



Incoming First Years (2026)
13th October 2025

PROGRAMME

- ▶ School History
- ▶ ACS Vision & Mission/ Community School
- ▶ Curriculum/ Subject Choice
- ▶ The Junior Cycle Programme
- ▶ Structure Of Care
- ▶ Year Head, Tutors, Other Supports etc.
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Additional/Exceptional Education needs
- ▶ Other items of importance
- ▶ What happens next?

School History

Ardee Community School was established in 1974 as an amalgamation of the three existing Post Primary Schools in the town,

- St. Anne's Secondary School for girls,
- De La Salle Boys' Secondary School and
- Ardee Vocational School.

The original school premises on the current site was built to cater for the amalgamation.

- New extension opened Sept 2018
- Further extension (Major building project) at design and planning stage.
- Extensive refurbishment and upgrading of equipment ongoing
- Playing pitch, walking /jogging track.

Vision:

We have a vision of a school community where equality, harmony, and friendship exist. We accept and welcome that we are a community of unique and diverse individuals. We work to ensure that each individual in our community may fulfil his / her purpose in life.

Mission:

Ardee Community School is a partnership of students, staff, parents / guardians, Board of Management, Trustees and our local community. We value the on-going input of all our partners in the life of the school.

We aim to provide the best educational environment where effective teaching and learning can take place. We aim to manage this with fairness and firmness.

We recognise the individuality of our students. We provide a broad curriculum designed to meet their individual needs and to help them maximise their potential.

We help our students to have a healthy, wholesome and confident self-image and to develop positive relationships through our curriculum and or extra-curricular programme.

We endeavour to co-operate with parents / guardians and religious leaders of all denominations to encourage the development of religious, moral and spiritual values in each student.

Our Educational Ethos

- ▶ To guide each student to achieve their educational potential
- ▶ To support students to be happy in school.
- ▶ To enable students to grow and develop into well rounded young adults, ready for adult, college and working life.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

- ❑ Trustees/Patrons
- ❑ Board of Management
- ❑ Funded by Department of Education and Youth
- ❑ Co Education
- ❑ Broad Curriculum
- ❑ Multi-denominational
- ❑ Caters for our Community

POLICIES

- ▶ Admissions Policy
- ▶ Positive Code of Behaviour
- ▶ Anti-Bullying/Bí Cineálta
- ▶ Pastoral Care/Guidance
- ▶ Subject Policies and Plans
- ▶ Bring Your Own Device/Acceptable Use Policy
- ▶ Health and Safety Policy
- ▶ Child Safeguarding Policy
- ▶ Data Protection

Systems and Structures

- ▶ 1-hour classes
- ▶ Student and Teacher Based Classrooms
- ▶ Teachers moving- Students in base classes
- ▶ Staggered Breaks and Lunch
- ▶ Tutorial for each class group each day
- ▶ Bring Your own Device
- ▶ Lockers in rooms for most
- ▶ Wear PE gear on PE day(s)
- ▶ Books at home or in school
- ▶ 4 long days, Friday finish at 1pm

6 YEAR CYCLE

CLASSES

- ▶ Base Classes (21 - 28) Mixed Ability
- ▶ Currently banded in 3rd Year for Irish & Maths.

JUNIOR CYCLE

- ▶ 3 Year Cycle
- ▶ J.C.S.P. (Junior Certificate Schools Programme)
- ▶ L1LP/L2LP courses

SENIOR CYCLE

- ▶ 2 / 3 Years (With Optional Transition Year)
- ▶ Conventional Leaving Certificate
- ▶ L.C.A (Leaving Certificate Applied)
- ▶ L.C.V.P. (Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme)
- ▶ L1LP and L2LP pathways

FIRST YEAR SUBJECTS

COMPULSORY

- ▶ MATHS
- ▶ IRISH *
- ▶ ENGLISH
- ▶ HISTORY
- ▶ SCIENCE
- ▶ CSPE
- ▶ SPHE (with RSE)
- ▶ PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- ▶ RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
- ▶ WELLBEING

OPTIONS

- ▶ WOOD TECHNOLOGY
- ▶ ENGINEERING (METALWORK)
- ▶ HOME ECONOMICS
- ▶ MUSIC
- ▶ VISUAL ART
- ▶ GRAPHICS (TG)
- ▶ APPLIED TECHNOLOGY
- ▶ DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY and CODING

Students choose two from above

- ▶ FRENCH
- ▶ GERMAN

Students choose one language

- ▶ BUSINESS STUDIES
- ▶ GEOGRAPHY
- ▶ Students choose one of the above

Information on subject choice

Information on subjects:

<https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/>

Ardee Community School, Junior Cycle Handbook available on our website.

Updated handbook is available on the website

Subject Choice

- ▶ Students choose four option subjects for the three years of Junior Cycle.

Digital Media Literacy and Coding

- ▶ New for 2026/2027
- ▶ Two short courses combined over three years as a subject option.
- ▶ Non exam
- ▶ Will be assessed and reported on through Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's)
- ▶ Information on these short courses available on <https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/> and in the Junior Cycle handbook
- ▶ There will be a limit to the number of places available

How subject choice works

- ▶ Parents/Guardians will choose subjects through our administration system (VSWare)
- ▶ Students are placed in options generated by our computerised system.
- ▶ There are strict limits to the sizes of classes in subjects
- ▶ If a subject is oversubscribed, the computer will use random selection to place students in options.
- ▶ We allow limited change if there is room in the chosen class.
- ▶ Most students get their chosen preferences.

Study a European Language

In First Year students choose between

- ▶ French
- ▶ German

- ▶ Students who are exempt from the study of Irish may be exempt from the study of a Modern Foreign Language.
- ▶ Some choose to study a European language in even if they are exempt.
- ▶ This is monitored throughout first year.

The Junior Cycle Programme

All students study the Junior Cycle Programme

- ▶ Revised over 12 years
- ▶ Active learning
- ▶ Project Work
- ▶ Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs)
- ▶ New grading system (revised this year) for exams and Classroom Based Assessment
- ▶ Oral presentations in class
- ▶ Wellbeing is a core element underpinning all aspects of the curriculum.
- ▶ Less formal exams and shorter papers
- ▶ Most subjects at common level (except Irish, English and Maths)
- ▶ Irish, English and Maths at Higher and Ordinary Level
- ▶ L1LP's and L2LP's
- ▶ Final JCPA certificate including state exam results, CBA's and other areas of learning.
- ▶ Booklet on the main elements of Junior Cycle

Senior Cycle Options

- ▶ TY, uptake over 80% currently, % expected to rise.
- ▶ Leaving Certificate Applied
- ▶ Conventional Leaving Certificate
- ▶ Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme as part of the Conventional LC

Leaving Certificate Subjects

23 option subjects currently

History

French

Music

Accountancy

Physics

Biology

Agricultural Science

DCG(Graphics)

Engineering

Drama, Theatre and Film Studies (new)

Technology (Applied Technology)

Politics and Society

Geography

German

Art

Business

Chemistry

LC Computer Science

Construction (Wood Technology)

LC Physical Education

Home Economics

LCVP

Applied Maths

Curricular and non curricular languages

New Senior Cycle

- ▶ Senior Cycle currently being reviewed and updated
- ▶ Changes to TY, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Conventional Leaving Certificate.
- ▶ First subjects under the revised Senior Cycle are studied by current 5th years to be examined in 2027.
- ▶ 40% assessment to be phased in for all subjects.
- ▶ New subjects:

Drama, Theatre and Film Studies

Climate Action and Sustainable Development

Ardee Community School has been chosen as a pilot school for Drama, Theatre and Film Studies, starting for 5th years this year

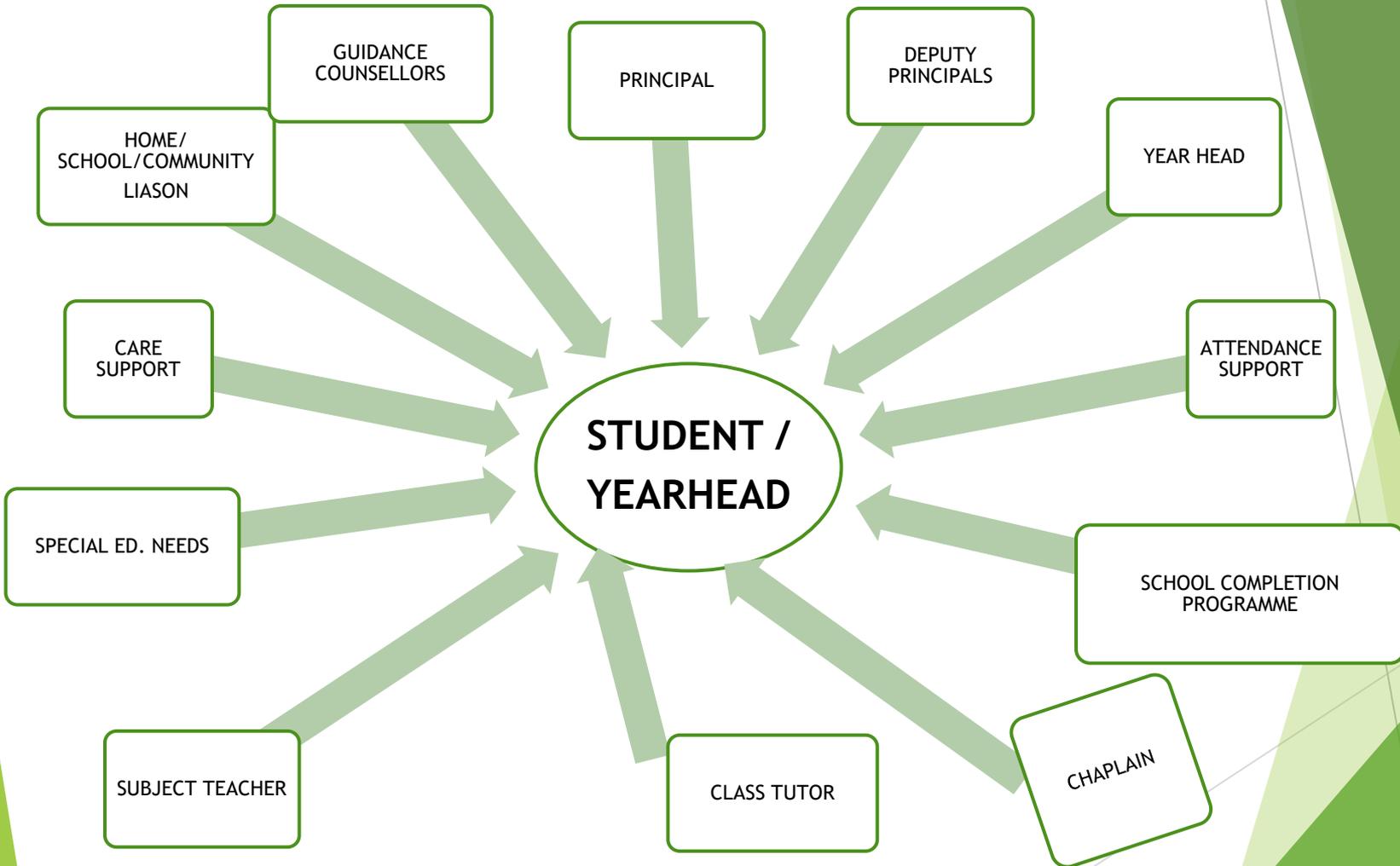
Plans for Climate Action and Sustainable Development for 2027

By 2030, 2031 most subjects will be in the revised format.

Beyond Leaving Certificate

- ▶ Third Level, University / IT's
- ▶ Post Leaving Certificate courses
- ▶ Apprenticeships
- ▶ World of Work

Student Care: Support and Wellbeing



This is at the core of what we do

THE YEAR HEAD

- ▶ Remains with group for their time in school.
- ▶ Care
- ▶ Behaviour Management
- ▶ Parent/Guardian Contact
- ▶ Monitoring Attendance and Permission to Leave
- ▶ General Care Of the Student
- ▶ Monitors And Supports Educational Attainment
- ▶ Deals with Issues
- ▶ **Ms Catherine McGinley** will be First Year Head next Year.

DEALS WITH THE UNEXPECTED

THE CLASS TUTOR

- ▶ “ Teacher who takes on the task of special care for a class
- ▶ Regular contact (daily contact during tutor time each morning)
- ▶ Focuses on weekly/daily theme
- ▶ Takes roll call each day
- ▶ Monitors student progress
- ▶ Builds a relationship with group
- ▶ Acts as a go to if issues arise

Home School Community Liaison Officer

- ▶ Supports parents with all aspects of their student's education.
- ▶ **Bridget Smith** is our current HSCL
- ▶ Her school mobile number will be available for contact should anything arise.

Dee Side School Completion

- ▶ A Support Programme for students at risk of not completing their education.
- ▶ SCP have strong links with five of the local primary schools.
- ▶ SCP lead the **induction programme** for incoming students, this will be held during May/June in the schools with the bigger numbers of students and in person for the smaller schools and individuals.

Students in Leadership

Head Boy and Girl

Student Council

Prefects

Mentors

Sports and club leaders

Student voice leaders

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES and TRIPS

- ▶ A very comprehensive level of extra curricular events
- ▶ Educational trips and tours to support curriculum
- ▶ Clubs
- ▶ After School Study
- ▶ Homework Club

Students with Exceptional Ability

- ▶ We identify students through reports and entrance tests.
- ▶ We provide for such students through our subject planning by providing extension tasks to challenge them in their learning.
- ▶ We expect very high standards from all our students.

Additional Educational Needs

- ▶ Brief overview
- ▶ Small group settings,
- ▶ Co-Teaching,
- ▶ Differentiation,
- ▶ Access to SNA (for Primary Care Needs),
- ▶ Autism Specific Classes,
- ▶ Staff CPD upskilling in Additional Educational Needs
- ▶ Parental involvement.
- ▶ Programmes JCSP/L2LP
- ▶ Irish Exemptions
- ▶ Assistive Technology
- ▶ RACE (Reasonable Accommodation for State Exams)

Additional Educational Needs

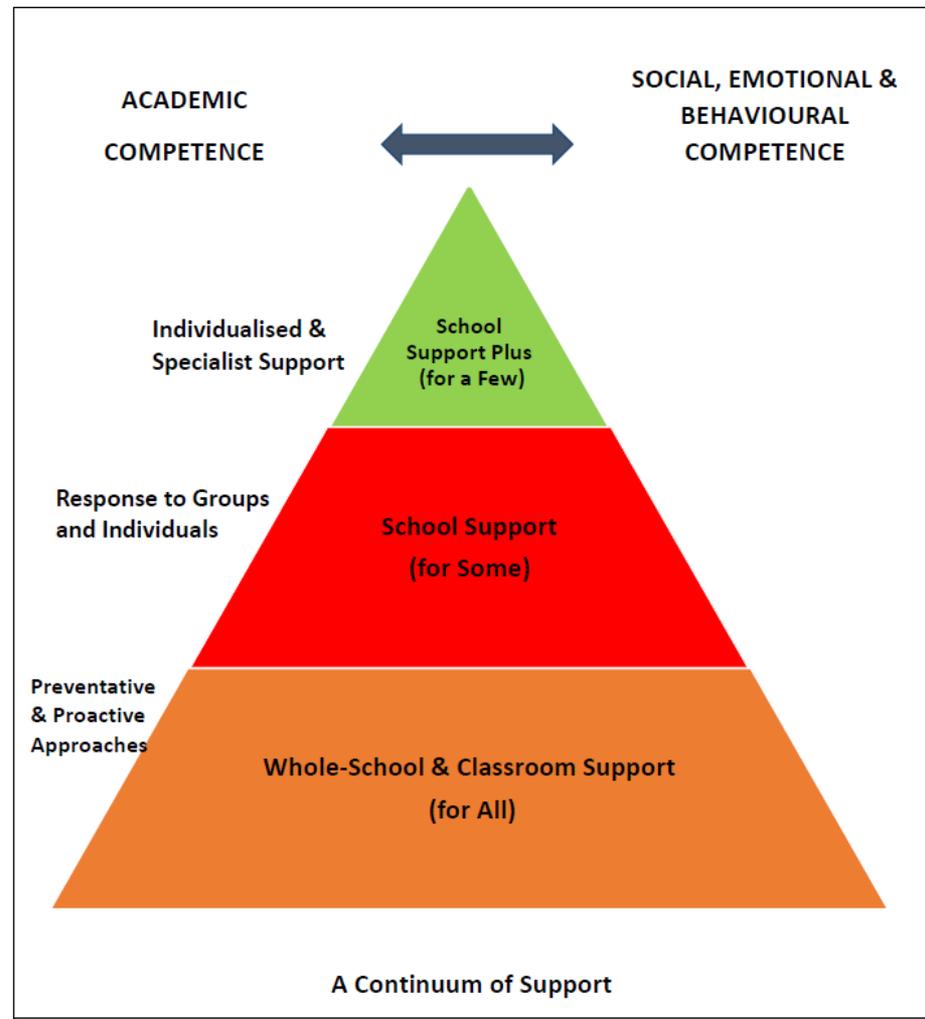
We request that Parents/Guardians

- ▶ Share Psychological, Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy Reports and Certificates of Exemption with us
- ▶ Inform us of learning support in primary school
- ▶ Discuss your students' needs fully with us in confidence
- ▶ March/April individual meetings/phone calls

Please contact us if we don't contact you by May.

Provision of Need

Continuum of Support;
No longer need a Psychological/ Educational Assessment stating diagnosis to access to education support. School decides the level of need/support
Exceptions for access to Autism Specific classes, assistive technology, speech and language and CALMS support.



Provision of Support

Type of Support:

- In-Class Support/Co-Teaching
- Small Group Setting (Irish Exemption)
- SNA Support (For primary care needs)

Autism Specific Classes

Five Autism Specific classes by 2026/2027

30 students

Admission requirements:

1. DSM-V diagnosis
2. Report stating that ; " it is recommended that the student be placed in an ASD class within a mainstream Post-Primary School setting "
3. Students complex needs are clearly outlined in a report.
4. Have the relevant NCSE letter confirming their eligibility for a place in the Autism Specific class.

Irish Exemptions

CRITERIA

- ▶ Education up to the age of 12 outside the state.
- ▶ On/Under the 10th percentile in a literacy assessment - intervention for 8 weeks followed by retesting.
- ▶ Exceptional circumstances - 2 Years
- ▶ Diplomat/ consular representatives in Ireland

SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT ONLY DETERMINES WHETHER AN EXEMPTION IS GRANTED OR NOT.

Assistive Technology

- ▶ Some of our students utilise Assistive Technology to support their learning and to ensure they can access the curriculum. These may include C-Pens, laptops, speech to text systems.
- ▶ Assistive technology applications are made through the Special Education Needs Organiser
- ▶ Any report must deem that Assistive Technology is "Essential to access the curriculum " and how the Assistive Technology will be used throughout the school day.

RACE-Reasonable Accommodation in State Examinations

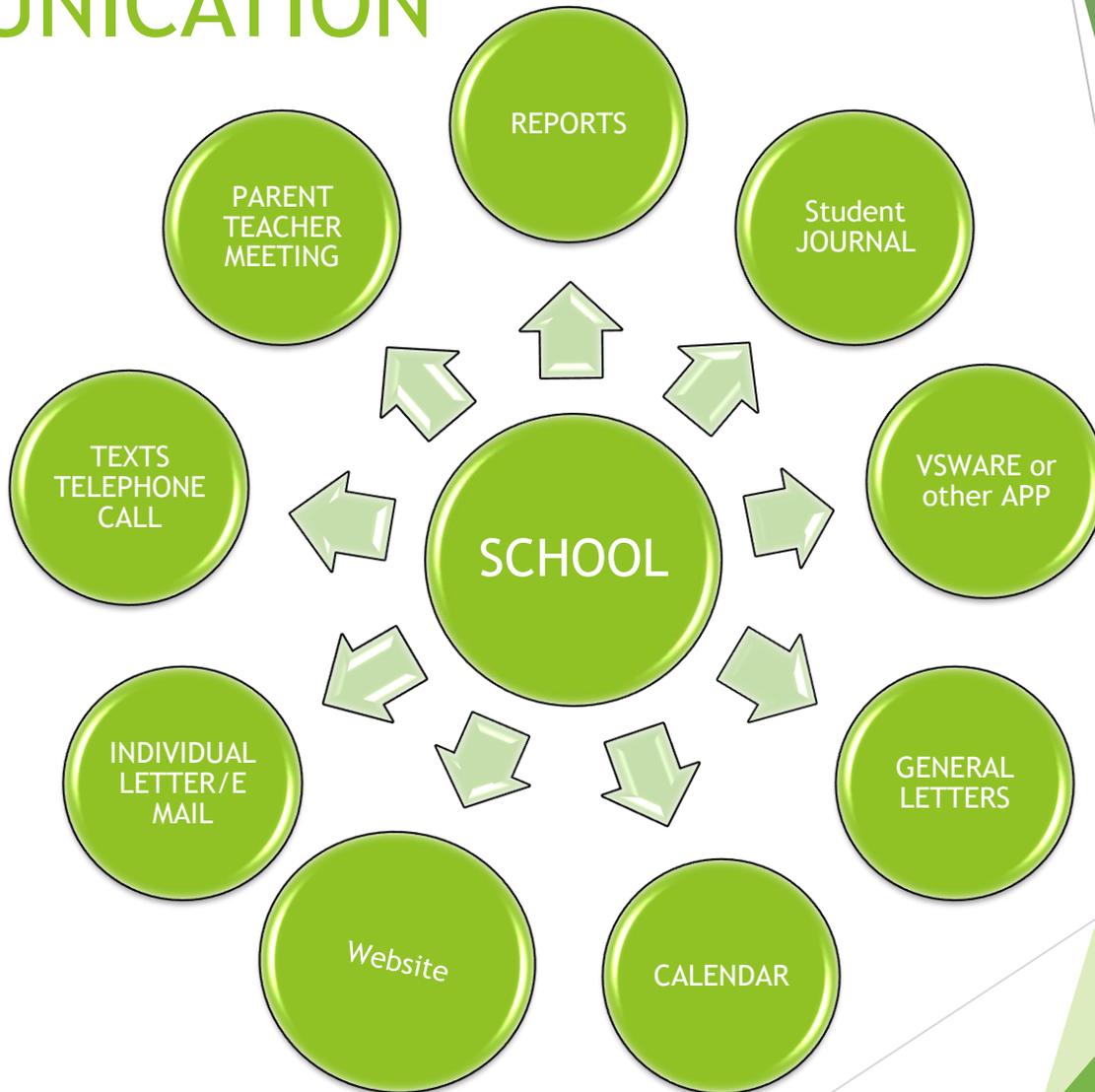
What is it ?

Facilitates access to the Junior/ Senior certificate examinations by candidates who would have difficulty in accessing the examination or communicating what they know to an examiner because of physical, visual , hearing and/or learning difficulty.

- ▶ **Types of accommodations;**
- ▶ Reading assistant/ Individual reader
- ▶ Grammar, punctuation and spelling waiver
- ▶ Use of a word processor, scribe , tape, C-Pen
- ▶ Colour identifier
- ▶ Additional time

VERY STRICT CRITERIA

COMMUNICATION



VSWARE (our admin platform)

- ▶ Main Means of Communication
- ▶ Secure platform
- ▶ Enhanced communication eg permission to leave forms/ absences
- ▶ Information will be sent out on how to download the school VSWare account.
- ▶ All reports and subject options will be through VSWare
- ▶ All attendance and permission to leave notes
- ▶ A text message will be sent out to you with access codes and how to use this system
- ▶ Payments made through VSWare

Textbooks

- ▶ Budget 2025 announced free schoolbooks and some equipment from 1st to 6th year.

Uniform

- ▶ Full uniform available from local retailers
- ▶ PE Uniform
- ▶ School Jacket

Structure of the Current School Day Junior Cycle



Monday - Thursday	
Time	Period
8.50 – 9.48	1
9.48 – 10.00	Tutor
10.00 – 10:20	Break - <u>20</u> minutes
10:20 – 11:18	2
11:18 - 12:16	3
12:16 – 12:40	4
12:40 – 13:10	<u>Lunch</u> - 30 minutes
13.10 – 13.44	4
13.44 – 14.42	5
14.42 – 15.40	6



Friday	
Time on Fri	Period
8.45 – 9.43	1
9.43 – 9.51	Tutor
9.51 – 10.05	Break – 15 minutes
10.05 – 11.04	2
11.04 – 12.02	3
12.02 – 13.00	4

Sample of a typical 1st year timetable.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
08:50	Home Economics	French	Irish	Science (JC)	English
09:48	Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial
10:00	Science (JC)	History	Home Economics	Mathematics	Mathematics
10:58					
11:18	History	Physical Education	SPHE	Religious Education	French
12:16	Irish	Business	Wood Technology	Wood Technology	Irish
13:14					
13:44	Religious Education	C.S.P.E.	Physical Education	History	
14:42	English	Mathematics	English	Geography	
15:40					

Placing students in base classes

- ▶ Eight to nine base classes (class size 21 to 28)
- ▶ Strictly mixed ability
- ▶ In first year, students' study most of their subjects with their base class except for their four options

Talk to Us

- ▶ Anything which may affect your students transition to Ardee Community School
- ▶ Sensitive issues (including family issues) in confidence
- ▶ Friendship or conflict issues
- ▶ **If friendships change over the summer, please let us know.**
- ▶ Medical issues
- ▶ Anything which may impact on your child settling in Ardee Community School.
- ▶ Contact us

Preparation for First Year

Some suggestions

- ▶ Work with your son/daughter on organisation
- ▶ Expect high standards from them.
- ▶ Have a routine of homework and study from the very beginning.
- ▶ Have a regular sleep routine, bedtime routine free of social media, play station, x-box and television
- ▶ Agree and set boundaries on the use of internet and social media.
- ▶ Know and double check where your child is at all times.
- ▶ Make school attendance non-negotiable and seek support if it becomes an issue.
- ▶ Encourage them to keep up some of their out of school activities
- ▶ Continue to encourage a healthy diet and exercise including breakfast before school.

Primary School Handover

- ▶ Key element in the move from Primary to Ardee Community School.
- ▶ A handover meeting with 6th class teacher/principal and the learning support teacher where necessary.
- ▶ Educational Passports
 - Information form from Parents/Guardians
 - from students
 - school report from 6th class

Admissions Process. What happens now

- ▶ Letter of offer and Part two application form by email by **Nov 14th 2025**.
- ▶ Acceptance of place by **Friday December 5th 2025** by submitting Application Form Part 2.
- ▶ A secure password for Vsware (or new system) will issue to all Parents/Guardians by **January 2026**.
- ▶ Subject Choice will be done electronically through Vsware (or other system) in **February/March 2026**
- ▶ Entrance tests: **Friday 6th or Saturday 7th February 2026**
- ▶ Information on the schoolbooks, calendar, uniform, start date etc will issue in **mid-June 2026**

Further supports

- ▶ Induction Programme for students
- ▶ Transitions for Parents/Guardians (2 nights in April)
- ▶ Summer Programme

Transport

- ▶ To qualify greater than 4.8 KM from school Those less than may get transport if there is a place on the bus.
- ▶ Apply through Bus Eireann Website under school transport before the end of April. **Important Deadline**
- ▶ Students will be either **eligible** or **concessionary**
- ▶ **Eligible** means Ardee is your nearest school
- ▶ **Concessionary** means there is a post primary school nearer to you
- ▶ Pay or submit up to date medical card details by the end of early June. **Important Deadline.**
- ▶ Bus Eireann offers **concessionary** travel where there is room on a bus
- ▶ Bus Eireann is responsible for school transport, the school has no input
- ▶ Tickets are issued from mid July to late August.

Questions

- ▶ Use e mail address admissions@ardeecs.ie
or
- ▶ Ring the office and leave a message 041 6853554



THANK YOU