

ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE

FIRST YEAR

OPTIONS BOOKLET

2025 – 2026

To All Incoming First Year Students ...

On behalf of all the form and subject teachers with whom you will soon be working, we would like to welcome you to First Year in St Andrew's College. We hope you will be very happy with us and enjoy the wide-ranging programme of activities we have prepared for you.

One of the first things we would like you to do is decide exactly which **TWO** subjects you wish to add to the list of 'core' subjects which form the basis of your study programme for the next three years. We call these 'optional' subjects, and you should make your choice in consultation with your parents.

The core subjects are as follows:

- English
- Irish (except where officially exempt)
- [Modern Foreign Language](#) (French, German, Spanish) (See Option Form)
- Mathematics
- Geography
- History
- Science
- Wellbeing (Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Social, Personal+ Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education)
- Religious Studies

The optional subjects are as follows:

- [Visual Arts](#)
- [Business Studies](#)
- [Home Economics](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Classics](#)
- [Graphics](#)
- Spanish*

**Students wishing to study two modern languages can do so by selecting Spanish as an 'option subject' in addition to the 'core' modern language choice.*

You and your parents are the best judges of the subjects which are most appropriate to your interests, aptitudes, abilities, and career inclinations. You will find plenty of information about these subjects in the following pages. The range of subjects offered is in keeping with the aims of the [Junior Cycle programme](#) in that it provides a broad and balanced curriculum to all students in the first years of post-primary school.

Kind Regards,

Laura Griffin and Damien Shevlin (First Year Heads)

VISUAL ART



The philosophy and aims:

Visual art encompasses art, craft and design and involves practical work with a specific outcome (e.g. an artwork, a design, architecture, an event).

What we try to achieve with our students is simply this:

- as individuals they are guided towards an awareness of themselves and their environment - making art develops the learner's imagination (developing an idea or concept) and allows them exercise personal responsibility for specific tasks.

The qualities that visual art can provide are crucial components of the rounded general education that all young people should experience. Visual art provides the learner with a space to experiment, to fail and to learn. It allows learners to collaborate on ideas and work. Through art we feel we help to produce keen and interested students.

Many of our art students go on to take art courses at third level, and on to careers in related areas. Not all our students go on to Art College but the art education they have received will benefit and enrich their lives in so many ways.

The Junior Cycle Programme

A student will experience learning in art, craft, and design. The Junior Cycle Visual Art focuses on the students' practical and cognitive engagement with art. It is an introduction to the many creative techniques and disciplines of art, craft, and design. A student will experience learning in each of these strands as they progress through different elements of art, such as:

1. Drawing & painting
2. Clay modelling
3. Print
4. Batik
5. Graphic design & photography
6. The art elements and design principles
7. Critical and visual language
8. Visual culture and appreciation
9. Technology

Our students are taught to support their work with research. For this they might use the many books and periodicals in the art room and the excellent service of our school library. As the student progresses through the course, there will be development of knowledge, principles and values, including key skills through each of the elements.

By the time our students are ready to start their Junior Cycle examinations, which is in the form of a project, they are confident in their ability to achieve their potential

For more information on the Junior Cycle Visual art course use the links below ...

1. [The Visual Arts online curriculum](#)
2. [Junior Cycle Information on Visual Art](#)



BUSINESS STUDIES



The new Junior Cycle business studies course is a varied and interesting course that covers a wide range of topics and has something that appeals to everyone. It is divided into 3 sections, personal finance, enterprise and economics.

The business theory part includes the following range of topics:

- Marketing
- Business plan
- Finance for setting up and running a business
- Consumer issues
- Banking, saving and borrowing
- Insurance

The book-keeping sections includes the following range of topics:

- Household Budgets
- Final Accounts
- How to complete and balance accounts
- How to analyse a business's performance

The economics section includes the following range of topics:

- Supply and demand
- Opportunity costs
- Consumer behaviour
- Current affairs topics
- Economic indicators
- Government economic policy

In general, the course equips students with the tools to make good budgeting decisions and ensures they are much more discerning as consumers. They are also more familiar with the issues that businesses face when dealing with staff and financing matters.

Assessment:

The course runs over three years with a final exam which examines business theory, book keeping and economics and two classroom-based assessments that are submitted, one towards the end of second year while the other in third year. There is no higher or ordinary level in the new course.

[Click here for more information on the Junior Cycle Business course](#)

HOME ECONOMICS



Home Economics as a Junior Cycle subject has been greatly revised and the new syllabus is designed to equip young people with skills and knowledge which will be of direct relevance to their present and future life.

Home Economics aims to develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills and competences to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for every person as an individual, and as a member of families and society.

It aims to develop students' practical food and health literacy skills so that they are enabled to adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed decisions that positively impact their health and wellbeing, both as individuals as well as within their families and society.

It aims to cultivate students who are creative, innovative, adaptable and competent consumers. In addition, students are encouraged to be environmentally conscious and dedicated to a sustainable and responsible way of life.



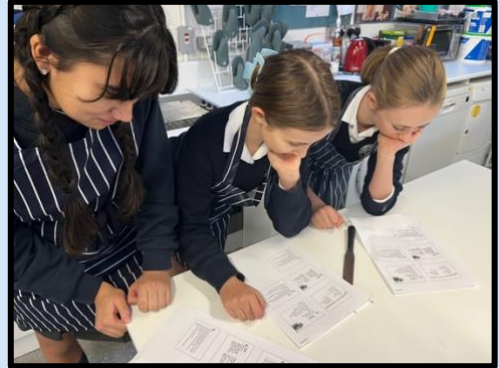
The course comprises of three strands:

1. Food, Health and Culinary skills

This strand focuses on developing student's health and culinary skills. Students are enabled to develop a healthy, sustainable attitude and positive relationship with food through practical experiential work. They apply their understanding of nutrition, diet and health principles in order to adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed decisions that impact their health and wellbeing of themselves as individuals as well as within their families. The application of practical food and health literacy skills is integral to this area and includes menu planning, cooking, health and safety food skills, portion control, reading food labels, dietary analysis, costing sensory analysis and food waste.

2. Responsible family living

In this strand students develop an understanding of the different forms and role of families as the core social unit. They develop an understanding of the role of the family in the development of the child in a safe and nurturing home environment. Students develop life skills to enable them to manage resources responsibly and sustainably in the home, family and community. They are facilitated to become discerning, competent consumers who are able to apply effective decision-making skills in everyday contexts in the home and community. Enabling students to become responsible and have a caring attitude towards other individuals, family members, society and the environment is integral to this strand.



3. Textiles and Crafts

This strand focuses on developing students' textile skills, knowledge and creativity. Practical textile and craft skills are integral to this strand and include hand and machine sewing skills, and fabric texturing and embellishment techniques. Students are enabled to make sustainable decisions as consumers in the choice and maintenance of clothing and textile. Students will apply the design brief process in designing and making a textile item for an individual or the home.

Throughout the course, knowledge is selected that is suitable for students of varying academic abilities.

Home Economics has both practical and written assessment

Assessment:

- **Two Classroom-Based Assessments-** one in Second year and one in 3rd Year
CBA 1 focuses on Creative Textiles and CBA2 focuses on Food literacy skills
- **Practical food skills examination -50%**
- **Written examination -50%**

All assessments will be at a common level.

The practical food skills examination and the written examination will be marked by the State Examinations Commission.

The subject can be continued and studied for the Leaving Certificate where it is fully recognised for CAO points.

[Click here for more information on the Junior Cycle Home Economics course](#)

MUSIC



Junior Cycle music aims to contribute to the development of artistic awareness and understanding, self-expression, self-esteem, imagination and multicultural sensitivity, and therefore, to the development of the whole person. Students will develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to produce and engage with authentic and original music, which is both theirs and the music of others. In doing so, they will develop their music literacy, critical skills and language necessary to engage with today's musical world.

The 3 interconnected strands are:

- Procedural knowledge
- Innovate and Ideate
- Culture and Context.



The learning outcomes are achieved through:

- Creating and exploring
- Participating and music-making
- Appraising and responding

Assessment:

There are two classroom-based assessments:

The first classroom-based assessment offers students an opportunity to celebrate their achievements as creators of music artefacts, by compiling a collection of their musical ideas and creative expressions in a variety of genres and styles over time.



For the second CBA students will prepare a 'Programme Note' to inform an audience on the content of their upcoming performance which itself will comprise the practical examination.

Practical examination - 30%

Students will perform 3 musical songs/pieces. Solo and group performing may be freely mixed. The songs/pieces may also be presented on a variety of instruments or a combination of voice and instruments. Technical control, fluency and musicality will be assessed.

THE STANDARD REQUIRED WILL REFLECT WHAT CAN BE ATTAINED IN 3 YEARS OF CLASS-BASED

TUITION.

Students will also undertake an unprepared test – aural memory, sight-reading or improvisation. This will be 4 bars long.

Written Examination – 70% 1 hour 30 minutes duration. Engage with, demonstrate comprehension of and provide written responses to stimulus provided.

Please Note: students can take part in Extra Curricular Music activities even if they do not choose it as an option: Consider participation in:

- School Orchestra
- Musical
- Choir
- Music and Dance Festival
- Instrumental lessons
- Guitar and Ukulele Club
- Trad Group

[Click here for more information on the Junior Cycle Music course](#)

CLASSICS



Classics is a subject that focuses on the study of the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome. It is a subject that students can study all the way up to the Leaving Certificate and it carries full points for entry to third level.

There was a brand new Junior Cycle curriculum introduced in September 2019, which was first examined in June 2022.

Students do not need to be familiar with ancient Greek or Latin. All texts and sources are in translation. However, students can expect to learn some Latin words and phrases and become familiar with the Greek origins of some of the words we use today in English.

We will examine a wide selection of Greek myths such as the Battle of the Gods and the Giants, Hercules, Jason and the Argonauts, Theseus and the Minotaur, Pandora's Box and others. The myths will encourage students to think about right and wrong and the meaning of life, while also contemplating the hopes, fears and ambitions of the people who lived in these civilisations. Any child who is curious and enjoys a good story will really enjoy this subject. Any student who is interested in Harry Potter, the Marvel universe or the adventures of The Mandalorian will find many of the ancient stories fascinating. Classical Studies students will also be encouraged to work with their classmates and create their own myths while also expressing their ideas artistically.

Students will also spend time examining the daily lives of people in ancient times. We will look at some of the key buildings and monuments in Rome such as the Circus Maximus and the Arch of Titus. Students will be encouraged to explore how different the lives of girls and boys were, and this can lead to interesting classroom debates about how differently some people were treated in ancient times. An examination of slavery will also be important in this respect.

The Trojan War and the central role of the mighty Greek warrior Achilles will feature strongly. We will learn how the combination of a woman's beauty and the meddling of the gods started a ten year war. Students will explore the good and bad aspects of Achilles' character and can decide whether he really is a hero. They will also be encouraged to examine lots of visual material and artefacts relating to the war and think about how the gods interfered in people's lives.

The basis for much of this subject is the fact that in the western world, much of our politics, buildings, art, education, and outlook on life begins with the Greek and Roman civilisations. We cannot understand who we are unless we look back to where we came from.

Much of this subject is based on stories, and many of the best things we can learn are in good stories. There are also huge amounts of original sources to look at, since the Greeks and Romans recorded so much of what they did. So, if you like learning which is fun and really makes you think, then Classical Studies is for you. You may even have the chance to go on a trip to see just how amazing these ancient civilisations were.

Assessment: Two classroom-based assessments and one written examination.

All assessments will be at common level. The formal written Assessment Task and the final written examination will be marked by the State Examination Commission.

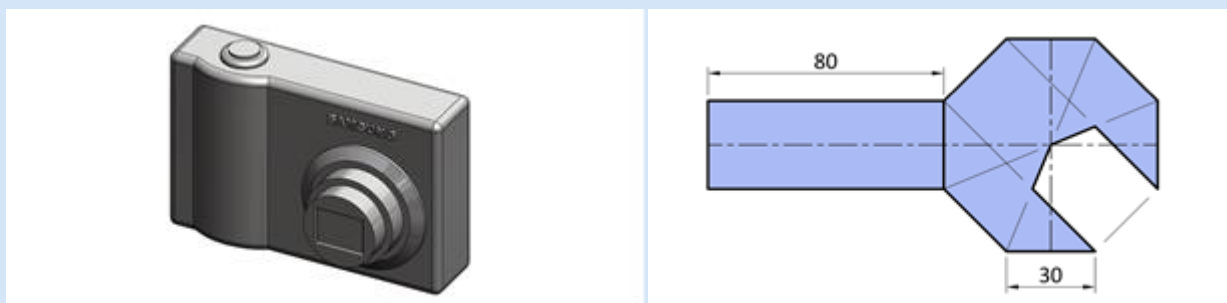
[Click here for more information on the Junior Cycle Classics course](#)



GRAPHICS



Graphics is the new name for Technical Graphics. Graphics teaches neat accurate drawing using T-squares, setsquares and boards, as well as using Solidworks, a 3-D CAD software. Students will also learn how to illustrate ideas using free-hand sketches to accurately communicate their ideas. Graphics helps to develop a student's dexterity and neatness and can be very rewarding. It suits girls and boys, both as a school subject and in later life, where it compliments many careers including engineering, product design, architecture, photogrammetry, game design, geomatics and animation. These careers are often referred to as the technology sector, which is one of the main growth areas in the Irish economy. The course involves learning how to draw in 2 and 3 dimensions, using traditional on paper techniques, as well as using CAD. Students will then apply these skills to solve real life problems. Topics covered in 1st year include creating designs using triangles, polygons and circles as well as learning the design process by doing a design project. Students spend about 70% of their time learning on paper techniques and 30% on computer. Here are some examples of exercises on the 1st year course:



Assessment:

The assessment of Graphics will comprise:

- Two Classroom-based Assessments: Communicating through sketching and Presentation of research, during the second term of Second Year and the first term of Third Year.
- A project: 30% (first term of Third Year)
- A written examination: 70% set and marked by the State Examinations Commission.

Graphics leads into Design & Communication Graphics at Leaving Certificate. Design and Communication Graphics is the new name for Technical Drawing.

[Click here for more information on the Junior Cycle Graphics course](#)

[Leaflet on the Graphics course](#)