2) Creative Textiles and CBA 2 (Year 3) Food Literacy Skills Brief

The final assessment comprises of a practical food skills examination (50%) and a written examination (50%). Both of these are assessed by the State Examination Commission.

## VISUAL ART

### What is the Aim of Junior Cycle Visual Art?

Junior Cycle Visual Art is an exciting course that offers students a unique opportunity to develop practical artistic skills, knowledge and values. The course encompasses the three strands of art, craft and design and involves practical work in a wide range of media leading to a specific outcome, e.g. an artwork, a design.

The students will learn through the following five elements:

*Critical and visual language, drawing, visual culture and appreciation, media art elements and design principles (colour, shape, symmetry, contrast).*



Making art develops the learner's imagination and creativity. It promotes individual thinking and personal responsibility and ownership of learning.

It provides students with skills that are valued in work and later life such as creativity, critical judgement, problem solving, working with others or working individually, providing and receiving constructive criticism, and respecting differences.

### How will Visual Art be assessed?

Assessment in Visual Art will follow the dual approach of formative and summative assessment as promoted in the new Junior Cycle and will happen as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Year – working in sketchbooks students will experience the creative process which by its nature introduces the practice of reflecting on their work and formative assessment.

2<sup>nd</sup> Year - Classroom Based Assessment (CBA 1) between January and May of second year. They will be issued themes which they will research and develop. A completed piece of art in one of the three strands of Art, Craft and Design will be submitted for assessment by their teacher and feedback given.

3<sup>rd</sup> Year - Classroom Based Assessment 2 takes place from September to December of third year. Here the students research and explore ideas based on themes issued by the State Exams Commission.

Final Assessment – this takes place from January to May. After reflecting on their work from the first half of the year the students bring these ideas forward and further develop them into two final pieces of art which are assessed by external examiners for the State Exams Commission.

## **SECTION 2: CHOOSING ONE FROM THE CORE LANGUAGE OPTIONS: FRENCH OR SPANISH**

Together with selecting two "Option" subjects, your daughter must also select a Modern Foreign language. Languages on offer include French and Spanish. A modern foreign language is guaranteed as a Core Subject. If you chose German as an option previously you must still choose one of the languages below. In essence, if you chose German you are choosing to do two languages.

### **Modern Foreign Languages as a Core Subject at Our Lady's School: French or Spanish.**

The Junior Cycle has taken a new approach to languages. Spanish, French and German are collectively known as Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). This means that for students, they will be achieving the same goals across the three languages. This facilitates a connection between languages and a more wholesome understanding of the language. The MFL Junior Cycle focuses on studying languages across three strands: Communicative Competence, Language Awareness and Socio-Cultural Knowledge and Inter Cultural Awareness.

#### Communicative Competence

- Knowledge of and ability to use the 5 key language skills:
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Spoken Interaction
  - Spoken Production
  - Listening

- Understanding language structures and grammatical awareness.
- Student's ability to reflect on their own learning
- Connecting what they know in one language to another

#### Socio-Cultural Knowledge and Inter Cultural Awareness

- Student's ability to connect the language with the country that speaks that language.
- Students will be aware of significant cultural traditions and norms of the country that speaks that language.

In terms of assessment, the Junior Cycle focuses on a dual approach to assessment: continuous assessment and a final exam.

**Continuous assessment:** Students are asked to create a portfolio of work in written and oral format. Students choose the work they are most proud of, therefore giving them ownership of their learning (This is known as Classroom Based Assessment 2 and due at the end of third year). Students will use this portfolio to carry out their Assessment task at the end of Third year, which will be assessed by the SEC, this is 10% of the final grade. The portfolio is graded based on a descriptor and this will appear on the JCPA. There is also an oral presentation which is carried out in second year, this is on a topic which the student finds interesting based on the TL country. This is also graded with a descriptor and appears on the JCPA. The final exam is in June of third year and contributes to 90% of the final result.



A dual approach to assessment, involving classroom-based assessment across the three years and a final externally-assessed, state-certified examination enables the appropriate balance between preparing students for examinations and also facilitating creative thinking, engaged learning and better outcomes for students

Oral Communication CBA 1	Student Language Portfolio CBA 2	Assessment Task	Final Examination
Year 2 Final Term	Year 3 End of Term 1	Year 3 End of Term 1	End of Year 3
School based assessment, followed by SLAR. Reported in JCPA using Descriptors	School based assessment, followed by SLAR. Reported in JCPA using Descriptors	Based on the Learning Outcomes of CBA2. Set by NCCA & marked by SEC. Accounts for 10% of Final Examination	Based on a sample of the Learning Outcomes. Set and marked by the SEC. Breakdown of final mark awarded by SEC: 10% Assessment Task 90% Final Examination (35% of which is allocated to an aural component)

## Benefits of studying a Modern Foreign Language – Which language suits me most?



- French is a beautiful language to learn, and is spoken across the globe.
- It is the international language of cooking, fashion, theatre, the visual arts, dance and architecture.
- France is the world's top tourist destination and attracts more than 79 million visitors a year. It is a good base for learning other languages, especially Romance languages like Spanish.
- More than 220 million people speak French on the five continents. The ability to speak French and English is an advantage on the international job market, and especially in Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, and the continent of Africa.



- Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world after Mandarin Chinese.
- Many people find Spanish easier to learn than other foreign languages as how it is pronounced follows very closely to how it is written.
- The ability to speak Spanish is beneficial when travelling in **Spain**, the United States and much of South America. It is spoken as a first language in around twenty countries. More people speak Spanish as a first language than English. By 2050, the United States will be the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world.
- Students will learn about the culture and traditions of the Hispanic countries in the course of the Junior Cycle.