



ST. ANGELA'S SCHOOL: Academic Curriculum Policy.

1. Mission Statement:

St. Angela's is a Catholic girls' school which aims to cherish the uniqueness of each individual and to develop the full potential of each member of the school community.

2. Aims of this policy:

- To uphold the school's Mission Statement and thereby to provide for the education of all students according to their own learning potential.
- To enable students to continue with further education after leaving St. Angela's.
- To contribute to the creation of opportunities to build self-esteem and pride in one's work.

3. Objectives of this policy:

- To outline the circumstances under which the school authorities will consider applications by parents / guardians for the down-sizing of a curriculum of study at Junior Certificate, Fourth Year and Leaving Certificate level.

4. Scope of the policy:

This policy extends to all students of St. Angela's, as well as to all teaching staff and those engaged in the creation of curriculum and timetable.

5. Curriculum offered.

St. Angela's School currently offers courses of study under the following programmes: Junior Certificate, Transition Year, LCVP, LCAP and Leaving Certificate. The following information is correct on this date, 2011, and is subject to change.

Junior Certificate:

- Irish, English, Mathematics, CSPE, PE (non exam subject) and SPHE (non exam subject) are currently compulsory in the State.
- French, Religion, History and Geography are currently compulsory in St. Angela's.
- *Students choose 2 or 3 additional subjects (Art, Science, Home Economics, Business, Spanish, Music.) The availability of these subjects may vary from year to year. Places are allocated, subject to supply and demand, to students who apply according to the terms laid down by the Principal. Students who choose two subjects take Learning Support from 1st Year (see below).

Fourth Year: (Currently under review, as at October 2015)

- Irish, English, Mathematics are compulsory in the State.
- PE, French and Religion are compulsory in St. Angela's.
- A number of Transition Year modules developed in St. Angela's are offered. These may vary from year to year and are compulsory.
- Students are given a number of options in three modules. Places are allocated, subject to supply and demand, to students who apply according to the terms laid down by the Transition Year coordinator.

Leaving Certificate:

- Irish, English and Mathematics are compulsory in the State.
- Guidance, Religion and PE are compulsory in St. Angela's (non exam subjects.)

- Students of St. Angela's then choose four or five additional subjects (French, Spanish, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Applied Maths, History, Geography, Music, Religious Education (exam syllabus), Home Economics, Business, Economics, Accounting) Places are allocated, subject to supply and demand, to students who apply according to the terms laid down by the Principal.
- St. Angela's School insists on all Leaving Certificate students taking seven subjects for examination within the school structure. Arrangements made by students for the study of subjects outside of the school structure have no bearing on this element of school policy.

Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

- All students follow a common course, all elements of which are compulsory.
- Religion and PE are also compulsory in St. Angela's.
- Places are allocated, subject to supply and demand, to students who apply according to the terms laid down by the Principal and LCA Coordinator.

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

- Students may opt to enrol in the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, if they meet the criteria of having particular subject combinations.
- In addition, Link Modules (compulsory) are offered. In order to allow for the timetabling of these link modules and the compulsory Modern Language module, currently LCVP students cannot study HL Maths or participate in PE. This is under review at present.
- Students must ensure that their subject choices fulfil the DES requirements for admission onto this programme.

6. Considerations when choosing subjects and levels:

- Incoming First Year students choose subjects before induction. They may be aided in this process during interviews which take place in February / March. Parent / Guardians and incoming students are welcome to meet with a member of the Pastoral Care team, by appointment, to discuss subject choice prior to induction.
- Parents / Guardians of incoming First Year students are advised to consider carefully the implications of any psychological report existing about a student as they choose subjects, particularly if the report recommends Junior Cert Schools Programme, which is not offered in St. Angela's School.
- Third and Fourth Year students are given information about all Leaving Certificate options during school time through Guidance classes, at individual guidance sessions and through an annual "Information Day", at which time subject departments outline courses and course requirements for all students. Fourth Year students are encouraged to use Fourth Year as a time to reflect on subject options for Leaving Certificate.
- Parents / Guardians of Third and Fourth Year students are invited to an annual information evening and all parents / guardians are encouraged to use annual Parent – Teacher meetings to gather information and advice.
- Places in subjects are allocated by the Principal and Deputy Principal.
- Students are advised that places in some Leaving Certificate subjects will depend upon there being evidence that an adequate course of study in that discipline has been followed previously.
- Requests to change subjects must be made in writing to the Deputy Principal. Where requests are reasonable and where it is deemed that the change is in the best interests of the student, every effort will be made to accommodate the student's choice of subject.
- Requests for change in subject may not be considered after a certain time lapse, if the view of the Subject Department is that that a significant amount of curriculum has been covered prior to the move. If a late move is allowed in exceptional circumstances, the student's family must sign a waiver.
- Students are allocated to a subject, not to a teacher. Requests to change from one teacher to another are not considered, except in extreme circumstances and when made in writing to the Principal.
- Students are encouraged to study to Higher Level as far as possible. Subject teachers may recommend a particular level of paper as being more appropriate to the ability of a student. Requests to change level must be made in writing to the class teacher and Deputy Principal.

- Students and their parents / guardians are advised to inform themselves of matriculation requirements of third level institutions before choosing their subjects or requesting a subject change. The school's Guidance Counsellors play an active role in this information gathering and decision making process.

7. Procedures for requesting dispensation from the study of certain subjects:

All applications must be made in writing to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Currently, a student may avail of a reduced curriculum in the following ways:

- At Junior Certificate level, she may opt to avail of learning support instead of one of the subjects listed at * above, where the bands of subject options allow in a given year and where staffing resources allow.
- She may avail of a State exemption from the study of Irish. This exemption is usually in place since Primary School and transfers over to the Secondary School on induction to 1st Year. (To avail of this exemption, certain criteria must be met. All applications must be made to the Deputy Principal.)
https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/ppc10_94.pdf
- She may apply for a dispensation from the study of a modern language, if an Educational Psychological Assessment Report exists which recommends this dispensation. Applications to be assessed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) for this purpose must be made in writing to the Deputy Principal. As waiting lists for this service can be very long, parents / guardians are encouraged to source an assessment privately.
- A student who for reasons of religious background wishes not to present for examination in RE may make an application for dispensation from examination in writing to the Principal. All students, regardless of religious background, are encouraged to participate fully in RE classes, according to our Religious Education Policy.
- The Principal reserves the right to excuse or remove a student from the study of particular subjects under health and safety grounds, should the need arise.
- In addition, in consultation with the Class Teacher, Tutor, Year Head, SEN coordinator and Guidance Counsellor as appropriate, it may be deemed in the best interests of the student not to present for examination in certain subjects. To be considered for a dispensation from examination in a subject other than those named already here, a student must have demonstrated reasonable attempts to achieve in the subject through classwork, homework and house examination. Furthermore, there must be a belief that the student's experience of the subject in question would be enhanced by this dispensation. (Note: continued failure to achieve in a subject does not automatically imply that a dispensation may be granted. Other factors affecting the student's inability to achieve will be reviewed.)
- So as to maximise a student's potential for entry into third level education, St. Angela's School requires all Leaving Certificate students to present for examination in seven subjects, all of which should be studied in St. Angela's. This does not preclude a student from taking extra subjects outside school, although students are strongly advised to consider very carefully the workload represented by the uptake of additional subjects. In the event that a student later opts to drop a subject, the school retains its requirement that all students present for seven subjects studied at St. Angela's. Permission to drop a subject from within the St. Angela's curriculum will only be considered following receipt of a written request the Principal from the student and her parents / guardians. The Principal's will make this decision in consultation with the Guidance team and other members of the Pastoral Care team.

8. Roles and responsibilities

- Development of this policy– Management, Staff and Department of Education and Skills.
- Implementation - Whole School Community.
- Review – Periodic review by School Development Planning Committee and Board of Management.

9. Evaluation

- Positive feedback from students through the Pastoral Care structure, Ceannaire, Prefect System and elsewhere

- Positive feedback from Parents /Guardians through Parents' School Advisory Committee and communication with Pastoral Care system.
- Evaluation through the observations of all Staff.

10. Legislation / equality proofing

- Ratified by Board of Management.

RATIFIED BY BOARD November 2015 _____

POLICY REVIEWED _____

NEXT REVIEW _____

Appendix 1. Subject / level changes: Information for Staff.

Appendix 2. Pro forma applications for Change of Subject / Level or dispensation from a course of study.

Subject / Level Changes.

Information for Staff.

Procedure if a student wishes to change subject / level:

- No move is facilitated without a note from home. This should be shown by the student to the class teacher first and then brought to the Deputy Principal. (Pro forma notes are available from the DP.) The class teacher is asked to initial the note to register approval of the proposed move. (This may be overlooked at the start of the school year, as subject choices settle.)
- Each request is examined on its own merit. Students should be advised by the class teacher to bring questions about changes to the Guidance Counsellors, if necessary.
- If a move is to take place, the student will be moved where there is place in another class, unless the class teacher advises to the contrary. Where none exists, the student will be placed on a waiting list.
- Individual requests for particular teachers are not considered.
- The school advises that all students present with a 7 subject Leaving Certificate, taught in St. Angela's / full LCA. The school will not agree to less than this, unless extreme circumstances apply.
- The school facilitates a full Junior Certificate. A reduced subject load is only possible following direct negotiation with the Principal, DP, SEN coordinator, Tutor, Year Head, Class Teacher, Guidance Counsellor as appropriate.
- Any change of level (with or without a move to a new class group) must be notified to the DP by the class teacher. This is for examination purposes. Thereafter, the DP advises the General Office of the change.
- Teachers will be advised in writing of any change which occurs. Please do not accept any change to your official class list without notification from the DP.
- **NB. Please notify the DP of any errors in your class list.**
- Teachers wishing to advise parents / guardians of the need to reconsider the level a student is taking may collect standard letters from the DP for this purpose.
- A Junior Certificate student who wishes to change level during the running of the State Exams may only do so if she presents with a note from home. The SEC permits LC students to change level at the last minute, although the school advises against last minute changes, unless the class teacher has recommended the change.

Exemptions and Waivers:

Students must meet specific DES criteria to avail of an exemption from Irish. If a student wishes to avail of exemption from Irish, her parent / guardian must apply in writing to the Principal / DP stating the grounds for the exemption.

- Irish exempt students are encouraged to participate in LCA Irish as fully as possible.
- The school does not allow exemption from the study of a modern language at Junior Cert level unless the student is in possession of an Educational Psychological Assessment Report which advises this.
- The school does not allow exemption from RE without particular consideration by the Principal.
- Dispensation from the study of any other subject can only be considered following written application to a member of the Teaching / Pastoral Care team.

Pro Forma Applications for Change of Subject / Level or Dispensation from study of a subject.

Date: _____

To: The Deputy Principal,

Student name: _____

Tutor: _____



Please note that I request a class change for this student as detailed below.

From: (Subject) _____

To: (Subject) _____

Many thanks,

Signed: _____ (Parent / Guardian)

Date: _____

To: The Deputy Principal,

Student name: _____

Tutor: _____



Please note that I request dispensation from a course of study for my daughter for the reasons below.

Subject: _____

Reason: _____

Many thanks,

Signed: _____ (Parent / Guardian)