



Finn Valley College

Programme, Class Group & Subject Choice System



Context

Finn Valley College is committed to providing a curriculum that is student-centred and that is responsive to the needs of our students. In doing so the school will provide students with learning experiences and learning opportunities that will lead to the development of the student, that are better suited to the aptitudes, interests and ability levels of each individual student and which will in turn lead to improved learning outcomes for our students. In order to achieve this a structured and progressive programme and subject choice procedure has been devised and implemented.

Principles

The main principle underpinning the Subject Choice system in Finn Valley College is the provision of a dynamic and evolving curriculum and timetable that responds to the needs of the students. In



developing the timetable and the programmes on offer, the school is mindful of the different abilities and aptitudes of the students in its care. The school offers a range of programmes at both junior and senior cycle that caters for all students.

Junior Cycle Programmes

At Junior Cycle the school offers the traditional Junior Certificate and also offers the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP). Additionally, the school offers Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes (L1LP / L2LP) for a small number of eligible students.

A. Junior Cycle Programme

An tSraith Shóisearach

Junior **CYCLE**

The Junior Cycle timetable is structured and offered in a manner that maximises student choice and which caters for the different aptitudes of students. Students can choose a mix of these practical or academic optional subjects depending on their aptitudes. Students participating in the traditional Junior Cycle are placed in mixed ability classes in First Year following a five week Induction and taster programme.

Current optional Subject Choices in Finn Valley College

Business, Geography, Home Economics, Engineering, Graphics, Music, Spanish, Visual Art, Wood Technology

*The subjects may change from year to year



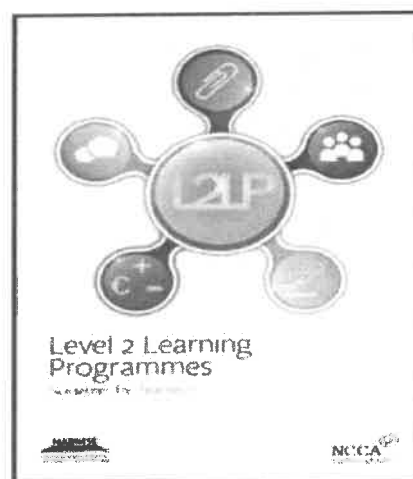
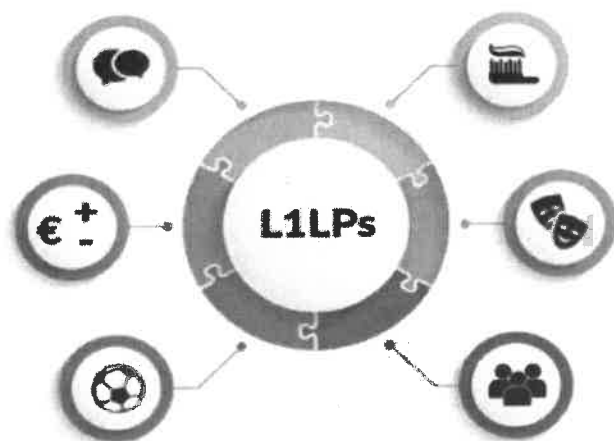
B. Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP)



Students who are assigned to the JCSP programme (in consultation with their parents) all follow the same Junior Cycle programme as their peers in mixed-ability classes. Typically, these students may not study a modern language and they may study an extra practical subject. The JCSP student receives an extra layer of certification which celebrates all of their success and not just exam success.. In deciding whether the student might be better suited to the JCSP programme a wide set of indicative markers are used including the following:

- National school reports
- Psychological assessments
- SEN / LS / SNA access
- Ability to access the curriculum
- Literacy test results
- Numeracy test results
- Taster programme Results/Report
- Teacher Recommendations
- Mid-term report or Christmas report
- Teacher Surveys

C. L1LP / L2LP Programmes



Our school offers both L1LP and L2LP programmes to a small number of eligible students for whom the traditional Junior Cycle or the JCSP programmes would not be suitable. Students may complete a combination of Junior Cycle and L2LP programmes. Additionally, they may complete some or all of the following Priority Learning Units (PLUs) depending on their needs:

- Communication and Literacy (L1LP & L2LP)
- Numeracy (L1LP & L2LP)
- Personal care(L1LP & L2LP)
- Living in a Community (L1LP & L2LP)
- Preparing for the World of Work (L2LP)
- The Arts (L1LP)
- Physical Education (L1LP)

First Year Class group & Subject Choice System

Students in the Junior Certificate programme participate in the school's taster programme during their five week Induction programme. This allows the students to gauge their ability and interest levels in a particular subject before making a choice. At the end of the module the students do common class-based tests, which will form/be the main factor in determining which programme they will follow. The Subject Choice process is outlined below.



Key stages in the Subject Choice Process

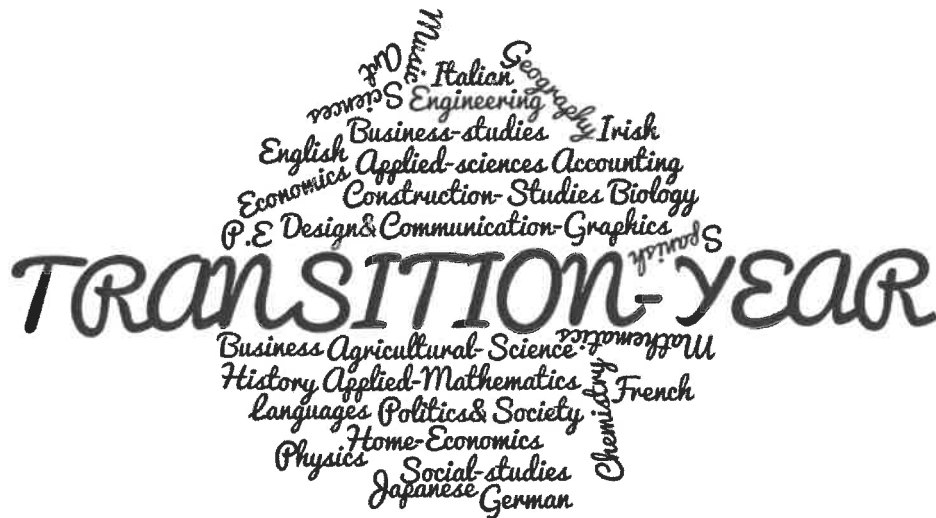
1. The Guidance counsellor meets with the class groups towards the end of the five week taster programme to discuss the choices the students will have to make.
2. The Guidance counsellor explains the different programmes available and the different mixes of subjects that students might wish to consider (Academic; Practical or Academic/Practical mix).
3. Information on the subjects is given to parents with instruction given on how to complete the subject choice process on VS Ware during the parents information night.
4. An email containing video links on how to complete this process will also be sent out to all parents.
5. Students will select their subjects on VS Ware in consultation with their parents. Students must select their subjects in genuine order of preference.
6. The students are divided into class groupings and subject areas according to their choices.
7. If there is an over-subscription for a particular subject the Guidance counsellor will discuss the subject choices made by the student in the first instance to ascertain the reason for choosing and their suitability.
8. The Guidance counsellor may discuss the ability, work ethic and conduct displayed by the student in a particular subject with the subject teacher.
9. Throughout the process there is consultation with the parent and the student.
10. If at the end of the consultation with the students there is still an over-subscription a random selection or lottery may take place to decide the final subject groupings.



Senior Cycle Programmes

At Senior Cycle the school offers the Transition Year Programme (TYP), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

A. Transition Year Programme (TY)



This programme is a one year stand alone bridging programme which benefits students in making the transition from Junior Cycle to Leaving Certificate programmes. Students study a mix of core subjects, Leaving Certificate sampling subjects and a programme of events and initiatives. Students also engage in a Work Placement.

Transition Year is separate from the LCVP programme and does not form part of the Subject Choice process outlined below. Selection for the TYP is carried out prior to the Subject process below and eligibility for the programme is set out in the Transition Year Admissions Policy.

B. Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)



Our school delivers an enhanced Leaving Certificate Programme known as the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). All students doing a Leaving Certificate are required to complete this programme. This programme suits the more academically able student. Students who enrol in this programme must choose to study four optional subjects in addition to the four core subjects of English, Irish, Maths and Link Modules. Students select four from an initial menu of 10 subjects which is subsequently narrowed down to 8 / 9 subjects. This process is outlined below.

C. Leaving Certificate Applied(LCA)



This programme favours those students who may struggle with the more academic LCVP programme, those who would be better suited to a modular system of continuous assessment instead of a terminal exam-based system and those who intend going into more vocational careers after leaving school. Students in the LCA programme study a common course and therefore there is no subject choice process. The subject specialisms and electives chosen by the school forms a continuum with the JCSP subject selection making it a seamless progression for this student.

Third Year Programme & Subject Choice System

Key stages in the Subject Choice Process

1. The Guidance counsellor links in with the students over a six week period to help them consider best their particular aptitudes and interest areas. A careers inventory test is conducted to help guide students towards the correct programme, subjects and, ultimately, career path.
2. The Guidance counsellor explains in detail the different programmes on offer at Senior Cycle and explains the structure of each, the type of learning which occurs in each, the type of assessment in each, the progression routes for each and any other associated issues or matters that may be deemed appropriate.
3. The Guidance Counsellor presents the students with information on each subject that is offered in LCVP. Video clips of each subject are presented. Students are also directed to appropriate support websites. All information and presentations relating to the programmes and subjects are also added to a Google Classroom forum for the students. This allows them to review the information with parents.



4. A Parent Information evening is arranged to inform parents of the programmes, subject choice system and subject choices available to the students for the current year.
5. Following the information sessions with students and parents, the initial focus is ensuring that the students choose the most suitable programme and the Guidance counsellor explains each programme in detail to each class group.
6. A survey - Programme Choice Online Survey 1 - is shared with the students in which they indicate their chosen programme. Students are asked in the survey to confirm that they have consulted with parents before making their selection.
7. The LCA programme is capped at 20 students this is to facilitate the range of subjects on offer in this programme.
8. The most suitable candidates will be given priority if there is an over-subscription. This will be determined by the following factors:
 - If the school feels like a student has opted for the wrong programme a programme recommendation sheet will be sent to all current teachers to determine the best programme option for the student
 - Consultation will also take place between the student, the Guidance counsellor, the principal and parents/guardians
9. Having selected the appropriate programme the Guidance counsellor explains the subject choice system for those opting for the LCVP programme. Emphasis is placed on choosing subjects for the right reasons, in keeping options as open as possible and in matching subjects with interests and abilities.
10. Students will select their subjects on VS Ware in consultation with their parents. Students must select their subjects in genuine order of preference
11. The Guidance Counsellors will seek to match students' choices with the blocks that are created in order for classes to run.
12. As all students need to be assigned a class, classes will be running concurrently with one another. This will result in some subjects clashing with one or more students' preferences.
13. If this issue arises the Guidance Counsellor will speak to the student and discuss the blocks and options available. The backup subject may be used in this instance
14. If the backup subject cannot be used the Guidance Counsellor will have further consultation with the student/parent or guardian to achieve the best possible outcome
15. If there is an over-subscription for a particular subject the following information is considered:
 - a. Has the student done the subject (or its equivalent) at Junior Cycle?
 - b. The student will be asked to consult with the Career Guidance department regarding the subject choices and an interview about the student's reason for choosing the subject; his/her possible College/career path will be explored and how the subject might relate to this; any possible College requirement for the subject.
 - c. The student's progress in the subject (or its equivalent) prior to this and in particular the Third Year Christmas and Mock results will be taken into account.
 - d. The student's previous participation in the subject (and in particular work ethic, class participation, homework and cooperation with the subject teacher).
 - e. The student's attendance record.



- f. The student's discipline record with the subject teacher
- g. The recommendation of the Subject Teacher based on aptitude, class participation, behaviour and so forth.
- h. If all of the above criteria have been satisfied and there is still a surplus a random selection or lottery may take place to decide the final subject groupings.

Subject Changes

Our school understands that students will on occasion choose a subject to which they are not ideally suited and that they may wish to change subjects after the initial subject choice was made.. Our school will try to support students and parents in such circumstances but subject to school constraints. Such constraints may include but not be limited to:

- The reason why the student wishes to move from one subject.
- The reason why the student has chosen another subject.
- The amount of time already spent in the current subject.
- How feasible a move to another subject is bearing in mind how much time remains prior to any examination in the subject.
- Available space in other subject groupings.
- Teacher reports on effort and progress in the current subject.
- Any relevant behaviour reports.
- Any other relevant information provided by the student, parent or relevant agency.

Where a move from one subject to another is requested the following procedures apply.

1. The school will only consider formal requests from parents/guardians.
2. A formal request should be submitted to the principal in writing. If there are any special circumstances to be considered, these should be included with the written request.
3. The principal will initially examine the capacity or available space in other subjects.
4. The principal or someone nominated by him will meet with the student to consider the reasons for the request.
5. The principal or his nominee will meet with the appropriate teachers to discuss the merits or disadvantages of any such move.
6. Following deliberation, the principal will advise the parent whether the request can proceed or not.

Our school does not facilitate changes of teachers within subjects.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years or as need arises.



Sean P. Fadden

Secretary

Angela Deed

Chairperson

17th Sept '24

Date

17th Sept '24

Date

