

Pastoral Care

We have highly developed Pastoral Care/Discipline structures within a school help to create a safe and caring environment in which every member of the school community feels respected. In such an environment, all students are able to explore and develop their talents and abilities and effective learning can take place.

We work hard to ;

- Create a secure and supportive environment in which effective learning can take place.
- Create an atmosphere of respect in which the dignity of each member of the school community can be safeguarded.
- Achieve a consistent and fair approach to rules and discipline in respect of each individual student.
- Foster in every student a sense of belonging, of self-esteem and of responsibility towards the wider community.
- To provide appropriate help and guidance for students in need.
- To develop effective channels of communication between students and teachers.
- To work in partnership with parents, in a caring role, developing effective channels of communication between them and the school.
- To help students to develop into mature, responsible adults.

Academic Excellence

The Sacred Heart has a long and proud tradition of academic excellence. Students excel in their Leaving Certificate examinations each year with many achieving 600 points or more and scoring significantly above the national average across the board. Sacred Heart School students have progressed to and excelled in all the universities and colleges in Ireland including NUIG, Trinity College, UCD, UCC, UL and DCU.

Many students have gone on to study at universities abroad among these universities are institutions in the UK, the US, Spain and the Netherlands as well as many others. It is common place for our students win scholarships to universities in Ireland and beyond.

This academic excellence and success is not confined to results in the state examinations but can also be seen in their success in other academic areas. The Sacred Heart School has featured in the BT Young Scientist and SciFest competitions as well as public speaking and other co curricular activities that advance their skills.

Complimentary teachers work hard to ensure that each student is encouraged to achieve her own personal best.

Cycles & Subjects

The Sacred Heart School has always promoted academic excellence. Many students have been awarded entrance scholarships and awards in the past. At each stage of the academic cycles, students are monitored for both performance and participation. This information is passed to parents via reports and parent/teacher meetings. Our school is built on a student focused approach.

Support and encouragement are provided to each child at every level of ability to guide each student to their own personal best. We have in place a dedicated and experienced Learning Support & Special Needs Department. Commitment to teaching and learning among staff is a key aspect of the educational philosophy lived each day at the Sacred Heart School.

As a large school we can offer a course to suit all needs. We provide the Junior Certificate as a gateway to the senior cycle in the Sacred Heart School.

At senior level we offer three progression paths;

- Established Leaving Certificate
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

In order to help students make good decisions and to sample some of the senior subjects we have a very popular optional Transition Year Programme which provides an opportunity for student to remediate their existing skills as well as develop new areas of interest as they mature.

Junior Cycle

The Sacred Heart School offers a wide range of subjects at Junior Level. Students follow a curriculum which leads to the Junior Certificate state examinations at the end of three years. Irish, English and Mathematics may be taken at three levels - higher, ordinary and foundation. All other subjects may be taken at higher or ordinary levels. All classes are of mixed ability and streaming only takes place for the core subjects of Irish, English and Mathematics in Second Year onwards. Students are encouraged to achieve their best and to take as many higher level subjects as is appropriate.



Subjects on offer at Junior Cycle

Core Curriculum Subjects	Optional Subjects	Non Exam Subjects
Irish	Art	Physical Education
English	Business Studies	Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE)
Mathematics	French	Religious Education
Geography	Home Economics	
History	Music	
Science	Spanish	
Civic Social & Political Education (CSPE)		
<i>Students do all 7</i>	<i>Students do 3</i>	<i>Student do all 3</i>

Transition Year

Transition Year in the Sacred Heart School is an optional one year programme which follows the Junior Certificate year. In Transition Year every student takes part in a dynamic and engaging student driven year. Students get the opportunity to avail of interesting and engaging modules taught by teachers in a variety of core subject related areas. They also have the opportunity to direct their learning by engaging in a wide range of other learning activities in the form of social awareness programmes, work experience and other out reach programmes that become available annually. TY is a year that develops student's skills and talents to meet the ever changing needs of the world students will be graduating in to. Subjects and courses change annually and have included those listed below. Within the modular courses (8/9 weeks) and full year long courses students get the opportunity to experience all the subjects available at senior cycle, thus making their subject choice an informed one.

The TY Curriculum changes constantly to meet the needs of students that progress throughout the school. Some of the innovative courses and activities that have featured in TY in the past are listed below

TY Co- Educational Experience

The Sacred Heart School is a progressive school and engages in partnerships to gain the best opportunities for its students. Transition year is a vibrant year that sees significant cooperation with Rice College Boys School. This coeducational element of TY is very popular. Students work together in a number of timetabled classes and also produce a musical, participate in a joint arts week and partake in joint tours.

Some activities which are available to Transition year students include Driving Lessons, Road Safety presented by both Ambulance Service and Mayo County Council, visits to Killary Adventure Centre and courses on Sexual Health and personal development. Students have also availed of international excursions to Europe and the US following TY initiatives and opportunities encountered in the year.

The Senior Cycle

The Sacred Heart School offers an even wider range of subjects at Senior Level than at Junior Level. Students can avail of three avenues of study depending which meets their needs best.

- Established Leaving Certificate
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

Established Leaving Certificate

We always strive to have the widest variety of subjects for students. Subjects offered as choices depend on student interest and allocation of resources from the Department of Education and Science.

Subjects at Leaving Certificate Level include more than twice the number of options available at Junior Cycle.

We provide:

- Arts and Humanities
- All three Science subjects and Agricultural Science
- All three Business subjects
- Two Languages

Core Subjects	Optional Subjects	
Irish	Art Craft and Design	Accounting
English	Music	Business
Mathematics	Home Economics	Economics
	Biology	French
	Chemistry	Spanish
	Physics	Geography
	Agricultural Science	History

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

The aim of LCVP is to prepare students for life after school, further education, the world of work and the business of making a living. We offer this subject alongside the traditional established Leaving Certificate programme. Eligibility depends on subject combinations chosen upon entry to Senior Cycle. Students study Enterprise Education and Preparation for the World of Work as additional modules.

Leaving Certificate Applied

The Leaving Certificate Applied is a two year Leaving Certificate available to students who wish to follow a practical programme with a strong practical and vocational emphasis. Several options are available and the curriculum is varied year on year to provide the best outcomes for students in a particular cohort.

Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy is at the heart of the caring ethos of the Sacred Heart School. It supports the holistic development of the students in all their moral, spiritual and social dimensions as stated in the school's mission statement. It is mindful of the school's place in the wider Christian Community. It is in keeping with the founding intention of the school and is especially mindful of the Catholic Ethos.

Pastoral care is a priority in the Sacred Heart School. It enables students to reach their full potential, through the support that it offers to them. Chaplaincy operates as part of the Pastoral Care structure. The school chaplain supports students throughout their time in the school and coordinates first year induction programme.

First Year Induction and Mentors

A tried and tested induction programme is in place for incoming first year students. They are welcomed into the school ahead of other year groups in September. Fifth year students receive special training to act as Mentors to the first year students. First year students meet with their mentors regularly from September to Christmas. The mentors take a special interest in first years welfare and meet with them after Christmas also. They take part in guided activities to help students find answers to questions they may have and to hear about many aspects of school life. Being a mentor is a great honour and senior students excel in making first years feel welcome and easing any anxieties they may have as they were once first years themselves and have relevant advice to give. This is a vital part of our student leadership initiative in the Sacred Heart School and benefits first years greatly as they develop responsible relationships with senior students who are excellent role models.

School Functions and Meetings

Parents have the opportunity to meet with teachers annually at parent – teacher meetings to discuss their daughter's progress and performance. Meetings are constructive and feedback is professionally delivered and always directed towards improvement and progress. Parents may also make appointments to speak with parents throughout the year at a mutually suitable time. Reports are sent home twice each year at Christmas and again at summer to keep parents advised as to their daughter's educational progress. Each report is evaluated by a Year Head who has a role as an academic monitor as well as a disciplinary and pastoral role to each year group.

VSWare

The Sacred Heart School uses a state of the art Management Information System to maintain records and to administer day to day running of the school e.g. attendance and examination result reporting. This software is very powerful and in time will have the possibility to enhance parent- school links via parental attendance monitoring and examination results available online.

Awards

Celebration of success is vital to maintaining motivation and a culture of confidence and achievement for our students. We have started a tradition of an awards ceremony to recognise achievement in all walks of school life. This takes place in May each year and includes extra and co curricular awards as well as academic and pastoral achievements.

Each year students from the SHS receive many awards for their work in a wide variety of fields including accolades relating to academic, sporting, musical and artistic achievement as well as many other areas of extra and co curricular endeavour. Our school facebook page demonstrates the wide variety of activities ongoing on the Sacred Heart School. You can find us at <https://www.facebook.com/Shswestport/>



Green Schools

The Sacred heart School received its fourth green flag in 2016 and is highly ecologically aware. The school is built alongside a river which provides a very picturesque scene for student sit also allows us to appreciate the natural world and to develop a respect for preservation of the environment. This is in keeping with the wider community of Westport and the tidy towns' initiative.

Evening Study

Evening study is available primarily for examination year students but it is also extended to non exam year students. Study is supervised until 7pm and application forms with further details are distributed at the start of each term.

Extra Curricular and Co Curricular

Some of Our Extra Curricular Activities Changing and Growing to meet the needs of our students.

All School Year Harp Orchestra

Guitar Lessons

All School Guitar Club

Hurling

Art - Texaco Art Competition

Harp Lessons

Athletics / Cross country /
Track and Field events

Irish Maths Teachers association Quiz

B.T. Young Scientist Competition

Junkoture Competition

Badminton

Literacy Initiatives

Basketball

Music - lunchtime performances

Book club

Piano Lessons

Chess

Poetry Competition

Christmas appeal for St. Vincent de Paul
and Aror

Pope John Paul II award

Debating both English and Irish

Public speaking

Doodle for Google Art Competition

School Tours domestic and International
- Spain, UK

European Science Olympiad ECO UNESCO

Scifest

Environmental awards.

Senior and Junior Science Olympiad

Fund Raising for Charity

Soccer

Gaelic football

Swimming

Gaisce award

Tag Rugby

