

## *Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock*



# Curriculum Policy

### Policy Details

Legal Status	Adopted	Version Date	Last Review	Next Review	Responsible
Statutory		August 2016	April 2015	April 2018	P. McCormick

### Related Documents and Location

1. School Improvement Plan 2015-18 - C2k Private Folders
2. Gifted and Talented Policy - C2k Private Folders
3. Homework Policy - C2k Private Folders
4. Circular 2016/11 – Class sizes in Post-Primary Schools

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## **1 COLLEGE VISION STATEMENT**

To achieve 'Excellence through Care'.

## **2 COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT**

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock cares for young people in way that encourages them to develop to their full potential within a supportive Christian community. We seek to prepare our students to play an active and responsible role in society, and to use their talents for the service of others.

## **3 AIMS OF THE CURRICULUM**

In keeping with College Aims, the resources available and DENI guidelines, Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock aims to provide a curriculum that:

- Is in line with all legal curriculum requirements, including the Education (NI) Order 2006.
- Is underpinned by the values of justice, tolerance and respect for diversity.
- Develops young people intellectually, physically, spiritually, morally, socially and emotionally.
- Responds to students' curricular needs and interests, is inclusive and supports their individual aptitudes and talents.
- Enables students to develop the attributes, knowledge and skills they will need if they are to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.
- Nurtures in students a life-long interest in learning and provides challenge and enjoyment.
- Is broad and balanced and promotes coherency, continuity and progression in students' learning.
- Engages students with other schools, the local community and the wider community.
- Leads to improved levels of attainment for all students.

## **4 PLANNING FOR AND DELIVERING THE CURRICULUM**

4.1 This Curriculum Policy embraces the **Vision Statement, Mission Statement and Aims of the College**, and reflects the curriculum priorities of the College as stated in the goals and targets of the **School Improvement Plan, 2015-18**. These curriculum priorities have been identified after an analysis of a range of sources, including consultation with parents, students and staff of the College, as well as educational and community partners.

The College curriculum is also consistent with the statutory requirements that schools are obliged to conform to.

The curriculum takes account of the students' differing stages of development, abilities, and attainments and tries to ensure that their individual needs are met.

- The curriculum is largely delivered through Subject Departments, who develop schemes of work which should be regarded as working documents.
- The schemes of work will normally include learning intentions, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods and resources.

- At Key Stage 3 schemes will also include reference to Assessment for Learning, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and the cross-curricular skills of Using ICT, Communication and Using Mathematics.
- Assessments and homeworks should be designed to test whether the learning outcomes have been met.
- The units of work will be evaluated to help facilitate future planning.

#### 4.2 Curriculum Organisation

Teaching is usually organised by Subject Department, unless the subject is delivered on a cross-curricular basis (ICT, Numeracy and Literacy). Each Department has a Head of Department who is responsible for the delivery of his/her part of the curriculum. There are also three Subject Co-ordinators with responsibility for ICT, Numeracy and Literacy. Each Department produces a Department handbook, which includes Department targets and action plans. The work of Heads of Department is overseen by the Faculty Team, i.e. three Heads of Faculty and the Vice Principal (Curriculum). The Faculty Team meet weekly and this is the main forum for discussing curricular matters.

In August, Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators prepare reports which are submitted to and discussed with the Principal. These reports help in the monitoring and evaluation the College curriculum, and overall, give a clear indication of the College's curricular priorities and professional training needs.

#### 4.3 Curriculum Roles and Responsibilities

Team	Membership	Roles and Responsibilities
n/a	Principal.	Overall accountability for all aspects of College performance and procedures.
n/a	Vice Principal.	To maintain high educational standards within the College. To lead and promote effective team-working within the College in the context of the SIP. To promote good relationships between the College, parents and various external agencies. To develop positive learning environments in which all students are encouraged to reach their potential. To co-ordinate and facilitate ongoing staff development. To manage change to ensure effective and appropriate student development. To put in place policies and procedures to ensure that the College meets all of the changing curriculum requirements. To monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching within the College as a self-evaluating institution. To clerk the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Governors.
Faculty Team	Vice Principal. 3 Heads of Faculty.	To develop an overview of the curriculum, initiate curriculum development and take the lead in formulating curriculum policy. To liaise with Heads of Department and Subject

		<p>Co-ordinators to ensure that appropriate schemes of work are in place.</p> <p>To monitor and evaluate the delivery of the curriculum throughout the College.</p> <p>To monitor and evaluate standards of achievement throughout the College.</p> <p>To engage with Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators in the process of target setting and action planning.</p> <p>To develop collaborative links with other schools and colleges.</p>
Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators	<p>29 Heads of Departments.</p> <p>4 Subject Co-ordinators.</p>	<p>To take the lead in developing schemes of work appropriate to the needs of our students.</p> <p>To quality assure the content and delivery of the curriculum.</p> <p>To take the lead in the process of target setting and action planning with department colleagues and to put in place procedures for monitoring targets.</p> <p>To monitor and evaluate standards of achievement of students within their departments.</p> <p>To develop connected learning programmes with other departments.</p> <p>To encourage and promote whole staff development within their departments.</p>
Subject Departments	<p>Individual Heads of Departments.</p> <p>Subject teachers within each Department.</p>	<p>To collaborate with department colleagues in developing schemes of work appropriate to the needs of our students.</p> <p>To engage with department colleagues in the process of target setting and action planning and to put in place procedures for monitoring targets.</p> <p>To monitor and evaluate standards of achievement of students within their departments.</p>
Central Management Team	<p>Principal.</p> <p>2 Vice Principals.</p> <p>3 Heads of Faculty.</p> <p>3 Heads of School.</p>	<p>To discuss and ratify major aspects of curriculum policy.</p>
Board of Governors' Curriculum Committee	<p>Principal.</p> <p>Vice Principal.</p> <p>3 Governors.</p>	<p>To ensure that the curriculum is delivered.</p> <p>To ratify curriculum policy.</p> <p>To encourage curriculum development.</p> <p>To ensure that arrangements are in place to deal with complaints about the delivery of the curriculum.</p>

#### 4.4 **Schemes of Work and Lesson Plans**

Each Subject Department is required to have schemes of work for all of its courses or programmes related, where appropriate, to the NI Curriculum and/or examination board requirements. These schemes of work are followed by all departmental staff and their delivery monitored by Heads of Department and Heads of Faculty.

Teachers plan for the delivery of individual lessons or sequences of lessons. Schemes of work set out how the content of the course is structured, so that students' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively, and how the teaching is organised. These schemes of work are supported by assessment strategies and methods for ensuring standardisation of expectation and assessment.

The schemes of work in every learning area are devised to ensure equal access for all students, irrespective of gender, religious affiliation, nationality, socio-economic background or special educational need.

Electronic versions of schemes of work are uploaded to C2k Private Folders 3, where they can be accessed by all teaching staff.

## **5 KEY STAGE 3 CURRICULUM – JUNIOR SCHOOL (YEARS 8 – 10)**

The statutory curriculum at Key Stage 3 is called the **NI Curriculum**. It is defined in statements of minimum entitlement, which are set out under the curriculum objectives and key elements, with examples that relate to life and work.

The legislative basis of the NI Curriculum is **The Education Order 2007**, which compels the College to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which *'promotes the spiritual, emotional, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life'*.

This overarching aim is in harmony with the Vision Statement, Mission Statement and Aims of the College, and the curriculum on offer in the College.

The **Objectives of the NI Curriculum** are to provide relevant learning experiences which help each young person to develop:

- as an individual;
- a contributor to society; and
- a contributor to the economy and environment.

The **main ideas behind the NI Curriculum** are to:

- Provide greater **flexibility** through reduced requirements
- Enable schools to **design** a curriculum that meets their needs
- Provide scope for teachers to follow their **professional instincts**
- Promote more **coherent thinking, collaboration and relevance** in how learning is presented
- Strike the right **balance** in skills, capabilities, knowledge and understanding
- Encourage pupils to be **independent, motivated learners**.

To bring these ideas to fruition, **curriculum development** in the College has led to:

- A more flexible curriculum
  - Minimum subject requirements
  - Themes that engage young people
  - Emphasis on relevance and connected learning

- A focus on Learning for Life and Work
  - Personal Development
  - Citizenship
  - Employability
  - Home Economics
  
- The development of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TS&PC)
  - TS&PC are now an intrinsic part of classroom practice
  
- An Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach to learning
  - Classroom methodology is employed that focuses on learning, pupil participation and feedback

### 5.1 Areas of Learning and Subject Strands

Areas of Learning	Subject Strands
Language and Literacy	English Media Education
Mathematics and Numeracy	Mathematics Financial Capability
Modern Languages	Any official language of the European Union other than English (French, German, Irish and Spanish in Knock)
The Arts	Art and Design Music Drama
Environment and Society	History Geography
Science and Technology	Science Technology and Design
Learning for Life and Work	Employability Local and Global Citizenship Personal Development Home Economics
Physical Education	Physical Education
Religious Education	Religious Education

The minimum statutory requirements for the NI Curriculum at Key Stage 3 are set out in nine **Areas of Learning**, some with **subject strands**. The College's curriculum includes provision for these Areas of Learning and their contributory subject strands as set out in the table below.

The minimum statutory requirements within the Areas of Learning and subject strands cover Years 8, 9 and 10. Teachers in the College have considerable scope to develop their schemes of work by selecting from within the Areas of Learning, those aspects they consider **appropriate to the ability and interests** of their students.

**Year 8 and 9** students study the following subjects:

- Art and Design
- Drama
- English
- Employability
- Geography
- History
- Home Economics
- Information and Communication Technology
- Local and Global Citizenship
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Science
- Technology and Design

Pupils also choose two Modern Languages from:

- French
- German
- Irish
- Spanish.

A Personal Development Programme is provided and all Junior School students follow our "Education for Love" Programme.

In **Year 10** students study all of the above subjects but Science is taught as the separate subjects of:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics.

We realise that transition from primary to grammar school can be quite difficult for children, so care is taken to ensure that the changeover goes as smoothly as possible. Year 8 pupils follow a **two-day induction course** before commencing their academic studies. During these days they meet their tutors, get to know the layout of the College, have the opportunity to discuss their expectations and concerns and learn about the ethos of the College.

## **6 END OF KEY STAGE 3 ASSESSMENT**

The **Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT** are relevant across the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on using, applying and transferring skills effectively in real and relevant contexts.

At Key Stage 3, the College is required to assess and report each pupil's progress in the Cross-Curricular Skills with reference to the Levels of Progression. The **Levels of Progression** set out, in the form of “can do” statements, a continuum of skills that pupils should be able to demonstrate if they are to build the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills needed to function effectively in life and in the world of work.

Teachers should ensure assessment activities, including CCEA approved assessment tasks, are planned and embedded in learning and teaching. Assessment activities should have a clear purpose, for example for formative or summative use. CCEA approved assessment tasks should be used to support the summative assessment judgement for each of the Cross-Curricular Skills.

The assessment of Communication and Using Mathematics is led by the English and Mathematics Departments respectively, with support being provided by other departments. Assessment of pupil achievement in the Areas of Learning is carried out in accordance with the College's Assessment policy. Assessment of the Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities) takes place within the Areas of Learning and is based on qualitative judgements of pupil progress.

## **7 KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM – SENIOR SCHOOL (YEARS 11 – 12)**

In Senior School, students study **10, 11 or 12** GCSE examination subjects over a two year period, selected from a range of 27 accredited courses.

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum caters for a wide range of interests and is designed to give students as much choice as possible while confirming to statutory requirements. Every student is encouraged to aim for breadth and balance in their curriculum so that a wide variety of career opportunities remain open. Careers staff in the College have a key role in addressing this aim.

Key Stage 4 students sit examinations in **compulsory core** and **optional GCSE subjects**.

### **Compulsory Core GCSE Subjects**

- Every student must study a compulsory core of 5 GCSE subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Learning for Life & Work and Religious Education.
- Students who achieve a high mark in the College's End of Key Stage 3 Mathematics exam will be offered the opportunity to study GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 followed by GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12.

### **Optional GCSE Subjects**

- Students choose **five courses** from Groups 1, 2 and 3 (Science Double Award is equivalent to two courses).
- It is strongly recommended that they **choose at least one science course from Group 1**. Any combination of the separate sciences can be chosen. If Science

Double Award is chosen, none of the separate sciences can be chosen. If Science Double Award is chosen, there are three choices left, to be taken from Groups 2 and/or 3.

- It is strongly recommended that every student **chooses a modern language from Group 2**. They may choose more than one modern language.
- **Group 3** contains the rest of the **optional courses**.
- **Music** may be taken as a **one-year** course during three lunch periods in Year 11 in addition to five other subjects chosen from the groups below. Students must consult with the Head of Music before selecting this option.
- It is strongly recommended that students choose at least one **Science course** from Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Science Double Award and a **Modern Language** from French, German, Irish or Spanish.

Students proposing not to choose either a Science course or a Modern language subject must first seek advice from their Science/Language teachers and a Careers Adviser.

### Optional GCSE Courses

#### Group 1

Science: Double Award (2 choices)  
Biology  
Chemistry  
Physics

#### Group 2

French  
German  
Irish  
Spanish

#### Group 3

Art & Design  
Business Studies  
Computing  
Drama  
Geography  
History  
Home Economics  
ICT  
Journalism  
Music (2-year course)  
Music (1-year course)  
Physical Education  
Technology and Design  
Engineering

In addition to GCSE examination courses, **non-examination** Careers Education, Physical Education and the College Tutorial Programme are compulsory for all students.

## 8 POST-16 CURRICULUM – UPPER SCHOOL (YEARS 13 – 14)

### 8.1 Entry on to AS-/A-level Courses

All students entering Sixth Form must study **AS-level** (Advanced Subsidiary level) and **A-level** (Advanced level) subjects. The AS-levels are made up of two or three assessment units and will be examined at the end of Year 13. They represent the first half of an A-level course of study. The A-level consists of **four or six assessment units**. Half of these make up the AS-level qualification studied in Year 13 while the other half, known as A2, are studied in Year 14 and represent the second half of the A-level course of study.

All students will be entered for the AS-level qualification in their chosen subjects at the end of Year 13 whether or not they wish to proceed to the full A-level qualification.

Students progressing to Sixth Form must fulfil the College's criteria for entry. The academic requirement is a minimum of **five GCSE subjects with grades A-C**. **Four of these five subjects**

**must be at grade B** level or above. A grade B at GCSE is required for entry into most AS-level and A-level courses. Some courses have higher entry levels.

## 8.2 **Sixth Form Courses Offered**

The Sixth Form curriculum is designed to provide for both academic study and the personal development of our students. The Sixth Form programme includes the following elements:

### **Compulsory Elements**

- AS-level and A-level subjects
- Careers Education and Guidance
- Life Issues
- Modular Religious Education Programme (compulsory for non AS-/A-level RE students)
- Tutorial Programme

### **Co-curricular Elements**

- Community Service Programme
- Student Mentor Programmes
- COPE (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness)
- Mandarin Language and Culture

Other enrichment courses may be arranged depending on demand.

Depending on timetable arrangements, the subjects listed are offered at **AS-level and A-level**, and students can study any combination of these subjects.

Art & Design	French	Irish
Biology	Further Mathematics	Mathematics
Business Studies	Geography	Music
Chemistry	German	Physical Education
Software Systems Development	Government & Politics	Physics
Design & Technology	History	Religious Education
Drama & Theatre Studies	Home Economics	Sociology
Economics	ICT	Spanish
English Literature		

## 8.3 **AS-/A-level Options**

- Most students are expected to choose **four AS-level subjects in Year 13** and continue **three of them into Year 14 as A-levels**. At the end of Year 14 these students will have obtained an award of three A-levels and one AS-level.
- Some students may choose four AS-level subjects in Year 13 and continue all of them into Year 14 as A-levels. At the end of Year 14 these students will have obtained an award of four A-levels.
- Some students may choose three AS-level subjects in Year 13 and continue these into Year 14 as A-levels. At the end of Year 14 these students will have obtained an award of three A-levels.
- Students who take three AS-level subjects in Year 13 may continue two of these into Year 14 as A-levels and take up another AS-level. At the end of Year 14 these students will have obtained an award of two A-levels and two AS-levels. Timetable arrangements will restrict the choice of the AS-levels available in Year 14.

- Subjects are offered on the condition that there are sufficient numbers to form a viable class. Students will be allocated to A-level classes first. AS-level classes will then be allocated.

#### 8.4 UCAS Tariff Points (2016 Entry)

UCAS tariff points are awarded for each AS-level and each A-level subject obtained and will be used by many universities for entry onto their courses. Students are asked to check their chosen Universities' policies on UCAS tariff points and obtain advice from their Careers teachers. Below is a summary of the UCAS tariff:

A-level Grade	Tariff Points	AS-level Grade	Tariff Points	COPE	Tariff Points
A*	140			Pass	70
A	120	A	60		
B	100	B	50		
C	80	C	40		
D	60	D	30		
E	40	E	20		

## 9 CLASS SIZES AND OVERSUBSCRIPTION

### 9.1 Maximum Class Size

The size of classes in the College will be determined by budgetary considerations and DENI regulations (see Circular 2016/11 – Class sizes in Post-Primary Schools):

- the maximum size for a **general class** is **35 students**;
- the maximum size for a **practical class** is **normally 20 students**, though there are exceptions for Science, Art & Design, Physical Education, Home Economics, Music Technology & Design and Engineering.

#### Science

- up to 26 students in Years 8 – 10;
- up to 24 students in Years 11 – 12;
- up to 20 students in Years 13 – 14.

#### Art & Design

- up to 26 students in Years 8 – 10;
- up to 20 students in Years 11 – 14.

#### Physical Education

- if classes are located in a gym or assembly hall, up to 25 students in Years 8 – 10;
- if classes are located in a gym or assembly hall, up to 20 students in Years 11 – 14.
- if classes are located in playing pitches or sports halls, up to 30 students in Years 8 – 14.

#### Home Economics, Music, Technology & Design and Engineering

- up to 26 students in Years 8 – 10;
- up to 24 students in Years 11 – 12;
- up to 20 students in Years 13 – 14.

## 9.2 **Minimum Class Size**

DENI does not recommend a minimum size for a class, so it is up to the College to decide on the viability of classes. Every effort will be made to accommodate course choices after taking into account the demand for the course, timetable arrangements and budgetary considerations. If the number of students choosing a particular course is less than 10, the College may decide that the class will still run. Possible reasons for this include:

- The number of students choosing the course is lower than has been the trend in recent years;
- Students have very good reasons for wanting to study the course, including its usefulness for university entrance;
- There is evidence that the course enriches the curriculum;
- The College is able to justify providing the resources to run the class.

In some cases, where the student uptake is low, the College may try to collaborate with another institution in order to make it viable to run particular courses (e.g. via EBALC).

## 9.3 **Oversubscription**

If there are more applications to take a GCSE or A-level course than there are places available, students will be selected according to how well they have performed in their:

- Year 10 assessments in the relevant course(s) for GCSE entry;
- GCSE assessments in the relevant course(s) for A-level entry.

## 10 **CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY**

A large team of experienced teachers and a Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) Careers Adviser are involved in the provision of Careers and Employability.

Facilities are divided between the Counselling rooms throughout the College, used for individual and small group guidance; the Careers Classroom where classes are taught and the Careers section of the Library, used by individual pupils to access Careers information.

From Year 8 to 14, all pupils have one compulsory period per week of time-tabled Careers or Employability, and pupils are given booklets of information and work sheets related to their lessons.

At Key Stage 3 the CCEA Education for Employability programme is followed, with its emphasis on pupil-centred learning and preparing young people for life after school. In addition to the normal weekly Careers lesson, Key Stage 4 pupils also study the CCEA GCSE Learning for Life and Work course, of which Employability is a major component. In the Sixth Form, the emphasis is on preparing pupils for university and working life.

Careers staff advise on all aspects of subject and career choice, and guidance is offered to both class groups and individuals. GCSE and A-/AS-level Option Books are produced annually to help pupils make their subject choices. All pupils in Years 10, 12 and 13 are individually interviewed before they choose their GCSEs, A-levels and Higher/Further Education options. Individual guidance on subject choice is offered to pupils and parents via Option Days in the second term. Careers staff are also available to pupils and parents after the publication of examination results, and at parent-teacher meetings. The College's Careers Adviser plays an important guidance role,

particularly with Year 12 pupils. Parents are also encouraged to become constructively involved in the career planning of their children.

From Year 10 onwards, pupils are required to produce realistic Personal Career Plans. ICT is considered to be vitally important to successfully addressing the objectives of the Careers and Employability programmes. The Internet is extensively utilized, and useful sites have been bookmarked for easy pupil access. Pupils are encouraged to answer psychometric questionnaires to ascertain or confirm their career choices.

In early February, Year 13 pupils participate in our annual work experience scheme. Further periods of work experience are also encouraged at appropriate times, especially for Sixth Form pupils. A Careers Convention is held in the College every second year. In the alternate years, pupils are encouraged to participate in a Convention organised by a neighbouring school.

## **11 ENTITLEMENT FRAMEWORK**

Like all schools, the College has been asked to fully deliver the Entitlement Framework by September 2015. The philosophy behind the Framework is to **improve the breadth, balance and coherence of the post-14 curriculum** across Northern Ireland. Schools are being asked to offer a wider range of choices that encompass both **general (academic)** and **applied** courses. In doing so, DENI hopes that young people will have access to a curriculum that interests and excites them, and is relevant to their career aspirations and the needs of the local economy. In this context, the Entitlement Framework is an important stepping stone to DENI's vision of a successful school, as outlined in *Every School a Good School: A Strategy for School Improvement*.

It is DENI's intention to commence legislation that will require all grant-aided post-primary schools to offer access to at least **24 courses at Key Stage 4** and **27 courses at Post-16**. In both cases, **at least one-third of the courses must be general and at least one-third must be applied**. In common with all grammar schools, the challenge that we are faced with at Knock is to increase our provision of applied courses. It is our desire to do this by a step-wise approach, in a way that does not diminish the quality of our Key Stage 4 and Post-16 curricula, and is aligned with the needs and expectations of our students and parents. To help us in this task, we will seek the views of students and parents.

At the start of each school year, the Vice Principal (Curriculum) completes an **Entitlement Framework Audit** of curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 and Post-16, the results of which are collated into an annual **Entitlement Framework Curriculum Audit Report**. Analysis of the College's Report, along with those of other schools in the area, is used to plan for the full implementation of the Entitlement Framework.

The arrangements for the delivery of the Entitlement Framework will differ from school to school, but it is envisaged that in many cases it will involve partnerships with other schools and Further Education Colleges. Every year, we explore such possibilities through regular planned meetings with institutions in our designated **Area Learning Community** and further afield. In the past, our curriculum offer has been strongly driven by student demand and it is a strategy that we will continue to use as we prepare to meet the challenges of implementing the Entitlement Framework by September 2015.

## **12 AREA LEARNING COMMUNITY (EAST BELFAST AREA LEARNING COMMUNITY)**

## **Aim**

The East Belfast Area Learning Community is established to promote a culture of collaboration across the educational providers in the area whilst recognising their individual autonomy. The community aims to provide equality of opportunity for achievement and progression; and reflect the needs of the local and regional economy.

## **Objectives**

The East Belfast Area Learning Community is committed to developing opportunities for collaboration between education providers. Such collaboration will allow individual institutions to co-exist and complement each other, and aim to provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum which:

- **Motivates** young people to participate in lifelong learning by developing a flexible, challenging curriculum and training provision based on local needs analysis and the needs of the local and regional labour market, and which prioritises young people's needs and aspirations;
- **Provides** opportunities for progression leading to outcomes that learners value and which are valued by wider society;
- **Promotes** young people's skills, ambitions and aptitudes; supporting their progression during Key Stage 4 and from Key Stage 4 to post 16, employment, apprenticeships and/ or Further/ Higher Education Training to 19 and beyond;
- **Permits** monitoring, evaluating and reviewing provision to ensure that it promotes excellence, reaches agreed quality standards, meets the needs of young people and increases their participation;
- **Provides** opportunities, as appropriate, for young people to be involved in the planning, reviewing and evaluation of provision;
- **Creates** opportunities for joint staff development.

## **Membership**

The members of EBALC are:

- Campbell College
- Lagan College
- Bloomfield Collegiate
- Strathearn School
- Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock
- Ashfield Boys' High School
- Ashfield Girls' High School
- Grosvenor Grammar School
- Mitchell House
- Belfast Metropolitan College

Any community/business/education partners may attend an EBALC meeting, on invitation, for the purpose of discussing relevant matters.

## **Committees**

Staff in the College attend meetings and fully participate in the work of the four committees established to help realise the aim and objectives of EBALC. These committees are made up of:

- Principals
- Curriculum Co-ordinators

- Heads of Careers
- SENCOs
- Pastoral Heads

### **13 COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS**

DENI has directed schools to collaborate with other schools as a means of helping to deliver the Entitlement Framework by September 2015. The primary vehicle proposed for this collaboration is the Area Learning Community.

### **14 SUBJECT CHOICE AND GENDER STEREOTYPING**

Gender stereotyping can involve students, parents and teachers making inaccurate assumptions about the different roles that men and women can play in society. Such assumptions restrict individual subject choice at Key Stage 4 and post-16, which leads to wasted talent and unfulfilled potential, to skills gaps and to lower pay for those jobs which are seen as 'women's work'. In short, gender stereotyping results in discrimination against both women and men.

It is challenged when students are asked to realistically consider **all** of the available GCSE/A-level subject choices and career options, and do not impose limits on their opportunities because they are male or female. It is challenged when students pick the optional subjects that they like and are good at, instead of simply following the crowd.

**Parents** are the single most important influence on students' subject choices. They should encourage their sons and daughters to widen their subject choices at school and beyond, and provide a home environment where girls and boys are encouraged to share all tasks equally.

**Teachers and Careers advisers** at Knock also have a duty to present unbiased information and to support those pupils who step beyond traditional GCSE subject and career choices.

### **15 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Regular contact with parents is maintained throughout a student's career at the College. Written reports are sent to parents and Parent-Teacher and Options Day meetings are held to discuss the academic and social development of all pupils.

A twice yearly newsletter keeps parents informed about events and changes in the life of the school. The College website ([www.knock.co.uk](http://www.knock.co.uk)) is also used to inform parents about what is happening in the wider school community. If, at any time, parents are concerned about their son/daughter, they are encouraged to contact the College immediately.

Parents and pupils are informed of the College's **Homework Policy** and students are provided with a College Homework Diary. Parents are encouraged to support their children in this extension of their school work.

(See Appendix 2: How can I help with my children's learning?)

## **16 WITHDRAWING FROM OR CHANGING A GCSE OR SIXTH FORM COURSE**

- Only in exceptional circumstances will a student be allowed to withdraw from a course after Halloween.
- In **Year 11 and 12** it is expected that all students will have a full timetable of lessons. If a student is allowed to withdraw from a GCSE course, he/she would normally be expected to replace it with another GCSE course. In some cases, students with specific needs or issues will be allowed to study a reduced number of GCSE subjects.
- A student who decides at the start of **Year 11**, to study GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 and GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12, must be fully committed to this option. The student will NOT be able to change his/her mind during Year 11 or Year 12.
- In **Year 13** it is expected that all students will study 4 or 3 AS-levels. If a student studying 3 AS-levels is allowed to withdraw from an AS-level course he/she would normally be expected to replace it with another AS-level course.
- In **Year 14** it is expected that all students will study at least 3 A2 courses. In exceptional circumstances, a student may be allowed to study 2 A2 courses with 1 AS-level course.

### **16.1 Procedure for Withdrawing From or Changing a Course**

If a student is considering withdrawing from or changing a course, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the following procedures are initiated:

- The student and parent/guardian should consult with the Teacher, Head of Department and Head of School.
- The Head of Department, Head of School and Vice Principal (Curriculum) should be in agreement that it is in the student's best interests to drop the course. If appropriate, the student should also consult a Careers Teacher.
- The Teacher should request a note from the parent/guardian asking that their son/daughter should drop the course. This note should be passed on to the Vice Principal (Curriculum).
- When final approval has been given by the Vice Principal (Curriculum), the student should inform the College Examination Officer in writing.
- The Teacher should also inform the Head of Department, who in turn will inform the Examination Officer.

## **17 TIER OF ENTRY**

At GCSE level a number of courses have different tiers of entry. It is College policy to enter students for the highest exam tier. However, in a small number of cases a lower tier of entry will be recommended by Heads of Department. Based on performance throughout the course, Heads of Department will write to parents recommending a tier of entry. **Parents will then return reply slips confirming that they accept the recommendations, or exceptionally, that they wish their son/daughter to be entered for a different tier.**

Heads of Department will then pass on this information to the College Examination Officer.

Teachers must ensure that Heads of Department are aware of any subsequent requests to change a tier of entry. Heads of Department must then ensure that students and parents are given appropriate guidance, and inform the College Examination Officer of any changes in tier of entry.

## 18 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE CURRICULUM

Consideration of the progress made in addressing the curricular goals and targets outlined in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is core to monitoring and evaluating the College curriculum. The Board of Governors has delegated to the Principal the requirement to monitor, review and evaluate all aspects of the SIP on an annual basis, through verbal and written reports from those members of the Central Management Team who are responsible for each area based on the stated success criteria. Members monitor progress through meetings with those responsible for action plans on a termly basis and report to the CMT and Principal annually. An annual Progress Report will be submitted to the Board of Governors.

Monitoring and evaluation are key components of the College's aim to raise student achievement. Within the curriculum, this involves focusing on teaching and learning, the performance of students, the effectiveness of teachers and hence the standard of achievement across the whole College.

The work of the Faculty Team is central to the effective monitoring and evaluation of the College curriculum. The Team reviews schemes of work, analyses reports on curricular projects, meets with Heads of Department and Subject Co-ordinators, reviews Department action plans, analyses examination results and promotes curricular innovation.

Some of the **broad issues** examined include:

- Are all statutory curricular requirements being met?
- Are the needs of all students being addressed, including the gifted and talented and those with Special Educational Needs?
- Are lessons sufficiently challenging for pupils?
- Is there continuity and progression in the curriculum between one year group and the next?
- Is an AfL approach consistently used across the curriculum?
- Are the cross-curricular skills, along with thinking skills and personal capabilities, infused into the taught curriculum?
- How do the curricular areas relate to each other; e.g. is there evidence of planning for connected learning and skills development?
- Are there adequate opportunities for practical and oral work?
- Are students achieving their potential in all areas of the curriculum?
- Are subject departments achieving the targets they have set for themselves?
- How does student performance, across different subjects and whole school, compare with the benchmark figures for NI grammar schools?
- What are the curricular issues that concern students and parents?
- What has been the impact of a particular curricular initiative?

The **main methods** used in the College to monitor and evaluate the curriculum are:

- CMT meetings, which focus on progress made towards achieving curricular targets.
- Student, parent and staff feedback through questionnaires and focus groups.
- End of year progress reports on curricular goals and targets, submitted by Heads of Department to the Principal.
- Weekly meetings of the Faculty Team, which often focus on a particular aspect of the curriculum. This may involve consideration of reports submitted by a teacher responsible for implementing an aspect of the curriculum.
- Termly meeting of Heads of Department, which can be used to obtain evaluative feedback.

- Subject Department meetings where teachers are able to give their views on the progress being made with a particular target, including student achievement.
- Subject teachers self-monitoring and evaluating their teaching, identifying areas of strength and areas that require further development.
- The College's PRSD programme, which has been particularly useful in encouraging innovation within the curriculum, followed by monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes achieved.
- Induction and EPD classroom observations.
- Classroom observations of new teachers (who have previously completed EPD 2) by the Principal.

## **19 DIFFERENTIATION**

Differentiation is the process by which curriculum objectives, teaching methods assessment methods, resources and learning activities are planned to cater for the needs of individual students.

**It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that work is differentiated to meet the needs of the individual students in the class.**

Reference to a student's IEP may give some guidance on strategies as well as the difficulties which present. Different **learning styles** should be considered as well as different levels of ability.

The following are among the strategies that may be employed:

### **19.1 Differentiation by task**

This means that the same learning intention is used but different tasks are provided. The tasks may be easy at the beginning and progress to a greater level of difficulty; in this way, the work is matched to the ability of the students and everyone is likely to experience success.

### **19.2 Differentiation by outcome**

The same content, materials, stimulus or task is used for all students: this works best with open ended activities and can be successful for individual or group task. More capable students are enabled to extend their thinking and develop their responses more fully.

### **19.3 Differentiation by support**

It is important to remember that all students need support at times, however, the nature and extent of the support differs according to the individual's needs. In some cases, the support required is to encourage the student to attempt a task while at other times it is to ask pertinent questions which will extend the student or help them to explore an alternative way of approaching a task. This requires the teacher to target intervention wisely to address individual need and this may result in an increased level of interaction which will have positive outcomes for students.

### **19.4 Differentiation by resource**

All students may be given the same task or questions to complete but different stimulus materials, graduated according to the ability range within the class, are used.

**19.5 Differentiation by pace**

More able students can often deduce next steps and proceed independently with tasks.

**19.6 Differentiation by dialogue**

The teacher gives a basic outline of the task from which some students will be able to begin the work. This is then followed by further explanation, exemplification or illustration and targeted questioning to support less able students. It is essential that appropriate language is used.

**19.7 Differentiation by choice**

A choice of activities is made available to match the abilities, interests and enthusiasm of the students. A range of starting points may be provided and varied materials or processes may be employed. This can also facilitate extension activities for the more able student.

## APPENDIX 1

### SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND THE CURRICULUM

The College ensures that the curriculum provides appropriate support for students with Special Educational Needs. Subject departments refer to specific Special Educational Needs support and provision within their departmental policies. Teaching and support staff are informed and regularly updated on students who have Special Educational Needs. Staff training on conditions such as Aspergers Syndrome, dyslexia and serious medical conditions is given a high priority in the INSET calendar.

*(Extracts from the College's SEN Policy)*

#### Definition of a Child with Special Educational Needs

A child has '**special educational needs**' if he/she has a learning difficulty, which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her. A child has a '**learning difficulty**' if:

- He/she has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age;
- He/she has a disability which either prevents or hinders him/her from making use of
- educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his/her age in ordinary schools.

#### Structure and Roles

- The approach to the Special Educational Needs of students is that of team work. The structure is led by the **Vice Principal (Pastoral)**.
- The **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)** has responsibility for ensuring the operation of the Policy within the College, covering all aspects of Special Needs including annual reviews.
- The **Special Educational Needs Teacher (SENT)** has responsibility for working on a day-to-day basis with subject teachers and individual students either in helping to identify special learning needs or in making out Individual Education Plans in line with the Stages of Assessment laid out in the Code of Practice and liaising with necessary personnel in and out of the College. He/she will be involved in the preparation of students for external examinations.
- **Heads of School** co-ordinate information on those students who require or may require SEN provision, keep parents informed of procedures, liaise with the SENT and SENCO and organise information for reviews.
- **Heads of Faculty** under the direction of the **Vice Principal (Curriculum)**, are responsible for ensuring that each department has in place its own Special Educational Needs policy drawn up in accordance with the College SEN policy.
- **Heads of Department** implement the policy within their subject areas and help subject teachers to develop strategies for children with Special Educational Needs.
- **Subject Teachers** identify children who may have Special Educational Needs and employ strategies within their subject areas in initial stages or refer to SENT for direction.
- The **Examinations Officer** has the responsibility of dealing with the examination boards with regard to any student requiring Special Needs provision during public examinations.
- The **Vice Principal (Pastoral)** has responsibility for making similar arrangements for internal College examinations.

### **Procedures for Dealing with Students with Learning Difficulties – Statemented and Non-Statemented**

- Information on students with learning difficulties will be passed on by HOS to SENCO and SENT.
- SENT assesses student's difficulties and draws up IEP in consultation with subject teachers and parents. Copy of IEP to be given to all teachers, SENCO and parents.
- Subject teachers will implement IEP in classroom teaching.
- SENCO initiates a Stage 1 record on computer.
- SENT reviews progress after period of time specified in IEP.

### **Procedures for Dealing with Medical Conditions/Physical Disabilities**

- Information on medical conditions/physical disabilities is recorded when students transfer to the College at Key Stage 3, 4 or 5.
- This information is disseminated as necessary through the Heads of School and Pastoral System.
- The Nurse manages medical conditions as they arise within the College and manages particularly those identified with Special Needs.
- Strategies are put in place for students with a medical condition or physical disability through liaison with parents and other agencies.
- The SENCO, in consultation with the HOS, will draw up an IEP for statemented students who have a medical condition/physical disability. A copy of the IEP will be given to all teachers and parents.
- If necessary the Education Welfare Services will be informed of a medical condition/physical disability which affects school attendance. Home tuition and special transport recommended if required.
- The Examination Officer will advise the Examination Boards of students who need special consideration because of a medical condition/physical disability.
- The SENCO will co-ordinate the strategies required to meet medical/physical needs and arrange for annual reviews to be carried out as necessary. Statutory assessments to be made by the EA.

### **Liaison with Parents**

- Clear lines of communication between the College and parents are encouraged.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved in the education of their children with Special Educational Needs.
- Parent/Teacher meetings, reports and an open policy enable parents to be consulted and informed of any procedures involving Special Educational Needs.

### **Integration and Access to the Curriculum**

- Pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs will be integrated with peers and have access to the curriculum.
- Specific environmental needs of identified pupils will be addressed with DENI, EA and other agencies.

## How can I help with my children's learning?

Getting involved with your child's education can make a significant difference to his/her chances of success. **Research has shown that children whose parents are involved get higher marks, have a better attitude towards learning and develop more confidence.** As your child gets older, of course, he/she needs to become more independent. Helping your child to get organised, providing equipment and a quiet place to work and offering lots of encouragement will get him/her off to the right start. Your child's **Homework Diary** should outline the homework that has been set and when it is due. You should check the Diary regularly and **sign it at the end of each week if your child is in Year 8, 9 or 10.**

### How to help – some general advice

- Make sure that you are familiar with your child's Homework Diary.
- Watch out for letters and text messages about Parent-Teacher Meetings and Option/Induction Days, and make every effort to attend (see the College website at [www.knock.co.uk](http://www.knock.co.uk)).
- Nominate somewhere at home as a homework area and have a set time for homework.
- Set up a daily routine. Plan a homework timetable in line with the College's homework guidelines in the Homework Diary, so that your child knows what to do and when.
- It is a good idea if your child has a break and something to eat before starting homework.
- Ask your child to explain the homework task and how it follows on from what he/she was studying at school.
- Be interested and be on hand to talk to your child about what he/she has learnt.
- Help your child to become an **independent learner**. Explain how to look up information rather than simply giving an answer in order to get the task finished.
- Try to ensure that your child can access the College's *Frontier* virtual learning environment from home.
- Turn off the television while homework is being done but do let your child listen to music if he/she finds it helpful and it does not annoy others.
- Read carefully any comments that your child's teacher makes about his/her work.
- Discourage your child from copying without editing when he/she is asked to do research tasks.
- Be positive about your child's attempts. If you have concerns about his/her progress, make an appointment to see your child's Tutor.

The College is keen that parents become fully involved in their children's education. However, please do not be tempted to do their homework, controlled assessment or coursework for them. If your child is to progress we need to know how much your child understands and can do independently.

### Helping with homework

Here are some ways you can help:

- Suggest doing homework as soon as it is received.
- Encourage your child to talk to you when in difficulty, as you may be able to help.
- Make sure your child has a good work-life balance, and does not spend too much time going out with friends, working in a part-time job or sitting at home doing homework.
- Find out about educational reading materials and programmes on radio and television.

### Helping with controlled assessment or coursework

Good controlled assessment or coursework marks can boost your child's grades. You can help by:

- Finding out about the curriculum and how much work needs to be done.
- Knowing when controlled assessment or coursework is due and helping to make out a schedule to complete it on time.
- Making sure your child is clear about what he/she is required to do.
- Locating internet sites that can help with his/her research (e.g. [www.bbc.co.uk/schools](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools)).
- Advising your child to print and save his/her computer work regularly.
- Encouraging your child to talk to his/her teacher about any problems.
- Making sure your child has the right books and resources.

***If parents have concerns about homework, controlled assessment or coursework they should contact their child's Tutor***



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE ABOUT THE DELIVERY OF THE CURRICULUM

### 1 The Board of Governors

- 1.1 The Board of Governors has the responsibility, within the resources allocated to the College, to ensure that the curriculum is delivered and to ensure that arrangements are in place to deal with complaints about its delivery.
- 1.2 The Board of Governors must have in place, and regularly review and update, a written statement of its curriculum policy. It must also ensure that it sends a copy of its curriculum policy (and copies of any subsequent updates to that policy) to the EA.

### 2 Delivery of the curriculum

- 2.1 In Our Lady and St Patrick's College the curriculum is in place for all year groups, and the College is required by law to ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum in line with the relevant legislation.
- 2.2 The curriculum in Our Lady and St Patrick's College has been designed to ensure that all of our students have the opportunity to receive a broad and balanced education through teaching and learning that has a clear focus on raising standards. It should also allow our students to develop their knowledge and skills (including cross-curricular and other skills) in all of the areas of learning specified in law.

### 3 Complaints about delivery of the curriculum

- 3.1 Parents and other interested parties have the right in law to register a complaint if they feel the College is failing to meet its statutory duties in relation to the curriculum. The Board of Governors has in place appropriate arrangements for hearing those complaints and for reaching a decision on whether or not to uphold a complaint.
- 3.2 It is DENI's expectation that in the vast majority of cases complaints will be resolved on an informal basis within the College. **Where resolution does not occur, the complainant will be advised by the Principal of his/her right to use the College's formal Complaints Procedure (4.0).**
- 3.3 In a case where a complainant is dissatisfied with the College's decision, the Board of Governors must provide him or her with the address of the EA's Curriculum Complaints Tribunal and a copy of DE Circular 1993/1, along with any other relevant information about the complaints procedure.

#### **4 The Complaints Procedure**

- 4.1 The Principal has been nominated by the Board of Governors to manage complaints about the delivery of the curriculum. He will also be responsible for disseminating information to parents/guardians or other interested parties about the complaints procedure and for keeping the Vice Principal (Curriculum) informed.
- 4.2 A complaint should be initiated in writing as promptly as possible, to the Principal, stating the details of the complaint and the reasons for the complaint.
- 4.3 The Vice Principal (Curriculum) and relevant members of staff with a responsibility relating to the subject of the complaint, will have an opportunity to see a copy of the complaint and, if appropriate, to respond to it in writing. The Principal will respond to the complainant in writing.
- 4.4 The complainant will have an opportunity to have a personal hearing if he/she is dissatisfied with the written response received. The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the hearing date and will have sight of all relevant documents to the complaint in advance of the hearing.
- 4.5 If the complaint has not been resolved, the complainant will be given the opportunity to bring the matter to the Board of Governors. They will convene a panel of three governors who have not dealt with the complaint previously. They will respond to the complainant in writing.
- 4.6 The College will maintain a written record of all complaints. This record will include the outcome of the complaint and reasons for that outcome. The College will send a copy to the complainant within ten days.
- 4.7 If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of the complaint, the Board of Governors will provide him or her with the address of the EA's Curriculum Complaints Tribunal and a copy of Circular 1993/1 along with any other relevant information about the complaints procedure.