



St Columba's College

Junior Cycle Reform

2023-2024

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to present information about the main changes associated with the new Junior Cycle and to highlight changes in teaching methodologies, assessment and grading terminology.

It aims to provide an overview by focusing on the following key areas:

1. Why Change?
2. Structure of the Junior Cycle
3. Junior Cycle Subjects
4. Assessment – A Changing Culture
5. Reporting



*Education is the
most powerful weapon
which you can use to
change the world.*

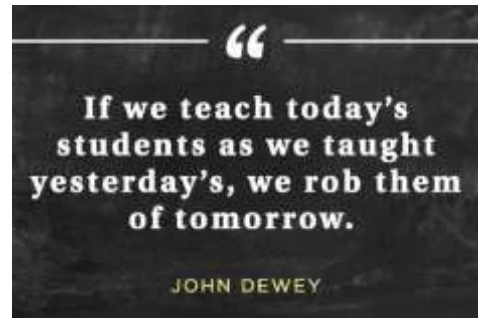
Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

1918 – 2013

2. Why Change?

Why change from the Junior Certificate?

- ✓ The Junior Certificate is examination-based.
- ✓ Rote learning and 'teaching to the test'.
- ✓ Major focus on the end result.
- ✓ The teaching methodology is often didactic: teacher tells – student listens.



Why change to the Junior Cycle?

- The new Junior Cycle provides a **broad education** for your child.
- The new Junior Cycle places **the student experience at the centre** of the learning process.
- It allows for **more varied ways of learning** and a **wider range of skills** to be explored and assessed.



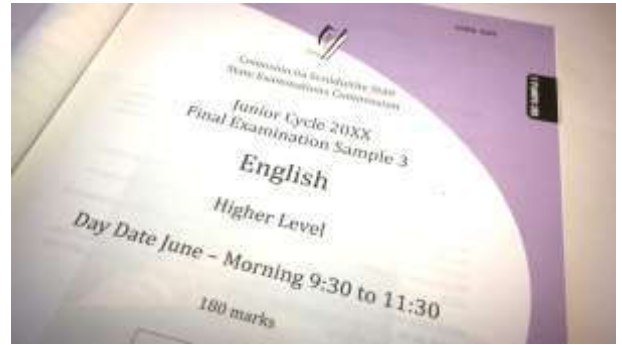
What stays the same?

- Students experience a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Standards and expectations remain high.
- Subjects continue to play an important role in the Junior Cycle.
- The Department of Education and Skills will monitor quality across all schools.
- The State Examinations Commission will continue to be involved in assessment for certification.



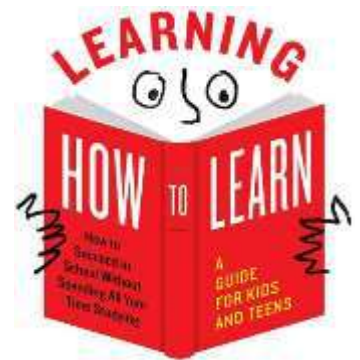
What is improving?

- **Reduction** in number of subjects.
- **Updated** subject specifications.
- An emphasis on **key skills** and preparation for life
- **Reduction** in duration of state examinations
- **Ongoing assessment** to support learning
- **Quality reporting** to parents and students



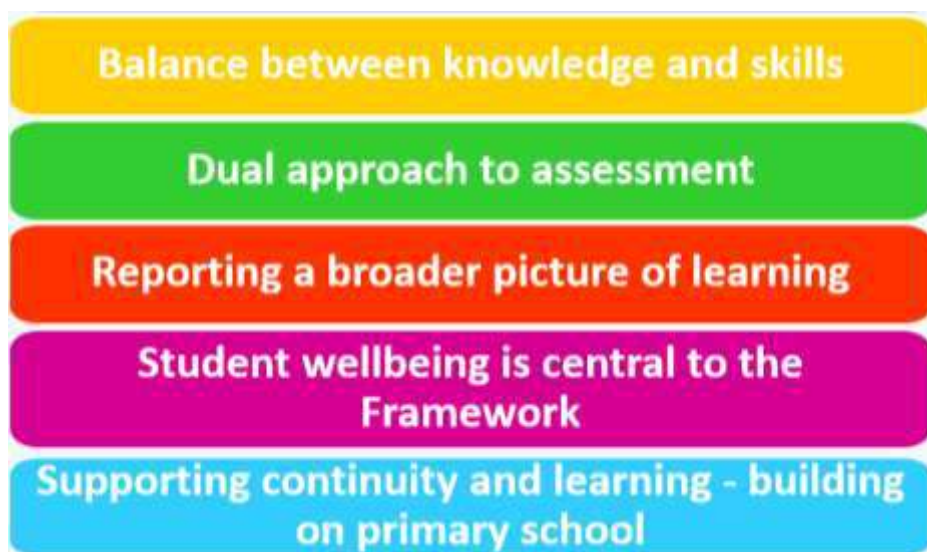
What is the purpose of education in Junior Cycle?

1. Help students become better learners – greater engagement in the learning process.
2. Help students develop a love of learning and ownership of learning.
3. Provide a solid foundation for further study.
4. To develop skills – creativity, innovation and critical thinking **for learning and for life.**
5. To support learning through improved reporting to students & parents.

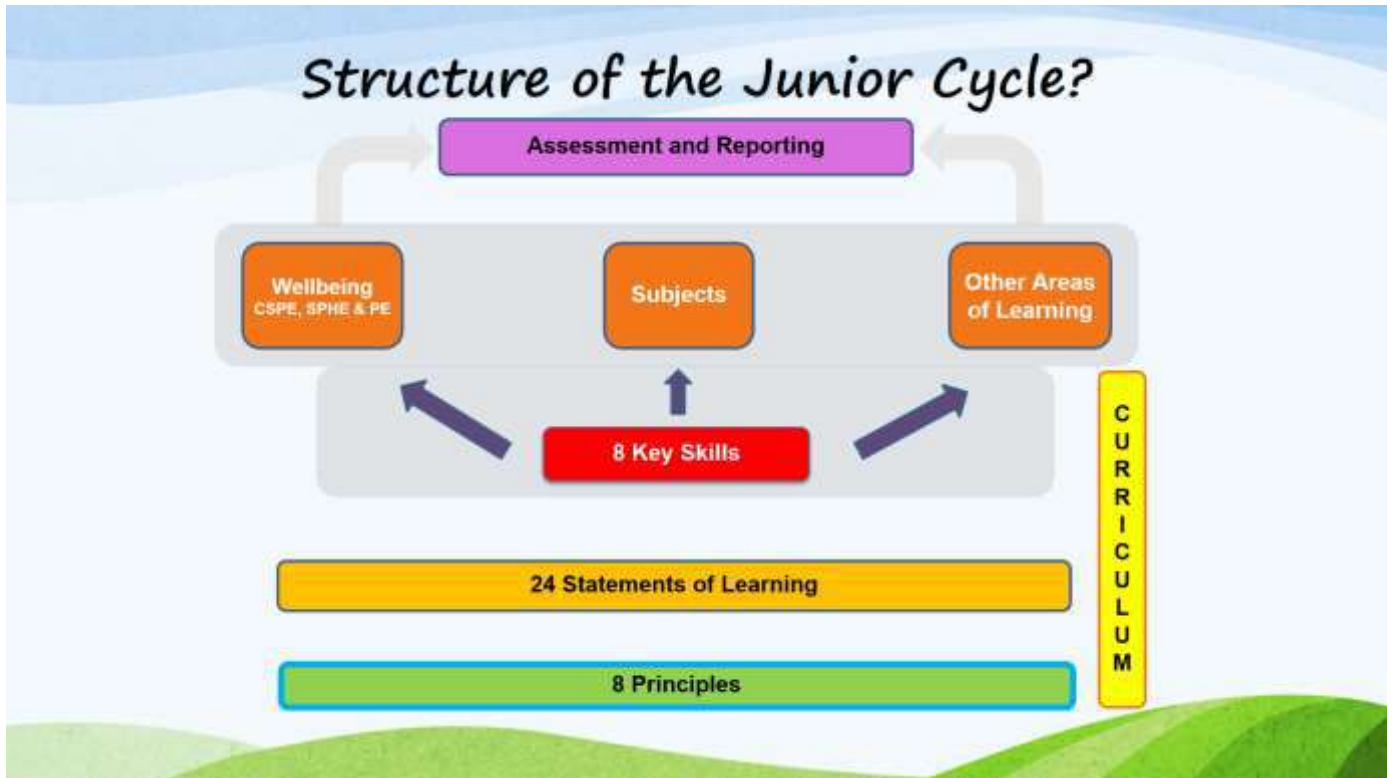


What are the key messages?

2.



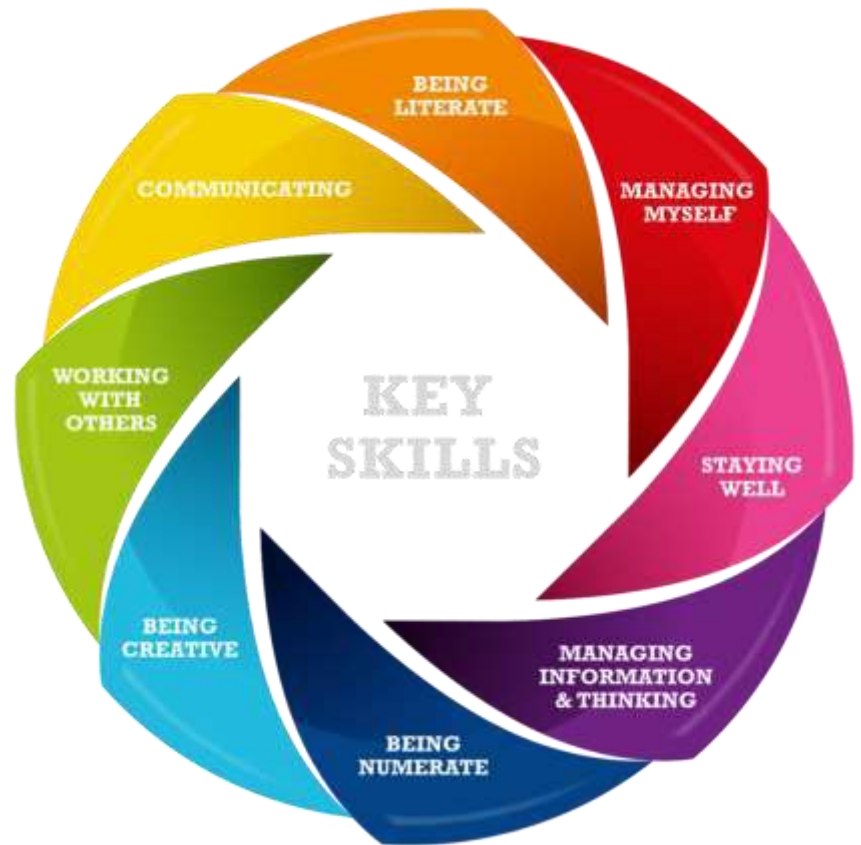
3. Structure of the Junior Cycle



8 Key Skills

Within the Junior Cycle curriculum as a whole, students will develop eight key skills.

1. Managing Myself
2. Staying well
3. Managing Information & Thinking
4. Being Numerate
5. Being Creative
6. Working with others
7. Communicating
8. Being Literate



By engaging with the key skills in all areas of the curriculum students will:

- be more **actively engaged** with their learning
- take **greater ownership** of their learning
- have a critical engagement with **digital technology**
- be encouraged to **problem solve** and **think critically and creatively**.

Implementing the new Junior Cycle in the classroom is focused on providing learning opportunities for students to learn, practice and develop these key skills over time.

Statements of Learning

There are twenty-four statements of learning, which describe what each student should know, understand and value having participated in a three-year Junior Cycle programme. Through the full curriculum, students will have the opportunity to engage with each of the statements of learning.

Examples:

Statement of Learning 1

Communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts.

Statement of Learning 6

Appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which he/she lives.

Statement of Learning 11

Takes action to safeguard and promote his/her wellbeing and that of others

Statement of Learning 17

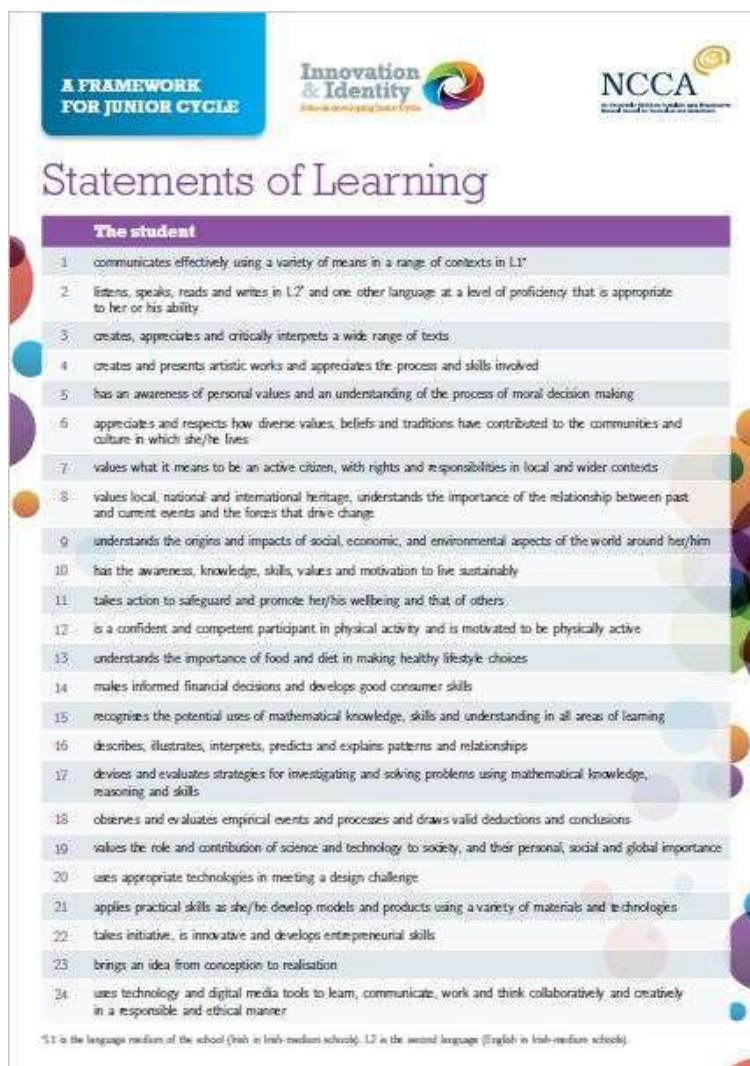
Devises and evaluates strategies for investigating and solving problems using mathematical knowledge, reasoning and skills.

Statement of Learning 21

Applies practical skills as she/he develop models and products using a variety of materials and technologies.

Statement of Learning 24

Uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner.



4. Junior Cycle Subjects

New subject specifications have been implemented in all subjects.

In St. Columba's College, students in Junior Cycle currently **study 9 subjects, 1 short course (Digital Media Literacy) Wellbeing (SPHE, CSPE and PE) as well as Religious Education.**



Wellbeing

Your child's wellbeing is of central importance to their educational success and overall happiness.

Wellbeing is now a core part of your child's Junior Cycle experience.

From September 2023 students will have 400 hours of wellbeing related learning over the course of their 3 years.

5. Assessment – A Changing Culture

Engagement with a variety of learning experiences and different approaches to assessment will provide a broader picture of student learning, throughout the 3 years of Junior Cycle.

- Assessment in support of learning
- Assessment focused on offering effective feedback
- Greater variety of assessment activity - "fit for purpose" and relevant to students
- Teachers talking to teachers about assessment
- Students reflection on the learning



Assessment in Junior Cycle:

- 1) Formative Assessment - ongoing
- 2) Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) – 2nd and 3rd Year
- 3) Assessment Tasks – 3rd Year (No assessment tasks for 3rd years in the 2023/24 school year)
- 4) Practical Examinations – 3rd Year
- 5) State Examinations in June – 3rd Year

Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs)

During 2nd and 3rd year, Junior Cycle students will undertake CBAs in their chosen subjects. Students will complete one CBA in second year and one in third year in most subjects. These are facilitated by the subject teacher and take place during class time, following a national timeframe. Upon completion of each CBA, the relevant subject teachers meet to discuss the quality of the work during a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting. They apply subject specific criteria, known as 'Features of Quality', to each assessment and award it a grade descriptor.

The features of quality are externally set, by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

CBAs will be reported on in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) using the following descriptors:

- Exceptional
- Above Expectations
- In Line with Expectations
- Yet to Meet Expectations
- Not Reported

Classroom-Based Assessments will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in a way which would not be possible in a formal examination. The tasks will cover a broad range of activities including: oral presentations, written work of different types, practical or designing and making activities, artistic performances, scientific experiments, research projects. A particular purpose of the Classroom-Based Assessments will be to facilitate developmental feedback to students.

Classroom Based Assessments – Ensuring Quality

- Schools will organise 'Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR)' meetings.
- Teachers will compare their assessment of students' work and ensure a common approach across the school.
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) will be provided for teachers to ensure that the Classroom-Based Assessments align to a national standard and students are given the best possible outcome.

Assessment Tasks

Once Classroom-Based Assessment 2 is completed, students in third year will sit a written reflective Assessment Task on what they have learned, the skills and competences developed during CBA 2. The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher, during a specified week in accordance with NCCA timeframe.

Assessment Tasks (10% of Final Subject Grade) are marked by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) along with the final exam in June of third year.

Practical Examinations

Subjects that have a State Examinations Commission Practical Examination towards the end of 3rd year - DO NOT have an Assessment Task – the CBA 2 instead links into elements of the practical exam.



Visual Art – 100%
Music - 30%
Home Economics – 50%
Engineering – 70%
Wood Technology – 70%
Graphics – 30%

State Examinations

Exams will be set, held and marked by the State Examinations Commission in June of third year.

- English, Irish and Maths specified at Higher and Ordinary levels
- All other subjects specified at a Common Level
- Short courses do not have a written exam
- Duration of 2 hours or less
- Examination in June will account for 90% of the grade in all subjects without a practical examination.

Assessment Changes for 3rd Year Students

2023/2024 ONLY

Our 3rd Year students in St. Columba's College have had adjustments made to the normal Junior Cycle Assessment for this year only.

- There will be **no Assessment Tasks** in any subject this year for 3rd Years – which under normal circumstances would be awarded 10% of the final grade. This means new Junior Cycle written papers in English, Maths, Science, Business, History and Geography will be worth 100% of the grade for 2021/22. Gaeilge and Modern Foreign Languages written and aural papers will be worth 100% of the grade for 2023/24.
- The required **number of CBAs to be completed has been reduced** – 3rd Year students will only have to complete one CBA in each of their subjects.
- Current 2nd years in 2023-2024 will complete CBA1 as normal and we await confirmation of CBA2 in their 3rd year from the NCCA.

- In the practical subjects (**Home Economics, Visual Art, Music, Engineering, Wood Technology and Graphics**), students are required to complete CBA2 as they are needed in the preparation for their final Practical Examination element.

6. Reporting on the New Junior Cycle

Junior Cycle will build on reporting currently carried out at Primary level. Schools will regularly provide information to parents about their child's achievement and progress. Teachers will support students in their learning by suggesting next steps and providing feedback to help students' self-evaluation. Reporting will happen in first, second and third-year.

Reporting occurs on an ongoing basis in the Homework Journal, Parent Teacher Meetings and Term Reports. CBA's descriptors will be reported within 2 weeks of the SLAR completion on the VSware system. Teachers will input descriptors and feedback for the CBA online and parents/ guardians will be able to log on in the normal manner to VSware and access the CBA descriptors.

The reporting process at Junior Cycle will culminate in the award of a certificate to students of their achievement in Junior Cycle. This is called the **Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)**. The JCPA will reflect a much wider range of your child's achievements over the three years of Junior Cycle.

JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT		Mary Murphy 2020	
State Certified Final Examinations		Classroom-Based Assessments - Subjects	
Irish L2 (H)	Achieved	IRISH L2	Language Portfolio: In line with Expectations Communicative Task: Above Expectations
Mathematics (H)	B	ENGLISH	Oral Communication: In line with Expectations The Collection of the Student's Texts: Above Expectations
English (H) (H)	Achieved	BUSINESS STUDIES	Business in Action: Above Expectations Presentation: In line with Expectations
Business Studies (C)	Distinction	FRENCH	Oral Communication: Above Expectations Student Language Portfolio: Above Expectations
French (C)	Higher Merit	SCIENCE	Extended Experimental Investigation: In line with Expectations Science in Society Investigation: Above Expectations
Geography (H)	A	VISUAL ART	From Process to Realisation: In line with Expectations Communicate and Reflect: Exceptional
History (H)	C		
Science (C)	Higher Merit		
Visual Art (C)	Higher Merit		
Other Areas of Learning		Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses	
<p>Mary took part in a school drama performance, learned to express herself and build her communication skills.</p> <p>Mary participated in the school Science Competition (Let's Explore) where she developed ways to recycle plastic. In doing so, she learned to bring an idea from conception to realisation.</p> <p>Mary through her role as Class Representative learned to communicate effectively as a voice for the students in her class.</p> <p>Mary worked collaboratively with others, in the organisation and promotion of the school card service for the local community.</p> <p>Mary was a member of the school camogie team, where she committed to training and developed her confidence in physical activity.</p>		<p>Digital Media Literacy: Above Expectations</p> <p>Philosophy: In line with Expectations</p>	
		Wellbeing	
		<p>CSPE: Not Reported</p> <p>SPHE: Not Reported</p> <p>PE: Above Expectations</p>	
		Other Areas of Wellbeing	
		<p>In SPHE, Mary reflected on and learned about the changing patterns of teenage friendship and how best to manage relationships.</p> <p>Mary completed a project in CSPE where she learned about the social and economic impact of homelessness.</p> <p>As part of the school's Wellbeing Programme, Mary participated in Lockers where she learned about the influence of social media, peer pressure and stereotypes in the digital world.</p>	
Principal	Year head	Roll Number: 60478Q	
Colman Candy	Ann Howett	Anytown Secondary School Anytown Co. Any County	
This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.			

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement includes:

1. SEC State Examinations Results

Each subject is listed with the grade achieved.

Junior Cycle	
Percentage	Grade Descriptor
≥ 90 to 100	Distinction
≥ 75 to < 90	Higher Merit
≥ 55 to < 75	Merit
≥ 40 to < 55	Achieved
≥ 20 to < 40	Partially Achieved
≥ 0 to < 20	Not Graded (NG)

2. Classroom Based Assessments

The descriptors awarded for each subject and short courses Classroom Based Assessment are listed on the JCPA.

3. Other Areas of Wellbeing

CSPE, PE and SPHE are among the areas reported here.

4. Other Areas of Learning

Students have the opportunity to engage with a range of other learning experiences as part of their Junior Cycle programme in St. Columba's College, and these can be acknowledged and recorded on the JCPA.

This information is collected towards the end of 3rd year by the JCT Coordinator.

Students in St. Columba's College are involved in a huge range of activities and achievements which are acknowledged on the JCPA. These include: Athletics, Rugby, Soccer, Gaelic, Hurling, Golf, Basketball, Girls Active, Musical, Talent Show, , DEAR, Make-A-Book Competition, Art Competitions, Shoe Box Appeal, Debating, County and National Math/ Business / Science Quizzes, Bake Off Competitions, Enterprise Projects, Scratch, VEX Robotics, Christmas Charity Appeals, Green Schools Committee, Student Council, Class Prefect, Global Citizen Committee, Sports Council, to name a few!

To conclude....

*We are mindful that Junior Cycle is **New** to Students; **New** to Parents and Guardians; and **New** to Teachers. We as a whole school community have to support and encourage are children, students and each other through this change. We need to demonstrate a model of interest in learning, support projects and homework - to encourage pride in their progress and work. The focus of Junior Cycle is on the continuous learning experience of our children over three years therefore, attendance at school plays a vital role.*

Mistakes made in a positive environment provide wonderful learning opportunities

Thank you from:

Mr. Tom Rowan

Principal

Ms. Georgina White

Deputy Principal

Mr. John Sweeney

Deputy Principal

Ms. Amanda Timony

Deputy Principal

Ms. Laura Neilson

Junior Cycle Coordinator