



Date 29/1/16

Dear S2 Parent/Carer

Re S2 Curriculum Evening Questions

Firstly, I would like to thank all who could make it along and for the questions which made for a good conversation about how we support pupils and parents/carers with the decisions which lie ahead. I take this opportunity to respond to some of the key questions which will clarify some points and support you with the process.

**Q: Do pupils get their preferences on a first come first served basis?**

A: Absolutely not. The sooner preference forms are returned, the more support guidance colleagues can offer. However, we try and keep the process fair and any issues will be discussed with pupils and parents/carers.

**Q: What support does my son/daughter get if I don't think their priority subjects are a good match?**

A: Guidance colleagues assure me that there is a culture of pupils returning preference forms on time. This allows them time to analyse preferences, discuss breadth with pupils, take advice from teaching colleagues and liaise with parents/carers as appropriate. Mr Hepburn suggested any issues be highlighted on the sheet so they can be picked up.

**Q: The S2 reports don't coincide with this process so how do we know what subjects students should be considering?**

A: Mr Cowie confirmed that addressing Tracking, Monitoring and Reporting in S1 to S3 will be a priority for the school to support good communication with parents/carers regarding pupil progress. However, this personalisation is not all about attainment but a degree of flexibility to support skills development and enjoyment. Pupils can discuss their plans with classroom teachers and again see their Guidance Teacher for reassurance.

**Q: How important is the ordering of priorities?**

A: Very. Guidance Colleagues offer advice to pupils that their top priorities from each of the curricular areas/groups. This ensures breadth and keeps options open for S4 and beyond. While it is likely that pupils will get the first 7 out of 8 of their priority preferences, they will only be choosing a maximum of 4 of these to go on and study at National Level in S4. Some of the other courses only offer additional skills development.

**Q: Is Enterprise running?**

A: Mr Cowie apologised for the mixed messages regarding the viability of this subject, he would look at this and communicate a definitive response. After consideration with Faculties, there is a capacity issue which would restrict choice in the Senior Phase. Given that there is no Enterprise qualification in S4, there is not direct progression to certification. Furthermore, there are significant opportunities to develop these Enterprise skills in both the Technologies and Business subject groupings.

Pupils are advised to prioritise giving consideration to the subjects that they are most likely to choose at NQ level in S4. Therefore, pupils and parents should complete their preference form excluding Enterprise from any of the 8 priorities or reserves.

I hope you find these comments useful and bring some clarity to the key issues discussed. I would add one final comment from a parent as he departed. He felt reassured when Ms Lynch illustrated the number of flexible routes student could take through Senior Phase and the opportunity to pick up a range of different qualifications at different levels each year. He was also interested on the importance placed on wider achievements which colleges, universities and employers are looking for.

**Q: Do I have to pick another Modern Language from Group B**

A: It is not essential to choose another Modern Language from Group B. All pupils do French as part of their core subjects. Pupils choosing Spanish or German will further develop their language skills. Currently, we have the capacity to offer German in S4, however there is no progression into NQ Spanish at this time. In future, if capacity allows, then hopefully Spanish could become a viable option for pupils in S5 or S6. Pupils choosing French in Group B will have the opportunity for consolidation, challenge and also overtake aspects of the Modern Languages for Life and Work Award.

Yours faithfully



Mr G Cowie  
Rector (Acting)