

First Year Experience

We are very aware of the significance and importance of a smooth transition from Primary to Post-Primary School. In order to ensure all First Years make that transition as successfully as possible we spend a lot of time, in particular during the first term, listening to First Years and ensuring they are settling in. We offer the following supports:

TO STUDENTS

OPEN DAY & TRANSFER PROGRAMME

Sixth Class students are invited to the school to sample some of the option subjects and become more familiar with the facilities in the school. The school also participates in the Transfer Programme for Sixth Class students in the local Primary Schools during May.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER FIRST YEAR INDUCTION PROGRAMME

Students are given practical help to familiarise themselves with the school day, e.g. class times, timetable, using their lockers etc.

MENTORING PROGRAMME

Senior students act as mentors to First Years especially at break times and also organise activities for the year group. They play a very important role in our induction programme. This allows students to gain confidence in their new surroundings. A Team Building trip in the first term helps students and mentors bond.

TUTOR AND YEAR HEAD SYSTEM

Each class is assigned a Class Tutor who works closely with the Subject Teacher and the Year Head to monitor the progress of each individual student in the year group. Therapeutic Support and Guidance is available as required.

HOMEWORK CLUB

Teachers are available to help students with their homework. The club generally operates three days per week from 3.45pm – 4.45pm and is funded by the School Completion Programme. A snack is also provided for students each day before club begins.

ACKNOWLEDGING ACHIEVEMENT

Academic success and positive behaviour is reinforced by the School Reward Scheme for junior students, positive comments in student journal/VShare, and our annual awards ceremonies. Students are encouraged to actively participate in school life by becoming class prefects, deputy prefects, mentors or members of Student Council. Students are also encouraged to join various school committees including Green Schools and Health Promoting School Committee.

TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNITY LIAISON

The H.S.C.L. works closely with parents to develop strong links between home and school and is an invaluable support for parents, students and teachers.

OPEN NIGHT

Parents are given an opportunity on Open Night to visit the school where teachers and students will be available to answer any questions.

PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS

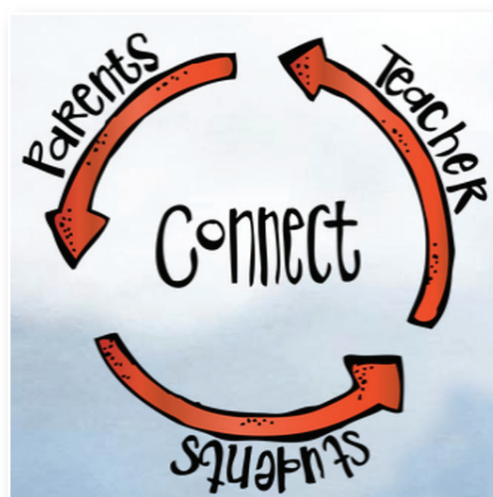
INFORMATION EVENINGS

COMMUNICATION

Parents are encouraged to have an active role in their child's education and are very welcome to contact the school. Appointments to see Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads or any staff member can be made by ringing the school secretary. We appreciate feedback from parents on their child's experience and progress in school. All parents are encouraged to join our active Parents' Council.

VShare PARENTS' APP

We use the VShare App to communicate with parents and student term school reports are available on line for parents using the App.



Frequently Asked Questions

How is the school day structured?

School begins every morning with roll call at 8.55am and finishes at 3.40pm every day except Friday when students have an earlier finish time of 2.42pm. Students have six classes per day Monday – Thursday and five classes on Friday.

Will my child have locker facilities?

Every student in the school has access to a locker. We constantly review our school practice and intend to review the benefits of locker usage.

How will my child with special needs/learning difficulties be catered for?

The Year Head and H.S.C.L. will work closely with the Primary School and the parents to ensure all relevant information is shared. If your son/daughter is identified as needing support it will be provided to best meet the needs of your child. The school, with guidance from the Learning Support Co-Ordinator, will use a variety of approaches to maximise the effectiveness of the support provided.

How will my gifted child be catered for?

The school has links with the Centre for Talented Youth based in D.C.U. which provides programmes for students identified as having high academic ability.

Will my child be in a mixed ability class?

In First Year all classes are mixed ability but in Second/Third Year classes are divided for English, Maths and Irish based on whether the student is studying Higher or Ordinary level.

Will my child get to choose his/her Junior Certificate subjects?

All students study History, Geography, Science, C.S.P.E., English, Irish and Maths. Students will also choose three option subjects from a list of eight before they commence First Year. Students also study the following non exam subjects: Religion, Physical Education and Social Physical and Health Education.

Will he/she be guaranteed a place in their chosen option subjects?

Every effort will be made to ensure students secure a place in their chosen options. Students will be asked to rank their preferences and the timetable will be devised to maximise as many students as possible getting their preferred subjects.

If I have a concern whom do I contact?

If you have a concern please contact the school secretary to make an appointment to see your child's Subject Teacher, Tutor or Year Head. The H.S.C.L., who works closely with parents, can also be contacted. If you need to speak with the Principal or Deputy Principal you are also welcome to ring and make an appointment.

Can students go home for lunch?

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during lunchtime.

What food is available at lunchtime in the canteen?

A range of reasonably priced hot or cold food and drink is available to purchase at lunchtime. As a Health Promoting School, students are encouraged to bring in healthy lunches and only healthy options are available in the canteen. Nutritious snacks are provided free of charge at break time to all students. Hot meals are provided at a subsidised cost and an online fob system operated by the canteen service provider allows parents to top up student's accounts.

How much will school books cost?

The school operates a school book rental scheme to minimise the cost to parents. This can be paid online using our online payments system.

How do your Leaving Certificate results compare to the national average?

Ard Scoil Chiaráin has a strong record of academic success and consistently features as one of the top feeder schools in Offaly.

How will I be informed of my child's academic progress?

Parents will be informed of their child's progress formally by term reports which are accessible online to parents three times during the year. Tutors and Year Heads also keep parents informed throughout the year. Parent/Teacher meetings are also scheduled during the year for all year groups.

How will the school communicate with parents/guardians?

The school values the input and involvement of parents and open communication is fostered through the use of the student journal, text messages, phone calls home as well as email and other online platforms including an App for parents to access school reports etc. Parents are also encouraged to join the Parents' Council.

Is after school study provided?

Supervised after school study is provided at a reasonable price subject to demand. Study operates after school for a two hour session. A short break is provided after last class prior to the commencement of study.

How much homework can I expect my child to get in First Year?

Generally First Year students have 1 – 1.5 hours homework per day.



The Curriculum



BROSNA CENTRE

The Brosna Centre caters for the needs of students with Autism who meet the criteria for an ASD specialist class setting. The Centre comprises of three classes and caters for a maximum of 18 students. ASCN offers a broad and inclusive programme for all our students including our Brosna students. Students can access mainstream classes and are encouraged to become involved in school activities and extra-curricular activities. Individual learning programmes centred on developing social, communication, organisation and life skills are offered in an Autism specific learning environment.



JUNIOR CYCLE

First Year students are in mixed ability classes and study the following core subjects:

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--|
| • English | • Geography | • Wellbeing |
| • Irish | • Science | <i>Civic Social Political Education,</i> |
| • Maths | • Religion | <i>Social Physical Health Education,</i> |
| • History | • I.T. | <i>P.E.</i> |

Students choose three subjects from the following list which they will study for their Junior Cycle.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| • Business Studies | • Engineering |
| • Graphics | • Home Economics |
| • Modern Foreign Languages – French | • Music |
| • Wood Technology | • Visual Art |

The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) is issued by schools and reports on: the student's achievements in the state certified examinations including the Assessment Task, as well as Classroom Based Assessments. The JCPA also reports on the student's achievement in Wellbeing.

The Junior Certificate School Programme is also offered in the school.



The Curriculum

SENIOR CYCLE

TRANSITION YEAR

We have a very vibrant and diverse T.Y. programme in operation in the school. It is not compulsory and students apply for places on the programme. This successful programme enables students to make a successful transition from Junior to Senior Cycle, encourages personal and social development and recognises the need for students to grow in independence. Work experience is an integral part of the Transition Year programme with two one-week work placements taking place during the year.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE

Students following the Leaving Certificate (Established) programme are required to study at least five subjects, one of which must be Irish, unless they have an official exemption. In general students study seven subjects for examination: English, Irish, Maths and four subjects from the option list below.

- Accounting
- Agricultural Science
- Art
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Construction Studies
- Design and Communication Graphics D.C.G.
- Engineering
- French
- Geography
- History
- Home Economics
- Music
- Physics
- I.T.*
- P.E.*
- Religion*
- Career Guidance*

**Non-exam subjects*

Option subjects are provided subject to demand and are offered at all levels.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME

L.C.V.P. is run in conjunction with the established Leaving Certificate. The L.C.V.P. combines the academic strengths of the established Leaving Certificate with a dynamic focus on self-directed learning, innovation and enterprise. The primary goal of the L.C.V.P. is to prepare young people for adult life by ensuring that they are educated in the broadest sense, with an ability to cope and thrive in an environment of rapid change. The L.C.V.P. examinations are accepted for points within the C.A.O. system of application for Third Level Colleges.

My Class Timetable

Class time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.55 - 9.00	Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial
9.00 - 9.58					
9.58 - 10.56					
10.56 - 11.14	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
11.14 - 12.12					
12.12 - 13.10					
13.10 - 13.44	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
13.44 - 14.42					
14.42 - 15.40					

LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED

Leaving Certificate Applied is a two year Leaving Certificate available to students who wish to follow a practical programme with a strong vocational emphasis and caters for the diversity of students in Senior Cycle. Students go on work experience one day per week, changing placement at the end of each module to ensure a variety of skills and occupations is experienced.

CAREER GUIDANCE

Career guidance and counselling is provided in the school as a timetabled subject and on a one-to-one basis to support our students. Guest speakers from a range of disciplines visit the school and students are encouraged to attend college and university open days.

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND

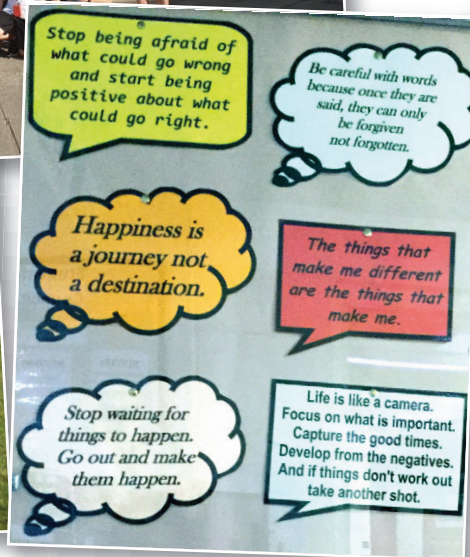
As part of this national initiative we are partnered with Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and have developed invaluable links as students prepare for the world of work and third level education.



Extra-Curricular Activities

Our school community recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities and actively encourages all students to become involved. We offer a wide range of academic, sporting and cultural activities to cater for a variety of interests. These activities include:

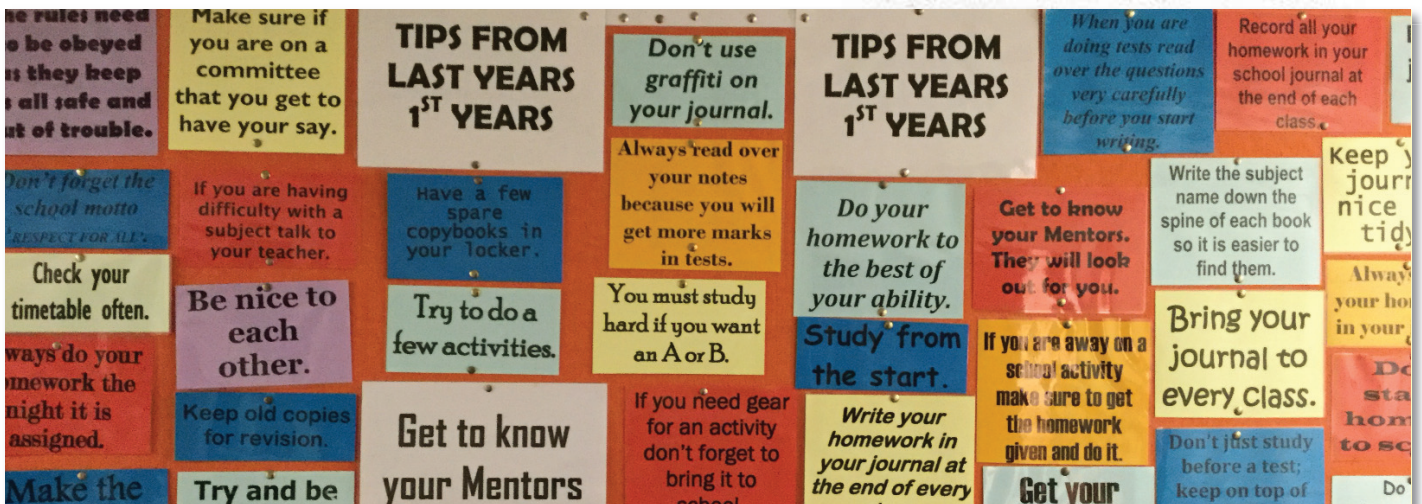
- Gaelic Football
- Hurling
- Soccer
- Pitch & Putt
- Golf
- Basketball
- Fishing
- Sports Day
- School Tours
- Day Trips
- Public Speaking
- Drama
- Panto
- Choir
- Guitar Lessons
- Storytelling
- Enterprise
- Gaisce
- Fundraising
- Quizzes
- Competitions
- Quizlet
- Maths Club
- History Club
- Badminton
- Guest Speakers



School Life

ASCN LEARNING COMMUNITY

Ard Scoil Chiaráin is a very progressive learning environment where all stakeholders have a voice. We pride ourselves in being proactive and responding to the needs of all within our learning community. Year on year our student numbers have grown, and we currently have 325 students attending. Our school campus has developed accordingly to meet these needs. We are all very excited with the planned development of a new school to meet our growing needs.



STUDENT VOICE

ASCN has a twelve-member Student Council which represents the student body. Each year group elects student representatives. All students are encouraged to join focus groups which explore students' experience of learning and school. We are a very student centred learning community where feedback from students is sought and encouraged. Feedback from students is gained through the use of online surveys and forms.

ONLINE & DIGITAL LEARNING

- All students use the Office 365 suite to access the curriculum and complete relevant work.
- Fully furnished specialist computer room for IT as well as laptop trollies for use in classes.
- TEAMS platform used to complement the work done in school and homework.
- Teachers use iPads as a teaching tool.

