

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál,
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Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál

Subjects Options Policy

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál has a very broad curriculum and tries to satisfy the subject demands of its students. The provision of subjects is pupil driven and specific student groups are consulted prior to subjects and option bands being provided for that specific group. Advice on career options and subject choices are available from the Career Guidance Dept. in the school. Subjects studied will follow Department of Education and Science Guidelines and will be dependent on resources provided by the Department.

First year

All students entering First Year experience 14 subjects. (This is adjusted for students with Irish exemptions – see Appendix I)

7 Core Exam Subjects:

- Irish
- English
- Maths
- History
- Geography
- Science
- Business

2 Short Courses:

- Civic, Social and Political Education
- Physical Education

2 Non Exam Subjects

- Religion
- SPHE

3 Option Subjects (Taken to Exam level)

STUDENTS MUST STUDY A LANGUAGE

- French OR German

- Woodwork
- Metalwork
- Technical Graphics
- Home Economics
- Art
- Music

Students with Irish Exemptions and that are not doing a language take 7 subjects plus 4 short courses; 2 mentioned above like all other students and 2 additional short courses:

- **Life Skills Short Course**
- **Computer Skills Short Course**

(See Appendix I for full details)

All incoming First Years will be asked to choose **THREE (One to be a language)** of the above option subjects. (see Appendix II - incoming subject choice form)

Using the Options Programme of VSware Administration, Option Bands will be generated that satisfy the greatest number of students.

Class sizes will be constrained by the maximum allowed by the Department (i.e. 24 for Practical Classes and 30 for General Classes)

Every effort will be made to offer students their first choice. However, if student demand exceeds the maximum number of places in particular Option classes students will be offered places on a first come first served basis.

Students will be allowed to change their option choice on or before the 4th Friday of the new school year (21st September 2018) by requesting a transfer from the Career Guidance Office. (See Appendix III) This request is granted subject to a space being available in the requested subject.

Students will not be allowed to change after that date.

Any students who join First Year during the year will have to choose option subjects where places are available for them.

Second Year

All students entering Second Year will be provided with 11 Subjects

7 Core Exam Subjects (Irish, English, Maths, French/German, History, Geography, and Science)

2 Option Exam Subjects chosen from the **Two Option Subjects** they picked in First Year and **Business**. Business will be placed in both options so every student will have free choice.

2 Short courses in Physical Education and CSPE

Plus

3 Non Exam Classes (Religion, Computers and Social, Personal and Health Education)

This will mean that all students will be able to study 9 Exam subjects and 2 short courses for their Junior Certificate. Subject choice form and information sheet (see appendix IV & V) will be given to students in May. Students will be allowed to change their option choice on or before the 4th Friday of the new school year (21st September 2018) by requesting a transfer from the Career Guidance Office. (See Appendix III) This request is granted subject to a space being available in the requested subject. Students will not be allowed to change after that date.

All students who join second/third year will have to follow the subjects of their new class and choose from the option bands for that particular year group.

Fifth Year

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál offers a wide range of subjects at senior cycle, laid out as follows

All students study 7 subjects

3 Core Exam subjects (Irish, English and Maths)

1 Non exam Subject (Religion)

4 Exam subjects from the following (French, German, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, Accounting, Business, Economics, Music, Engineering, Construction Studies, Design and Communication Graphics, Home Economics, Applied Maths, Agricultural Science and Art).

5th Year subject choice takes place in late March/early April each year. Students from 3rd Year that are going straight through to 5th Year and all Transition Year students are taken for a subject choice talk presented by the Guidance Department. They are given a hard copy of the 'Fifth Year Subject Choice Booklet for students and parents', which is updated annually (see appendix VI). A digital version of this booklet is also available all year on the school website. Parents are invited to attend an information night here in the school, at the end of which is a question and answer session. Students are then asked to pick 6 subjects from the above in order of priority. (See appendix VII subject choice form) This information is inputted to

the VS Ware options programme, as in first year, and the best satisfaction rating is used to set up the Four Option Groups for that particular year. Prior to subject groupings being finalised the Guidance Department are consulted in order to ensure there is no clash with regard to basic and course entry requirements for college courses. Students then pick one subject in each option block. The number of subjects offered in each year will be determined by numbers applying and staffing allocation from the Department of Education and Science. Where possible, and if numbers are sufficient, two classes in particular subjects will be set up in the same option group and hence different levels can be followed. Students will be allowed to change their options choice, on or before the 4th Friday of the new school year (21st September 2018) by requesting a transfer from the Career Guidance Office. (See Appendix III) This request is granted subject to a space being available in the requested subject.

Students will not be allowed to change after that date. However, in very, very exceptional circumstances, e.g. if the student, because of career research, decides that they would like to follow a certain career path and that career path has specific subject requirements, an application may be made to management to change subjects. Certain conditions may be put in place in order to allow this transfer e.g. grinds outside of school to catch up on missing work.

Any students who join Fifth Year during the year will have to choose option subjects where places are available for them.

All students who study the required subjects, and that study Ordinary Level Maths, have the option of following the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The following are the 2018/2019 specialist and service groups, as specified by the Department of Education and Science, and offered in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal.

Specialist Groupings:

1. Construction Studies; Engineering; DCG, (Any Two)
2. Physics and Constructin Studies or Engineering or DCG
3. Ag. Science and Construction Studies or Engineering or DCG
4. Ag. Science and Chemistry or Physics
5. Home Ec.; Ag. Science; Biology (Any Two)
6. Home Ec. and Art
7. Accounting; Business; Economics (Any Two)
8. Physics and Chemistry
9. Biology and Chemistry or Physics
10. Biology and Ag. Science
11. Art and DCG

Services Groupings:

1. Engineering or Construction Studies or DCG and Accounting or Business or Economics
2. Home Ec. and Accounting or Business or Economics
3. Ag. Science and Accounting or Business or Economics
4. Art and Accounting or Business or Economics
5. Music and Accounting or Business or Economics

Students that qualify and do not wish to study the LCVP, together with those that do not qualify, must do Physical Education. Students studying honours maths do honours maths during LCVP & PE classes.

Procedure for Changing Subject Choice in 1st Year, 2nd Year and 5th Year

Any student wishing to change subject choice in 1st Year, 2nd Year and 5th Year can do so on or before the 4th Friday on the new academic year, provided there is space in the new subject, by:

- Calling into the Guidance Drop in service during morning break 09.55 – 10.10
- After consultation with Guidance Counsellor, a form will be given to complete by the student; the teacher currently teaching the student; the proposed subject teacher of the new subject and the parent. The guidance counsellor will outline to the student any relevant careers and aptitude information that needs to be considered prior to making the decision and will make a comment on the form (see Appendix III)
- The student must bring the form back to the guidance counsellor prior to taking up the new subject.
- Immediately on receipt of the completed form, which includes parental permission, the guidance counsellor will notify Cathal Dodd, Deputy Principal and he will update student details on VS Ware.

Procedure for Changing Subject Level – all years

Any student wishing to change subject level from Higher Level to Ordinary Level and, where relevant, from Ordinary Level to Foundation Level, can do so at any stage throughout the academic year by:

- Calling into the Guidance Drop in service during morning break 09.55 – 10.10
- After consultation with Guidance Counsellor, a form will be given to complete by the student; the teacher currently teaching the student, and the parent. The guidance counsellor will outline to the student any relevant careers and aptitude information that needs to be considered prior to making the decision and will make a comment on the form (see Appendix VIII)
- The student must bring the form back to the guidance counsellor prior to taking dropping levels.
- Where there is an Ordinary Level or Foundation Level class in the subject area, the subject department decides if the student should move class and if so to which one. This should be noted on the form (Appendix VIII)
- Immediately on receipt of the completed form, which includes parental permission, the guidance counsellor will notify Cathal Dodd, Deputy Principal and he will update student details on VS Ware.

Procedure for Dropping a Subject

A student will only be allowed to drop a subject in very exceptional circumstances. Some such circumstances are:

- Where a student has extreme special educational needs that requires a reduced timetable. A recommendation from an appropriate professional (e.g. Educational Psychologist) may be requested to support this application.
- Where a student is studying an additional subject outside school, which they are going to take in their exams, because either that subject wasn't on offer in the school or the subject bands formed for their year group did not allow them to take that subject in school. In such circumstances the student must obtain a letter from the grinds teacher/school confirming their attendance in classes and that they are preparing them for the said exam.

If a student wants to request to drop a subject, they can do so by:

- Calling into the Guidance Drop in service during morning break 09.55 – 10.10
- After consultation with Guidance Counsellor, a form will be given to complete by the student; the teacher currently teaching the student and the parent. The guidance counsellor will outline to the student any relevant careers and aptitude information that needs to be considered prior to making the decision and will make a comment on the form (see Appendix IX) The Principal/Deputy Principal must sign off on the form, also giving permission.

- The form must be returned to the guidance counsellor, together with any supporting documentation requested, prior to dropping the subject.
- Immediately on receipt of the completed form, which includes parental permission and Management permission, the guidance counsellor will notify Cathal Dodd, Deputy Principal and he will update student details on VS Ware.

Appendix I

All students will be assessed to see if they require extra help in the form of Learning Support (Literacy and numeracy). Those that require Learning Support will be allocated a separate class (max 5 per class) and those students will not study French/German. The possible future implications, regarding college and course eligibility, of not studying a third language will be outlined to parents and they will be asked for written consent prior to the start of any Learning Support. The number of Learning Support classes in any year will be determined by demand and by staffing resources allocated by the Department of Education and Science.

Students with an Irish exemption will receive Resource during Irish class. These students do not normally study a language; therefore, they will do 2 short courses during language option time:

- Life Skills Short Course
- Computer Skills Short Course

If a student with an Irish exemption chooses to study either French or German, they will receive Resource during Irish class and will not take the 2 short courses.

Appendix II

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Optional Subjects for 1st Yr students 2018 / 2019

Student Name _____

Choose Two subjects from

Choose One subject from
this list

List A	
Art	
Home Ec	
Metalwork	
Music	
Woodwork	
Tech Graph	

* Students with an exemption from Irish do not have to choose German or French and may choose a third option from List A

Subject to constraints imposed by space, resources and staffing approved and provided by the Department of Education & Science every effort will be made to offer each student the subjects of his or her choice.

**Please return this form to the school office on or before
Thursday 26th October 2017**

Thank You

Appendix III

Request re: Change of Subject Choice

NB: Subject choices may have very serious consequence. It is essential that the student and their parents know of these consequences prior to making any decision. The student must complete this form and talk to the subject teacher of both subjects, the guidance counsellor and a parent before changing.

Student: My reasons for changing from _____ to _____ are:	
Signed:	Date:

Subject Teacher of _____ (subject you want to give up) Comment:	
Signed:	Date:

Proposed Subject Teacher of _____ (subject you want to do) Comment:	
Signed:	Date:

Parent: Comment:	
Signed:	Date:

Guidance Counsellor: Comment:	
Signed:	Date:

Appendix IV

Second Year Options 2018/19



All students entering 2nd Year in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál will be provided with 11 Subjects.

- 7 Core Exam Subjects (Irish, English, Maths, French/German, History, Geography, and Science)
- 2 Option Exam Subjects (chosen from the 2 **Option Subjects** they picked in 1st Yr and **Business**).
- 2 Short courses in Physical Education and CSPE
- Students **not** taking a foreign language **and** exempt from Irish will complete 2 further short courses in Life Skills and Computers

Plus

- 2 Non Exam Classes (Religion and RSE)

Student Name _____ Class _____

Parent /Guardian _____

Please place your present option subjects in the boxes below. Then pick three of the four and place in the lower boxes.

Option 1 French / German / Option	Option 2	Option 3	Business
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French / German / Short Courses		
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Forms to be returned by Friday 11th May to Mr Dodd's Office

Appendix V

Subject Choice for 2nd Year – How to decide?

1. Interest – your favourite subjects
2. Aptitude – the subjects you are doing best in in class tests
3. Possible Career Paths – what careers are you considering? Will this subject be useful to you?

Possible Career Paths:

All subjects are equal when it comes to point allocation (exception Honours Maths – bonus points for students achieving 40% or higher), however, certain subjects are obviously **more useful** to certain careers e.g. Art if you want to study anything in art or indeed if you want to become an architect, Home Economics if you want to become a Home Economics teacher, chef, etc., Music if you want to go on and study music at third level, Business for any career in commerce, business, accounting, etc. All colleges have basic entry requirements and a lot of courses have specific course entry requirements. Check out www.qualifax.ie for entry requirements.

NB: Although it is not essential to have taken certain subjects at Junior Certificate level in order to study them for Leaving Certificate, it is advisable, as students who have no previous experience of a subject going into Leaving Certificate are usually at a disadvantage – **SO IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT WANT TO STUDY A SUBJECT IN LEAVING CERTIFICATE THEN IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO DO IT FOR YOUR JUNIOR CERTIFICATE!**

Advise:

- Firstly think about the subjects you like the most – if you like a subject you are more likely to study it and more likely to get on well.
- Look at the grades you are getting in class tests.
- Talk to your parents.
- Talk to your subject teachers.
- Talk to students currently studying the subject in Junior Cert.
- Look at the Junior Cert books and exam papers.
- Talk to the Guidance Counsellor.
- Complete the form, get it signed by your parents and return to Mr. Dodd on or before Friday, 11th May 2018

Appendix VI

*Copy of the 2018 Fifth Year subject choice booklet
for students and parents*

Appendix VII



SUBJECT CHOICES FOR LEAVING CERTIFICATE COURSE 2018/2019

Student _____ Date of Birth _____

Present Class _____ Have you applied for T.Y.O. Yes No

All students entering 5th year will take An Ghaeilge, English, Maths and Religion (a non exam subject)

Students will take FOUR other subjects for Leaving Cert. giving a total of 7 exam subjects.

Students should select six subjects from the list below by putting 1 to 6 opposite the subjects in order of preference. When students have indicated their preferences, four groups or bands of subjects will be created. Students will select one subject from each band. A class may not be formed in a particular subject if the numbers applying are too low.

French		Social and Scientific (Home Ec)	
Geography		Construction Studies	
History		Engineering	
Physics		DCG (Design and Communication Graphics)	
Chemistry		German	
Biology		Accounting	
Music		Economics	
Art		Business	

All students will be given the opportunity to follow the L.C.V.P. course if their chosen subjects satisfy the criteria laid down. (See reverse for details)

Please select one subject from the group below by using a tick

Ag Science		LCVP		PE		Applied Maths	
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Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

**Form must be returned to Mr Dodd's office
by Friday 7th April 2017
Appendix VIII**

Appendix IX