

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock



Curriculum Policy

Policy Details

Legal Status	Adopted	Version Date	Last Review	Next Review	Responsible
Statutory	June 2019	August 2016	May 2019	May 2021	P McCormick

Related Documents and Location

1. School Improvement Plan 2018-21 - C2k Private Folders
2. Gifted and Talented Policy - C2k Private Folders
3. Homework Policy - C2k Private Folders
4. Circular 2016/11 - Class sizes in Post-Primary Schools
5. Special Educational Needs Policy - C2k Private Folders

CONTENTS

1	College Vision Statement	3
2	College Mission Statement	3
3	Aims of the Curriculum	3
4	Planning for and Delivering the Curriculum	3
5	Key Stage 3 Curriculum – Junior School (Years 8 – 10)	6
6	End of Key Stage 3 Statutory Assessment	9
7	Key Stage 4 Curriculum – Senior School (Years 11 – 12)	9
8	Post-16 Curriculum – Upper School (Years 13 – 14)	11
9	Class Sizes and Oversubscription	13
10	Careers and Employability	14
11	Entitlement Framework	15
12	Area Learning Community (East Belfast Area Learning Community)	15
13	Subject Choice and Gender Stereotyping	16
14	Parental Involvement	17
15	Withdrawing from or Changing a GCSE/AS-level Course	17
16	Tier of Entry	18
17	Monitoring and Evaluation of the Curriculum	19
18	Differentiation	20
19	Special Educational Needs and the curriculum	21
20	How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy	21
Appendices		
	Appendix 1: How Can I Help with My Children’s Learning?	22
	Appendix 2: Request to Withdraw from a GCSE Course	24
	Appendix 3: Request to Withdraw from an AS-level Course	25
	Appendix 4: Room Allocation	26

1 COLLEGE VISION STATEMENT

To achieve 'Excellence through Care'.

2 COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock cares for young people in way that encourages them to develop to their full potential within a supportive Christian community. We seek to prepare our students to play an active and responsible role in society, and to use their talents for the service of others.

3 AIMS OF THE CURRICULUM

In keeping with College Aims, the resources available and DE guidelines, Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock aims to provide a curriculum that:

- Is in line with all legal curriculum requirements, including The Education (NI) Order 2006, The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (NI) 2007 and The Education (Other Skills) Order (NI) 2007.
- Is underpinned by the values of justice, tolerance and respect for diversity.
- Develops young people intellectually, physically, spiritually, morally, socially and emotionally.
- Responds to students' curricular needs and interests, is inclusive and supports their individual aptitudes and talents.
- Enables students to develop the attributes, knowledge and skills they will need if they are to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.
- Nurtures in students a life-long interest in learning and provides challenge and enjoyment.
- Is broad and balanced and promotes coherency, continuity and progression in students' learning.
- Engages students with other schools, the local community and the wider community.
- Leads to improved levels of attainment for all students.

4 PLANNING FOR AND DELIVERING THE CURRICULUM

4.1 This Curriculum Policy embraces the **Vision Statement**, **Mission Statement** and **Aims of the College**, and reflects the curriculum priorities of the College as stated in the goals and targets of the **School Improvement Plan, 2018-21**. These curriculum priorities have been identified after an analysis of a range of sources, including consultation with parents, students and staff of the College, as well as educational and community partners.

The College curriculum is also consistent with the statutory requirements that schools are obliged to conform to.

The curriculum takes account of the students' differing stages of development, abilities and attainments and tries to ensure that their individual needs are met.

- The curriculum is largely delivered through Subject Departments, who develop schemes of work which should be regarded as working documents.

- The schemes of work will include learning intentions, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods and resources.
- At Key Stage 3 schemes will also include reference to Assessment for Learning, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and the cross-curricular skills of Using ICT, Communication and Using Mathematics.
- Assessments and homeworks should be designed to test whether the learning outcomes have been met.
- The units of work will be evaluated to help facilitate future planning.

4.2 **Curriculum Organisation**

Teaching is usually organised by Department, unless the subject is delivered on a cross-curricular basis (ICT, Numeracy and Literacy). Each Department has a Head of Department who is responsible for the delivery of his/her part of the curriculum. There are also three Co-ordinators with responsibility for ICT, Numeracy and Literacy. Each Department produces a Department handbook, which includes Department targets and action plans. The work of Heads of Department is overseen by the Faculty Team, i.e. three Heads of Faculty and the Vice Principal (Curriculum). The Faculty Team meets weekly and this is the main forum for discussing curricular matters.

In August, Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators prepare reports which are submitted to and discussed with the Principal. These reports help in the monitoring and evaluation the College curriculum, and overall, give a clear indication of the College's curricular priorities and professional training needs.

4.3 **Curriculum Roles and Responsibilities**

Team	Membership	Roles and Responsibilities
n/a	Principal	Overall accountability for all aspects of College performance and procedures.
n/a	Vice Principal	To maintain high educational standards within the College. To lead and promote effective team-working within the College in the context of the SIP. To promote good relationships between the College, parents and various external agencies. To develop positive learning environments in which all students are encouraged to reach their potential. To co-ordinate and facilitate ongoing staff development. To manage change to ensure effective and appropriate student development. To put in place policies and procedures to ensure that the College meets all of the changing curriculum requirements. To monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching within the College as a self-evaluating institution. To clerk the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Governors.

Faculty Team	Vice Principal 3 Heads of Faculty	To develop an overview of the curriculum, initiate curriculum development and take the lead in formulating curriculum policy. To liaise with Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators to ensure that appropriate schemes of work are in place. To monitor and evaluate the delivery of the curriculum throughout the College. To monitor and evaluate standards of achievement throughout the College. To engage with Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators in the process of target setting and action planning. To develop collaborative links with other schools and colleges.
Heads of Department and Co-ordinators	29 Heads of Department 4 Co-ordinators	To take the lead in developing schemes of work appropriate to the needs of our students. To quality assure the content and delivery of the curriculum. To take the lead in the process of target setting and action planning with department colleagues and to put in place procedures for monitoring targets. To monitor and evaluate standards of achievement of students within their departments. To develop connected learning programmes with other departments. To encourage and promote whole staff development within their departments.
Subject Departments	Individual Heads of Departments Subject teachers within each Department	To collaborate with department colleagues in developing schemes of work appropriate to the needs of our students. To engage with department colleagues in the process of target setting and action planning and to put in place procedures for monitoring targets. To monitor and evaluate standards of achievement of students within their departments.
Senior Leadership Team	Principal 2 Vice Principals 3 Heads of Faculty 3 Heads of School	To discuss and ratify major aspects of curriculum policy.
Board of Governors' Curriculum Committee	Principal Vice Principal 3 Governors	To ensure that the curriculum is delivered, and attainment is at a high standard. To ratify curriculum policy. To encourage curriculum development. To ensure that arrangements are in place to deal with complaints about the delivery of the curriculum.

4.4 **Schemes of Work and Lesson Plans**

Each Subject Department is required to have schemes of work for all of its courses or programmes related, where appropriate, to the NI Curriculum and/or examination board requirements. These schemes of work are followed by all departmental staff and their delivery monitored by Heads of Department and Heads of Faculty.

Teachers plan for the delivery of individual lessons or sequences of lessons.

Schemes of work set out how the content of the course is structured, so that students' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively, and how the teaching is organised. These schemes of work are supported by assessment strategies and methods for ensuring standardisation of expectation and assessment.

The schemes of work in every learning area are devised to ensure equal access for all students, irrespective of gender, religious affiliation, nationality, socio-economic background or special educational need.

Electronic versions of schemes of work are uploaded to Staff (T) drive, where they can be accessed by all teaching staff.

5 **KEY STAGE 3 CURRICULUM – JUNIOR SCHOOL (YEARS 8 – 10)**

The statutory curriculum at Key Stage 3 is called the **Northern Ireland Curriculum**. It is defined in statements of minimum entitlement, which are set out under the curriculum objectives and key elements, with examples that relate to life and work.

The legislative basis of the NI Curriculum is **The Education (NI) Order 2006**, which compels the College to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which '*promotes the spiritual, emotional, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of students and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life*'.

This overarching aim is in harmony with the Vision Statement, Mission Statement and Aims of the College, and the curriculum on offer in the College.

The **Objectives of the NI Curriculum** are to provide relevant learning experiences which help each young person to develop:

- as an individual;
- a contributor to society; and
- a contributor to the economy and environment.

The **main ideas behind the NI Curriculum** are to:

- provide greater **flexibility** through reduced requirements;
- enable schools to **design** a curriculum that meets their needs;
- provide scope for teachers to follow their **professional instincts**;
- promote more **coherent thinking, collaboration and relevance** in how learning is presented;
- strike the right **balance** in skills, capabilities, knowledge and understanding;
- encourage students to be **independent, motivated learners**.

To bring these ideas to fruition, **curriculum development** in the College has led to:

- A more flexible curriculum
 - Minimum subject requirements
 - Themes that engage young people
 - Emphasis on relevance and connected learning

- A focus on Learning for Life and Work
 - Personal Development
 - Citizenship
 - Employability
 - Home Economics

- The development of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TS&PC)
 - TS&PC are now an intrinsic part of classroom practice

- An Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach to learning
 - Classroom methodology is employed that focuses on learning, student participation and feedback

5.1 Areas of Learning and Subject Strands

Areas of Learning	Subject Strands
Language and Literacy	English Media Education
Mathematics and Numeracy	Mathematics Financial Capability
Modern Languages	Any official language of the European Union other than English (French, German, Irish and Spanish in OLSPCK)
The Arts	Art and Design Music Drama
Environment and Society	History Geography
Science and Technology	Science Technology and Design
Learning for Life and Work	Employability Local and Global Citizenship Personal Development Home Economics
Physical Education	Physical Education
Religious Education	Religious Education

The minimum statutory requirements for the NI Curriculum at Key Stage 3 are set out in nine **Areas of Learning**, some with **subject strands**. The College's curriculum includes provision for these Areas of Learning and their contributory subject strands as set out in the table above.

The minimum statutory requirements within the Areas of Learning and subject strands cover Years 8, 9 and 10. Teachers in the College have considerable scope to develop their schemes of work by selecting from within the Areas of Learning, those aspects they consider **appropriate to the ability and interests** of their students.

Year 8 and 9 students study the following subjects:

- Art and Design
- Drama
- English
- Employability
- Geography
- History
- Home Economics
- Information and Communication Technology
- Local and Global Citizenship
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Science
- Technology and Design

Students also choose two Modern Languages from:

- French
- German
- Irish
- Spanish

A Personal Development Programme is provided, and all Junior School students follow our "Education for Love" Programme.

In **Year 10**, students study all of the above subjects but Science is taught as the separate subjects of:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics

We realise that transition from primary to grammar school can be quite difficult for children, so care is taken to ensure that the changeover goes as smoothly as possible. Year 8 students follow a **two-day induction course** before commencing their academic studies. During these days they meet their tutors, get to know the layout of the College, have the opportunity to discuss their expectations and concerns and learn about the ethos of the College.

6 END OF KEY STAGE 3 STATUTORY ASSESSMENT

The **Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT** are relevant across the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on using, applying and transferring skills effectively in real and relevant contexts.

At Key Stage 3, the College is required to assess and report each student's progress in the Cross-Curricular Skills with reference to the Levels of Progression. The **Levels of Progression** set out, in the form of "can do" statements, a continuum of skills that students should be able to demonstrate if they are to build the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills needed to function effectively in life and in the world of work.

Teachers should ensure assessment activities, including CCEA approved assessment tasks, are planned and embedded in learning and teaching. Assessment activities should have a clear purpose, for example for formative or summative use. CCEA approved assessment tasks should be used to support the summative assessment judgement for each of the Cross-Curricular Skills.

The assessment of Communication and Using Mathematics is led by the English and Mathematics Departments respectively, with support being provided by other departments. Assessment of student achievement in the Areas of Learning is carried out in accordance with the College's Assessment policy. Assessment of the Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities) takes place within the Areas of Learning and is based on qualitative judgements of student progress.

7 KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM – SENIOR SCHOOL (YEARS 11 – 12)

In Senior School, students study **10, 11 or 12** GCSE examination courses over a two-year period, selected from a range of 26 accredited courses. Unless there are exceptional circumstances students are expected to study 10 courses, but some will fast track through GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 and study GCSE Further Mathematics as an 11th course in Year 12. GCSE Music is also offered as a fast track option in Year 11. A small number of very able students will study both fast track Mathematics and Music in Year 11 and thus will study a total of 12 GCSE courses during their two years in Senior School.

Teachers and Careers staff will advise students about their choice of GCSE courses, to ensure that each student's curriculum is appropriate to his/her abilities, interests and career aspirations. Sometimes a Curriculum or Pastoral leader will need to be proactive in strongly recommending a specific GCSE course or tier of entry to a student and his/her parents.

Students who have changed their career plans or are finding their choices of GCSE courses challenging, may be allowed to study a reduced curriculum, but only after consultation with pastoral staff, parents, the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and external agencies (if appropriate). Students are strongly encouraged to continue with the GCSE courses assigned to them unless there is good reason not to. (See Appendix 2: *Request to Withdraw from a GCSE Course*)

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum caters for a wide range of interests and is designed to give students as much choice as possible while conforming to statutory requirements. Every student is encouraged to aim for breadth and balance in their curriculum so that a wide variety of career opportunities remain open. Careers staff in the College have a key role in addressing this aim.

The curriculum offered at Key Stage 4 is in line with the DE Entitlement Framework which states that a school should offer a minimum of 21 GCSE courses, at least one third of which must be general and at least one third of which must be applied. (see section 11, page 14)

Key Stage 4 students sit examinations in **compulsory core** and **optional GCSE subjects**.

Compulsory Core GCSE Subjects

- Every student must study a compulsory core of 5 GCSE courses: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Learning for Life & Work and Religious Education.
- Students who achieve a high mark in the College's End of Key Stage 3 Mathematics exam will be offered the opportunity to study GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 followed by GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12.

Optional GCSE Courses

- Students choose **five courses** from Groups 1, 2 and 3 (Science Double Award is equivalent to two courses).
- It is strongly recommended that they **choose at least one Science course from Group 1**. Any combination of the separate Sciences can be chosen. If Science Double Award is chosen, none of the separate Sciences can be chosen. If Science Double Award is chosen, there are three choices left, to be taken from Groups 2 and/or 3.
- It is strongly recommended that every student **chooses a Modern Language from Group 2**. They may choose more than one modern language.
- **Group 3** contains the rest of the **optional courses**. **Music** may be taken as a **one-year** course during three lunch periods in Year 11 in addition to five other courses chosen from the groups below. Students must consult with the Head of Music before selecting this option.
- It is strongly recommended that students choose at least one **Science course** from Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Science Double Award and a **Modern Language** from French, German, Irish or Spanish.

Students proposing not to choose either a Science course or a Modern Language subject must first seek advice from their Science/Language teachers and a Careers Teacher/Adviser.

Optional GCSE Courses

Group 1

Science: Double Award (2 choices)
Biology
Chemistry
Physics

Group 2

French
German
Irish
Spanish

Group 3

Art and Design
Business Studies
Computer Science
Digital Technology
Drama
Food and Nutrition
Geography
History
Journalism
Music (2-year course)
Music (1-year course)
Physical Education
Technology and Design

In addition to GCSE examination courses, **non-examination** Careers Education, Physical Education and the College Personal Development Programme are compulsory for all students.

8 POST-16 CURRICULUM – UPPER SCHOOL (YEARS 13 – 14)

8.1 Entry on to AS-/A-level Courses

An **A-level** is usually studied as a two-year course, with the **AS-level** studied first in Year 13 and the **A2** studied in Year 14. 40% of the marks are assessed through the AS-level units, with the remaining 60% assessed through the A2 units.

All students entering Sixth Form must study AS-level and A2 courses. The AS-level and A2 courses are each made up of two or three assessment units and are examined at the end of Year 13 and 14 respectively. Overall, an A-level course consists of four or six assessment units. Students will be entered for the AS-level qualification in their chosen courses at the end of Year 13 irrespective of whether or not they wish to proceed to the full A-level qualification.

In Upper School, students have the choice to study 3, 4 or 5 AS -level courses in Year 13 followed by 3, 4 or 5 A2 courses in Year 14. The most popular choice is to study 4 AS-level courses in Year 13 and take 3 of them through to full A-level in Year 14.

Teachers and Careers staff will advise students about their choice of AS-level and A2 courses, to ensure that each student's curriculum is appropriate to his/her abilities, interests and career aspirations. Sometimes a Curriculum or Pastoral leader will need to be proactive in strongly recommending a specific AS-/A-level course to a student and his/her parents.

Students who have changed their career plans or are finding their choices of AS-level or A2 courses challenging, may be allowed to drop or change courses, but only after consultation with pastoral staff, parents, the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and external agencies (if appropriate). Students are strongly encouraged to continue with the courses assigned to them unless there is good reason not to. (See Appendix 3: *Request to Withdraw from an AS-level Course*)

The Post-16 Curriculum caters for a wide range of interests and is designed to give students as much choice as possible while conforming to statutory requirements. Every student is encouraged to aim for breadth and balance in their curriculum so that a wide variety of career pathways remain open. Careers staff in the College have a key role in addressing this aim.

The curriculum offered at Post-16 in line with the DE Entitlement Framework which states that a school should offer a minimum of 21 A-level courses, at least one third of which must be general and at least one third of which must be applied. (see section 11, page 14)

Students wishing to progress to the Sixth Form must fulfil the College's criteria for entry. The academic requirement is a minimum of **five GCSE courses with grades A-C. Four of these five courses must be at grade B** level or above. A grade B at GCSE is required for entry into most AS-level and A-level courses. Some courses have higher entry levels. (Courses with equivalent grades on the English Awarding Bodies' 9 to 1 scale are also acceptable)

8.2 Sixth Form Courses Offered

The Sixth Form curriculum is designed to provide for both academic study and the personal development of our students. The Sixth Form programme includes the following elements:

Compulsory Elements

- AS-level and A2 courses
- Careers Education and Guidance
- Life Issues
- Modular Religious Education Programme (compulsory for non AS-/A2 RE students)
- Personal Development Programme

Co-curricular Elements

- Community Service Programme
- Student Mentor Programmes
- Mandarin Language and Culture

Other enrichment courses may be arranged depending on demand.

Depending on timetable arrangements, the subjects listed are offered at **AS-level and A-level**, and students can study any combination of these courses.

Art & Design	English Literature	Mathematics
Biology	French	Music
Business Studies	Further Mathematics	Nutrition & Food Science
Chemistry	Geography	Physical Education
Computer Science	German	Physics
Design & Technology	Government & Politics	Religious Education
Digital Technology	History	Sociology
Drama & Theatre Studies	Irish	Spanish
Economics		

8.3 AS-/A-level Options

- Most students are expected to choose **four AS-level courses in Year 13** and continue with **three of them into Year 14 as A-levels**. At the end of Year 14 these students will have obtained an award of three A-levels and one AS-level.
- Some students may choose four AS-level courses in Year 13 and continue with all of them into Year 14 as A-levels. At the end of Year 14 these students will have obtained an award of four A-levels.
- Some students may choose three AS-level courses in Year 13 and continue with these into Year 14 as A-levels. At the end of Year 14 these students will have obtained an award of three A-levels.
- Students who take three AS-level courses in Year 13 may continue two of these into Year 14 as A-levels and take up another AS-level. At the end of Year 14 these students will have obtained an award of two A-levels and two AS-levels. Timetable arrangements will restrict the choice of the AS-levels available in Year 14.
- Courses are offered on the condition that there are sufficient students to form viable classes.

8.4 UCAS Tariff Points

UCAS tariff points are awarded for each AS-level and each A-level course grade obtained and will be used by many universities for entry onto their courses. Students are asked to check their

chosen Universities' policies on UCAS tariff points and obtain advice from their Careers teachers. Below is a summary of the UCAS tariff:

A-level Grade	Tariff Points	AS-level Grade	Tariff Points
A*	56		
A	48	A	20
B	40	B	16
C	32	C	12
D	24	D	10
E	16	E	6

9 CLASS SIZES AND OVERSUBSCRIPTION

9.1 Maximum Class Size

The size of classes in the College will be determined by budgetary considerations and DENI regulations (see DE Circular 2016/11 – Class sizes in Post-Primary Schools):

- the maximum size for a **general class** is **35 students**;
- the maximum size for a **practical class** is **normally 20 students**, though there are exceptions for Science, Art & Design, Physical Education, Home Economics, Music Technology & Design and Engineering.

Science

- up to 26 students in Years 8 – 10;
- up to 24 students in Years 11 – 12;
- up to 20 students in Years 13 – 14.

Art & Design

- up to 26 students in Years 8 – 10;
- up to 20 students in Years 11 – 14.

Physical Education

- if classes are located in a gym or assembly hall, up to 25 students in Years 8 – 10;
- if classes are located in a gym or assembly hall, up to 20 students in Years 11 – 14.
- if classes are located in playing pitches or sports halls, up to 30 students in Years 8 – 14.

Home Economics, Music, Technology & Design and Engineering

- up to 26 students in Years 8 – 10;
- up to 24 students in Years 11 – 12;
- up to 20 students in Years 13 – 14.

9.2 Minimum Class Size

DENI does not recommend a minimum size for a class, so it is up to the College to decide on the viability of classes. Every effort will be made to accommodate course choices after considering the demand for the course, timetable arrangements and budgetary considerations. If the number of students choosing a particular course is less than 10, the College may decide that the class will still run. Possible reasons for this include:

- The number of students choosing the course is lower than has been the trend in recent

- years;
- Students have very good reasons for wanting to study the course, including its usefulness for university entrance;
- There is evidence that the course enriches the curriculum;
- The College is able to justify providing the resources to run the class.

In some cases, where the student uptake is low, the College may try to collaborate with another institution in order to make it viable to offer particular courses (e.g. via EBALC).

9.3 **Oversubscription**

If there are more applications to take a GCSE or A-level course than there are places available, students will be selected according to how well they have performed in their:

- Year 10 assessments in the relevant course(s) for GCSE entry;
- GCSE assessments in the relevant course(s) for A-level entry.

10 **CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY**

A large team of experienced teachers and a Department for the Economy (DfE) Careers Adviser are involved in the provision of Careers and Employability.

Facilities are divided between the Counselling rooms throughout the College, used for individual and small group guidance; the Careers Classroom where classes are taught and the Careers section of the Library, used by individual students to access Careers information.

From Year 8 to 14, all students have one compulsory period per week of timetabled Careers or Employability, and students are given booklets of information and work sheets related to their lessons.

At Key Stage 3 the CCEA Education for Employability programme is followed, with its emphasis on student-centred learning and preparing young people for life after school. In addition to the normal weekly Careers lesson, Key Stage 4 students also study the CCEA GCSE Learning for Life and Work course, of which Employability is a major component. In the Sixth Form, the emphasis is on preparing students for university and working life.

Careers staff advise on all aspects of subject and career choice, and guidance is offered to both class groups and individuals. GCSE and A-/AS-level Option Books are produced annually to help students make their subject choices. All students in Years 10, 12 and 13 are individually interviewed before they choose their GCSEs, A-levels and Higher/Further Education options. Individual guidance on subject choice is offered to students and parents via Option Days in the second term. Careers staff are also available to students and parents after the publication of examination results, and at parent-teacher meetings. The College's Careers Adviser plays an important guidance role, particularly with Year 12 students. Parents are also encouraged to become constructively involved in the career planning of their children.

From Year 10 onwards, students are required to produce realistic Personal Career Plans. ICT is considered to be vitally important to successfully addressing the objectives of the Careers and Employability programmes. The Internet is extensively utilized and students are encouraged to answer psychometric questionnaires to ascertain or confirm their career choices.

Year 13 students participate in the College's annual work experience scheme. Further periods of work experience are also encouraged at appropriate times, especially for Sixth Form students. A Careers Convention is held in the College every second year. In the alternate years, students are encouraged to participate in a Convention organised by a neighbouring school.

11 ENTITLEMENT FRAMEWORK

In order to meet the full statutory requirements of the Entitlement Framework, since September 2017, all post-primary schools are required to provide students with access to a **minimum of 21 courses at Key Stage 4 and 21 courses at post-16**; of which at least one third must be general and one third applied.

The philosophy behind the Framework is to **improve the breadth, balance and coherence of the post-14 curriculum** across Northern Ireland. Schools are being asked to offer a wider range of choices that encompass both **general (academic)** and **applied** courses. In doing so, DE hopes that young people will have access to a curriculum that interests and excites them and is relevant to their career aspirations and the needs of the local economy. In this context, the Entitlement Framework is an important stepping stone to DE's vision of a successful school, as outlined in *Every School a Good School: A Strategy for School Improvement*.

In 2019-20, it is planned that 26 courses will be offered at Key Stage 4, with 11 categorised as applied and 15 as general. At Key Stage 5, at least 25 courses will be offered, with 8 categorised as applied and 18 as general.

At the start of each school year, the Vice Principal (Curriculum) completes an **Entitlement Framework Audit** of curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 and Post-16, the results of which are collated into an annual **Entitlement Framework Curriculum Audit Report**. Analysis of the College's Report, along with those of other schools in the area, is used to plan for the full implementation of the Entitlement Framework.

The arrangements for the delivery of the Entitlement Framework will differ from school to school, but it is envisaged that it will involve partnerships with other schools in the area at Post-16. Every year, we explore such possibilities through regular planned meetings with schools in our designated **Area Learning Community** and further afield.

12 AREA LEARNING COMMUNITY (EAST BELFAST AREA LEARNING COMMUNITY)

Aim

The East Belfast Area Learning Community is established to promote a culture of collaboration across the educational providers in the area whilst recognising their individual autonomy. The community aims to provide equality of opportunity for achievement and progression; and reflect the needs of the local and regional economy.

Objectives

The East Belfast Area Learning Community is committed to developing opportunities for collaboration between education providers. Such collaboration will allow individual institutions to co-exist and complement each other, and aim to provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum which:

- **Motivates** young people to participate in lifelong learning by developing a flexible, challenging curriculum and training provision based on local needs analysis and the needs of the local and regional labour market, and which prioritises young people's needs and aspirations;
- **Provides** opportunities for progression leading to outcomes that learners value and which are valued by wider society;
- **Promotes** young people's skills, ambitions and aptitudes; supporting their progression during Key Stage 4 and from Key Stage 4 to post 16, employment, apprenticeships and/ or Further/ Higher Education Training to 19 and beyond;
- **Permits** monitoring, evaluating and reviewing provision to ensure that it promotes excellence, reaches agreed quality standards, meets the needs of young people and increases their participation;
- **Provides** opportunities, as appropriate, for young people to be involved in the planning, reviewing and evaluation of provision;
- **Creates** opportunities for joint staff development.

Membership

The members of EBALC are:

- Ashfield Boys' High School
- Ashfield Girls' High School
- Bloomfield Collegiate
- Campbell College
- Grosvenor Grammar School
- Lagan College
- Mitchell House
- Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock
- Park School
- Strathearn School
- Tor Bank School

Any community/business/education partners may attend an EBALC meeting, on invitation, for the purpose of discussing relevant matters.

Committees

Staff in the College attend meetings and fully participate in the work of the six committees established to help realise the aim and objectives of EBALC. These committees are made up of:

- Principals' Steering Group
- Curriculum Leaders
- Special Educational Needs Leaders
- Information Technology Leaders
- CEIAG Leaders
- Pastoral Leaders

13 SUBJECT CHOICE AND GENDER STEREOTYPING

Gender stereotyping can involve students, parents and teachers making inaccurate assumptions about the different roles that men and women can play in society. Such assumptions restrict individual subject choice at Key Stage 4 and post-16, which leads to wasted talent and unfulfilled

potential, to skills gaps and to lower pay for those jobs which are seen as 'women's work'. In short, gender stereotyping results in discrimination against both women and men.

It is challenged when students are asked to realistically consider **all** of the available GCSE/A-level subject choices and career options, and do not impose limits on their opportunities because they are male or female. It is challenged when students pick the optional subjects that they like and are good at, instead of simply following the crowd.

Parents are the single most important influence on students' subject choices. They should encourage their sons and daughters to widen their subject choices at school and beyond and provide a home environment where girls and boys are encouraged to share all tasks equally.

Teachers and Careers advisers at Knock also have a duty to present unbiased information and to support those students who step beyond traditional GCSE subject and career choices.

14 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Regular contact with parents is maintained throughout a student's career at the College. Written reports are sent to parents and Parent-Teacher and Options Day meetings are held to discuss the academic and social development of all students.

A twice-yearly newsletter keeps parents informed about events and changes in the life of the school. The College website (www.knock.co.uk) is also used to inform parents about what is happening in the wider school community. If, at any time, parents are concerned about their son/daughter, they are encouraged to contact the College immediately.

Parents and students are informed of the College's **Homework Policy** and students are provided with a College Student Planner. Parents are encouraged to support their children in this extension of their school work.

(See Appendix 1: How can I help with my children's learning?)

15 WITHDRAWING FROM OR CHANGING A GCSE/AS-LEVEL COURSE

- In **Year 11 and 12** it is expected that all students will have a full timetable of lessons.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will a Key Stage 4 student be allowed to withdraw from a GCSE course. The request to study a reduced timetable must be supported by medical evidence submitted to the Head of School (Mr Hughes).
- A student who decides at the start of Year 11, to study GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 and GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12, must be fully committed to this option. All students are required to study a Mathematics course in Year 12 i.e. GCSE Mathematics or GCSE Further Mathematics.
- In **Year 13** it is expected that all students will study 4 or 3 AS-levels. If a student studying 3 AS-levels is allowed to withdraw from an AS-level course, he/she would normally be expected to replace it with another AS-level course.
- In **Year 13**, students who are finding the study of four AS-level courses challenging, may be advised to drop down to three courses. They will be required to talk with subject teachers, the Head of School and Careers staff, in a coordinated approach to ensure that they continue with the best combination of courses that will allow them to fulfil their potential.

- In **Year 14** it is expected that all students will study at least 3 A2 courses. In exceptional circumstances, a student may be allowed to study 2 A2 courses with 1 AS-level course.

15.1 Procedure for Withdrawing from a GCSE Course

Students who are considering withdrawing from a GCSE course should use the *Request to Withdraw from a GCSE Course* form (see Appendix 2). Any proposed timetable change must be discussed with the:

- GCSE Teacher
 - Careers Teacher
 - Head of School
 - Parent/Guardian
 - Vice Principal (Curriculum)
- For each request, all parties should be in general agreement that it is in the student's best interests to withdraw from the GCSE course.
 - When final approval has been given by the Vice Principal (Curriculum), the student should inform the College Examination Officer. The Vice Principal (Curriculum) will also inform the College Examination Officer by e-mail.

15.2 Procedure for Withdrawing from an AS-level Course

Students who are considering withdrawing from an AS-level course should use the *Request to Withdraw from an AS-level Course* form (see Appendix 3). Any proposed timetable change must be discussed with the:

- AS-level Teacher
 - Careers Teacher
 - Head of School
 - Parent/Guardian
 - Vice Principal (Curriculum)
- For each request, all parties should be in general agreement that it is in the student's best interests to withdraw from studying the AS-level course.
 - When final approval has been given by the Vice Principal (Curriculum), the student should inform the College Examination Officer. The Vice Principal (Curriculum) will also inform the College Examination Officer by e-mail.

16 TIER OF ENTRY

At GCSE level a number of courses have different tiers of entry. It is College policy to enter students for the highest exam tier. However, in a small number of cases a lower tier of entry will be recommended by teachers. Based on performance throughout the course, teachers will communicate with parents, recommending a tier of entry. **Parents will then confirm that they accept the recommendation, or exceptionally, that they wish their son/daughter to be entered for a different tier.**

Heads of Department will then pass on this information to the College Examination Officer.

Teachers must ensure that Heads of Department are aware of any subsequent requests to change a tier of entry. Heads of Department must then ensure that students and parents are given appropriate guidance and inform the College Examination Officer of any changes in tier of entry.

17 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE CURRICULUM

Consideration of the progress made in addressing the curricular goals and targets outlined in the

School Improvement Plan (SIP) is core to monitoring and evaluating the College curriculum. The Board of Governors has delegated to the Principal the requirement to monitor, review and evaluate all aspects of the SIP on an annual basis, through verbal and written reports from those members of the Senior Leadership Team who are responsible for each area based on the stated success criteria. Members monitor progress through meetings with those responsible for action plans on a termly basis and report to the SLT and Principal annually. An annual Progress Report will be submitted to the Board of Governors.

Monitoring and evaluation are key components of the College's aim to raise student achievement. Within the curriculum, this involves focusing on teaching and learning, the performance of students, the effectiveness of teachers and hence the standard of achievement across the whole College.

The work of the Faculty Team is central to the effective monitoring and evaluation of the College curriculum. The Team reviews schemes of work, analyses reports on curricular projects, meets with Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators, reviews Department action plans, analyses examination results and promotes curricular innovation.

Some of the **broad issues** examined include:

- Are all statutory curricular requirements being met?
- Are the needs of all students being addressed, including the gifted and talented and those with Special Educational Needs?
- Are lessons sufficiently challenging for students?
- Is there continuity and progression in the curriculum between one year group and the next?
- Is an AfL approach consistently used across the curriculum?
- Are the cross-curricular skills, along with thinking skills and personal capabilities, infused into the taught curriculum?
- How do the curricular areas relate to each other; e.g. is there evidence of planning for connected learning and skills development?
- Are there adequate opportunities for practical and oral work?
- Are students achieving their potential in all areas of the curriculum?
- Are subject departments achieving the targets they have set for themselves?
- How does student performance, across different subjects and whole school, compare with the benchmark figures for NI grammar schools?
- What are the curricular issues that concern students and parents?
- What has been the impact of a particular curricular initiative?

The **main methods** used in the College to monitor and evaluate the curriculum are:

- SLT meetings, which focus on progress made towards achieving curricular targets.
- Student, parent and staff feedback through questionnaires and focus groups.
- End of year progress reports on curricular goals and targets, submitted by Heads of Department to the Principal.
- Weekly meetings of the Faculty Team, which often focus on a particular aspect of the curriculum. This may involve consideration of reports submitted by a teacher responsible for implementing an aspect of the curriculum.

- Termly meeting of Heads of Department, which can be used to obtain evaluative feedback.
- Subject Department meetings where teachers are able to give their views on the progress being made with a particular target, including student achievement.
- Subject teachers self-monitoring and evaluating their teaching, identifying areas of strength and areas that require further development.
- The College's PRSD programme, which has been particularly useful in encouraging innovation within the curriculum, followed by monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes achieved.
- Induction and EPD classroom observations.
- Classroom observations of new teachers (who have previously completed EPD 2) by the Principal.

18 **DIFFERENTIATION**

Differentiation is the process by which curriculum objectives, teaching methods assessment methods, resources and learning activities are planned to cater for the needs of individual students.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that work is differentiated to meet the needs of the individual students in the class.

Reference to a student's IEP may give some guidance on strategies as well as the difficulties which present. Different **learning styles** should be considered as well as different levels of ability.

The following are among the strategies that may be employed:

Differentiation by task

This means that the same learning intention is used but different tasks are provided. The tasks may be easy at the beginning and progress to a greater level of difficulty; in this way, the work is matched to the ability of the students and everyone is likely to experience success.

Differentiation by outcome

The same content, materials, stimulus or task is used for all students: this works best with open ended activities and can be successful for individual or group task. More capable students are enabled to extend their thinking and develop their responses more fully.

Differentiation by support

It is important to remember that all students need support at times, however, the nature and extent of the support differs according to the individual's needs. In some cases, the support required is to encourage the student to attempt a task while at other times it is to ask pertinent questions which will extend the student or help them to explore an alternative way of approaching a task. This requires the teacher to target intervention wisely to address individual need and this may result in an increased level of interaction which will have positive outcomes for students.

Differentiation by resource

All students may be given the same task or questions to complete but different stimulus materials, graduated according to the ability range within the class, are used.

Differentiation by pace

More able students can often deduce next steps and proceed independently with tasks.

Differentiation by dialogue

The teacher gives a basic outline of the task from which some students will be able to begin the work. This is then followed by further explanation, exemplification or illustration and targeted questioning to support less able students. It is essential that appropriate language is used.

Differentiation by choice

A choice of activities is made available to match the abilities, interests and enthusiasm of the students. A range of starting points may be provided, and varied materials or processes may be employed. This can also facilitate extension activities for more able students.

19 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND THE CURRICULUM

The College ensures that the curriculum provides appropriate support for students with Special Educational Needs. Teaching and support staff are informed and regularly updated on students who have Special Educational Needs.

- Students identified as having Special Educational Needs are integrated with their peers and have access to the whole curriculum.
- Specific environmental needs of identified students will be addressed with DE, EA and other agencies.
- Individual Education Plans (or Personal Learning Plans) are required by SEN legislation to be used by teachers as a guide for the teaching of Special Educational Needs students.
- Teachers, Heads of Department and the SENCo have responsibility to ensure that children who are absent from school for substantial periods of time, have access to the same resources as students who attend lessons as normal.

20 HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN OR MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS POLICY

If you have a concern or complaint about the administration of this policy, please contact Mr McCormick, Vice Principal, in the first instance. If necessary, you may then access and follow the College's Parental Complaints Procedure which is available on the College website at www.knock.co.uk. Should you remain dissatisfied with the College's response after completing the internal complaints procedure, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. Contact details for the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman are provided on Page 11 of the Parental Complaints Procedure.

Signed: *Mr Leo O'Reilly*
(Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: 6th June 2019

Signed: *Miss Deborah McLaughlin*
(Principal)

Date: 6th June 2019

APPENDIX 1:

How can I help with my children's learning?

Getting involved with your child's education can make a significant difference to his/her chances of success. **Research has shown that children whose parents are involved get higher marks, have a better attitude towards learning and develop more confidence.** As your child gets older, of course, he/she needs to become more independent. Helping your child to get organised, providing equipment and a quiet place to work and offering lots of encouragement will get him/her off to the right start. Your child's **Student Planner** should outline the homework that has been set and when it is due. You should check the Diary regularly and **sign it at the end of each week if your child is in Year 8, 9 or 10.**

How to help – some general advice

- Make sure that you are familiar with your child's Student Planner.
- Watch out for letters and text messages about Parent-Teacher Meetings and Option/Induction Days and make every effort to attend (see the College website at www.knock.co.uk).
- Nominate somewhere at home as a homework area and have a set time for homework.
- Set up a daily routine. Plan a homework timetable in line with the College's homework guidelines in the Homework Diary, so that your child knows what to do and when.
- It is a good idea if your child has a break and something to eat before starting homework.
- Ask your child to explain the homework task and how it follows on from what he/she was studying at school.
- Be interested and be on hand to talk to your child about what he/she has learnt.
- Help your child to become an **independent learner**. Explain how to look up information rather than simply giving an answer in order to get the task finished.
- Try to ensure that your child can access the College's *Frontier* virtual learning environment from home.
- Turn off the television while homework is being done but do let your child listen to music if he/she finds it helpful and it does not annoy others.
- Read carefully any comments that your child's teacher makes about his/her work.
- Discourage your child from copying without editing when he/she is asked to do research tasks.
- Be positive about your child's attempts. If you have concerns about his/her progress, make an appointment to see your child's Tutor.

The College is keen that parents become fully involved in their children's education. However, please do not be tempted to do their homework, controlled assessment or coursework for them. If your child is to progress we need to know how much your child understands and can do independently.

Helping with homework

Here are some ways you can help:

- Suggest doing homework as soon as it is received.
- Encourage your child to talk to you when in difficulty, as you may be able to help.
- Make sure your child has a good work-life balance and does not spend too much time going out with friends, Working in a part-time job or sitting at home doing homework.
- Find out about educational reading materials and programmes on radio and television.

Helping with controlled assessment or coursework

Good controlled assessment or coursework marks can boost your child's grades. You can help by:

- Finding out about the curriculum and how much work needs to be done.

- Knowing when controlled assessment or coursework is due and helping to make out a schedule to complete it on time.
- Making sure your child is clear about what he/she is required to do.
- Locating internet sites that can help with his/her research (e.g. www.bbc.co.uk/schools).
- Advising your child to print and save his/her computer work regularly.
- Encouraging your child to talk to his/her teacher about any problems.
- Making sure your child has the right books and resources.

If parents have concerns about homework, controlled assessment or coursework they should contact their child's Tutor.

APPENDIX 2:

REQUEST TO WITHDRAW FROM A GCSE COURSE

Student name: _____ Tutor Group: _____

*You **must** consult with your GCSE Teacher, Careers Teacher, Head of Senior School (Mr Hughes) and Parents when seeking permission to withdraw from a GCSE course. This form should be returned to the Vice Principal (Mr McCormick).*

- In **Year 11 and 12** it is expected that all students will have a full timetable of lessons.
- Only in **exceptional circumstances** will a student be allowed to withdraw from a GCSE course. A request to study a reduced timetable must be supported by robust evidence submitted to the Head of Senior School (Mr Hughes).
- All students are required to study a Mathematics course in Year 12 i.e. GCSE Mathematics or Further Mathematics.

My GCSE Courses are		
Mathematics/Further Mathematics	Religious Studies	
English Language		
English Literature		
Learning for Life and Work		

1) State the course that you wish to withdraw from and explain why. State your recent assessment results in this course.

2) How will your career plans be affected?

3) I have discussed withdrawing from this GCSE course with:

	Change Agreed? (Yes/No)	Comments	Signature	Date
GCSE Teacher				
Careers Teacher				
Head of School				
Parent/Guardian				
Vice Principal (Curriculum)				

I agree to withdraw from this GCSE course: Student signature _____ Date _____

Examinations Officer (Ms Tara O'Connor) has been informed? Yes / No

Parents/Guardians should contact Mr McCormick or Mr Hughes if they require further information or advice.

Office Use: GCSE _____ has been removed from timetable? Yes / No

Office Use: GCSE Teacher, Careers Teacher and Head of School have been informed? Yes / No

APPENDIX 3:

REQUEST TO WITHDRAW FROM AN AS-LEVEL COURSE

Student name: _____ Tutor Group: _____

You **must** consult with your AS-level Teacher, Careers Teacher, Head of School (Mrs McCarry) and Parents when seeking permission to withdraw from an AS-level course. This form should be returned to the Vice Principal (Mr McCormick).

	My AS-level Courses are	AS Target Grades	Teachers	Recent Assessments	
				Assessment 1	Assessment 2
1					
2					
3					
4					

1) State your most recent assessment results for each AS course in the table above. State the course that you wish to drop and explain why.

2) How will your career plans be affected?

3) I have discussed withdrawing from AS-level _____ with:

	Change Agreed? (Yes/No)	Comments	Signature	Date
AS-level Teacher				
Careers Teacher				
Head of School				
Parent/Guardian				
Vice Principal (Curriculum)				

I agree to withdraw from this AS-level course: Student signature _____ Date _____

Examinations Officer (Ms Tara O'Connor) has been informed? Yes / No

Parents/Guardians should contact Mr McCormick or Mrs McCarry if they require further information or advice.

Office Use: AS-level _____ has been removed from timetable? Yes / No

Office Use: AS-level Teacher, Careers Teacher and Head of School have been informed? Yes / No

APPENDIX 4:

ROOM ALLOCATION

The allocation and use of rooms in the College is at the discretion of the Principal. Subject departments have been allocated one or more classrooms, and as far as possible department classrooms have been clustered together. Some departments have also been allocated Resource, Preparation or Planning rooms. Resource rooms are particularly useful, acting as storage facilities as well as providing flexible spaces where teachers, especially those without classrooms, can work or meet with department colleagues.

In the planning of the school buildings, the number of classrooms was maximised to ensure that as many teachers as possible could be accommodated with their own teaching base. However, inevitably, there will be more teachers than classrooms, so it will not be possible for every teacher to have their own classroom.

Teachers of Science, Technology and Physical Education will have to move from one location to another, depending on the course that they are teaching and the level at which it is being taught. Teachers of Junior School IT will teach in IT-equipped rooms. Other courses, such as Employability and Citizenship, which have a relatively small curriculum time allocation, will be taught mostly in non-specialist accommodation throughout the school.

Every effort will be made to accommodate teachers within their subject department cluster. However, as some subject departments have more specialist teachers than allocated rooms, some lessons may have to be taught outside of the department cluster. In the allocation of rooms to teachers in a specific subject department, priority will be given to the Head of Department, other teachers with management responsibilities for that subject and then to teachers with the highest number of periods of that subject on their timetables. Where a teacher has not been allocated a classroom, effort will be made to accommodate all of his/her classes in rooms that are in relatively close proximity.

The Lecture Room provides a very useful multipurpose space for staff and students. It contains tiered, retractable seating for up to 107 people, which allows it to be converted into a theatre venue or a room where visitors or staff can present to or discuss with a selected audience. Due to its versatility, it will be booked by teachers from a range of curriculum areas in the College.

When a temporary room change is requested for a small number of teaching periods, for example to accommodate a visitor to the College, a teacher may be asked to move temporarily to another free room.