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+Coláiste Chill na n-Iníon Firhouse Community College

FIRHOUSE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

JUNIOR CERT SCHOOLS PROGRAMME POLICY



Ratification of Policy Review

Signed: *Mick Duff*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: *18/11/2025*

Signed: *Senan Nolan*

Principal/ Secretary to the Board
of Management

Date: *18/11/2025*

Next Review Date: November 2027

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1.The College Ethos

Firhouse Community College was established in 1982 to meet the second-level educational needs of the local community.

As teachers, we commit ourselves to work to fulfil this purpose with dedication and professional expertise.

As set out in the Admissions Policy in our school, Firhouse Community College is a state, co-educational, multi-denominational school underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect

We believe in the principle of education for all. We value the uniqueness of each member of our school community. We are committed to equality in all aspects of school life.

As educators, we are mindful of, and sensitive to, the changing needs of students as they grow towards adulthood. We commit ourselves to care for our students and to provide for their wellbeing. We also commit ourselves to care for our colleagues.

We endeavour to carry out our work to the highest standards. We strive to create a positive, respectful atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning and the personal development of every member of the school community. For this reason we expect our students to share and uphold the values of our school.

In working as a team we aim to assist you, the student, to:

- discover and realise your own potential
- Achieve the highest of your abilities
- Lead a rewarding and fulfilling life
- Strive for excellence
- Develop personal discipline in your life
- Respect and care for your own well-being and the well-being of others
- Understand and appreciate the values and traditions of our society
- Become good citizens
- Understand, respect and actively contribute to the community in which you live.

2.Preamble

The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) is a national programme sponsored by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). It is an intervention for potential early school leavers. It is based on the concept that all young people are capable of achieving real success in school, and they can have a positive experience of education, if the conditions are favourable.

It is not an alternative to the Junior Cycle but a support framework to it. It aims to ensure that students participate in the Junior Cycle along with their peers.

A young person who feels valued within the school community is more likely to stay in school. The development of a positive relationship between the young person and the teachers is central to this.

Through this framework:

- A Student Profiling System is adopted
- Students can track their own progress
- Achievement is acknowledged and rewarded at each stage

3. In FCC we aim that JCSP students will:

- Experience success in school
- Become involved in school life
- Have positive reports to bring home
- Develop a positive self-image
- Improve literacy and numeracy skills
- Attend school regularly
- Experience a broad curriculum
- Actively participate in the learning process
- Achieve a final positive record of achievement

4. SELECTION OF STUDENTS FOR JCSP

A maximum of 15 students are selected for JCSP in each junior year group. Selection is based on a defined set of criteria to ensure students who will benefit most from the programme are chosen.

4.1 Criteria

Some of the following criteria are used in selecting students to be part of the JCSP group

- CAT scores and other school-based assessments
- Difficulties with basic skills, including literacy and numeracy
- A record of high absenteeism from school
- Students who will benefit from additional learning resources
- Students who demonstrate a lack of confidence or have poor self esteem

4.2 Who is involved in the selection process?

The selection process typically involves the following staff members. This list is not exhaustive and may include additional personnel where appropriate:

- Principal and Deputy Principal
- Year Head and tutors
- JCSP Co-ordinator

- AEN Link Teacher

Following the selection process Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing if their son/daughter is offered a place in this Programme.

5. Organisation of JCSP in Firhouse Community College

In first year, students are placed in mixed ability classes for core subjects. During the first term - and beyond if necessary – student progress is monitored with a view to identifying which students would benefit from participating in JCSP.

Where the need arises, those students will receive extra support during Irish class or at other designated times. Support may be offered in the form of small groups or individual support.

5.1 Subjects taught to JCSP students

JCSP students in general tend to do the same subjects as all other students unless they have a psychological report exempting them from partaking in a particular subject or subjects or it has been deemed to be in the best interest of the student(s) to follow an amended timetable, with parental consent.

5.2 Links between JCSP and the new Junior Cycle

We believe that there are many opportunities within JCSP for students to engage with the aims and objectives of the Junior Cycle. In particular, involvement in JCSP statements and initiatives can enhance engagement with the Key Skills.

5.3 Enhancing student experiences through JCSP

Celebration of student success is an important part of the philosophy of JCSP and also of the College. We seek to do this through:

- Involving parents in JCSP celebrations of learning
- Ensuring that students experience a range of cultural activities through participating in JCSP initiatives
- Tracking student success through the Profiling system
- Facilitating student reflection on their learning through engagement with JCSP statements.

6. Profiling

6.1 How does profiling take place?

Profile meetings of teachers involved with JCSP take place during the year and are year-based. They are used to discuss strengths and challenges of the students and to plan how to meet student needs. In addition, a profile meeting for Third Years takes place in March to allow for final profiling and writing of references.

After November exams, students will reflect on their learning using JCSP statements from English, Maths and PE during pastoral care. The outcomes of this reflection will help inform subject teachers when identifying achieved statements during final profiling.

Students receive a certificate along with achieved statements and a reference at an end of year ceremony in third year.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Information Letter to Parents

Coláiste Chill na n-Iníon



Firhouse Community College

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are pleased to inform you that your child has been selected for the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), which runs in conjunction with the Junior Cycle.

JCSP is designed to support students in achieving their full potential by providing a more engaging approach to school. The programme aims to:

- Help students experience success in school
- Encourage greater involvement in school life
- Provide positive reports for students to bring home
- Develop a positive self-image
- Improve literacy and numeracy skills
- Support regular school attendance
- Offer a broad and balanced curriculum
- Promote active participation in learning
- Conclude with a final, positive Record of Achievement

Students' progress is carefully tracked and recorded throughout their time in the programme, ensuring that their development is supported and recognised.

We kindly ask you to confirm whether you give permission for your child to take part in the JCSP. Please return the signed slip below to the school as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

JCSP Coordinator

Year Head

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

I am happy for _____ to take part in the JCSP programme.

Firhouse Community College, Firhouse, Dublin 24 Telephone: 452 5807 Fax: 452 5423
Email: firhouseecc@ddlefb.ie Website: www.firhousecommunitycollege.ie
Principal: Senan Nolan Deputy Principals: Carmel Boyle, Máirín Brady

Appendix 2:

Curriculum Provision

Monitoring Progress in JCSP

Most JCSP students will sit the same subjects as the other students of the College in the Junior Cycle State Exams. They will take their subjects at levels based on their ability.

All students' progress is monitored in several ways including through their school reports in December and May, through year-head and tutor meetings, JCSP coordinator and subject teacher meetings and through parent-tutor meetings.

Literacy needs of students

The College has a whole-school policy in literacy. Literacy needs of students are met by individual classroom teachers by their use of a variety of strategies which include:

- Focusing on developing a range of reading strategies and skills
- Providing specific individualised instruction when required
- Focusing on supporting oral language development
- Regular use of assessment
- Providing frequent opportunities to practise reading
- Regular use of IT for individualised programmes
- Spelling Bees
- Keywords
- Reading for Meaning
- Reading for Pleasure
- Dictionary work
- Read along
- Graded Readers

As well as classroom strategies JCSP initiatives such as Drop Everything and Read, Primary Picture Books, Word Millionaire, Make a book etc. are also used, as appropriate, to promote literacy.

Numeracy needs of students

The College has a whole-school approach to numeracy development. Among the initiatives that have taken place over the years and that have added to the Maths Department resources are:

- Maths Laboratory
- Handheld Gaming Devices
- Flashmaster
- Maths Games
- Maths Dominos
- Clocks
- Geosticks
- Spheros

Appendix 3:

PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- The JCSP Co-ordinator has an APII post to co-ordinate the programme.
- The coordinator meets with the DP, relevant Year-head and other teachers to plan for JCSP.
- Data is stored in the JCSP office, data stored in compliance with GDPR and school data-protection policies.