

## SECONDARY SCHOOL IN IRELAND - GENERAL INFORMATION

Students enter the Irish Secondary School system at the age of 12 or 13. They commence in 1st Year and continue to 6th Year as follows:-

- 1st Year: 12 - 13 yrs.
- 2nd. Year: 13 - 14 yrs.
- 3rd. Year: 14 - 15 yrs. (Junior Certificate Examination)
- 4th. Year: 15 - 16 yrs. (Transition Year)
- 5th. Year: 16 - 17 yrs.
- 6th. Year: 17 - 18 yrs. (Leaving Certificate Examination)

Students participating in the EIL Secondary School Programme will join a 5th Year or 4th/Transition year class as a general rule. In general schools do not accept placement of exchange students in 6th year, regardless of age or ability. Students with a very poor level of English may be placed in a lower year class with a younger age group if the school feels it is necessary.

The School reserves the right to finally decide which year each participant should join and to make any changes depending on the progress the student makes during the course of the year. Students on the programme must not expect to receive credits for courses taken in Ireland, or expect that their subject preferences will be guaranteed by the school. There is no standardised assessment procedure in place and each school has its own system. **It is the students responsibility to request school reports** as these are often difficult to acquire after they have left the programme.

Each year is also sub-divided in to Honours (Advanced) or Ordinary (Standard) levels. Students may take one subject at Honours Level and another at Ordinary Level if available.

### SUBJECTS - 1st, 2nd & 3rd Years

Students are required to take classes in a minimum of 5 subjects. The following subjects are available at Junior Level. **Not every school teaches all subjects**, but the following are recognised by the Department of Education (i.e. 1st Year, 2nd. Year and 3rd. Year):-

|                   |  |                                |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Irish             | Italian                                      | Environmental & Social Studies |
| English           | Science                                      |                                |
| Technology        | CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) |                                |
| History           | Mathematics                                  |                                |
| Home Economics    | History                                      |                                |
| Latin             | Music  |                                |
| Greek             | Art, Craft, Design                           |                                |
| Classical Studies | Materials Technology (Wood)                  |                                |
| Hebrew Studies    | Metalwork                                    |                                |
| French            | Technical Graphics                           |                                |
| Spanish           | Business Studies                             |                                |
| German            | Typewriting                                  |                                |

### SUBJECTS - 5th & 6th Years

Students are required to take classes in a minimum of 5 subjects, maximum of 7. Some schools insist that exchange students take their native language to assist in teaching their fellow pupils. The following subjects are recognised by the Irish Department of Education, but may not be available at every school:-

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|                     |                                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Irish               | Physics & Chemistry                  |
| English             | Agricultural Science                 |
| Latin               | Biology                              |
| Greek               | Agricultural Economics               |
| Classical Studies   | Engineering                          |
| Hebrew Studies      | Technical Drawing                    |
| French              | Construction Studies                 |
| German              | Home Economics (Scientific & Social) |
| Italian             | Home Economics (General)             |
| Spanish             | Accounting                           |
| History             | Business Organisation                |
| Geography           | Economics                            |
| Mathematics         | Economic History                     |
| Applied Mathematics | Art (including crafts)               |
| Physics / Chemistry |                                      |

**Please note that not all schools offer all of these subjects.** We can never guarantee placement in a school where applicants can be assured of classes in their first choice subjects. Schools may ask for a student's subject choices prior to arrival, whereas others may be allowed to select classes in the first week of arrival. In some cases, the principle will select the timetable of subjects based on previous transcripts and what is available as some subjects may be oversubscribed by Irish students who have first choice.

### **TRANSITION YEAR PROJECT (4TH YEAR)**

The Transition Year Project is a one-year interdisciplinary programme for pupils who have completed 3rd year.

The Project is directed towards the intellectual, social and emotional maturation of the pupil. It is conceived as an introduction to adult education. The content of Transition Year curricula will include elements of the following:

Social education; moral education; education for living (including homecrafts and education for parenthood, employment and leisure); philosophy and applied logic; music and the arts; Irish Studies; civilisation courses for students of continental European languages; visual education; media education and communication skills; etc. Group work is featured heavily. Many TY (Transition Year) students will also have to do work experience outside the school. Each school's yearly plan is decided independently. Many feature school trips and activities. These will cost extra and is not covered by the programme fees.

### **STATE EXAMINATIONS**

State Examinations organised by the Minister for Education take place as follows:

- Junior Certificate - end of 3rd Year
- Leaving Certificate - end of 6th Year

Examinations in languages include oral tests. All other examinations are written. There is no scheme of continuous assessment. The Leaving Certificate examination covers subjects learned during 5th & 6th Year. We do not recommend foreign students to take the Leaving Certificate examination after just one year of study in Ireland. Students wishing to take state exams must do the following: have the agreement of their Irish school; pay an exam fee; organise the financial

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arrangements of an official extended stay which can amount to an extra month. Their Host family may not be available to host after official programme dates and should be considered.

### **SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS**

Schools usually have in house examinations prior to Christmas holidays. The results of these examinations form part of a report on each student which are usually issued by the School to their parent or guardian. International students must request these reports as they are not sent to EIL. 1st, 2nd and 5th year students also have similar in house examinations at the end of May. Junior Certificate (3rd Year) and Leaving Certificate (6th Year) Examination students all have "mock" in house examinations each year in April. This is in preparation for state examinations.

### **SCHOOL YEAR**

- Last week in August or first week of September - school year commences.
- End of October/Beginning November: 3 - 5 days/mid term holiday.
- December: 2 weeks holiday for Christmas and New Year holidays.
- February/March: mid term holiday for 3 - 5 days
- Easter: 2 weeks holiday.
- End of school year (other than for state exams.) last week in May.

### **TYPICAL SCHOOL DAY**

|              |                                  |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 9.15 a.m. -  | Classes commence                 |
| 10.30 a.m. - | Break (usually for 15 - 20 mins) |
| 12.30 p.m. - | Lunch (usually a packed lunch)   |
| 1.45 p.m. -  | Classes commence                 |
| 3.45 p.m. -  | Classes end                      |

There is no school on Saturdays & Sundays. Each class normally lasts 40 minutes. Many schools do not have classes on Wednesday afternoon. Times will vary slightly between different schools

### **HOMEWORK**

Most classes will have homework, this must be completed and turned in on time. Most students should study 1-2 hours each evening

### **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Almost all schools organise a programme of sporting, social and cultural activities during/after school periods or at weekends. These are generally free of charge or at a small extra cost.

Typical Sport Activities: basketball, football, hurling, hockey, tennis, gymnastics, swimming, etc. Most schools organise physical education classes as part of the school curriculum and it is generally compulsory for students to participate.

Typical Social & Cultural Activities: Drama, debates, quizzes, exhibitions, films, discos and excursions.

We encourage foreign students to participate fully in the programme of extra curricular activities as it is the best way to integrate into the school community and stay active.

### **SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

All the public schools participating in this programme are managed by local Education Authorities or Religious Bodies. The schools are both single-sex and co-educational, please note that the majority of schools in Ireland are single-sex schools. Most of Ireland's Secondary Schools are man

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aged by Catholic religious orders. The majority of teachers in these schools are lay persons. Foreign students who wish to be exempt from Religious education (there are usually one or two classes per week) should advise EIL at the time of their application. Some schools replace religious education with "Civics Classes". Items covered during civics classes may cover a range of issues such as health education, drug abuse, relationships and so on.

Each school has its own code of discipline and participants are expected to respect and adhere to this code of discipline. Most schools do not allow facial piercings, long hair on boys or non-natural hair colours and each school would have its own policy on students' appearance and uniforms and is strictly enforced.

### **SCHOOL UNIFORMS**

The wearing of school uniforms is compulsory in the vast majority of schools. Students must wear a school uniform. Students should bring their own sports equipment and clothing. Students on the EIL programme purchase their own uniform on arrival. The approximate cost of school uniforms is about €225 euro. Many schools have very strict uniform policies and will only allow official school uniform pieces issued by specific shops. Student may bring appropriate shoes from home.

Note: This document gives general guidelines about Secondary Schools in Ireland -please be aware that regulations and procedures may vary from school to school

