

Incoming First Year
Subject Information Booklet
Academic Year 2024-2025



Simon Carey	School Principal
Louise O'Sullivan	School Deputy Principal
Huw Davies	School Deputy Principal

Dear parent(s)/guardian(s),

We are delighted that you have chosen St David's Holy Faith Secondary School for the post-primary education of your son(s) and/or daughter(s). Our new First Year students of 2024/25 will be arriving into a very new school configuration. Our construction project is now complete and our school is looking stunning. We have a school that consists of forty-seven classrooms and eleven offices.

Our new Sports Arena now gives us wonderful opportunities in sports for leisure, competition and in fitness. The new uniform is also giving expression to a new stage in our development as a school and our first year students will be among the first to wear the new uniform. These are exciting times of change and transformation and while people may have worked or been students in this school over a number of years, we are all new as we begin the next academic year. Our Arts Programme: we have a very comprehensive school sports, arts and wellbeing programmes for all students. Full details are on our website, www.stdavids.ie

Ours is a school that prides itself in care of the students, a strong record of academic excellence, a code of behaviour and policies which govern the smooth running of our school where students are happy, whose talents are nourished and encouraged, whose contribution to school life is hugely valued. One of the first parts of school life that has to be considered is the range and choice of subjects. These subjects are situated in the wider context of the Junior Cycle reforms all of which are stated in the booklet. In our school, we offer a diverse and contemporary curriculum which caters for students with a variety of skills and competencies. Some subjects are core subjects which are mandatory; others are subject options which allow for choice. Take time to consider carefully what is described in each subject option so that the students' own strengths and interests are to the fore.

Finally, our school is proud of our four pillars: ethos, academic excellence, sports and arts.

Simon Carey, Principal
Louise O'Sullivan, Deputy Principal
Huw Davies, Deputy Principal

ST DAVID'S HOLY FAITH SECONDARY SCHOOL, GREYSTONES

Our school is a dynamic vibrant community in which students are given opportunities to flourish in a diverse range of activities which suits the myriad of personalities characteristic of this community. The school building is equipped with the finest facilities which enhance all aspects of our school life. Our curricular and extra-curricular programmes give every student an opportunity to thrive to the best of their abilities. Our school has four foundational pillars: academic attainment and achievement, ethos sports and arts. Our school's Vision, Plan and Strategy, 2021-2026 (available online at www.stdauids.ie), underpins these pillars, sets out our priorities for these years, the targets which we are working towards, and the involvement of all our stakeholders in this work. It includes areas such as:

1. Sports programmes which incorporate competitive, recreational and occasional sports so that all students can find something they enjoy.
2. Arts programmes including art, music, clubs, extracurricular activities all of which aim to develop creative and innovative skills, and which enhance self-confidence, the ability to communicate, and to cooperate effectively.
3. Ethos – our year is punctuated with events which celebrate our identity as a Catholic school while also being inclusive of those of other faiths and beliefs or none. It is also inclusive of the values which permeate our relationships, our approach to work and play, and the holistic development of students.
4. Wellbeing is an important element for all students; the supports and opportunities available to students enable them to flourish in this regard.
5. Learning and Teaching are a high priority for us as a school community and we aim to provide a high-quality learning environment for our students in all areas of their development. Two teachers are involved here in Assistant Principal I capacity: Bryan O'Dowd, with the overall brief of Teaching and Learning across the school, and Lorna Wilson, for Digital Technology Infrastructure and Communication. Within this sphere are day-to-day teaching and learning, student learner autonomy and engagement and the use of methodologies which give opportunities for students to access material in more manageable and differentiated ways. Students with Special and Additional Needs are integrated through mainstream teaching and some receive additional assistance through learning support and mentoring with a specialised team and two SNAs. We endeavour to afford all students the opportunity to reach their potential in an inclusive environment. Students are provided with assistance in study skills and information management, and study after school and at night are also provided for students. The Wednesday after school study includes a session where students can collaborate together in groups on academic content of their own choice. Our school library is a lovely haven of calm with our wonderful librarian, Mairead Duggan, and provides students with a place to research, work individually or collaboratively on projects or participate in literary or artistic initiatives.

We also have an initiative which we have called 'Open Classroom'. This consists of shared collaboration between teachers and also includes the Senior Leadership Team, whereby our classrooms are open to one another to visit. We are privileged in gaining an insight into the wonderful variety of methodologies and differentiated ways of teaching and learning happening in our classrooms for the benefit of the students.

First Years are exposed to a wide range of subjects which they may not have done previously. Students learn, from the beginning, that the daily routine of classwork and homework, persistence and resilience, go hand in hand to lay strong foundations for academic achievement as they progress through school. We know, from our experience, that students who work away incrementally throughout the year in regular attendance, punctuality and good homework routines, perform better when it comes to the State Examinations of which there are two: Junior Cycle takes in work of the first three years of school, and Leaving Certificate takes in the final two years of school.

An important part of any learning is assessment. This can be formative, which takes place in every lesson by checking if the students are understanding content at various stages, or summative through class tests, at the end of units of learning, or through the mechanism of the whole school examinations which take place in November, February and May. These assessments give both teachers and students a barometer of student learning, the areas which pose greatest challenge to them, and then what can be done to improve their learning going forward. Year Heads monitor progress periodically throughout the year.

The importance of balance between work and rest are also emphasised. We strongly encourage all students to participate in the extracurricular activities on offer in our school and to have a balance in their lives.

Contents

Junior Cycle 8 Key Skills	5
Junior Cycle 24 Statements of learning	6
Junior Cycle Core Subjects	8
Junior Cycle Visual Art	10
Junior Cycle Business	11
Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages	12
Junior Cycle Home Economics	13
Junior Cycle Graphics	14
Junior Cycle Music	15
Junior Cycle Engineering	16
Junior Cycle Wood Technology	17
Next Steps	18

THE JUNIOR CYCLE CURRICULUM FOCUSES ON EIGHT KEY SKILLS



Teachers can also build many of the other elements of particular key skills into their classroom planning. There are opportunities to support all key skills but some are particularly significant.

THE JUNIOR CYCLE CURRICULUM FOCUSES ON 24 STATEMENTS OF LEARNING

The Junior Cycle Framework contains 24 statements of learning, underpinned by the eight principles, provide the basis for schools to plan for, design and evaluate their junior cycle programmes. That process of planning focuses on the combination of curriculum components (subjects and short courses) and other learning experiences. Schools will ensure that all statements of learning, alongside the key skills feature in the programmes of all junior cycle students.

These are the key learning experiences throughout a whole learning process, from first to third years:

1. Communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts
2. Listens, speaks, reads and writes and one other language at a level of proficiency that is appropriate to her or his ability
3. Creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts
4. Creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved
5. Has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making
6. Appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives
7. Values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts
8. Values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change
9. Understands the origins and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around her/him
10. Has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably
11. Takes action to safeguard and promote her/his well-being and that of others
12. Is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active
13. Understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices
14. Makes informed financial decisions and develops good consumer skills

15. Recognises the potential uses of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning

16. Describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships

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

18. Observes and evaluates empirical events and processes and draws valid deductions and conclusions

19. Values the role and contribution of science and technology to society, and their personal, social and global importance

20. Uses appropriate technologies in meeting a design challenge

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

22. Takes initiative, is innovative and develops entrepreneurial skills 23. Brings an idea from conception to realisation

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

THE JUNIOR CYCLE CURRICULUM FOCUSES ON 8 PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING:

- Learning to learn
- Choice and flexibility
- Quality
- Creativity and Innovation
- Engagement and Participation
- Continuity and Development
- Well-being
- Inclusive Education

These key educational skills, learning tools and statements for learning aim to direct learning for First Years in a different way. Varying teaching methodologies enhances the learning experience, which in turn seeps into how students engage with the overall process within the classroom.

JUNIOR CYCLE CORE SUBJECTS

All students of St David's Holy Faith Secondary School will study, from First to Third Year, the following subjects:

Gaeilge
English
Mathematics
History
Geography
Science
Religious Education
Wellbeing which includes (PE, CSPE and SPHE)

Gaeilge: Gaeilge is a compulsory subject for all students who studied it in Primary School. Students must have Irish to enter many colleges and some courses e.g. Primary Teaching.

English: Most employers and colleges will require students to have studied English.

Maths: An extremely important subject, required for many courses and occupations. Honours Maths are needed for most engineering courses in University and some other specialised areas.

History: While History is not a specific requirement for any course it is an excellent foundation for the study of Law, Journalism etc. It also raises one's awareness of political and economic trends in modern society.

Geography: Geography brings an appreciation of the environment and the impact of daily living on the world around us.

Religious Education: As a Catholic school, religion imbues the whole ethos of the school and all students are required to take part in both class and out of class religious activities. Religious Education is a state examination subject for all Junior Cycle students in St David's Holy Faith Secondary School.

Science: Science is one of the subjects most in demand in this technological age. It is divided into three subjects after the Junior Cycle: Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Very often one of these subjects is a requirement for many third level science related courses e.g. engineering, medicine, physiotherapy and food science. The Government, colleges and employers are all attempting to get more students to take up Science at Junior Cycle. Level. For these reasons, though Science is not part of the National Core Curriculum, all students study Science in Junior Cycle in St David's.

Wellbeing includes three subjects:

- (i) Physical Education:** This subject contributes to the Wellbeing programme by providing learning experiences which support students in being better able and more motivated to include regular physical activity in their lives, thereby contributing to their overall experience of wellbeing.
- (ii) Civics Social and Political Education:** CSPE enables students to feel connected to and take responsibility for the wellbeing of others. It also develops students' confidence, agency and engagement which are important characteristics of student wellbeing.
- (iii) Social Personal and Health Education:** Students have a dedicated space and time to learn about themselves, caring for themselves and others and making informed decisions for their health and wellbeing.

SUBJECT OPTIONS

In addition to the above subjects, all incoming First Years choose three optional subjects. The material covered in each of these optional subjects are covered over the following pages of this information booklet.

Students choose three optional subjects

Block 1 - Students choose either French or Spanish. For students with specific diagnosed learning difficulties, we will provide a Resource class in this block.

Blocks 2 and 3 are created based on student preferences and we ask that students place 1 - 7 with number 1 being the subject they really want and number 7, the subject they do not want.

The remaining subject blocks will be created based on students' preferences.

As part of the new Junior Cycle, students are required to engage in project work in Second and Third Year, both in groups and individually. This is known as Classroom-Based Assessment (CBAs) and in Third Year, students sit an Assessment Task for one hour and twenty minutes, supervised in class by their teachers, based on their CBA in Third Year. This constitutes 10% of the new Junior Cycle in each subject.

We recommend that parents use this booklet, as well as online resources, to help them decide their subject options.

Additional information on every subject for Junior Cycle can be found on www.ncca.ie

- Junior cycle
- Junior cycle is changing
- Junior Cycle facts sheets

JUNIOR CYCLE VISUAL ART

Art, or fine art, is the expression of creative skill in a visual form. It emphasises ideas, feelings and visual qualities through imaginative and/or technical skill. Apart from the creation of artworks, fine art also encompasses the study of art through appreciation and critical discussion.

Craft is the application of a range of particular artistic skills and knowledge to produce artefacts of aesthetic worth. With an emphasis on processes and materials, the artefacts created may represent either traditional crafts or a more individual approach by the craftsperson.

Design is the process of planning, problem-solving and creating. It can be a response to a brief, a need or a situation. Emphasising the process of planning, problem-solving and completion, with drawing as a means of thinking, formal visual elements and imagery are used to communicate messages and ideas.

Student engagement and learning are optimised by a fully integrated experience of art, craft and design. To give further emphasis to the integrated nature of learning, the outcomes for each strand are grouped by reference to five elements:

- Critical and visual language
- Drawing
- Visual culture and appreciation
- The art elements and design principles
- Media

Each element focuses on the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and values. As the student progresses through each of the strands, there will be systematic development of their fundamental knowledge, principles and values, including the key skills through each of the elements.



JUNIOR CYCLE BUSINESS

The specification for Junior Cycle Business Studies on improving students' understanding of the business environment and on developing skills for life, work and further study through the three inter-connected strands:

- Personal Finance
- Enterprise
- Our Economy

Personal Finance focuses on students developing a set of skills, knowledge and values that allows them to make informed decisions to effectively and responsibly manage their financial resources.

Enterprise encourages students to identify opportunities and turn them into practical and targeted activities within business and wider society through the development and application of their understanding, skills and values. It develops students' basic understanding of the financial, marketing and operational functions of an organisation.

Our Economy enables students to understand the dynamic relationship between the local, national and international economic situation. It develops students' ability to identify and understand basic economic concepts as they relate to personal finance, enterprise and the Irish economy. While the learning outcomes associated with each strand are set out separately in this specification, this should not be taken to imply that the strands are to be studied in isolation. The students' engagement and learning are optimised by a fully integrated experience of Personal finance, Enterprise and Our economy.

To give further emphasis to the integrated nature of learning, the outcomes for each strand are grouped by reference to three elements:

- Managing my Resources
- Exploring Business
- Using Skills for Business



JUNIOR CYCLE MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH OR SPANISH LANGUAGES

Language learning is accessible to all students and contributes to their cognitive, personal and social growth by enhancing their communicative and thinking skills, as well as their participation in a global society. Being able to communicate in the mother tongue and in foreign languages are also among the eight key competences for lifelong learning identified by the European Union and European Council.

Language learning develops students' general language awareness. It enhances their ability to analyse how language works, to compare languages, and to reflect on how they learn languages. This has a positive effect on their first language skills and on future language learning. In learning foreign languages, students are actively engaged in activities and tasks which integrate the five language skills of listening, reading, spoken production, spoken interaction and writing. As a result, they communicate with increasing independence, confidence and creativity.

A fundamental feature of languages is that they give students access to new worlds and different ways of thinking. The resulting development of socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness also enhances students' cognitive development. By reflecting on other cultures and making comparisons they develop a deeper understanding of their own while appreciating diversity.

Language learning also broadens students' horizons and enables them to develop a lifelong learning skill for education, leisure and work, and to develop a positive attitude towards other languages and cultures. Modern technologies play a key role in making language learning and language use increasingly more accessible and enjoyable for learners, by facilitating access to information and communication with people at a global level. Many studies attest to the benefits of bilingualism.



JUNIOR CYCLE HOME ECONOMICS



The specification for Junior Cycle Home Economics focuses on developing students' understanding and skills to achieve an optimal, healthy and sustainable life through three interconnected contextual strands: Food, health and culinary skills, responsible family living and textiles and craft.

Strand 1: Food, health and culinary skills

This strand focuses on developing students' food, health and culinary skills.

Students are enabled to develop a healthy, sustainable attitude and positive relationship with food through practical experiential learning. They apply their understanding of nutrition, diet and health principles in order to adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed decisions that impact the health and wellbeing of themselves as individuals as well as within their families. The application of practical food and health literacy skills is integral to this strand and includes menu planning; shopping; cooking; health and safety food skills; portion control; reading food labels; dietary analysis; costing; sensory analysis; and food waste.

Strand 2: Responsible family & living

This strand enables students to explore, from a systems perspective, responsible family living. Students develop an understanding of the different forms and role of families as the core social unit. They develop an understanding of the role of the family in the development of the child in a safe and nurturing environment. Students develop life-skills to enable them to manage resources responsibly and sustainably in the home, family and community. They are facilitated to become discerning, competent consumers who are able to apply effective decision-making skills in everyday contexts in the home and community.

Strand 3: Textiles and craft

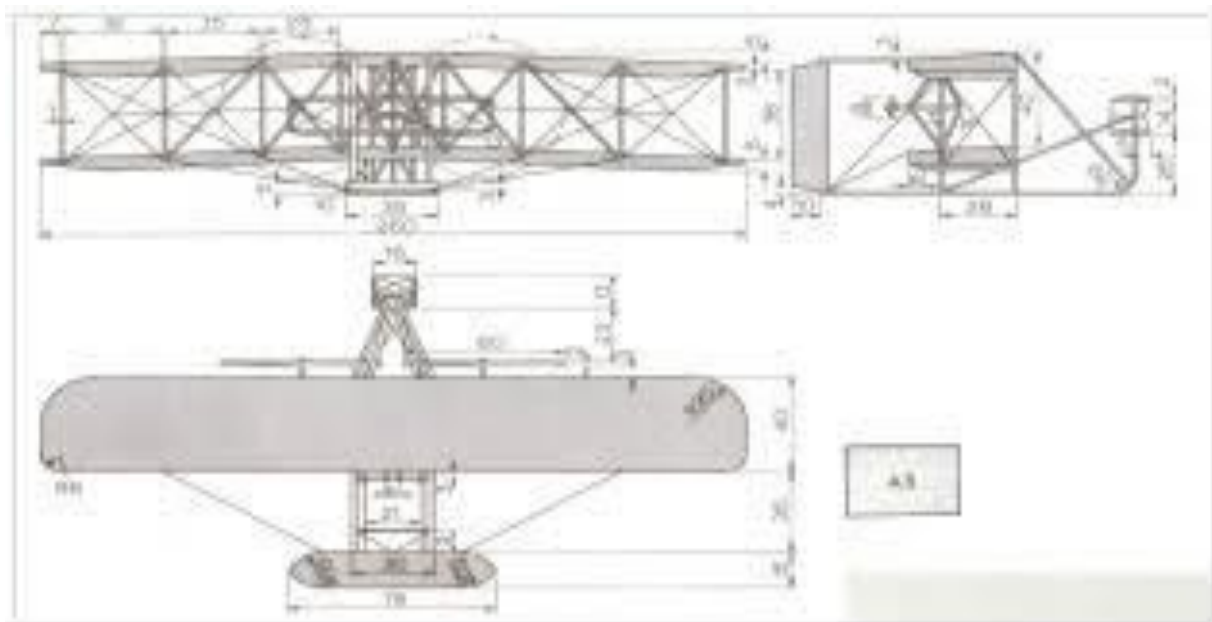
This strand focuses on developing students' textile skills, knowledge and creativity. Practical textile and craft skills are integral to this strand and include hand and machine sewing skills, and fabric texturing and embellishment techniques. Students are enabled to make sustainable decisions as consumers in the choice and maintenance of clothing and textiles. Students will apply the design brief process in designing and making a textile item for an individual or the home.

JUNIOR CYCLE GRAPHICS

The course content is arranged under the headings of topics and sub-topics, many of which are directly interrelated. The following are seen as the main areas of study: plane geometry, descriptive geometry and communication graphics (including design presentation and computer aided design/graphics).

Freehand drawing is seen as an integral skill in all these areas as well as a stimulus to spatial reasoning. The first year of the course will consist of basic modules taken from a variety of topics and will be a foundation course for the following two years. While the material content of the first year modules will in the main be common to both higher and ordinary levels, this will be structured so as to allow pupils to work at their own level of ability. The emphasis in the first year should be on material of an applied nature based on appropriate geometric principles and be such as to stimulate pupils' interest and curiosity.

At the end of the first year, pupils will have acquired basic graphic communication skills and techniques. They should also appreciate the significance of graphics in 'ordering' space, their unique value in communicating information and ideas as well as their intrinsic beauty, particularly in graphical design.



JUNIOR CYCLE MUSIC



The specification for Junior Cycle Music focuses on giving students the opportunity to develop their musical knowledge, skills and cultural awareness through the practical and cognitive engagement with music. A student will experience learning in each of these three strands as they progress through their junior cycle.

Strand 1: Procedural knowledge

To explore fully their musical imagination, creativity, and potential requires students to develop their music literacy and skills in a range of ways. Students learn music through engaging in, reflecting upon and evaluating their musical experiences. Through this process, students develop a range of musical skills (technical, aural, analytical and notational) that leads to musical understanding. It also involves experimenting with elements of music such as pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture, style and tonality.

Strand 2: Innovate and ideate

In this strand, students draw on their personal experiences and perspectives to develop, refine, showcase and seek feedback on their musical ideas. They develop an awareness of different sounds and the potential of sound for resourcing and generating ideas, and for communicating feelings. Students will innovate and ideate through composing/arranging and performing music for specific purposes, experimenting with music to communicate ideas derived from a variety of stimuli, and collaborating with others to develop and extend musical ideas. Students will make interpretative musical decisions by demonstrating an integrated understanding of music elements and by using technology to innovate and share ideas.

Strand 3: Culture and context

The understanding of music in context and its cultural positioning helps to shape our ability to create, participate and appraise the music we engage with. In this strand, students will investigate the contextual and cultural environments that impact on purpose and intent in music. This includes developing an understanding and a knowledge of music in past and present contexts; considering musical works as social commentaries on cultures and peoples; investigating music associated with particular times, places, social groups and feelings and sharing and discussing examples of music experienced at home, at school and in the wider community.

JUNIOR CYCLE ENGINEERING

Junior Cycle Engineering aims to develop the students' awareness of engineering processes while developing the necessary subject knowledge with the disciplinary skills to engineer products.

There are three strands in this course:

Strand 1: Processes and Principles

In this strand, students will learn about and employ the fundamental processes and principles of engineering. They will apply their knowledge of materials and equipment to design and manufacture products. Students will be encouraged to use the engineering principles and processes, together with accuracy and precision, to help develop an engineering mindset which ultimately leads to the production of innovative and efficient solutions of high quality and finish.

Strand 2: Design Application

In this strand, students will learn about the key stages of the engineering design process. They will understand the importance of design in both the end-user experience and the economic and social impact of the product.

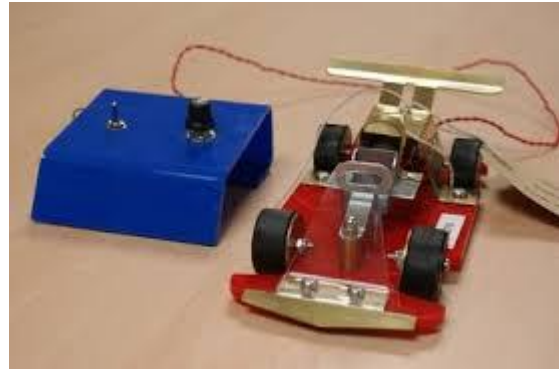
They will discover how informed choice of materials and processes combine to produce a solution that is functional and efficient. Students will learn the value of good project management and how to manage themselves and the product development through the journey from the design to the manufacturing stage.

Strand 3: Mechatronics

In this strand, students will use a combination of mechanical, manufacturing, electronic and software engineering to explore the relationship between simple impetus, processes and outputs.

The course includes the following components:

Physical, mechanical, thermal and electrical properties of materials: solid, liquid and gas state materials; production of iron and steel; properties and application of: plain carbon steels, high speed steel and stainless steel; common non-ferrous metals and alloys; properties applications and sources of plastics: - thermo-sets and thermo-plastics in common usage; standard methods and fabrication processes using metallic materials and plastics; use of wood as alternative structural and finishing material, as well as design; selection of finishes applied to materials for decorative and aesthetic purposes; effects of oxidation in metals: protective coatings; purpose of heat-treating metals: annealing; effects of normalising, annealing, hardening and tempering plain carbon steels, case-hardening mild steel: effects of different cooling and quenching methods; design of cutting tools.



JUNIOR CYCLE WOOD TECHNOLOGY

This course consists of three strands:

Principles and particles

In this strand, students learn about and employ the fundamental principles and practices associated with the study of Wood Technology. They learn to work safely and efficiently with equipment and materials, and apply principles of craft excellence through design and manufacture. They will investigate the environmental benefits and impacts of using wood as a natural and renewable resource and learn about sustainable practice.

Design Technology

In this strand, students explore design briefs and their solutions. They use key principles of design and produce sketches, drawings, models/prototypes and artefacts that illustrate their design thinking. Students consider factors such as materials, cost, time resources and skills to produce purposeful, functional, appealing artefacts. They also consider the environmental and social impacts of design decisions and investigate how to minimise material use and manage waste.

Wood Science and Technology

In this strand, students explore the natural and physical properties and characteristics of wood. They learn how to use the natural aesthetics and properties of wood to enhance the appearance and function of artefacts. They explore the role of forestation and wood in terms of local/global ecology and sustainability and recognise the importance of considering the impact on the natural environment when sourcing materials.



NEXT STEPS

Cat4 entrance assessments have been finalised. Each student and their parent/guardian will be invited into St David's Holy Faith Secondary School, Greystones, to meet with the school Principal for a fifteen-minute meeting. At this meeting, the Principal will explain these assessments to you and your child. The date-line for these one-to-one interviews is: Monday, 8 April 2024 to Friday, 19 April 2024.

What is required by you for this meeting?

If you have an Exemption in Irish form, and educational assessment or a psychological report, you will be required to bring this with you. You will have an opportunity to discuss your child's subject options and ask any questions you may have pertaining to your child(ren) next year.

How are subject choices allocated?

We operate a time-table scheduling programme which selects subjects based on a student's choice and it randomly selects accordingly. Subject choice letters will be completed and distributed to each parent/guardian at the one-on-one interviews. In the event that we are unable to provide the top three subject choices, the Deputy Principal or the Guidance Counsellor will contact you directly.

Please note a subject is only deemed viable if ten or more students choose it as one of their three choices. If less than ten students choose a subject, it will not be sanctioned and students and parents/guardians will be advised of this accordingly.



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