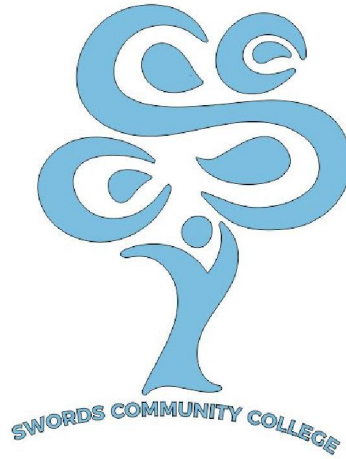




**Subject Choice Policy
Swords Community College
2026**

Date for review: June 2027

Chairperson of the Board

Secretary to the Board

Date

Date

Mission Statement

At Swords Community College, we believe there is a place for everyone. We are a welcoming, inclusive, multi-denominational school where students' opinions matter and their learning and welfare are at the center of all we do.

We support our learners to aim high and reach their full potential through strong pastoral care, engaging teaching which encourages and supports students individual learning styles, in a respectful and caring environment. Learning in our school blends traditional methods with digital technologies to create an experience that encourages curiosity and independence.

Through a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities, designed to cater to all interests and abilities, we encourage students to explore their passions, develop new skills and build confidence beyond the classroom.

Guided by our four pillars of Respect, Excellence, Resilience and Teamwork, we empower our students to become confident learners, active citizens and well-rounded individuals, prepared for further education and for life beyond school.

This policy is informed by:

1. Assessment Policy
2. Code of Positive Behaviour
3. Acceptable User Policy (AUP)
4. Homework Policy
5. Admission Policy
6. LCVP Admission Policy
7. Whole School Guidance Plan

Introduction

In Swords Community College, we are committed to providing a comprehensive and effective learning environment which is child-centered and empowers young people to make informed decisions with the support of their parents / guardians. We also aim to acknowledge the particular importance of the professional role subject teachers and guidance counsellors play in supporting students in making informed decisions around subject options and level choice in line with their best interests. Students are empowered to work collaboratively with parents / guardians, subject teachers and guidance counsellors as they form their decisions. Students are encouraged to develop personal responsibility, initiative, personal growth and leadership during their time in SCC.

We endeavour to support all students to select subjects, programmes and levels that are best suited to their interests, aptitudes and abilities. The Subject Choice Policy will play a key role in ensuring a culture of collaboration between students, parents / guardians, teachers, the guidance department and senior management to support the best interests of each student.

As a new and growing school, we are continuously formulating and reviewing policies based on what is happening in the present but with an understanding that change is a normal part of the school development process.

This policy is subject to periodic review through the appropriate channels such as Student Council, Staff Council, Parent Council and Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Management.

Subject Choice Support

A comprehensive career guidance and counselling service is available to all students at Swords Community College. The guidance department helps students with study skills, subject choices, provides information regarding Further Education (FE) and third level institutions, and supports students with wider educational and personal matters.

Guidance Supports at Junior Cycle

- Students complete guidance module in 1st and 3rd year through wellbeing module.
- Students undergo CV studies in DML at 2nd year
- Students in 3rd year attend subject choice information evening
- All junior cycle students have access to guidance and counselling support on one to one.
- An element of careers focus is studied in all subjects take at Junior Cycle for examination.

Guidance supports at Senior Cycle

Transition year:

- Students are invited to attend an in-house Careers Fair.
- Students take part in year-long subject sampling.
- Aptitude testing is conducted with all students.
- Students complete a careers/guidance module year round where they complete work experience reflections, career investigation and portfolio work.

5th Year:

- Students receive one guidance class per week per year.
- Students have access to one to one career guidance service.
- Students must attend a guidance meeting to discuss the possibility of changing a subject or level.
- Students attend Apprenticeship Expo fair in April.

6th Year:

- Each individual 6th year student receives a career guidance appointment.
- Students have access to guidance appointments with regard to CAO applications, PLCs and apprenticeships.
- Students have access to attending Higher Options and World Skills Event.
- Students and parents of 6th year students attend a Career Progression information evening in October.

- Students receive career talks from colleges, universities and further education colleges throughout the year.
- Students have support around changing levels in subjects or doing additional languages as are required to consult guidance first.

Junior Cycle Criteria

Students will study a maximum of ten subjects for assessment by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

- Students will study xxx subjects that will be examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).
- Students will choose two options before starting in September of first year, or if transferring from another school.
- Students will study short courses as outlined below. Short courses are not examined by the SEC but are included in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).
- The Level 1 Learning Programme (L1LP) and Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP) are offered to students as per the Special Educational Needs Policy.

SUBJECT	COMPULSORY / OPTION SUBJECT	CORE / SHORT COURSE	EXAMINED BY SEC
English	Compulsory	Core	Yes
Irish*	Compulsory	Core	Yes
Mathematics	Compulsory	Core	Yes
History	Compulsory	Core	Yes
Geography	Compulsory	Core	Yes
Science	Compulsory	Core	Yes
French / Spanish	Compulsory	Core	Yes
Home Economics	Option	Core	Yes
Art	Option	Core	Yes
Wood Technology	Option	Core	Yes
Technical Graphics	Option	Core	Yes
Engineering	Option	Core	Yes

Applied Technology	Option	Core	Yes
Business	Option	Core	Yes
Music	Option	Core	Yes
PE	Compulsory	Short course	No
CSPE	Compulsory	Short course	No
Wellbeing*	Compulsory	Short course	No
SPHE	Compulsory	Short course	No
IMBVE*	Compulsory	Short course	No

*Students may be withdrawn as per our SEN Policy.

Leaving Certificate / Senior Cycle Criteria

Students engaging in LCVP, please refer to LCVP Admissions Policy.

Students will be timetabled for compulsory core subjects.

Students choose four optional subjects. In total students sit 6/7 subjects for their Leaving Certificate.

SUBJECT	COMPULSORY / OPTIONAL SUBJECT	EXAMINED BY SEC
English	Compulsory	Yes
Irish*	Compulsory	Yes
Mathematics	Compulsory	Yes
SPHE	Compulsory	No
Careers	Compulsory	No
PE	Compulsory	No
French	Option	Yes
Spanish	Option	Yes
Home Economics	Option	Yes
Art	Option	Yes
Construction	Option	Yes
Design & Computer Graphics (DCG)	Option	Yes
Engineering	Option	Yes

Technology	Option	Yes
Business	Option	Yes
Music	Option	Yes
Leaving Certificate Physical Education (LCPE)	Option	Yes
Politics & Society	Option	Yes
Classical Studies	Option	Yes
Accounting	Option	Yes
Biology	Option	Yes
Chemistry	Option	Yes
Physics	Option	Yes
Economics	Option	Yes

The majority of students in the country will study **SEVEN** subjects for their Leaving Certificate. These will comprise of the three core subjects of Irish (unless you have an exemption), English and Maths, which leaves **FOUR** more subjects to choose from. Some students may decide to study an extra subject(s) outside of school in their own time. It is worth noting, that when it comes to calculating CAO points for entry to college, the best six in one sitting of the Leaving Certificate are counted. Subjects can be taken at either Higher or Ordinary Level. Two subjects can be taken at Foundation Level: Gaeilge and Maths.

Subject Choice Considerations

It is not recommended that a student study a Leaving Certificate subject having not previously studied it at Junior Cycle. It is important that students and parents/guardians are aware of the very significant level of additional time and independent work outside of the classroom that will be required to sit a subject at Leaving Certificate, having not studied the subject at Junior Cycle.

Any student wishing to take up a subject at Leaving certificate level, having not studied it previously, may be required to meet with parents/guardians and head of subject department before approval is provided.

Exceptions may be made where the student demonstrates proficient knowledge, skill, required to take up the subject at Leaving Certificate level. Students may be asked to sit a Junior Cycle level exam or similar assessment to demonstrate their proficiency.

Students taking up Music or a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) for the first time at Senior Cycle should be able to demonstrate a level equivalent to the Junior Cycle State Exam or prove a period of residence in the country where the curricular language is spoken in the case of MFL. All students are encouraged to fully engage with a Modern Foreign Language during first year.

Subject / Programme Changes

Subject and Programme Changes are permitted in 1st and 5th year **until the first week of October each academic year**, where space is available. It is felt that by this date, students have had sufficient time to engage with the curriculum and make an informed decision. After this date, it is felt that students have missed significant content which may constitute a permanent barrier to achieving in this subject to the best of their ability.

Student change of subject/programme must be supported by a written letter from home confirming a discussion has taken place and the change is warranted. Any change to subject(s) is subject to class size and availability. Every effort will be made to accommodate student choice. Exceptions may arise where a student has transferred to the school and has missed career guidance opportunities.

Subject Level Changes

At Swords Community College, we encourage all students to sit subjects to the highest level possible. With this in mind, there may be circumstances that arise outside of the school's or student's control where it would be considered within the best interest of the student to sit a subject at Ordinary/Foundation Level. When a decision is made to change level, this should be done in consultation with the student, parent/guardian, teacher and/or guidance. This will be kept on the student file with the head of the subject department.

It is important to note that while every effort will be made to support the student in making decisions regarding levels throughout their time in SCC, they may still change their exam paper level on the day of the state exam without any consultation. Equally, a student can change their level on the State Examinations Commission E-Portal without any consultation. Changes in these cases are the sole responsibility of the student and would not be advised.

Additional Subjects Outside School.

Students sitting additional subjects outside school should let the school know at the earliest available opportunity.

Junior Cycle

It is worth noting that while students can sit additional subjects within the framework of the JCPA, outlined above, the maximum grade received will be 90% due to the limitations of the assessment task. Where subjects involve Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) and project work, teachers cannot oversee or sign off on work that is completed outside of school.

Senior Cycle

Students sitting an additional subject outside of school (including native languages), must let the school know in September of 6th year. This is to ensure the relevant examination requirements are submitted to the State Examinations Commission. Limitations may apply in certain subjects where project work / AAC is a requirement, such as construction studies.