



ACADEMIC POLICY

ST. BRIGID'S PRESENTATION SECONDARY **SCHOOL**

KILLARNEY

Reviewed: July 2020	Ratified by B.O.M.: 10 th August 2020	Next review: Academic Year 2021/2022
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CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

St. Brigid's Presentation Secondary School, Killarney is a voluntary Catholic Secondary School for girls only. It operates under the Trusteeship of CEIST. It supports the religious and educational philosophy of the Presentation Congregation and of its foundress Nano Nagle who responded to the needs of her time and developed an educational curriculum suitable for her students, with special concern for the disadvantaged.

The school aims within the limits of the available resources, to provide the best possible environment in order to cater for the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions of all students.

Our Pastoral Care Programme ensures that the uniqueness of each person is respected.

Students are invited to accept leadership roles within the school community and to discover and share their talents. There is a regular review of our subject choices.

The school is managed by a Board of Management, is funded by the Department of Education and Skills and operates within the regulations and guidelines set down by that Department. The Board of Management in managing the school for the Trustees is obliged to promote the ethos of the school by

- (a) entering into dialogue with all the educational partners
- (b) ensuring that the Mission Statement is reflected in the policies, plans and structures of the school and is part of the lived culture.

The school is a Catholic faith community, inspired by Gospel values, in which the dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honoured.

The Principal and Staff are committed to implementing the philosophy and ethos of Presentation education in providing educational excellence with accountability for high standards of learning and teaching in a caring environment where the needs of the learner, rather than academic achievement alone, is a priority.

Students are challenged to work to the best of their ability in order to reach their full potential in mind, body and spirit. They are encouraged to live a life in harmony with the whole of creation and nurture in themselves a respect for life in all its dimensions.

Parents are encouraged to share in a participative and collaborative role with the school in the development of policy, procedures and structures: to become actively involved in their child's personal welfare by monitoring general progress and behaviour.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our school is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for girls only under the Trusteeship of CEIST.

We strive to be a centre of growth and development.

Our aim is an education for life and living, which is realistic and challenging.

Our inspiration is the Christian vision,

which fosters the dignity and value of every human being.

We aim to ensure that the day- to- day running of the school is conducted in the light of the Presentation Ethos, the School's Mission Statement and CEIST Charter.

INTRODUCTION

St. Brigid's Presentation Secondary School aims to provide education for life and living, which is realistic and challenging. Our inspiration is the Christian Vision, which fosters the dignity and value of every human being.

The cultural, creative and intellectual development of each pupil is highly valued and every aspect of school life is designed to advance this process.

Students may pursue a five or six year course within the school. On entry to the school the students commence the three year Junior Cycle Programme. They may then chose to participate in the optional Transition Year Programme. At Senior Cycle, students may choose to participate in one of three Leaving Certificate programmes – Leaving Certificate Established, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) or Leaving Certificate Applied(LCA), each of which is two years in duration.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND PRAYER

Our school is essentially Catholic in nature. However, we welcome students from all faith communities and none. The Liturgical Calendar of the Catholic Church is highlighted during the school year. Religious especially Catholic iconography is displayed throughout the school. The Blessed Sacrament is kept in the

Prayer Room. The Presentation Cross is an integral part of the school crest and appears on school literature, the school uniform and the student diary. Times for reflection are organised for classes.

Religious Education (RE) is a core subject on the school curriculum and an integral part of the ethos of the school. However this does not affect the legal rights of parents to withdraw their daughter from Religious Instruction (as set out in the Constitution (Article 44(4))).

Permission to withdraw from Religious Education must be sought in writing from the Principal by parent(s)/guardian(s). Students who have been withdrawn from Religious Education Instruction must sit at the back of the class during RE. Under section 9 (d) of the Education Act 1998 schools are required to “promote moral, spiritual, social and personal develop of students”. It is for this reason that students who have been withdrawn from RE are required to use this time to study or read material of a spiritual or philosophical nature. The RE department have compiled a list of appropriate texts. Under no circumstances is this time a “free class” to do homework or other academic work.

Students of religions other than Catholic and students of no religion may with prior written permission from parents absent themselves from any religious services which are distinctly Catholic in nature. These students will be supervised by a member of staff for the duration of the service.

DIVISION OF CLASSES

St. Brigid’s Secondary School does not have a policy of streaming. The consistently high level of academic achievement is a reflection of the pupils' response to the encouragement of staff and parents. The School’s curriculum is constantly adapted to meet changing needs, offering a comprehensive and progressive range of subjects, extensive specialist facilities and a highly qualified teaching staff.

It is not possible to facilitate requests from students or from parent(s)/guardian(s) of students to be assigned to a particular teacher’s class.

Neither can requests from parent(s)/guardian(s) to place students in the same class be facilitated unless they are siblings in the same year group e.g. twins.

1. Division Of Classes in First Year

Students are divided into mixed ability base classes using the results of the CAT 4 Standardised Assessment which are completed prior to entry. Consideration is also given to ensuring that where possible, students are placed in a base class with at least one student from their primary school. Where a change to the assignment to class is required to facilitate this, consideration is given to maintaining the mixed ability nature of each class and students of similar academic profiles are swapped.

If it is necessary to split a First Year base class for the purpose of ensuring correct numbers in certain subjects it will be done on an alphabetical basis using the surname of the students.

Requests from parents to place students in the same base class cannot be facilitated unless they are siblings. In exceptional circumstances (i.e. a history of bullying in primary school) an appointment may be made with the Year Head to discuss the matter.

Students who do not complete the CAT 4 will be assigned to base classes last and this will be done in alphabetical order.

2. Division of Classes in Second Year For the 2020/2021 School Year

Students in Second Year will remain in the base class to which they were assigned in First Year unless they were in 1 Yellow in which case they will be assigned to the base class which they joined in First Year 2019/2020 for Irish.

Irish, English and Mathematics

Students will indicate their chosen level for Irish, English and Mathematics via written permission from parent(s)/guardian(s). Students who chose to study Ordinary level will be assigned to the Ordinary level class. All other students will remain in their base class.

Option Subjects

In the event that more than one class for a given subject appears on the same option line, classes for these subjects will be allocated on a mixed ability basis using the results attained in the standardised Christmas House Exams 2019. Where 2 or more students receive the same result, the students will be assigned classes in alphabetic order.

3. Division Of Classes in Third Year

Classes will remain the same as Second Year, unless a student with written consent of her parent(s)/guardian(s) requests a change of level from Higher to Ordinary or Ordinary to Foundation Level and it is possible to assign a student to a class where this level is being taught exclusively.

4. Division Of Classes in Transition Year

Students are initially assigned to base classes based on their chosen European language. Where more than one class exists for a particular language students will be assigned to classes alphabetically. However, consideration is given to ensuring an equal distribution of students from each base class in third year and to equal distribution of International and newly registered students.

5. Division Of Classes in Fifth Year For the 2020/2021 School Year

Repeat students and students who had participated in TY will be assigned to base classes first as follows:

- Divided into groups based on whether they have applied for a place in LCVP

- Arranged within these groups in alphabetical order

Students who have come straight from Third Year will then be assigned as follows:

- Divided into groups based on whether they have applied for a place in LCVP
- Arranged within these groups in alphabetical order

Irish, English and Mathematics

Students will remain in their base class for Irish, English and Maths unless they have selected to study the subject at ordinary level. Where they have selected ordinary level they will be assigned to an ordinary level class where they will sit with students from their base class.

Option Subjects

In the event that more than one class appears on the same option line, classes for these subjects will be allocated on a mixed ability basis using the process outlined below.

Repeat students and students who had participated in TY will be assigned first as follows:

- Divided into groups by grade received at Higher and Ordinary Level in Junior Certificate
- Arranged within these groups in alphabetical order
- Banded (mixed ability)

Students who have come straight from Third Year will then be assigned as follows:

- Divided into groups by grade received in Summer 2020 i.e. Junior Cycle Result
- Arranged within these groups in alphabetical order
- Banded (mixed ability)

6. Division Of Classes in Sixth Year

Classes will remain the same as Fifth Year unless a student with written consent of her parent(s)/guardian(s) requests a change of level from Higher to Ordinary or Ordinary to Foundation Level (where available) and it is possible to assign a student to a class where this level is being taught exclusively.

CHANGE OF LEVEL

Students wishing to change level are asked to complete the change of level form. The form must be fully completed and be signed by a Parent/Guardian, Subject Teacher, Deputy Principal/Principal and Guidance Counsellor. It must be submitted to the office before the request can be processed. If possible, the student will then be assigned to a class where this level is being taught exclusively. Students may not change class until they receive confirmation from the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Students who sit an examination at Ordinary/Foundation Level at Junior Certificate Level cannot be facilitated to move to Higher/Ordinary Level for Leaving Certificate.

CHANGE OF SUBJECT

Students wishing to change their subject choice are asked to complete the change of subject choice form available from the Guidance Counsellor. Having researched and understood the implications that changing subjects may have on their future subject options, career and Third Level choices, the student must ensure that the following people sign the form: Parent/Guardian, Subject Teacher, Deputy Principal/Principal and Guidance Counsellor. The completed form is then submitted to the office before the request can be accommodated. Requests to change subject choice can only be facilitated with the approval of the subject teacher and subject to availability of a space in the class. In some cases a waiting list may apply.

Requests to change subject choice should be made prior to the end of September each year. After this date it is not advisable to change subject choice as elements of compulsory coursework/theory will have been completed. Changes after this date will only be facilitated in exceptional circumstances and following consultation with the Parent(s)/Guardian(s), Subject Teacher, Deputy Principal/Principal and Guidance Counsellor.

Students wishing to change subject choice are required to sign an understanding that they accept that it is their responsibility to catch up on the material missed.

CHANGE OF PROGRAMME

Students wishing to change from one programme to another are asked to arrange a meeting with the Guidance Counsellor. Having researched and understood the implications that changing programme may have on their future subject options, career and Third Level choices, the student must submit their request in writing to the Principal. The written request must be signed by the student's parents/guardians and by the Guidance Counsellor. Requests to change programme choice can only be facilitated with the approval of the co-ordinator of the programme co-ordinator and is subject to availability of a space in the programme. In some cases, a waiting list may apply.

Ideally requests to change programme choice should be made prior to the end of September each year. After this date it is not advisable to change programme as elements of compulsory coursework/theory will have been completed. Changes after this date will only be facilitated in exceptional circumstances and following consultation with the Parent(s)/Guardian(s), the co-ordinator of the Programme, Deputy Principal/Principal and Guidance Counsellor.

Students wishing to change programmes are required to sign an understanding that they accept that it is their responsibility to catch up on the material missed.

Students may only be enrolled in one programme at any given time and students who accept the offer of a place on a programme automatically forfeit their place in all other programmes.

CO-OPERATION WITH ST. BRENDAN'S COLLEGE

The aim of the co-operation with St. Brendan's College is to provide Senior Cycle students with the widest range of subject choices possible. The co-operation is reviewed on an annual basis and the availability of places in classes in the co-operating school depends on the demand within the host school.

Students who attend classes in St. Brendan's College walk unsupervised to and from St. Brigid's and are obliged to sign in for roll calls at 9a.m. and 1.40p.m. in St. Brigid's. Due to the different organisational needs of each school (school closures, parent/teacher meetings, in-service etc.) there may be days when students miss a class in either school. Times of classes are not always compatible, and it is the students' responsibility to catch up on any academic work missed. Students who attend classes in St. Brendan's will miss a few minutes of class as a result of the necessity to move between schools.

Students are facilitated to sit the relevant SEC examinations in their home school. Every effort is made to accommodate House Exams as per the home school's timetable.

Christmas, mock exam and summer reports are provided in respect of subjects facilitated through the co-operation. In general students will sit their house exams in the school in which the host school where they take the classes for each subject.

PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students who participate in extra-curricular activities are likely to miss some academic classes throughout the year. These students are expected to use the "buddy system" (see Homework Policy and student diary) to identify the work covered during the missed class(es) and to complete the homework assigned.

REPEAT YEAR

As outlined in the Admissions Policy.

REPEAT LEAVING CERTIFICATE

As per repeat Leaving Certificate in Admissions Policy.

ADMISSION TO LCA

As outlined in Leaving Certificate Applied Admissions Policy.

ADMISSION TO TRANSITION YEAR

As outlined in Transition Year Admissions Policy.

RESOURCES

The financial and teaching resources of the school are provided by a combination of: voluntary contributions, fund-raising, Department of Education & Skills grants and teacher allocations.

Implementation of school planning and policies will have due regard to the efficient use of resources and funding available. The Board of Management may not incur any debt without the permission of the Trustees.

The school operates within the regulations determined by the Department of Education & Skills.

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education & Skills. These may be amended from time to time in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Where students have Special Educational Needs (SEN), there is a dynamic and proactive team in the school who will work to support students in every possible way. Students are regularly monitored and progress is reviewed. The team is dedicated in its work and participates in continuous professional development on a regular basis. In consultation with parents/guardians, small group support is offered to students who have diagnosed learning difficulties. The extent of availability of such support is dependent on the allocation provided to the school by the Department of Education and Skills. This is reviewed on an annual basis.

EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE

The school has an established tradition of catering for the needs of gifted and talented students. The success of the school's commitment to excellence and the development of the individual is evident from the long list of awards and scholarships.

EXEMPTION FROM IRISH

The school follows the directives from Department of Education & Skills with regard to exemption from Irish.

Students who are exempt from Irish with diagnosed Special Educational Needs may receive learning support during Irish class time.

CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

In accordance with directives from the Department of Education & Skills (Education Act, Sect. 9 c) the School Guidance Programme offers a range of interventions and activities on a developmental basis. These are designed to assist students to make decisions of an educational, career and personal /social nature.

CONCERNS RELATING TO ACADEMIC WORK

A parent/guardian/student (over 18) who has concerns regarding their daughter's academic progress in a particular subject should make an appointment and discuss the matter with the subject teacher with a view to resolving the concern. (See Complaints Procedures)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

On behalf of Board of Management