



Incoming First Years  
2026 - 2027

Junior Cycle Subject Choice Information

# Presentation Secondary School, Waterford

*Nurturing Talent, Fostering Success*





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# Foreword



Dear Students,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Presentation Secondary School, Waterford. As you take this exciting step into secondary school, know that you are joining a warm, inclusive, and supportive school community where every student is valued and encouraged to thrive.

We understand that starting first year can feel like a big change, but you are not alone. Our Fifth-Year Mentors are here to guide and support you, helping you settle into school life. These senior students have been carefully chosen to act as friendly faces, offering advice and encouragement as you find your way.

Here in the Prez, you will meet with your Tutor every day, they will provide pastoral support and be there to check in on your well-being. They, along with all our teachers and staff, are committed to making sure you feel safe, happy, and motivated to do your best.

Choosing your subjects may seem overwhelming at first, but this booklet is designed to make the process easier. Take your time to read through the advice given, ask questions, and remember that help is always available. We want you to enjoy your learning journey and discover your own unique talents and interests along the way.

Above all, we want you to feel at home here. Presentation Secondary School, Waterford is more than just a place of learning—it is a community where friendships are made, achievements are celebrated, and every student is encouraged to reach their full potential. We are delighted to welcome you and look forward to supporting you every step of the way.

Wishing you every success and happiness in your journey with us.

Warm regards,

**Sally Ronayne**

Principal

# Junior Cycle Curriculum

Students will study **nine** subjects for examination

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## Core Examination Subjects

- › English
- › Irish
- › Mathematics
- › Geography
- › History

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## Choice Exam Subjects Choose **FOUR**

- › French (*Modern Foreign Language*)
  - › German (*Modern Foreign Language*)
  - › Science
  - › Business Studies
  - › Home Economics
  - › Music
  - › Visual Art (*formerly Art, Craft and Design*)
  - › Graphics (*formerly Technical Graphics*)
  - › Applied Technology
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# Junior Cycle Curriculum

There are many subjects that are **NON STATE EXAM** in Presentation Secondary School that students will take throughout their three years of Junior Cycle.

Students could complete Classroom Based Assessments or projects in these subjects but they will not sit summative examinations.

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## Wellbeing

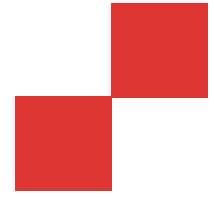
- › Civic, Social, Political Education (CSPE)
- › Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
- › Physical Education (PE)
- › Learning 2 Learn
- › Speech and Drama
- › Computer Studies

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## Religion

- › Religious Education
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# Core Curriculum



*Higher and Ordinary Level*

## English

Junior Cycle English provides you with many opportunities to be creative, use your imagination, and learn about great writers. You will study a variety of texts from novels to poems to films. You will also learn how to communicate more effectively with others by expressing your opinions in class.

Junior Cycle English focuses on three core areas: Reading, Writing and Oral Language.

## Irish *Higher and Ordinary Level*

Irish classes in secondary school are focused on improving your ability to communicate “as gaeilge”. Communication and language skills are enhanced by speaking Irish in class, as well as listening to others, CDs and videos; reading poems, extracts and stories, and practicing your written Irish.

*Only students who have an Official Exemption from Irish, granted by the Department of Education, are considered to be ‘exempt’ from the subject. Irish is mandatory for all other students. If you have been granted an exemption in National School, please submit a copy of the exemption to the school office.*

*Higher and Ordinary Level*

## Mathematics

Junior Cycle Mathematics focuses on developing students’ ability to think logically, strategically, critically, and creatively through the Unifying Strand and the four contextual strands: Number; Geometry and Trigonometry; Algebra and Functions; and Statistics and Probability.

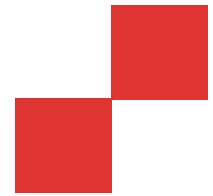
It provides students with access to important mathematical ideas to develop the mathematical knowledge and skills that they will draw on in their personal and work lives.

# Geography

## *Common Level*

Geography is used everyday, whether we realise it or not. When we look at maps, check the weather app or give someone directions, we are using Geography. In Junior Cycle Geography, you will study about people, places, and what impacts our environments.

You will study trends and patterns in the environment and learn how to use maps and equipment accurately to complete fieldwork.



# History

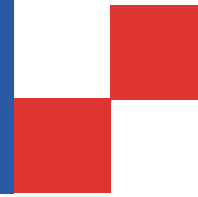
## *Common Level*

Junior Cycle History teaches you how to identify patterns in history and the importance of learning about the past to be an informed citizen. Students are given the opportunity to engage meaningfully in local, national and international issues.

Topics are studied closely to see how they are still significant today, focusing on the five R's:

- Resonance
- Remembered
- Remarkable
- Resulting in change
- Revealing

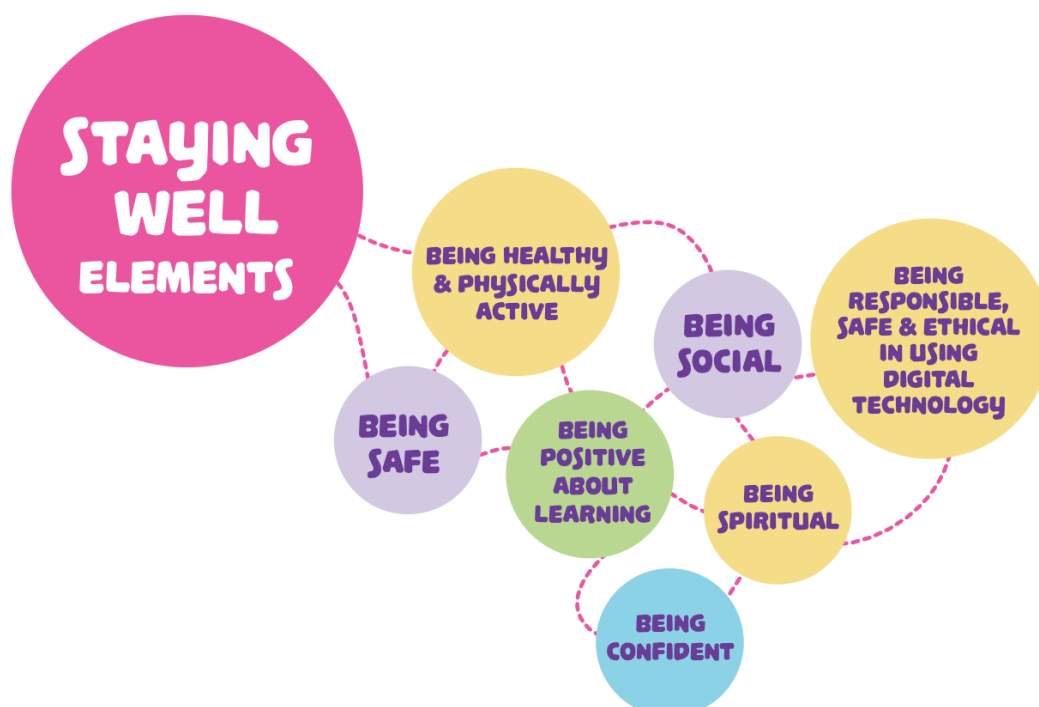
# Wellbeing



Student wellbeing is at the core of the Junior Cycle. The Junior Cycle years are an important time in young peoples' lives as they learn to take greater responsibility for their lives and to cope with new experiences, influences and pressures.

Each of the day-to-day interactions that take place in a school can impact students' well-being. Schools nurture students' well-being through the provision of curricular and extracurricular experiences, ensuring that well-being is supported across all learning.

Wellbeing matters not only because it leads to students doing better at school, but it can also influence young people's outcomes as adults. The Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme is 400 hours of timetabled learning over the course of the first three years of secondary school. CSPE, SPHE and PE are essential curriculum components accounting for 300 hours, with the final 100 hours coming from school-created short courses and modules.



# JUNIOR CYCLE WELLBEING

## INDICATORS OF WELLBEING



### ACTIVE

- Am I a confident and skilled participant in physical activity?
- How physically active am I?



### RESPONSIBLE

- Do I take action to protect and promote my wellbeing and that of others?
- Do I make healthy eating choices?
- Do I know where my safety is at risk and do I make right choices?



### CONNECTED

- Do I feel connected to my school, my friends, my community and the wider world?
- Do I appreciate that my actions and interactions impact on my own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts?



### RESILIENT

- Do I believe that I have the coping skills to deal with life's challenges?
- Do I know where I can go for help?
- Do I believe that with effort I can achieve?



### RESPECTED

- Do I feel that I am listened to and valued?
- Do I have positive relationships with my friends, my peers and my teachers?
- Do I show care and respect for others?



### AWARE

- Am I aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviours and can I make sense of them?
- Am I aware of what my personal values are and do I think through my decisions?
- Do I understand what helps me to learn and how I can improve?

# Wellbeing Subjects

## Civic, Social, Political Education

Civic, Social, Political Education teaches students how to be active citizens. The course covers everything from the rights and responsibilities each person has to learning about sustainability and conservation. Helping students understand social, economic and political systems worldwide, making them more connected and aware of the world around them.

## Social, Personal and Health Education

Social, Personal and Health Education focuses on developing students understanding and participation in relationships. Lessons focus on physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing as well as making informed and considerate choices. Throughout these lessons students will learn to enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society.

## Physical Education

Physical Education allows students an opportunity to try out new sports, and learn how the body reacts in sport. From dancing, basketball, volleyball and athletics, students will be stretching their knowledge of games and their abilities to work together as a team. Students will hopefully find a sport or physical activity that they are passionate about

## Learning 2 Learn

Learning 2 Learn is a subject offered to only First Year students. This subject is taught by a number of teachers with the hopes of guiding students through the more challenging aspects of First Year. Using your locker, organising your books and creating a study schedule are all covered in this class as well as highlight numeracy and literacy skills.

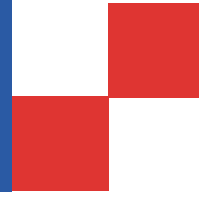
## Speech and Drama

Speech and Drama classes offer students the opportunity to grow in confidence and practice their public speaking. Students will play games, sing, act, debate, recite poetry and dance all with the focus on improving their confidence. Students have numerous opportunities to perform in front of the school community throughout their time in school, and this is where they can get their practice in.

## Computer Studies

As a Microsoft365 school, students will become familiar with the Office Suite of applications and utilise them regularly in class projects and organising of study materials. Students are also given the opportunity to work on their typing skills and computer coding in these lessons to ensure that they are ready for the world of work when leaving school.

# Religious Education



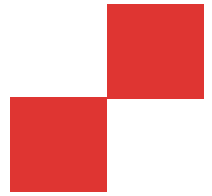
As a CEIST school, Religious Education is a core part of the non-exam curriculum. The core values of CEIST are:

- Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Training and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

However, Religious Education classes do not focus solely on Catholic education. Students aim to develop their knowledge and understanding of religion in life and its ties to the modern world. Lessons focus on world religions and how students can engage with life's big questions as well as reflecting on moral values for life. It encourages respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living, including both the religious and non-religious responses to human experience.

Please find additional information about Religion and religious services in the [Religion Policy](#).

# Choice Subjects



All choice subjects are sat at Common Level

Choose four subjects that interest you the most.

While we cannot guarantee all of your choices, we will attempt to facilitate you as best as we can.

## How to choose subjects

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- **Take your time**
  - Don't rush when picking your subjects. Read through the descriptions carefully. Clear your head and really think your decision through before submitting your choices.
- **Be independent with your choices**
  - There is no point in picking a subject just because your best friend is planning on picking it. You will make new friends in your classes.
- **Consider what you are good at and enjoy**
  - If you are talented or passionate about a hobby that corresponds to a subject, it is a good idea to pick it!
- **Talk to neighbours, older siblings or cousins**
  - Talk to people who are already in secondary school or those who have finished secondary school to see what they think of each subject. It will be beneficial to hear from people around your age as they can offer a different insight into the class content.
- **Chat with your primary school teacher**
  - Your teacher could help guide you in picking subjects for Junior Cycle as they know where your strengths are in the curriculum.

# Modern Foreign Languages

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Learning a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) opens doors to communication with people from different cultures and strengthens cognitive abilities. It enhances attention, memory, reasoning, decision-making, and creativity while also improving multitasking skills. Some university courses require an MFL at Leaving Certificate level, making language learning an important academic choice. At our school, students can choose between French and German. Our MFL programme follows the Junior Cycle curriculum, which is built around three key strands:

- **Communicative Competence** – Developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in real-life contexts.
- **Language Awareness** – Understanding how languages work and improving overall literacy skills.
- **Socio-Cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness** – Gaining insights into different cultures and fostering global citizenship.

Students taking French or German may have the opportunity to travel to other EU countries in TY and 5th year. These trips are currently fully funded or partially funded by Erasmus+, providing an invaluable experience of language immersion and cultural exchange.

MFL classes require a minimum of 200 hours of learning at Junior Cycle level, ensuring students develop strong language skills in an interactive and engaging environment.

# French *Modern Foreign Language*

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French is the first or second language in more than 40 countries and is spoken by 125 million people around the world, on every continent. Because French is a foreign language of choice for so many people in the world, knowing French will also increase your chances of communicating in a non-English-speaking country. French is always an official language used to announce events, winners, and medals at the Olympic Games. Some 40 to 50% of English vocabulary comes from French. The study of French will also enhance your grammar skills. As you develop greater skills in French, you also sharpen your skills in English. France continues to be a leader and innovator in science and technology. Civil engineering, medical technologies and telecommunications are just a few areas in which the French play a leadership role. Knowing French can open the doors to graduate school and to important research.

# German *Modern Foreign Language*

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Germany has a rich history of literature, music, philosophy, and science and plays a key role in global business and innovation. As the most widely spoken language in the EU, German offers excellent career prospects in fields such as engineering, science, business, and tourism. Many international companies use German, making it a valuable language for future job opportunities. German is spoken not only in Germany but also in Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Belgium, Luxembourg, South Tyrol in Italy, and even in Namibia. Around 175 million people speak German worldwide, and it is the second most commonly used language in scientific research and the third most widely used language on websites. Learning German can also enhance travel experiences, allowing students to communicate effectively across multiple countries. At our school, students learning German benefit from dynamic and engaging lessons, cultural projects, and the possibility of participating in Erasmus+ exchanges to experience the language in real-life settings.

# Science

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Junior Cycle Science allows students to understand the importance and prevalence of Science in our everyday lives. Science is about asking questions and finding answers through experiments and research. Students will be able to appreciate how scientists work and how scientific theories and ideas are modified over time. Biology, chemistry, physics as well as earth and space are all studied at Junior Cycle in order to expose students to all aspects of scientific research, investigation and problem-solving.

The skills studied in Junior Cycle Science are useful both in school and in careers later in life. Science is linked to subjects like Maths (calculations and measurements), Geography (climate and ecosystems), and even Home Economics (nutrition and food science). Science classes aim to encourage all students to develop a sense of enjoyment in learning.

# Business Studies

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Business Studies teaches students how to manage money, budget, and make smart financial decisions. It helps students understand banking, saving, and even how to avoid debt. Students learn about different types of businesses, employment, and entrepreneurship. It introduces key concepts like marketing, management, and economics, which are useful in any career.

Business Studies links well with subjects like Maths (accounting and finance), Geography (trade and resources), and even English (report writing and presentations). After completing Junior Cycle Business Studies, you can continue your studies in Senior Cycle Business, Economics or Accounting.

# Home Economics

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Home Economics is much more than just cooking. It is a practical and useful subject that prepares students for real-life situations, encourages healthy living, and supports future career opportunities. It's a great subject for anyone who wants to develop essential life skills while also being creative and hands-on. Home Economics covers topics like meal planning, food safety and sustainability as well as managing money, understanding household expenses, and planning for the future.

Students complete a practical food skills examination in Third Year, worth 50% of the final grade.

Home Economics consists of three strands:

- **Food, Health and Culinary Skills**
- **Responsible Family Living**
- **Textiles and Craft**

# Music

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Music enables students to express their emotions, explore their creativity, and develop their unique style. Opportunities to compose and perform music help students to think outside the box. It develops confidence, creativity and valuable life skills while making learning enjoyable. Music introduces students to different styles, traditions, and cultures from around the world.

Music can lead to careers in performance, teaching, composing, sound engineering, event management, and many other fields. Whether students want to pursue music in their later life or just enjoy it as a hobby, it's a fantastic subject that offers lifelong benefits.

Students complete a practical examination in Third Year worth 30% of the final grade.

# Visual Art *Formerly Art, Craft and Design*

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Studying Visual Art for Junior Cycle is a great way for students to develop their creativity, problem-solving skills, and cultural awareness. Visual Art allows students to express their thoughts, emotions, and ideas uniquely and creatively through a range of media such as drawing, painting, print and clay modelling. Students learn about different artists, art movements, and cultures from around the world. In today's world, visual communication is everywhere, from social media to advertising and design. Understanding art helps students interpret visual information and create digital content. Visual art also recognises and rewards several different forms of intelligence, including emotional intelligence, developing qualities of expression and empathy,

Visual Art is **not assessed in a written examination**; students are requested to create two artefacts, which are then sent to the SEC for examination.

# Graphics *Formerly Technical Graphics*

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Graphics is the underpinning language of the technology disciplines and is transferable across numerous Junior Cycle subjects. Graphics is a hands-on subject, allowing students to work on practical, creative, and technical projects. It provides a balance between creativity and precision, making it enjoyable and rewarding. Students use both traditional drawing tools and modern software to create their designs. Learning how to use design technology prepares students for future careers in digital design, architecture, and engineering. Graphics is not just about technical drawing—it allows students to design and create solutions for real-world problems. It helps students develop skills used in graphic design, product design, and animation.

Students complete a project set by the SEC worth 30% of their final grade in Third Year.

# Applied Technology

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Applied Technology addresses the modifications of the natural world made to fulfil human needs or desires. This subject offers students a lens through which to view the role and impact of technology within their classroom, their community, and the world. Through the study of Applied Technology, students will have the opportunity to develop technological capability and literacy by engaging with a broad range of materials and systems. Students will develop an understanding of the principles of energy and control to resolve practical problems. Students will have the freedom to explore design and systems thinking through an iterative process to conceive, refine, realise, and evaluate ideas.

The Applied Technology assessment consists of

- 2 Classroom-based Assessments (CBAs)
- A Project (70%)
- A Written Exam (30%)

# Additional Resources

The following links can provide more guidance on the Junior Cycle curriculum and specifications as well as providing an insight into daily life in the Presentation Secondary School.

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**01** [Junior Cycle Information for Parents of Primary School Students](#)

**02** [Junior Cycle Wellbeing](#)

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**03** [Framework for Junior Cycle](#)

**04** [Subjects and Short Courses](#)

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**05** [Junior Certificate School Programme](#)

**06** [Assessment and Reporting at Junior Cycle](#)

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**07** [Erasmus+](#)

**08** [Home School Liaison](#)

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**09** [Day in the Life of a Pres Girl](#)

**10** [Policies](#)

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**11** [School of Sanctuary Padlet](#)

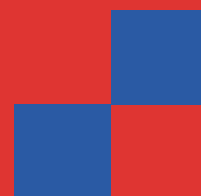
**12** [Yellow Flag Padlet](#)

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**13** [Guidance](#)



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