Coláiste Pobail Acla

JCSP Policy

Junior

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Certificate

School

Programme

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JCSP Mission Statement:

Coláiste Pobail Acla seeks to develop the educational, physical and emotional needs of all our students. Therefore, the Junior Certificate School Programme within Coláiste Pobail Acla aims to aid student development through the provision of JCSP. We aim to aid the holistic development of the students we teach.

Coláiste Pobail Acla is a co-educational, non denominational, multi racial and open facility under the auspices of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim E.T.B. The school aims to provide an organised and focused environment leading to the personal development of the individual within society and the promotion of the unique talents of each and every student in our care, unlocking potential and creating opportunities.

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Programme Overview:

The Junior Certificate School Programme Aims:

* Identifying the academic, social and personal needs of the students especially those at risk of early school dropout.
* Catering for the needs of the students through the planning and teaching of the programme.
* Evaluating the extent to which the needs are being met by assessment and regular feedback to the students.
* Giving students a manageable but broad curriculum with varied teaching methodologies.

Objectives of the Junior Cert School Programme:

* That the student will recognise their talents, aptitudes, abilities, needs and interests.
* That the student will get the opportunity to develop in terms of responsibility, self esteem and self knowledge.
* That the students remain within the school system and experience success in this system.

“The Junior Certificate School Programme is designed to enhance students social and personal development, support them in achieving the Junior Certificate programme, remedy defects in their academic development and encourage them to identify with and gain satisfaction from being in school”.

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JCSP Admissions Policy:

The general admissions policy of the school applies to all prospective JCSP students. JCSP students are chosen from the cohort of students enrolled in the school. The JCSP programme runs its own admission policy to ensure the correct students are admitted to the programme. This is those with identified needs, e.g., low literacy levels, social background or poor primary school attendance (see below).

In regard to admissions the Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Acla welcomes all eligible students who apply for admission, including those with special educational needs.

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.

Study/Homework:

Homework plays an important role in the students’ academic development and as such the school’s homework policy also applies to JCSP students. Teachers dispense homework suitable to the students’ academic ability. Homework is corrected by a variety of means and students are provided with constructive feedback on their work.

Time Allocation:

JCSP students complete the same timetable as all other students within the school (starting school each day at 9.10am, finishing Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 3.40pm.)

If students are missing they must bring a detail of absences form to their year tutor upon returning to school. Students who need to leave school during the day must have prior permission from their parents and sign the sign out book in the office.

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Assessment:

The Junior Certificate School Programme is *not* an alternative to the Junior Certificate. All JCSP students sit the Junior Certificate 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 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 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

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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.

Selection Process for Prospective JCSP Students:

Students are selected to the JCSP under a number of criteria. The criteria may include the following:

* being at risk of leaving school early
* poor literacy or numeracy levels
* absenteeism
* JCSP teachers’ input regarding how best to incorporate the programme into the school.
* international new comers or language problems
* poverty
* poor home/parental situation or housing conditions

There is a whole school approach to presenting programme information to parents. All incoming first year students are invited into school for an enrolment evening. The JCSP co-ordinator is available at this meeting to talk to parents and to distribute information on the programme. Students are tested on their literacy and numeracy levels on another date by the principal and learning support/resource teachers. Along with these results, the student’s enrolment form, information from primary schools and initial performance within secondary school are taken into consideration when selecting students.

Pupil Induction:

* All first year students begin their secondary school life with a day of induction. On this day, the principal 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.

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* 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 are also sent information outlining the decision to include their child in the JCSP class and offering to meet them with any queries.
* Parents of first year JCSP students are invited to the school for an information evening during the month of September. Parents 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. At this time folders are developed. The co-ordinator meets JCSP students regularly during the year.

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.

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* 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.

Programme Budgetary Procedures:

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.

Curriculum Content:

General details;

The JCSP hopes to provide a broad curriculum which meets the needs of the students. Students are offered a full range of Junior Certificate subjects and pursue a full academic path to the Junior Certificate. To add to this a programme of additional activities are set up for the pupils. This can be seen on

the Yearly Plan. Additional activities allows for students to become involved in areas such as arts and crafts, reading programme and school trips.

Individual subject departments include JCSP within their own plans. This can be seen within each subject plan.

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

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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 for 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.

Planning for Guidance and Pastoral Care:

The school counsellor meets with all students. She is also available, by appointment, if students wish to speak with 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 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.

Record of Teacher In-career 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

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meetings. Records of in-service attendance are retained by management. The school has found group in-service from the JCSP support service very useful.

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.

A formal review of the programme will be completed every three years.

Date of Next Review: September , 2014

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request, and has been provided to the Parents’ Council . A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Adopted by BOM 10/04/14

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Appendix 1 : Procedures for Out of School Activities:

Individual teachers may organise out of school activities for their subjects with the permission and at the discussion of school management. Activities under the funds or auspices of JCSP must be discussed with the JCSP co-ordinator to confirm they meet the criteria of JCSP.

Every care should be taken when planning activities or trips. The groups should be involved in the preparation of the trip and choosing the location. The safety of the class rests with the teacher and therefore considerable planning is needed. The following checklist should be read as a guide to aid planning. **All JCSP Out of School Activities should be planned and undertaken in compliance with the school’s Procedures for Out of School Activities.**

1. At the earliest opportunity, inform the principal about the date, time and location of the intended activity. Decide, in consultation with the principal, how many teachers are required for supervision. It is not advisable for one teacher to undertake supervision, other than for a very small number of students. The ratio of teacher to pupil should reflect the level of risk of the activity and the group involved.
2. Out-of-school activities require the consent of the Mayo, Sligo, and Leitrim E.T.B. in order to be covered by insurance. Further insurance may be required depending on the nature and destination of the trip.
3. For insurance purposes, **all** residential trips must be notified to the Board of Management well in advance. This involves asking the Principal to raise the issue with the Board. As the Board of Management usually meets twice a term, teachers need to make themselves aware of the timeframe necessary for timely notification.
4. If a bus is required, book well in advance. Make sure the destination, date, time of departure and arrival back, are clearly understood. Confirm the bus a few days in advance.
5. Some students may not be able to afford the costs involved and this may require a subsidy. There are some school funds in relation to school completion programme and the JCSP initiative programme that may be of help. However these must be secured well in advance of the trip. At the beginning of the school year is the best time to secure these funds and then plan the trip for the appropriate time of year.
6. It is important that the teacher has first hand knowledge of the location of the activity so that all risks can be fully assessed. If safety equipment or clothing is required, e.g., on a factory visit, ensure that this is explained and that equipment is worn.
7. A Risk Assessment **must** be carried out for each out of school activity undertaken.
8. Ensure that clear instructions are given at all times.
9. If there is an element of risk, then ensure that one of the supervising teachers/instructors has expertise in that area.
10. If activity involves entry onto private property, e.g., on a farm or a shopping centre, ensure the owner’s consent is obtained. Be prepared to explain the purpose of the activity. Proof of insurance cover may be required. Consider whether a follow-up letter of thanks would be ppropriate. You might want to come again.
11. Pupils will be required to wear official school uniform on all trips unless otherwise decided by school management.
12. Draw up a code of conduct for the activity. The Code of Behaviour of Coláiste Pobail Acla will be adopted during the course of all school tours or trips.
13. Ensure appropriate First Aid is available.
14. Ensure that at least one of the leaders has a mobile phone in case of emergency. The school office and principal should have this number in case they need to contact the group/leader during the trip.
15. The Tour Leader must carry all relevant personal details regarding each member of the tour, i.e., health information, home contact details, student contact details. In case of an accident, expert medical attention will be sought should it be deemed necessary.
16. Written parental consent may, in some cases, be considered where students are under 18. If notifying parents, ensure the following information is given:

* date, time of departure and estimated time of arrival back in the school
* cost
* recommended clothing and footwear
* lunch arrangements
* if there is an element of risk involved make sure this is explained to parents.

1. Seek information on whether any student has medical conditions which might require special arrangements.  
   Medical consent will form part of the parental consent form for foreign and residential trips. Parents/Guardians will be asked to agree in writing to the pupil receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If the parent/guardian does not agree to this, the pupil will not be permitted on the trip.
2. Before residential visits or when pupils travel abroad or engage in adventure activities parents/guardians may be invited into school to attend a briefing meeting. If a passport is required for the trip a photocopy of this must be supplied before the trip and the passport should remain in date for six months after the trip.