



Curriculum

ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM

Year 8 pupils are placed in classes according to reports from contributory Primary Schools and our own internal assessment. The placing of pupils is subject to review during their school career and their progress is continually monitored. Any pupils who have not fully developed their basic skills in literacy and numeracy are given special help to enable them to overcome deficiencies and prepare them to integrate fully into the school programme.

The school is implementing all statutory requirements of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum. In the first three years the following subjects are offered: Art, English, French, Geography, History, Learning for Life and Work, Home Economics, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Religious Studies, Science and Technology. While the courses in Religious Studies are non-denominational in character, parents, who on grounds of religious conscience, wish to have their children excused may do so having made prior written application to the Principal.



Instrumental tuition is available from tutors provided by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board for pupils who show a musical aptitude.

After three years following a basic common curriculum **all** pupils enter courses which, followed for two years, lead to the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations.

Pupils in Years 11 and 12 study English, Mathematics, Science (Year 11), Additional or Applied Science (Year 12), Drama, Religious Studies, Physical Education, French, History or Geography (or both) Art, Music, English Literature, Technology, Diploma in Digital Applications (DiDA), Construction, Learning for Life & Work, Business Studies, Moving Image Arts, ICT and Home Economics to G.C.S.E. level.

Some pupils may also study BTEC courses in Creative Media Production, Countryside and Environment, Digital Applications, Sport and Hospitality. Pupils may also enter for the music examinations of the Associated Board. Where choices are to be made, they are taken following consultations between pupils, parents and teachers.

Those pupils who wish to remain at school and have reached the required standard, pass into the Sixth Form where courses are followed leading to the General Certificate of Education – Advanced Level.

In Sixth Form provision is made jointly with Cross and Passion College and pupils may study the following subjects to Advanced Level: English Literature, Mathematics, Geography, French, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Drama, Applied Science, Art, Home Economics, History, Music, Religious Studies, Business Studies, ICT, PE, Leisure Studies, Psychology, Government and Politics, Technology and Health and Social Care.

'A' level Construction, Engineering and Digital Media are offered in collaboration with the Northern Regional College. All sixth formers have the opportunity to complete Level 3 Key Skills qualifications in Communication and some may take Application of Number.

It is our intention that pupils in Ballycastle High School can follow courses which suit both their own needs and abilities. On leaving school pupils may proceed directly into employment or enter universities, colleges of education, agricultural colleges etc.

CAREERS GUIDANCE

Careers is an integral element of Learning for Life and Work and will be dealt with within this subject and at all levels throughout school.

In Year 10 the Year Tutor will explain to the pupils the choices for Key Stage 4 and the implications of those choices, as well as the relevant issues that should be considered in the decision-making process.

The pupils in Year 12, in addition to having Learning for Life and Work and access to their Year Tutor, will be interviewed by the Careers Officer from the local Training and Employment Agency. Careers plans are discussed with individual pupils, parents, the Principal and the Year Tutor at individual interviews in February, following the mock examinations.

Work Shadowing is organised for those who return to school in Year 13, when the pupils will go on placement for a week in April/May to a mutually agreed work site.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A member of staff has been appointed as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to oversee special needs provision in the school. This teacher, depending upon need and availability, will arrange in-class support and/or group tuition. The school aims to provide an environment within which pupils with special needs will feel valued, encouraged and challenged to show progress not only in basic literacy and numeracy but in subjects across the entire curriculum.



The Library

The Library aims to provide a comprehensive service for both the study and recreational needs of pupils.

The school is fortunate in that the Library is staffed by a Library Assistant. This ensures prompt and easy access to the wealth of information available in the stock of approximately 5000 books.

In order to sustain pupils' interest and keep up to date, a number of these are exchanged twice a year. In addition the Library has three internet linked computers with associated printers, and a wide selection of reference materials on compact discs.

The use of video recorders and televisions are being replaced by the use of DVDs and Smart Boards.



Books and Stationery

Pupils are provided with text books and stationery at school through the North-Eastern Education and Library Board. These remain the property of the Board and should be looked after carefully. It is strongly recommended that pupils should carry all their books and stationery in a suitable school bag or case.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important training in self discipline. A reasonable amount to complement and reinforce the work done in the classroom is set during the week. It is graduated according to the pupil's age and capacity. The time for its completion is unlikely to exceed two hours for year 8 and 9 pupils; two and a half hours for year 10 and 11 year pupils, and three hours for year 12 and sixth form.

Each pupil will be provided with a student planner to note the homework to be done for each day. Parents are requested to check the student planner against the homework being done and help the staff to see that homework is carefully and honestly done. Parents are requested to sign the planner each week.

It is important that pupils should be given privacy, quietness and reasonable facilities for study at home. Homework should be presented on time, excuses for non-production of homework must be in writing from the parent or guardian.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The school building provides a range of facilities for all subjects in the curriculum. There has been a continuous programme aimed at developing these facilities in order that recent and current innovations in education can be implemented.

We continually update and refurbish our facilities. Our computer network has 3 complete computer suites, all classrooms have computers and interactive whiteboards. We have recently completed the installation of a fourth computer suite of iMac computers working with multimedia applications and a new video conferencing facility. Thanks to recent investment in I.T. equipment the school is at the forefront in terms of innovative technology in teaching and learning.



This year we are undergoing complete refurbishment of our Home Economics department, Music suite, Sixth-form study and toilet facilities.

The school buildings are maintained to a very high standard in terms of decor and cleanliness.

Considerable effort has been made around the school to display pupils' work; photographic and other records of local and school history and items of artistic interest and merit.

Our picturesque grounds are well maintained and provide excellent recreational

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORT

The aim of the school's programme of Physical Education is to encourage all pupils to participate in physical activity and gain enjoyment from it through timetabled lessons and extra-curricular activities.

Facilities are hired to enhance the programme, such as -

- The Astro Turf Hockey Pitch - Quay Road, Ballycastle
- Tennis Courts - Mary Street, Ballycastle
- Pulse Gym - Sheskburn Centre, Ballycastle



All pupils are expected to take part in the school's programme which consists of the following activities at either Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4.

Aerobics	Dance	Outdoor Pursuits
Athletics	Football	Rugby
Badminton	Fitness	Netball
Basketball	Gymnastics	Swimming
Cricket	Hockey	Trampolining

Pupils should be properly attired for physical activity. In the case of a pupil being physically unable to take part, a medical statement and/or letter from the parent or guardian should be supplied.



CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

This policy came into operation on 1st April, 1992. The Board of Governors are required to determine and keep under review a Charges and Remissions Policy in respect of the charges it proposes to make for any Optional Extra or Board and Lodging. (Article 131 Paragraph (1) Education Reform (N.I.) Order 1989.

An optional extra is an activity or provision organised or arranged by a Board or the school in which pupils participate voluntarily on the basis of parents willingness and ability to meet the associated costs.

An optional extra is with two exceptions (Public Examinations and Music Tuition) all education or transport which is provided by the Board of Governors wholly or mainly outside school hours and which is not specifically required to meet the Board of Governors statutory duty to deliver any component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum or an approved public examination. There is no obligation on school authorities to provide optional extras.

Where the Board of Governors has decided to provide an optional extra the charge on the parents of participating pupils will be based on the full per capita cost. The Board of Governors may decide to subsidise part of the cost of the activity out of school funds.

Optional Extras

1. Tuition in the playing of a Music Instrument

This will normally be provided through the N.E.E.L.B. Music Service and will be subsidised within the financial resources available. If provided by any other service or outside school hours charges will be made which will include a proportion of the cost of the teacher giving the tuition. These charges will not be remitted.

2. Educational Activities

Charges will be made in respect of all activities which take place wholly or more than 50% outside school hours when the child's participation has been agreed in advance by the parent. The charge will include the cost of travel, entrance fees, materials, books and equipment and, where appropriate, board and lodgings, tuition fees and insurance cover. There will be **no** remission of these charges.

3. Transport

A charge will be made when a pupil makes use of transport, other than transport provided by the Education and Library Board to attend an activity. This charge will be based on the full economic cost. There will be **no** remission of this charge.

Public Examination Entries

There will be no charge for entering any approved public examination if the school has prepared the pupil for that examination. Charges will be made in respect of a pupil's entry for any examination for which he or she has not been prepared by the school or for the re-sit of a GCSE/GCE 'A' level module examination. There will be no remission of these charges.

(The School will pass on to parents any charge which may arise as the result of a parent's request to have a pupil's examination result scrutinized. There will be no remission of this charge).

Practical Subjects

Charges will be made for ingredients and materials needed for courses in practical subjects provided by the school where parents indicate, in advance and in writing, a wish to receive the finished product - as an alternative the parents may provide the ingredients and/or materials. There will be **no** remission of charges.

Board and Lodging

Where a school activity involves pupils spending a night or nights away from home, a charge for board and lodgings will be made. Where such a residential trip is considered an "Optional Extra", this charge will **not** be remitted.

Where a residential trip is inside school hours or is outside school hours but must be provided free under Article 128 Paragraphs 2 & 4, parents in receipt of Income Support or Family Credit are entitled to have these charges remitted when they declare and give evidence of their circumstances. Such parents may make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the residential trip.

General

- (a) This policy will operate for the financial year April 2011 to March 2012 and will be subject to monitoring and review.
- (b) This charging and remissions policy only relates to charges which may be made by the school or N.E.E.L.B. and does not relate to any educational activity where charges are levied by a third party.
- (c) No charge made in respect of individual pupils will exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra to that pupil. Charges will not include an element of subsidy.
- (d) The school reserves the right to cancel any activity arranged under the terms of this "Charges and Remissions Policy".
- (e) The Reform Order permits the school to ask all pupils to make a voluntary contribution to defray the costs of any educational activity.

REPORTS

Reports are issued twice a year for each pupil in years 8, 9, 10 and 11. A Winter report is issued for pupils in years 13 and 14. Parents of year 11 and 12 pupils will receive a report following the mock examinations in February. Reports are posted by the school for the attention of parents. At the end of the summer term all pupils' parents, except those taking external examinations, receive a report. These are the main and most important reports on pupils' school life and parents are requested to consider them carefully.

Industry Reports and Test Reports

A constant check is kept on the work of each pupil. Approximately twice a term class teachers assess the efforts of each pupil in their particular subject. Parents of pupils in years 8 – 12 will receive a printed copy of each industry report, which should be signed and returned to the pupil's registration teacher. Those pupil's whose work is deemed to be unsatisfactory will be put on report and parents are informed. The pupil is given a card to be signed in class by the teacher and at home by the parent over a two week period. This is done to try and ensure that all pupils work to the best of their ability. In Years 8 – 10, pupils who do exceptionally well, receive congratulatory letters.

Achievement and endeavour are also recognised at Key Stage 3 through our Merit Awards System.