

19<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

The Secretary,  
Board of Management and  
School Principal in  
each Community and Comprehensive School.  
Members of the Executive of ACCS.

ACCS/Info Bulletin 77/20.

**Re: Circular Letter 0076/2020: Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with Reference to School Year 2020/21.**

The attached Circular Letter 0076/2020 is now available on the Department of Education and Skills website and supersedes Circular 55/2019. This circular sets out the main changes and updates in Junior Cycle in schools for the school year 2020/21. Other documents to take account of in this regard are listed in **Appendix 1 of Circular 76/2020** and include in particular:

**CI 16/2020 History in Junior Cycle (attached):** *Framework for Junior Cycle – History in Schools from September 2020 onwards.*

**CI 17/2020 Guidance on SLAR process (attached):** *Guidance on the Junior Cycle Subject Learning and Assessment Review Process.*

**July & August 2020 publications:** *'Returning to school - Guidance on learning and school programmes for post primary school leaders and teachers'* (July 2020), and *'Curriculum and assessment guidance for post-primary school leaders and teachers in respect of the return to school in 2020/21'* (August 2020). Both documents are available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

### Key changes for school year 2020/2021:

1. **Classroom-Based Assessment Arrangements and Assessment Tasks** in 2020/21.
  - a. The arrangements (One CBA per subject + AT will not be examined in 2021) are in place for students in **third year** in 2020/21 due to COVID-19 school closures. The grade descriptor awarded for these subjects will be based on the examination paper.
  - b. Arrangements for CBAs in short courses remain unchanged.
  - c. For students who entered 1st year in September 2019 or 1st year in September 2020, the arrangements as outlined in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 currently remain unchanged. (Two CBAs + AT + Final Exam).
  - d. Due to COVID-19, students in the school year 2020/21 may, in exceptional circumstances, need to complete some or all their work on CBAs in school or remotely, with guidance from their teachers.
  - e. Details of the CBA national timetable are available at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) along with assessment guidelines for each subject are available on [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie).

- f. In the case of Music, as an exceptional measure and in light of the changes introduced regarding CBAs for 2020/21, students entering third year in 2020/21 will be permitted to continue studying outside of a school setting for reporting on their JCPA.
2. **SLAR Meetings** (Options A-C only are available for organisation of SLARS available).
    - a. Schools are required to maintain the currently defined levels of student contact time, i.e. 28 hours per week.
    - b. Schools must not incur any additional costs through Substitution.
    - c. Supervision and Substitution must not be used in facilitating SLAR meetings.
    - d. The SLAR meeting should take place no more than a month after completion of the CBA, with the exception of SLARs of student work from CBAs completed during school closures which may not yet have taken place. Where necessary, key dates for classroom-based assessments may be amended in light of particular circumstances schools may encounter due to COVID-19.
  3. **Management Resource Hours** (some adjustments from the provision for 2019/20, with an overall increase in the funding provision).
  4. **Wellbeing**
    - a. Schools can defer the increase of wellbeing provision at JC from 300 to 400 hours until 2021/22 academic year.
    - b. See Appendix 1 of CI 76/2020 for '*Considerations in planning for Junior Cycle Wellbeing 2020-21*' (NCCA) which supports planning in response to the unique circumstances that have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
    - c. Wellbeing will now be reported on through the JCPA for the first time in 2021.
    - d. In planning their Wellbeing programme, schools should note that from September 2021 onwards, the use of the Junior Certificate syllabuses for SPHE and CSPE should be discontinued.
    - e. The NCCA has also been requested to prepare a 135-hour programme for PE.
  5. **Junior Cycle History** (special core status)
  6. Schools that currently offer the **Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP)** may continue to do so. A review of JCSP is underway, but work is not concluded due to the impact of COVID-19. No new applications are currently being accepted from schools for entry to the JCSP.
  7. **Timetabling**
    - a. English, Irish and Mathematics will each require a minimum of 240 hours of timetabled student engagement.
    - b. Apart from English, Irish and Mathematics, each subject, including History, will require a minimum of 200 hours of timetabled student engagement that includes teaching, learning and assessment activity.
    - c. Priority Learning Units are designed for up to 250 hours of student engagement.
    - d. Short courses require 100 hours of student engagement over the three years of the Junior Cycle.
    - e. In schools where a sampling programme is in place for first years, school management should ensure that such programmes do not impact on the overall time available for the subject options chosen as students progress in subsequent years of the Junior Cycle.

8. Requirements in respect of **School Self-Evaluation (SSE)** are set out in Circular 41/2020. This circular supersedes circular 0040/2016 *Continuing Implementation of School Self- Evaluation 2016-2020* and recognises the challenges presented by school closures due to Covid-19.
9. **JCT + CPD:**
  - a. Online provision of CPD and relevant supports will feature strongly in the programme of CPD planned by JCT in 2020/2021 including JCT whole-school CPD, subject-specific CPD, Support for L1 & L2 learning programmes and CPD for school leaders. This provision will be reviewed at the end of Term 1 in the context of public health guidelines.
  - b. The JCT has repurposed all of its 2019/2020 subject CPD workshops for the online space and these are available at [www.jct.ie](http://www.jct.ie) for all teachers who teach a second subject from the commencement of the 2020/2021 school year.
10. Guidance in relation to revised arrangements for 3rd year students **following Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes** (L1LPs and L2LPs) in 2020/21 will be issued shortly.

Please note correspondence from Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) earlier this week (Tuesday, 17th November) to all schools seeking full registration of all subject teachers on the JCT online portal before 25th November 2020. This correspondence also contains information regarding JCT current whole-school CPD supports and outline of JCT CPD plan for January – March 2021.

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le mór mheas,



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John Irwin,  
GENERAL SECRETARY.