



Coláiste Pobail Acla

Junior Certificate School Programme Policy

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1. School Mission Statement

We strive to motivate our school community to realise its full potential academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally in a safe, supportive environment.

Coláiste Pobail Acla is a centre of learning, a place where everyone is treated as an individual. Staff and students work together in the pursuit of excellence in student learning, in a safe and friendly environment.

Coláiste Pobail Acla puts mutual respect and teamwork between staff and students to the fore. Coláiste Pobail Acla encourages creativity and embraces diversity in a positive learning environment. We support and encourage all students to become responsible citizens that excel in their personal and academic careers.

In Coláiste Pobail Acla we are constantly trying to improve the high standard of education all students receive. We are a Community College and the Community is at the heart of the school.

2. Programme Overview

2.1. Context

The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) originated in a number of projects initiated by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) through its Curriculum Development Unit (CDU).

The projects were concerned with identifying potential early school leavers and devising a programme suitable to their needs. In September 1996, following a pilot phase, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Department of Education and Science (DES) launched the *Junior Certificate School Programme*.

Since its introduction the programme has expanded from 32 schools in 1996 to 240 schools in 2010. The programme has expanded on a phased basis, to all post-primary schools participating in the *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools* (DEIS) initiative.

2.2. Aims

We aim to provide an intervention programme that is positive and effective in providing support for students, Parents/Guardians and staff and that will be dynamic and flexible in order to change, develop and adapt according to the needs of the student.

JCSP will support participating students who may be at risk of early school leaving and students who may be having difficulty engaging productively with the Junior Certificate Programme, in the following ways:

- All students will be included in the programme on entering 1st year in our school, ensuring inclusive support in a mixed ability setting for all.

- These supports include Literacy/Numeracy Initiatives, Recording Achievements/Profiling, Cross-Curricular Statements, Celebrations and Certification.
- All students will be assessed, and use will be made of existing assessments, in order to gain necessary information on literacy and numeracy levels of all students.
- Parents/Guardians, staff and students will receive relevant information on a regular basis.
- Through JCSP activities, students and Parents/Guardians will further develop a positive attitude to learning and life in school.
- Provision of opportunities of in-service training for staff both within and outside the school will be encouraged.
- Students will develop academically, socially and personally as a result of participation in JCSP activities.
- Resources and materials will be provided to students and teachers as required.
- All students will be encouraged to participate in Cross-Curricular and Extra-Curricular activities both within and outside of the JCSP Programme.
- Through participation in JCSP, students will develop confidence, and motivation to improve participation and performance levels while experiencing success.

2.3. Admissions

Students participating in the JCSP come under at least one of the following criteria **and** may be at risk of leaving school early.

1. Students who have an educational / psychological report.
2. Students with literacy / numeracy difficulties.
3. Students who come from a disadvantaged background.
4. Students from minority groups.
5. Students with a family history of early school leaving.
6. Students with behavioural problems which may adversely affect their education.
7. Students with attendance problems.
8. Students referred by the principal / care team for any other reason.

All students entering years 1 or 2 will be part of our JCSP Programme.

2.4. Equality of access and participation

Guided by the principles of the school Mission Statement Coláiste Pobail Acla will ensure no student will be refused admission for reasons of religion, ethnicity, special education needs, disability, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status, family or social status.

3. Assessment

The Junior Certificate School Programme is *not* an alternative to the Junior Certificate/ Junior Cycle. All JCSP students sit the Junior Certificate/ Junior Cycle exams at the end of the three-year course. The Junior Certificate School Programme aims to make the Junior Certificate course more accessible for students with learning needs.

Assessment of a student's progress within the JCSP programme is done in two ways:

A. Profile meetings

It is hoped to have 3 profile meetings for each JCSP group per year. During profile meetings a group of 4/5 core teachers discuss the progress of each student. Details of JCSP initiatives, programmes or planning are also discussed during this meeting. A link teacher from each core meeting will then bring the matters discussed back to the JCSP core team who will work together on implementing and improving JCSP in the school.

B. Statements

The JCSP has broken up the Junior Certificate/ Junior Cycle course for each subject into manageable pieces called statements. Statements are awarded to a student when they are competent in the area involved. Each statement is broken up into a set of targets. Each target is a small section of the course.

Progress in targets is monitored by teachers using a statement record of progress sheet. When a student has finished a statement, details are given to the JCSP co-ordinator who then updates students' folders and their own records with these details.

In conjunction with the state exams held at the end of the three years, there is also continuous assessment carried out on an ongoing basis by all teachers. These methods of assessment include:

- Verbal and written questions in class
- Homework
- Projects
- Class discussion and debate
- Group work and pair work
- Role play and various student activities
- Written exams

Parents/Guardians are updated on their child's progress with two official reports and one parent teacher meeting per year. From time to time other contact may be made with home as necessary. The JCSP co-ordinator also keeps in regular contact with parents/guardians by phone calls, letters, meetings and JCSP postcards.

The Home School Community Liaison ensures there is a constant link between home and school.

4. Curriculum

The subjects offered to JCSP students may be added or removed if necessary, on a yearly basis. The current list of subjects in JCSP are:

Subject	Statement Code
Irish	IR1,IR2,IR3,IR4, IR5,IR6,IR7,IR8
English	EJC1,EJC2,EJC3,EJC4,EJC5
Maths	MGT1,MGT2, MN1,MN2,MN3,MN4,MN5,MSP1,MSP2
Geography	G2,G3,G4,G5,G6,G10,G11,G12, G13,G14,G15
History	H3,H10,H11,H12,H13,H14,H15,H16,H17,H18,H19,H20,H21,H22,H23,H24,H25,H26,H27
Science	ST1,ST2,ST3,ST4,ST5,ST6,ST7,ST8,ST9,ST10,ST11,ST12,ST13,ST14,ST15,ST16,ST17,ST18,ST19,ST20,ST21
Business Studies	BST1,BST2,BST3,BST4,BST5,BST6,BST7
French	ML1F,ML2F,ML3
Home Economics	HE3,HE4,HE5, HE6,HE7,HE8, HE9,HE10
Materials Technology (Wood)	MTW1,MTW2, MTW3,MTW4, MTW5,MTW6, MTW7
Materials Technology (Metal)	MTM1,MTM2, MTM3
Technical Graphics	TG4,TG5,TG10, TG11,TG12

5. JCSP support for reaching targets of DEIS Plan

Our DEIS plan outlines targets to be met in the 8 key areas of DEIS. They are:

1. Plan to improve Literacy Levels
2. Plan to improve Numeracy Levels
3. Plan to improve Pupil Retention
4. Plan to improve Pupil Attendance Rates
5. Plan to improve Student Transition from Post-Primary Education
6. Plan to improve Academic Attainment
7. Plan to improve Partnership with Parents/Guardians
8. Plan to improve Partnership with Others

DEIS targets will be set in line with the DEIS plan. JCSP will aim to help meet these targets by backing up and reinforcing the findings of research carried out. There are many ways JCSP can help with this.

5.1. Plan to improve Literacy Levels

- Providing resources for classes
- Running initiatives (keywords, DEAR, one book one read, reading corner etc.)
- Digital Library
- Make a Book
- Film making initiative

5.2. Plan to improve Numeracy Levels

- Keywords for Numeracy
- Class initiatives
- Class resources and materials
- Maths week
- Maths Trail

5.3. Plan to improve Pupil Retention

- JCSP is made available to all students
- Running initiatives
- Targeting at risk students
- Profiling
- Ensuring all students are able to experience success
- The use of postcards to congratulate success
- The use of achievement certs and awards
- Christmas and summer celebrations

5.4. Plan to improve Pupil Attendance Rates

- JCSP is made available to all students
- Running initiatives
- Targeting at risk students
- Ensuring all students are able to experience success
- The use of postcards to congratulate success
- The use of achievement certs and awards
- Christmas and summer celebrations

5.5. Plan to improve Student Transition from Post-Primary Education

- JCSP is made available to all students
- Ensuring all students are able to experience success
- Students learn to learn

5.6. Plan to improve Academic Attainment

- Profiling keeps track of academic progress
- Initiatives help to make subjects more engaging
- The Library has been well funded by JCSP

5.7. Plan to improve Partnership with Parents/Guardians

- The use of postcards to congratulate success
- The use of achievement certs and awards
- Christmas and summer celebrations

5.8. Plan to improve Partnership with Others

- Initiatives can be run to engage with outside parties
- Guest speakers and celebrity chefs can be brought to the school
- Field trips can be organised in various subjects
- We link with the community
- We link with primary schools (One Book One Read)

Through the evaluations of JCSP initiatives, effects on attendance will be addressed. The attendance of all JCSP students will be monitored on a regular basis. Students will be rewarded for excellent and improved attendance.

Through participation in JCSP Programme and profiling of students in 3rd year, encouragement is given to all students to complete their Junior Certificate Examinations successfully and so improve progression throughout the Junior Cycle and retention rates to Senior Cycle and beyond.

Introduction of students to the JCSP Programme in 1st Year along with successful participation in JCSP initiatives and activities are hugely dependant on parental/guardian support. Partnership with parents/guardians is fostered and encouraged through all JCSP activities.

Engagement and Partnership with the community takes place through advertising projects, initiatives and accomplishments in local press and parish newsletters. Some initiatives will require input from the business sector, e.g. Readalong/Book reviews. Other JCSP activities engage with the community, voluntary and 3rd Level sectors through initiatives such as library visits, science/maths workshops in I.T. and Oral Language Development Initiatives.

6. Pupil Induction

All first year students begin their secondary school life with a day of induction. On this day, the principal, a member of the school completion programme and their year tutor meet the group where they discuss the layout of the school, transition to secondary school, homework and study skills and other necessary details.

Within the first three weeks of term the JCSP co-ordinator meets the assigned students to explain how JCSP works. A small presentation is given to the students on JCSP and they are shown some of the JCSP materials, folders, etc. At this stage Parents/Guardians are also sent information

outlining the decision to include their child in the JCSP class and offering to meet them with any queries.

Parents/Guardians of first year JCSP students are invited to the school for an information evening during the month of September. Parents/Guardians are provided with all the information associated with the JCSP programme and have the opportunity to meet with the co-ordinator for further discussion.

The JCSP co-ordinator meets with all new JCSP students to outline the subjects and the general expectations regarding behaviour, etc. The co-ordinator meets JCSP students regularly during the year.

7. Profiling

Teachers are encouraged to complete the statements with their students within the classroom on a regular basis.

Teachers in conjunction with their subject departments will select the subject statements to be taken by their students.

Completion of Subject Statements in this way can occur in conjunction with formal and informal assessments of the students and so enhance assessment for learning of the students.

Profiling of 3rd Year students will take place in Term 3 with the class teachers and the JCSP Coordinator facilitating the submission of subject and cross-curricular statements to JCSP National Headquarters.

A Final Profile Celebration will take place later in Term 3 where students will be awarded their 'Junior Certificate School Programme Student Profile'. This will include Certification of participation in JCSP by Department of Education and Skills, a list of all statements achieved and an individual school reference.

8. Teacher Induction

In September the teaching staff receives information on JCSP. This includes updates on the plan, details of the pupils included and personal information relating to the students. The resource teacher also makes the staff aware of students with NEPS reports or specific needs. Staff are reminded of how statements work, information on in-service, initiatives and the aims of JCSP within Coláiste Pobail Acla.

The co-ordinator hands each teacher out the statements they are to work on for the year. This is decided under each department curriculum plan. If these statements do not meet the needs or ability of the pupils, the teacher discusses this with the JCSP co-ordinator and relevant changes are made.

New teachers: During a one to one meeting with the JCSP co-ordinator new teachers receive a teacher pack for JCSP. The co-ordinator outlines how the programme works and gives them all the required information and documents they need.

In-service is arranged as needed. Teachers who are new to the course are encouraged to contact teachers who have taught the course previously.

The co-ordinator is available for discussion and support at all times. The JCSP notice board in the staff room acts as a means of communicating with staff and keeping them updated.

9. Budget

The JCSP budget is managed through the school office in the accounts section. JCSP funds are spent following the guidelines of their distribution, i.e., reading initiative funds only spent in that area. The co-ordinator discusses purchases under the fund with the Principal but has the power to directly order materials through the school office. Other teachers liaise with the co-ordinator and principal in securing funds under JCSP. The JCSP budget and initiatives are discussed at staff addresses to gain their input into the areas of need for funding. All materials purchased under JCSP must have a copy of the invoice placed in the office to keep an accurate account of spending.

10. Initiatives

Initiatives are applied for and run by subject teachers in consultation with the programme co-ordinator and the Principal. Applications are made in September and decided on by the end of September. There can be 6 initiatives applied for annually as well as the Christmas and summer celebrations. A list of initiatives available are listed below.

Initiative Title
Artist in the Classroom Initiative:
Arts and Crafts Initiative:
Author in Residence
Bodhrán/Traditional Instrument
Bodhrán/Traditional Instrument Top Up
Bog Earraí
Book Review
Calligraphy/Penmanship Initiative:
Camera (English)
Ceili
Chess Initiative:
Christmas Celebration
Community Service
Dance
Debating
Dictionary Work
Digital Storytelling
Drama
Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)
Drop Everything and Read Top-up
e-Portfolio
English Pen Pal
Environmental and Social Studies
Field Trip
Film Making Initiative
Flashmaster Maths
Gaeilge camera initiative
Gaeltacht
Geography

Guidance
Handheld Gaming Device
History
Home Economics
Home Economics: Celebrity Chef
ICT in Numeracy
JCSP Newsletter / Yearbook
JCSP Student Folder Photographs
Keyword
Linguascope
Literacy in your classroom
Maidin Gaeilge
Materials Technology Metal
Materials Technology Wood
Maths Games
Maths Laboratory
Modern Languages
Music
Number Millionaire
Oral Language Development
Paired Maths
Paired Reading
Paired Reading Top Up
Physical Education
Primary Picture Books
Readalong
Readalong Top Up
Reading Aloud
Reading Challenge
Reading Challenge Top Up
Reading Corner Top Up
Reading Corners
Reading Programme in the English Classroom
School Based Literacy Initiative
School Based Numeracy Initiative
Science
Seanacháí
Spelling Challenge
Storytelling
Study Skills
Subject Topic Boxes
Subscription to a language magazine
Technical Graphics
The Reading Medley

Trip to an Art Gallery
Twinning with Another School
Who Wants to be a Word Millionaire?
Who Wants to be a Word Millionaire? Top Up

11. Planning for Students with Special Needs

The JCSP department follows the Special Needs criteria of the school in attempting to fully integrate special needs students into the JCSP programme. There is close liaison between the Learning support co-ordinator and the JCSP co-ordinator. A variety of methods have been used to ensure all students' needs are catered for. These include team-teaching, differentiated learning material and withdrawal from class for extra support. Teachers vary the level of class questions and homework asked of students depending on the student's own ability.

Students involved in the JCSP programme are provided with extra classes and resources in both English and Maths where possible. Some JCSP students also have resource classes as laid out in DES guidelines. The timetabling of the resource classes is organised by school management and the learning support co-ordinator.

Students of JCSP partake in initiatives designed to improve literacy and numeracy such as paired reading, a reading corner – library, maths games. Alongside this are initiatives ran to improve the students' social and personal skills, e.g., Celebrity Chef in Home Economics.

12. Planning for Guidance and Pastoral Care

The school counsellor meets with all students. He/she is also available, by appointment, if students wish to speak with him/her.

Each class group has a year tutor who meets the class regularly. The tutor acts as a member of staff whom students can go to if they are encountering problems or issues. The co-ordinator has an important relationship with JCSP students and is there to help students whatever way he/she can.

Throughout the school community there is an ethos of building a strong relationship with students and guiding them through their life in secondary school.

13. Continuous Professional Development

All teachers teaching the JCSP programme are encouraged to attend in-service courses. The co-ordinator notifies the availability of all in-service on the JCSP notice board. The upcoming JCSP in-service calendar is also mentioned at staff meetings. Records of in-service attendance are retained by management. The school has found group in-service from the JCSP support service very useful.

14. Programme Review Procedures

At the end of each academic year the JCSP is reviewed to allow for updating for the following academic year. The review happens in an informal manner. The JCSP co-ordinator meets with the JCSP teachers, management, initiative teachers and the teaching staff. During these meetings it is discussed what worked well during the year, what could be improved and what changes could be made. These details are then discussed with management.

Evaluations of Initiatives involving input from students and teachers will be submitted to JCSP Headquarters annually. A formal review of the programme will be completed every three years.

15. Useful Links

www.jcsp.ie

www.scoilnet.ie

www.examinations.ie

16. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed on a three year basis through:

- School DEIS Plan
- Literacy testing
- Teacher feedback
- Department feedback

17. Links with other Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- SSE Plan
- DEIS Plan

18. Declaration

This Coláiste Pobail Acla Policy was formed following consultation with all staff, members of the Board of Management, Parents/Guardians and the Student Council. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed every three years or whenever it is deemed necessary by School Management. It was adopted by the Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Acla on:

Signed: _____

Mr. Pat Kilbane

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Mr. Paul Fahy

Board Secretary & School Principal (Acting)

Date: _____