



St Joseph's Secondary School

Convent of Mercy
Castlebar

School Prospectus

St. Joseph's Secondary School
Convent of Mercy
Castlebar
Co. Mayo
Ireland
F23RK09

School office hours:
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CEIST
Catholic Education
An Irish Schools Trust

A Word of Welcome

St. Joseph's Secondary School,
Castlebar, Co. Mayo

We are proud to introduce St. Joseph's Secondary School to you and we are privileged that you are considering our school for your daughter. We hope that this prospectus will capture some of the special qualities of St. Joseph's and the outstanding all-round education we offer.

As the school's Senior Management Team, we are proud to be part of this vibrant learning community and bearing witness to young girls entering our school community as excited First Years, and leaving as happy, confident, enquiring young women destined to make a positive contribution to the world. Each young woman in St. Joseph's is valued and supported in her own right and offered every opportunity to excel and advance. We have no doubt that is on account of the positive atmosphere of care, trust, support, and mutual respect which is so evident in St. Joseph's, and often remarked upon by parents, past pupils and visitors to the school.

We as a school community are justifiably proud of our very broad curriculum, our excellent academic results, our facilities, and our exceptional array of extra and co-curricular activities. Our Year Heads move up through the school with the students, monitoring progress and ensuring an authentic educational partnership between school and home.

Our commitment to each individual child makes our school a happy and safe place to learn, develop and mature. A St. Joseph's student will grow towards their full potential, supported in every aspect of their life by a dedicated staff who encourage them to be the best they can be beyond the walls of the classrooms and corridors they inhabit while a student here.

A number of years ago our school underwent the formal process of a Whole School Evaluation by the Department of Education (DES) Inspectorate. The visiting team of Inspectors visited classes, interviewed staff, board of management, parent and student representatives. We encourage you to read their positive findings which are published on the DES website with several citations of excellent practice.

We hope this prospectus will give you a flavour of life here in St. Joseph's and that the information will assist you in deciding on the next stage of your daughter's education.

Looking forward to meeting with you.

Mr Peadar ÓTuathail
Principal

Mrs Aisling McAlpine
Deputy Principal





Our Ethos

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy, St. Joseph's is the oldest secondary school in the Castlebar with its origins dating back to 1853. While maintaining a strong Catholic tradition and ethos, we welcome students from every religious tradition. We have students of various nationalities, believing that all are enriched by the experience and culture of fellow human beings. Our Catholic ethos is characterised by our caring spirit and our commitment to each pupil and each teacher.

Students are immersed in a rich tradition, where the qualities of commitment, dedication, professionalism and volunteerism are alive and well. True to the inspiring vision of our foundress, Catherine McAuley, we aspire to foster in all our students a deep respect and compassion for all people, especially those who are most vulnerable and in need of practical help.

Our Vision

St. Joseph's is a dynamic centre of excellence in education where all students are encouraged to achieve to their full potential and to become active citizens who will excel in their personal and academic lives. We embrace the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation, and a respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life.

We encourage our students to live out the values of respect, honesty, truth, care and justice while developing a keen sense of responsibility towards themselves, others and the world in which we live. View our Code of Behaviour on our website.

All members of the St. Joseph's learning community are expected to treat one another with respect, good manners and courtesy at all times.



We expect and promote good standards of behaviour including:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Respect for staff
- Respect for property



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St. Joseph's Secondary School is a voluntary catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST- a Catholic Education and Irish Schools Trust.

We aim to provide a holistic christian education in co-operation with staff, students, parents/ guardians, board of management and the community.

We work to create equality for all in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

We strive for excellence in learning and endeavour to help each student to reach her full potential in a positive, caring and happy environment.

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Our Mission Statement

CEIST

St. Joseph's Secondary School is under the trusteeship of CEIST- a Catholic Education Irish Schools Trust. CEIST is the trustee body for voluntary secondary schools of the Daughters of Charity, the Presentation Sisters, the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of the Christian Retreat and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The vision of CEIST is to create a compassionate and just society inspired by the life and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Their mission is to provide a holistic education in the Catholic tradition. The CEIST community is committed to living the vision and core values of the Charter.

These values have their roots in the Gospel of Jesus and have been central in the tradition of the five founding Congregations. CEIST schools are committed to a value led education; their curriculum is underpinned by the values of Jesus Christ.

Our Introduction

St. Joseph's Secondary School Castlebar is an all girls' secondary school under the Trusteeship of CEIST. We are managed by a board of management which includes nominees of CEIST, staff, parents and our founding congregation the Sisters of Mercy.

We believe that learning is a personal journey for each individual student and we have an established reputation for personalised care and support for every student.

We have high expectations for our students and proudly celebrate their wide ranging achievements and the fact that the vast majority of our students proceed to third level education.

We have high standards of achievement based upon our commitment to helping each student achieve their full potential supported by an outstanding teaching and support staff.

Support and Care Structures

Outstanding pastoral care is a hallmark of life in St. Joseph's. Students learn best when they are supported and happy. Pastoral care systems and structures in St. Joseph's supports the development of happy, confident and successful young people.

We place our students at the heart of all we do in our school and have weekly meetings of our dedicated Student Support and Care Teams which includes the principal, deputy principal, guidance counsellors, chaplain, SEN link teacher, and our year head team.

Year Head

Each class has a dedicated Year Head who is responsible for a maximum of two class groups. This focus on two class groups cultivates and nurtures this important relationship. Additionally, Year Heads in St. Joseph's have a daily morning check-in with students in their class/year group.



First Year Induction

Recognising that the change from primary to secondary school is daunting and we have put in place a number of supports to assist our junior students settle into their new home.

'Mentors' consist of Fifth Year students who have been selected from a stringent application process to serve as role models, mentors and leaders for our First Year students. These young leaders are invaluable in caring for our new students, acting as supports and guides, and connecting with staff regarding any concerns that may arise. Additionally, we have developed an excellent in-house Induction programme tailored to meet our student's needs.

Special Educational Needs

We have a dedicated team of specialist teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) in the area of special or additional learning needs who work tirelessly to support our students with special educational needs- in class support, small group, one-to-one, and/or other. This team works closely with students, parents, teachers and other relevant professionals e.g. SENO, EWO, NEPS, CAMHS... to ensure that students thrive, prosper and reach their full potential.



Guidance

We have two fully qualified guidance counsellors on staff. Their roles are vast and include numerous areas including personal and social counselling, and vocational and career counselling.

We engage with students from first year to Leaving Certificate in a variety of ways, across a wide range of experiences including the following;

- Timetabled *Learning to Learn* classes at Junior Cycle
- Support with subject choices
- Study skills workshops
- Careers classes
- Psychometric Testing e.g. CAT 4 & *Eirquest*
- Partnership and referral to outside support agencies such as Jigsaw, CAMHS, Pieta House etc.
- Mental health support and education
- Partnership with the *Fuse* Anti-Bullying programme

They also offer one-to-one support to students who want to discuss personal or vocational issues in a confidential, non-judgmental environment.

Homework and Study

Research shows that a good study routine leads to good results and so every effort is made to facilitate and promote teaching and learning both during and after school. Supervised Study is offered from

4.15pm - 6.15pm Monday - Thursday.





Why choose St. Joseph's Secondary School?

St. Joseph's Secondary School has the following to offer your daughter:

- » A long-standing tradition and culture of success, achievement and excellence in education
- » High expectations of students to achieve their full potential
- » Outstanding success in Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations
- » A wide ranging and broad curriculum
- » A wide range of extra and co-curricular activities including sport, cultural and music
- » A vibrant, enthusiastic and dedicated teaching staff who are committed to helping students succeed
- » Excellent care and support systems
- » Supervised study
- » Canteen facility freshly producing hot and cold meal choices
- » A welcoming and friendly environment for students and parents
- » A strong sense of community within the school

Extra and Co-Curricular Activities

We provide an extensive curriculum of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities through which students extend their learning, build teamwork and develop their friendships. We want students to aspire to be the best that they can possibly be in all aspects of their lives, tackling fresh challenges and taking pride in their achievements.

Students participate in a broad range of after school and lunchtime activities. We field teams in a variety of sports including athletics & cross country, basketball, badminton equestrian events, gaelic football, soccer, swimming and volleyball. We have a packed programme of non-sporting activities with various music groups, debating, public speaking, quiz teams (to name but a few!) achieving regional and national successes. Clubs with a social justice theme include St. Vincent de Paul, Goal, Amnesty, Green Schools, Trocáire etc. are also a feature of life in St. Josephs.



Student Leadership

St. Joseph's has a strong reputation in the field of student leadership and promotes active involvement and participation in a range of leadership programmes including GAA Future Leaders, Foroige, Comhairle na nNog... Committees are selected on a democratic basis and officers elected.

The aims of school student leadership programmes are to provide a line of communication between students, board of management, staff, parents and represent the views of the student body on matters of concern and interest to them. Each year the students elected as members are afforded the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, undergoing training in the area of leadership, developing their skill-sets, as well as personal responsibility and accountability.



Our Curriculum



Junior Cycle Curriculum

The broad and varied curriculum on offer in St. Joseph's offers an extensive curriculum that provides a diverse range of subjects at all levels and seeks to accommodate student preference.

Mandatory and Core Subjects

- Gaeilge
- English
- Maths
- History
- Geography
- Business Studies
- Science
- Religious Education (non-examination)

Optional Subjects

- Visual Art
- French
- German
- Graphics
- Home Economics
- Music

Wellbeing Programme

- PE
- SPHE
- CSPE
- Guidance related learning
- Learning to Learn

Other Curriculum Subject Supports

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Digital Literacy
- L1L2PLP Programme

Subject provision correct at time of printing and may be subject to change.



Transition Year (Optional)

Transition Year provides a bridge to help students make the transition from the structured and dependent environment that is Junior Cycle to one where students will take greater responsibility for their own learning and decision making in Senior Cycle. This allows students to build personal confidence, to gain competence in the core academic subjects, and to develop skills and initiatives in a way that may not be possible in the core exam year(s).

During TY students will have an opportunity to create new learning environments, and discover their own individual talents, aptitudes and interests.

Some highlights from our TY programme include the comprehensive taster programme for senior cycle subjects, the school musical, and the many TY trips and tours. Please visit our school website www.stjosephscastlebar.com and download our app to see weekly updates of the wide array of TY experiences.

Transition Year Subjects

- Art
- Business Studies
- Careers
- English
- Future Leaders
- French
- German
- Geography
- Green Schools
- Health Education
- History
- Home Economics
- Gaeilge
- Maths
- Music
- P.E.
- Religion
- Science
- Work Experience
- Young Social innovators (YSI)



Leaving Certificate

There are two Leaving Certificate programmes offered:

Leaving Certificate Established

In general students taking this option study seven subjects.

Compulsory Subjects

- Gaelge
- English
- Maths
- Religion (**non-examination**)
- Physical Education (curricular/ non-curricular)

Modules in:

- Career Guidance
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Optional Subjects

Students choose **4 subjects** from the following:

- History
- Geography
- French
- German
- Business
- Accounting
- Economics
- Art Craft & Design
- Home Economics (Social & Scientific)
- Design & Communications Graphics
- Music
- Agricultural Science
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Physical Education (for examination)

In general students are free to choose any four subjects having had a basis at Junior Cycle and / or Transition Year.

In addition, students may now sit Leaving Certificate examinations in other languages e.g. Spanish, Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Japanese, Portuguese.... However, please be advised that we do not offer tuition in these subjects.



Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) provides senior cycle students with the opportunity to undertake an innovative, dynamic subject which combines both academic and vocational elements. As part of the programme, students will have an opportunity to:

- » Prepare a CV
- » Conduct a career investigation
- » Undertake work experience
- » Engage in event planning

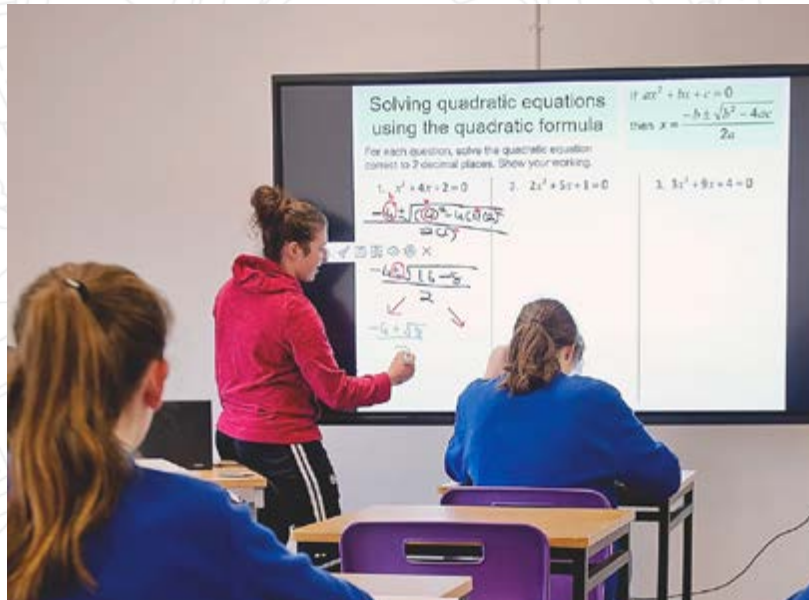
This subject is studied in addition to the traditional leaving certificate subjects, giving students the opportunity to develop key life skills.



ICT for Teaching and Learning

We use ICT for teaching, learning and our administration systems.

Students and staff actively use ICT based communications to participate in learning communities inside and outside of the school. We are continually developing our systems and digital learning platforms to meet students' individual learning needs.



We use G-Suite Google Classroom for learning enabling students to be independent learners giving them access to their classroom materials when required.

We have two specialist computer rooms and a large number of laptops and iPads for students to use. Every subject avails of these throughout the year. Our WIFI system enables students to use their own devices for their learning under the supervision of the class teacher.

Our Facilities

- Two computer suites fully equipped with new computers, printers and scanners
- High speed broadband and all rooms with internet access
- Top of the range, high spec projector in every room
- Two fully equipped science laboratories
- Two Home Economics rooms/ kitchens
- Sewing Room
- Specialist tiered Physics room with seating
- Gym/Assembly Hall
- Fitness & Aerobics room
- Two music rooms with facilities for choir and orchestra
- Library
- Art Room
- Canteen
- Additional educational needs & Learning Support Suite
- Meditation/prayer room
- Two full -sized basketball and four -full sized tennis Courts





Community Links

We are fully committed to forging links with our local Castlebar community. We achieve this through local parishes, sporting and cultural links, local employers, other schools and charitable organisations.

Application Process for Incoming 1st Year Students

Application forms and information regarding our Admissions Policy will be delivered by a representative of St. Joseph's to girls in 6th class in our local primary schools. Information is also available directly from our website www.stjosephscastlebar.com



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Get In Touch

Phone

Tel: 094 9021406

Website

www.stjosephscastlebar.com

Social



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