



Christian Brothers College

Curriculum and Assessment Policy

Revision	Description	Approved By
This revision to the Policy adds a new section on standardised testing	Curriculum and Assessment Policy	Consultation Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching Staff• Student Council• Parents Council• Preparatory School Ratified by the Board of Management:

Curriculum and Assessment Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy updates and replaces the Curriculum Policy of 2019, the Homework Policy of 2021, the Textbooks and Educational Materials Policy of 2020 and the Assessment and Reporting Policy of 2019. It outlines the curriculum offered in the College, the structures involved in implementing and reviewing the curriculum and the College's assessment and reporting procedures.

Scope

The curriculum comprises all the opportunities for learning provided by a school. For the purposes of clarity this policy will only deal with the formal programme of lessons. Extra-curricular areas are dealt with under the Extra and Co-curricular Policy.

Goals

1. To enhance the academic achievements of our students and ensure that they reach the highest possible standards.
2. To enable all our students to learn and develop to the best of their ability and to promote a positive attitude towards learning.
3. To provide access to quality learning for all.
4. To enable our students to experience a broad and balanced education which encourages them to fulfil their potential in the many different areas relevant to their abilities, skills and interests.
5. To allow students to acquire knowledge and develop the understanding necessary for higher or further education, for employment and for adult life.
6. To develop the key skills of literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and ICT.
7. To appreciate human achievement in the creative and expressive arts, science, technology, humanities and physical pursuits and to experience a sense of personal achievement in these areas of study.
8. To ensure consistent approaches to the setting and reviewing of homework across the school.
9. To ensure an equitable distribution of study time for each subject.
10. To promote the development by students of good study habits and effective study skills.
11. To encourage parents to take an interest in and to share responsibility for their children's work and progress.
12. To allow subject departments to select common textbooks.
13. To allow for continuity if there is a changeover of teachers or classes.
14. To monitor the pupil's learning and to provide feedback to parents.

Policy Content

Section 1 Curriculum

1. Teaching Time

Teaching time is twenty-eight hours per week, in line with the Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter M29/95 – Time in School. The school operates a forty-two period week. There are nine periods per day on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, each of which lasts for forty minutes. On Wednesdays there are six class periods of forty minutes.

2. Board of Studies

A Board of Studies assists the Principal by making recommendations in the curricular area. This Board contributes to reviewing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy. The Board consists of members representing a wide range of subjects in the College.

3. Learning and Teaching Committee

The Learning and Teaching Committee also has an input in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy. The role of the Learning and Teaching Committee is to advise on and analyse effective learning and teaching in the College.

4. Subject Departments

Each subject is represented by a subject department. In some cases, several subjects are offered within a broader discipline, such as business and science subjects. Each subject has a head of department. Subject departments meet on a regular basis during the school year. Timetabled meetings of these departments coincide with each staff meeting. In addition, many informal meetings take place. Subject meeting minutes are kept on a subject-specific shared drive and a copy is provided for Senior Management. All subject departments produce an annual subject department plan, including a separate TY plan. These plans outline the curriculum content for each year group.

The Board of Management encourages teachers to be involved in professional and subject associations. Membership fees will be paid from the College's Professional Development of Teachers Fund upon presentation of receipts. An individual teacher or a head of department may apply to the Principal to avail of this. The College encourages all teaching staff to engage in continuous professional development and to avail of recommended in-service training courses organised by agencies of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Where feasible, the College will facilitate attendance at such courses. In-service training for staff introducing new syllabi or courses will be given priority. Further details are available in the Professional Development of Teachers Policy.

5. Subject Choice

All students and parents may make an appointment to meet with a guidance counsellor to discuss subject options.

In First Year students study subjects from the following list:

- a. Irish (four periods per week).
- b. English (four periods per week).
- c. Mathematics (four periods per week).
- d. History (three periods per week).
- e. Geography (three periods per week).

- f. Science (three periods per week).
- g. Business Studies (three periods per week).
- h. French (two periods per week).
- i. German (two periods per week).
- j. Religious Education (RE) (two periods per week).
- k. Physical Education (PE) (two periods per week).
- l. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (1 period per week)
- m. Tutorial (Mentor Class) (1 period per week)
- n. CSI Forensic Science (three periods per week).
- o. CSPE (one period per week).
- p. Guidance, Art, Music, Heritage and Computers are offered on a six or seven week rotation (four periods per week).

PE, CSPE and SPHE are provided as short courses. CSI is also offered as a short course. Wellbeing provision in CBC is in line with DES Circular 0059/2021 and the 2021 NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines.

In Second and Third Year students take nine subjects plus up to two short courses for the Junior Cycle programme. All students must take at least one modern language as part of their subject selection at the end of First Year. At the end of First Year, they choose two subjects from German, art, music and French. DATS testing is conducted in the second term of Third Year.

Transition Year is compulsory in CBC. The aim of Transition Year is to allow students to mature and develop, to explore their interests and to develop aptitudes and skills which form a sound basis for life skills and academic studies. Students choose seven Leaving Certificate subjects in April of Third Year. Subject teachers speak to Third Year students about their subject at senior cycle. Prior to their selection, a handbook is provided to students to assist with subject choice. All students are offered the maximum choice of subjects and the College attempts to provide each student with his first choices where possible. Students may alter their subject choice during Fourth Year if needed, following consultation between the student, parent and teacher. In addition, Transition Year allows students to study several other modules. Work experience of two weeks duration forms a key part of the Transition Year Programme. Details of TY modules and work experience are contained in the Transition Year Programme. Students receive a certificate upon completion of Transition Year.

Fifth and Sixth Year are focused primarily on the Leaving Certificate syllabus. The Leaving Certificate Programme is as follows:

- a. All students take Irish, English and Mathematics, though exemptions may apply in Irish. Religious Education as a Leaving Certificate subject is provided for Students who have a DES exemption in Irish. Religious Education classes are timetabled against Irish.
- b. All students must take either French or German.
- c. All students choose three subjects from the following list: 1. Biology; 2. Chemistry; 3. Physics; 4. Agricultural Science; 5. Applied Mathematics; 6. History; 7. Geography; 8. Art; 9. Business; 10. Economics; 11. Accounting; 12. Physical Education. Music is provided as an extra subject outside school hours, subject to demand. Option lines generally contain at least one science, arts and business subject. Thus, a student may specialise in one area or choose a wide combination of subjects.

All subjects are taught at higher level and all students are given the opportunity to study the higher level course.

6. Allocation of Teachers

The Principal allocates teachers for all classes. The College supports a co-teaching model where appropriate as part of the SEN continuum of support.

Section 2 Curriculum Delivery

1. Class Formation

Junior Cycle students are placed in mixed ability groups.

In Senior Cycle classes in core subjects and in some options are streamed. Some subjects are taught in mixed ability groups.

The procedures for class formation are outlined in the Formation of Classes Policy.

2. Classrooms

Most instruction takes place in classrooms. Each classroom is equipped with a data projector and some rooms have a visualizer. Teachers are provided with school laptops for use in classrooms and an additional five desktop computers are available for teachers to use in the Staffroom.

Subject specific rooms in the College include four science laboratories, two art rooms, an oratory, a music room, a SEN room, a fitness suite and sports hall.

3. Special Educational Needs

The role of the SEN Department is to support the right of all students to access the curriculum, regardless of their ability. Students with special educational needs are encouraged to become independent and take responsibility within the school. The operation of the SEN Department is outlined in the Special Educational Needs Policy.

4. Study

After school supervised study is available in the College for all Third and Sixth Years and for Fifth Years, subject to demand. Special hours are provided during mid-term breaks, Christmas and other holidays. There is an additional cost for this service. In addition, pupils receive regular advice on study technique and are encouraged to use the study timetables distributed to them. An external agency is employed for the purpose of facilitating a study skills seminar during the first term for Third and Sixth Year pupils. There is an additional cost for this service.

5. Textbooks and Copybooks

Textbooks and copybooks are essential to providing quality instruction. They provide structure to a syllabus, present students with a central reference point and are vital means of teaching organisational skills to the student.

Secondary School

- a. Common textbooks used across classes allow for movement within class groups and ensure that students receive similar instruction. Subject departments meet in the final term to review textbooks and to formulate an agreed list for the following year. Teachers will consult DES guidelines and subject specifications and syllabi to determine the most appropriate textbooks. Each department will consider the educational value, appropriateness of vocabulary, cost and

- relevance of the textbook before deciding to adopt it. The booklist is posted to parents of incoming students. Parents of students in the school receive the booklist via the school app.
- b. At times it may be necessary to ask students to get additional textbooks during the school year, especially in cases where classes are streamed mid-year. Examples of such books include workbooks for listening comprehension in modern languages. Decisions such as these are made in the best educational interests of the students.
 - c. The school is aware of the weight of school bags, particularly at junior cycle. To assist in this area, lockers are made available to all students where they may leave the textbooks, copies and other educational materials that they do not need to take home on a particular night. Where it is not possible to provide lockers, for example following public health guidance, students are encouraged to download e-books on a tablet which they may bring to school.
 - d. Students are required to purchase copies of past examination papers. In this respect they are treated as textbooks. In some subjects (such as science and languages), students may need specific types of copies, logbooks, experiment copies, hardback copies, etc. These are also vital educational materials and must be kept in appropriate condition by students.
 - e. Notes distributed in class must be kept in a folder unless otherwise indicated by the teacher. Such notes are essential for revision and examination preparation.
 - f. Pupils are required to keep their textbooks and other materials (copies, logbooks, etc.) in an appropriate condition and must replace them immediately if they are lost or destroyed.
 - g. Teachers will use the homework journal to inform parents where students are not bringing textbooks to class. Pupils will have disciplinary points noted on VSWare if they do not bring their homework journals to class.
 - h. In deciding on booklists for each academic year, consideration is given to textbooks produced by members of the teaching staff.

Preparatory School

- a. Each class teacher is responsible for choosing textbooks.
- b. Teachers will work together with those at similar levels, usually Jnr/Snr Infants 1st/2nd Class 3rd/4th Class 5th/6th Class.
- c. Where possible, the same textbooks are used throughout the school to ensure continuity moving from class to class e.g Busy at Maths.
- d. If this is not possible, then the relevant teachers endeavour to have continuity from Junior Infants to 2nd class, and then from 3rd to 6th class.
- e. Individual class teachers assign copy books, stationery etc as required.
- f. If changes in textbooks of core subjects such as Irish/English/Maths are required, this is done on a phased basis.
- g. Booklists are sent at the end of the school year in June and are available on the College App and College Website.
- h. When possible, a service using a local bookshop will be used so that booklists are made available at the end of April to be delivered in a pack to the school in May before the school closes for the summer. This procedure will continue as long as the local bookshop is able to provide the service.

6. Homework

Homework is an integral part of a student's education. Students are encouraged to have a routine for homework and this routine should be established very early in the year. Teachers will assign homework where appropriate to reinforce classroom learning.

- a. Homework is allocated at the discretion of the subject teacher. With the exception of bereavement and serious illness, students are expected to catch up on any class work and homework missed out on during their absence and complete it in a reasonable time period. Homework set will be purposeful and meaningful to the work of the class or to some future work.
- b. Homework and class work must be neatly presented and organised in the correct subject copybook. Notebooks and copy books must not contain graffiti.
- c. Homework will be monitored to ensure that students are not overloaded. A rough time guide will be suggested for year groups by their mentor teachers or in guidance classes. Students will also receive training in homework/study skills.
- d. Each student must bring his homework and school homework journal to every class.
- e. Google Classroom may be used to assign and monitor homework. If homework is presented online using Google Classroom it is important that the homework is presented within the timeframe given by the teacher. Teachers will advise students on appropriate contact times using Google Classroom.
- f. Teachers will provide feedback to students on homework via Google Classroom or via the students' school gmail.
- g. Special consideration will be given to students with special educational needs.
- h. Parents should monitor their son's homework journal and Google Classroom on a frequent basis as this is the primary means of contact between parents and teachers.

8. Remote Working and Online Learning

On occasions it may be necessary to move from on-site learning to remote working and online learning. The Remote Working and Online Learning Policy outlines the procedures to be followed in such instances.

Section 3 Assessment and Reporting

Regular and detailed formative assessment is used to help form and inform the teaching and learning process. Assessment includes all aspects of what happens in class from informal questioning to homework to class tests. It also includes Winter/Christmas, Summer, Pre-Junior Cycle and Pre-Leaving Certificate Examinations. Oral and practical assessments are included. Assessment is a continuous process. Assessment contributes to the development of sound study skills, consolidates and supplements the work done in class and promotes independent learning and creativity.

1. Standardised Testing

- a. Standardised tests are used for specific reasons such as those outlined below. Proper testing administration protocol, issues of data protection, record keeping, feedback and information given are all adhered to. This is also referred to in the Guidance Plan of the College.
 - The DATs for Guidance are tests used to measure Scholastic Aptitude. The DATs are carried out in Third Year to facilitate subject choice. The exams are administered by the Guidance Department and corrected by testing consultants ETC Consult. Results are stored securely by the Guidance Department/SEN department on individual student files in paper format in the office, and electronically in a confidential shared drive. Results are discussed individually with students, in line with best practice and ethical standards.
 - The CAT4 Level E is conducted with incoming First Year students to determine their base aptitude on entering secondary school in terms of literacy, numeracy and non-verbal/spatial reasoning abilities. It can provide some indication of support needs in terms of literacy/numeracy. The exams are administered by the Guidance Department and are corrected by GL Assessment. Records are stored by the Guidance/SEN department maintaining the confidentiality of the results on a shared secure drive. Results are provided to parents, and a thorough explanation of how to interpret the results is provided. Individual queries are dealt with by request in a supportive manner by the Guidance Department.
 - Further Entrance exams called the PPad E are conducted by the SEN department with First Years once they have started secondary school, to determine SEN support needs and requirements. They are corrected by the SEN department and results are stored by the SEN department and feedback provided to parents.

Care will be taken in relation to the suitability of the assessment instruments that are used with students with SEN, or with students who are studying English as an Additional Language (EAL). Under these circumstances, individual students who may fall under these categories are identified and debriefed and provided with proper support in relation to the use of the assessments with them and the subsequent results that emerge. In some circumstances it may be recommended to students and parents for them not to participate in tests the assessments if they will provide no helpful information in relation to the student's abilities, due to English requirements or SEN needs. Assessment results are not regarded as definitive nor interpreted in isolation. Therefore, students who may have SEN needs or language support requirements are assessed in terms of their general abilities in school, and based on professional assessments that they may have undertaken. Students' needs and other contextual information are always taken into consideration when interpreting assessment results.

In relation to assessments for incoming students, engagement between primary schools and the College will inform decisions around the selection and timing of assessments for students new to post-primary education.

- b. Information will be provided to parents and students regarding the purpose of the assessment and with whom the assessment results may be shared and why. The consent of parents (for students under 18 years of age) and assent of students over 18 will be obtained in advance of the assessment instrument being administered, in line with this policy and the College's Data Protection Policy. The administration of ability tests is restricted to appropriately qualified personnel who have been specifically trained in specialised psychometric testing, including the selection and administration of such assessment instruments, interpretation of assessment results, scoring and feedback. Guidance Counsellors are trained in Psychometrics as a result of their Guidance qualifications, and possibly from further studies in Psychometrics in line with BPS standards. Individuals in the SEN department would also have training in the administration and use of school based psychometric and educational assessments, and individuals have completed the CCET training for the administration of tests such as the WIAT and WRAT4. Appropriately trained personnel will engage with continuing professional learning in psychometric testing and make use of resources and guidance published by NEPS.
- c. Details of tests that are acceptable for Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE) will be set out in the Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations - Instructions for Schools, which is published annually by the SEC. The College will ensure that the versions of tests in use are the most up-to-date and appropriate for administering to the specific student cohort.
- d. Results of any one test will not be considered in isolation and tests results will be considered alongside other information: parental information, information from the primary school, information from teachers etc.
- e. In terms of the use of aptitude tests, students will be provided with the opportunity to explore their assessment results in the context of the educational options available to them in the school and to inform their future educational and vocational development, career choices and decision making. Students and parents will be made aware of the limitations of the results of standardised tests during this discussion and the importance of other factors including the students' interests, motivation, talents and experiences, and information available from other sources.
- f. The results of standardised tests, in conjunction with other related information, will be shared with relevant members of school staff. This allows the College to plan effectively to meet the educational, social, emotional, behavioural and wellbeing needs of the students. It may also be necessary at times to share relevant information with external parties, such as NEPS and CAMHS. Such results will be presented accurately and sensitively and in a way that is clearly understood by the receiving party.
- g. The College is aware of obligations relating to access, retention and processing data under the Freedom of Information Act 1997, the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act 2013, associated regulations, and the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003, and GDPR (2018).
- h. In line with standards of ethical conduct outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the Psychological Society of Ireland, NEPS and the British Psychological Society, all students who engage in assessments are given feedback about any assessments in which they have engaged, in consultation with their parents. Some parents of students who are under 18 years of age may request that results are shared only with themselves. Hence, parents are

informed of the CAT4 and DATs results initially, and with their permission, students are subsequently met and provided with individual feedback.

2. All students take Winter/Christmas and Summer Examinations in most subjects every year. Third Years and Sixth Years take Winter Assessments in November instead of Christmas exams. This allows for an early assessment of progress for exam years and ample time for correcting and returning exams to students so they can adjust targets/revision plans prior to Pre exams in early February. The Winter Assessments are instrumental in developing expertise in sitting examinations and give a clear view of the pupil's performance. Subject departments arrange the setting of common examinations.
3. Third and Sixth Year students sit a Pre-Junior Cycle Examination and Pre-Leaving Certificate Examination in February of each year. These aim to give the students practice in sitting examinations which cover the whole course, are of the same duration as the state examinations and held in similar conditions.
4. As part of the revised Junior Cycle programme, Second and Third Year students complete Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) at times designated by the Department of Education and Skills. These tasks are assessed by the subject teacher, in consultation with colleagues in the subject department. A Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting is held by the subject department prior to the awarding of the final CBA grade descriptor by the teacher. CBA results are recorded on the Department of Education and Skills online database and appear on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement certificate which is issued to students at the end of the first term of Fourth Year. Each year a calendar is produced in school coordinating the windows for the completion of CBAs in each subject. When the results of the CBA have been submitted to VShare the Subject Department Head will complete the sign off form contained in the appendix.
5. Sixth Year students take oral examinations in the languages that they are studying for Leaving Certificate. These include the Winter Assessment and the Pre Leaving Certificate Examination. Oral examinations take place for the Leaving Certificate at a time outlined by the DES each year. Oral assessment for other year groups may also take place as appropriate.
6. Some subjects include practical elements and/or project/portfolio work which are assessed for examinations.
7. Project and portfolio work is also used to assess students in First Year and Transition Year.
8. In most subjects, students have a range of class tests, designed to assess the pupil's learning. These are generally held after a chapter, section, topic, etc. has been covered or on a monthly or mid-termly basis. The subject teacher decides which method is most appropriate and cognisance is taken of differentiation.
9. A variety of formative and summative assessment practices are employed by teachers as appropriate in line with best practice. Continual feedback is provided by the subject teacher to the students, and parents if deemed necessary.
10. Parents are informed of their son's results in examinations by school reports. These include a mark, grade and comment for each subject they have taken to examination. These are available on VShare. Parents have access to their son's results.
11. Records of grades, homework and comments are kept by the subject teacher.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

1. To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time.
2. To approve the policy.
3. To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.
4. To support and fund appropriate staff training.

Principal and Deputy Principals

1. To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
2. To monitor the implementation of the policy.
3. To provide time for subject department planning.

Board of Studies and Learning and Teaching Committee

1. To advise the Principal on the effectiveness of the policy.
2. To suggest changes to the policy as they deem necessary.
3. To advise on methodologies and assessment and to measure the effectiveness of these.

Subject Departments

1. To implement the policy as it applies in their subject area and review its effectiveness on an annual basis.
2. To draw up an annual subject plan and an annual TY plan.
3. To devise common assessments.
4. To agree common booklists where practical.
5. To meet at timetabled subject meetings and review the operation of the subject.

Subject Teachers

1. To implement the policy and provide feedback to students.
2. To keep records of homework.
3. To instruct students in homework/study skills.
4. To review assessment procedures and provide feedback to students.
5. To keep records of all homework assessments set.
6. To inform parents if a pupil is not achieving the grades he/she believes the pupil capable of achieving and to inform parents when work is not being submitted by their son.

Class Mentor, Class Teacher and Learning Support Personnel

1. To monitor the effects of the policy and to identify students experiencing difficulty.

2. To provide support and guidance, especially for those experiencing difficulty.
3. To liaise with subject teachers, especially in relation to consideration for students with special education needs.

Guidance Counsellors

1. To support students making appropriate choices for their future careers.
2. To provide information on subject choice and its implications for careers after Leaving Certificate.
3. To provide one to one counselling for students.
4. To advise the Principal in areas of curricular development from a guidance perspective.

Exam Committee

1. To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
2. To monitor the implementation of the policy.
3. To organise the Winter, Christmas, Summer, Pre-Junior Cycle and Pre-Leaving Certificate Examinations.

Parents are encouraged

1. To support school policy.
2. To ensure their son has the textbooks required for each subject.
3. To ensure that their son maintains his books in an appropriate condition.
4. To provide suitable conditions for study and homework.
5. To monitor their son's homework and to ensure he is presenting it.
6. To ensure that the suggested amount of time is spent on revision and homework.

Students are required

1. To have all necessary textbooks for each subject.
2. To maintain these books in an appropriate condition.
3. To prepare for examinations and class tests.
4. To revise on a continuous and consistent basis.
5. To concentrate on all elements required for the assessment of each subject: oral, written and practical.
6. To present written homework properly and to learn material the subject teacher has indicated must be known.

Success Criteria

1. Pupils are organised.
2. Pupils have a central text to use as a reference.
3. The key elements on the syllabus are explained in detail.
4. Students are maximising their potential.
5. Teachers, parents and students are satisfied with the effectiveness of the policy.
6. The goals are being attained.

Monitoring Procedures

1. Subject departments will conduct on-going monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy and will note feedback from students, teachers and parents.
2. The Principal and Deputy Principals will seek feedback from subject departments and the Board of Studies on the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.
3. The Principal will report to the Board of Management once per year.
4. A similar approach is taken in the Preparatory School to ensure continuity both within each school and between the two schools, in as much as is possible.

Review Procedures

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. The review team will comprise the Principal, Deputy Principals, Board of Studies and Learning and Teaching Committee. The views and experiences of subject departments, individual teachers, students and parents will be considered in relation to the success criteria.

Ratified by the Board of Management 18 April 2024

Laurence Park 18/4/24

David Lorde 18/4/24

Appendix



CBA Sign Off Form
2023-2024

Subject _____
CBA _____

Names of the teachers whose classes completed the CBA.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

All students' CBA results for _____ have been added on VSware.

Subject Department Head Signature

Principal's Signature

Date _____

Date _____