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18th November 2025

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s) & Student(s),

With less than five weeks remaining to the Christmas holidays and a further 5 school weeks to the mock exams it is essential that all 3rd year students put in place a structured study plan now, catering for all subjects. They must allocate time to every subject and over time to every topic within subjects. While November exam results and scripts will be returned to students in the coming weeks, no student should be waiting for these to plan their study. Preparing for exams can be challenging for students but with the right supports, structures and encouragement every student can achieve their potential.

All 3rd year students have been provided, free of charge, with a full set of exam papers and a code to enable them to access Studyclix Plus, under the schoolbook scheme. Studyclix is an online study platform which breaks down the Junior Cycle subjects by topic assisting students to focus their study on specific areas of the course. They have access to quizzes, flash cards, videos and graded sample answers. The solutions and marking schemes which students have access to through both the exam papers and studyclix can be used to check both accuracy and detail in answers. These, combined with their textbooks and notes provide a rich source of information to support effective learning and exam preparation.

At FCJ the advised homework and study time allocation is 15 hours per week for 3rd year students. We recognise that students may have extra commitments, sports, music, appointments etc., in the evenings and we advise that these should be built into their schedule and allocate their 15 homework and study hours around these. A 'free class' during the school day does not serve to reduce the student's commitment to study in the evening but rather should be seen as an opportunity to work on a more difficult subject/topic or practice exam questions etc.

Across 2nd year and again this year your son/daughter has received guidance in study skills. It is recognised that successful study requires the student to engage with the material i.e. study must be active rather than passive. With that in mind, reading, underlining and highlighting does not constitute effective study. It is simply a starting point.

Please find below a summary of the advice provided to students.

Study sessions should be:

- regular – consistent study schedule – realistic timetable – avoids last minute cramming and reduces the chance of avoiding difficult/less attractive topics.
- timed - 20/30 minutes followed by a 5 minute break - shorter study sessions over time are more effective than one long intense session.
- uninterrupted – remove distractions (mobile phones, limit background noise etc) – improves focus.
- organized – clear workspace, notes, exam papers, books etc available and within reach.

Effective study sessions include:

- clear and achievable goals - chunked information – chapters broken down into manageable amounts of information.
- notemaking and summarising (written, audio), mind maps, flash cards, etc – suit the needs of the student.

- review of work covered at class, before the next class, whether or not homework is assigned.
- regular self-testing/retrieval of information – exam questions, flash cards, teaching the topic to someone else etc. – without looking at notes - improves memory and recall.
- spaced repetition – revisiting the material regularly – embed it in memory.
- familiarising themselves with structure and timing of junior cycle exams – practice exam questions – improve time management - students studying for an exam should study the exam.

Health & Wellbeing

- Prioritise sleep – minimum 8 hours per night – screens off at least 1 hour before of bed time.
- Nutritious meals & snacks and stay hydrated – maintain energy and concentration
- Regular physical activity – e.g. walking or other form of exercise - increase alertness and reduce stress.

By combining effective study strategies with healthy habits, students can maximize their learning potential and achieve academic success. We encourage students to adopt these practices and take ownership of their learning. Academic success is not simply about ability. It's about habits and consistency and relies on routines that they build and repeat. It is consistency that turns effort into progress and learning for students. We ask students to maintain a healthy balance between their studies and extra curricular activities. Engaging in sports and hobbies can reduce stress and help them stay motivated, making the task less daunting and support their wellbeing, but balance is required.

School Attendance & Assessment Arrangements 2025/2026

The following arrangements are in place in FCJ Secondary School for third year exams/assessments in the current academic year:

- Mock Examinations January 29th - February 6th as per school calendar.
- State Exams – June 2025

Please find enclosed:

- the schedule for completion of CBAs 2025/2026.
- the weighting of marks for each Junior Cycle subject – written exam, aural, project, practical.

Details of project deadlines and practicals will be shared with parents/guardians and students once they are available.

It is imperative that students and parents/guardians note the dates of CBAs, Projects and Practicals and ensure attendance within this timeframe. Students must take personal responsibility during any absence to keep up to date with work. We would appreciate that you support your son/daughter and the school in ensuring all deadlines are met as outlined.

Exams continue to be an integral part of the student's learning journey at Junior Cycle and they hold significant importance in assessing a student's progress and identifying gaps in learning. To that end we ask that you support your child in their learning by ensuring that they are present at school for the Mock exams in February.

We encourage our students to believe in their abilities and we will support them in any way that we can to help ensure that they achieve their full academic potential.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Daly
Principal

Úna Osborne
Deputy Principal

Founded by the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus, in 1861

Companionship Justice Excellence Hope Dignity Gentleness

Calendar 2025/2026

The Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs), are undertaken by Junior Cycle students during set timeframes, within class contact time and to a national timetable.

Please find below details of the requirements for 3rd year students for the period 2025/2026.

THIRD YEARS

Revised arrangements (NCCA):

- The Assessment Tasks have been cancelled for 3rd year students 2025/2026
- 3rd year students 2025/2026 are required to have completed a minimum of 1 CBA in each subject with specific requirements in the following subjects:
Applied Technology, Graphics, Home Economics, Music, Visual Art, Wood Technology, Engineering & Gaeilge must complete CBA2.
French/Spanish CBA requirement – CBA1

Third Year - CBA 2			
Subject	Title	Date begins	Date ends
Wood Technology	Student Self Analysis & Evaluation	Completed	
Applied Technology	Student Self Analysis & Evaluation	Completed	
Engineering	Research & development	Completed	
Graphics	Graphical Presentation Skills	Completed	
Visual Art	Communicate & reflect	Friday 28 th November	
Home Ec	Food Literacy Skills		
Dates to be confirmed – Linked to practical exam – students will be informed once dates are available.			
Music	Programme Note		
Dates to be confirmed – Linked to practical exam – students will be informed once dates are available.			
Gaeilge CBA2	Communication Task	Mon. 25 th November	Friday 13 th December
CSPE		Mon. 17 th November	Friday 9 th January
SPHE		Monday 23 rd February	Friday 17 th April

Christmas Holidays – Friday 19th December (12 noon) – Friday 2nd January (incl.)

February Mid Term Break – Monday 16th February – Friday 20th February (incl.)

Easter Holidays – Monday 30th March – Friday 10th April (incl.)

Please note that where a school closure/day off results in a class being missed within the particular window for completing the CBA, the start/finish date can be amended by the teacher to ensure that students are not adversely affected in the completion of their CBA. Individual teachers will notify their students regarding same.

The CBA results will be reported 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 (where a student does not complete a CBA)

Please note the following weighting of marks for each Junior Cycle subject.

Junior Cycle		
Subject	Written Exam	Project/Practical Exam
Applied Technology	30%	70%
Graphics	70%	30%
Home Economics	50%	50%
Music	70%	30%
Visual Art		100%
Wood Technology	30%	70%
		Assessment Task
Irish	100% (incl. Aural)	No Assessment Task in 2025/2026 (3rd year students sitting JC 2026)
English	100%	
Maths	100%	
History	100%	
Geography	100%	
Science	100%	
RE	100%	
MFL French/Spanish	100% (incl. Aural)	
Business Studies	100%	

Deadlines & Dates for the projects & practical exams will be issued once they become available.

FCJ School Policy around Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs)

- As CBAs are reported on in each student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) it is vital that students and parents/guardians note the dates of the CBAs and do their very best to ensure student's attendance within the national set timetable. Parents/guardians are encouraged to schedule essential appointments outside of school time where possible.
- FCJ realises that students may have to attend important extra-curricular school events during the CBA timeframes. In this instance students must take responsibility on themselves to catch up on any work missed due to such absences. It is the responsibility of the student to notify their teacher of such an absence in advance.
- Only work that is the student's own can be accepted for assessment in the JCPA.