

Woodbrook College

Incoming 1st Years Information Booklet



Learning together for a better future

Welcome from the Principal

It is with great pride that I welcome you to Woodbrook College.

While we only have your child for a short portion of their lives, we hope that the positive impact of this community will remain with them for the rest of their lives in newfound friendships and happy memories of life in secondary school.

We aim to create a supportive environment so that your son or daughter will grow to be a fantastic adult and be equipped with the skills to navigate life after secondary school. However, this journey is not an easy one and there will be difficulties that arise during your time at Woodbrook, but we will endeavour to support you and your child during these periods.

We aim to promote a RICH (Respectful, Inclusive, Committed, Honest) culture in our school that allows the holistic development of your son/daughter's journey into adulthood.

What follows is a short information pack focusing on subjects, transitioning supports and some general information regarding our school.

Life is like a camera. Focus on what's important. Capture the good times. Develop from the negatives. And if things don't work out, take another shot.

Henry Hurley
Principal

Subject Options

One of the great advantages of a larger school, such as ours, is that we can provide a wide range of subjects. We recommend that students select subjects that appeal to their talents as it will help them to enjoy the transition from Primary to Post-Primary.

Students who are just beginning first year can be often over awed when they learn that they have to study 10 subjects in the core curriculum: Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography, CSPE, SPHE, RE, PE and Science, and several more subjects in optional choices, many of which are completely new. However, in our experience, students adjust quite quickly to the new challenges of second level.

We ask you to read the description of the subjects which follows, *mindful of the guidelines highlighted in italics*.

Procedures for Subject Choices

Subject selection for 1st year will be completed online via the school administration software, VShare. Usernames and passwords for this will be given to parents via an email so it is vital that you ensure that the office has a valid email address for you.

It is our intention to grant students their choices, in as far as possible, in particular 1st and 2nd choices. However, on occasion, students may not get their highest choices in rank order. We advise, therefore, that you make sure that the lower choices are subjects that you would be happy with.

The allocation of subjects will be issued to students prior to the completion of this academic year and a full timetable will be available as part of the Student Registration pack received during Registration week.

Mixed Ability Classes

It is school policy to have 'mixed ability' classes in first year to allow students to settle into the school and to achieve their potential. Students will be banded for Irish only to allow for those who are Irish exempt and in need of support to receive it during this time.

Class names

We have divided the school into a number of class groups currently names after rivers that rise in or flow through Wicklow and south County Dublin. An example would be Avoca. Students in 1Avoca will move into 2 Avoca and then into 3Avoca. In 4th year, were they to select it as TY is currently not compulsory, they would be re shuffled and named after characters that may be in a play or musical that they are involved in for that TY group. This is done in consultation with their Year Head and the events planned for the year. For 5th year they will then return to their original base class of 5Avoca and finally into 6Avoca.

Class Tutors

All class group through the school has a specific Class Tutor who takes registration each morning with their class and currently for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th has a period during the week which forms part of the Wellbeing program in Woodbrook College. Tutors are also the first port of call regarding behaviour and Pastoral Care issues.

Outline of the Full Subjects for 1st year

The Core Curriculum

All students in first year study the full core curriculum.

Irish: Irish is a compulsory subject for all students who studied it in Primary School. Students must have Irish to enter many colleges and some courses e.g., Primary Teaching.

English: Most employers and colleges will require students to have studied English. Honours English is a requirement for some courses e.g., Journalism.

Maths: An extremely important subject, required for many courses and occupations. Honours Maths are needed for most engineering courses in University and some other specialised areas.

History: While History is not a specific requirement for any course it is an excellent foundation for the study of Law, Journalism etc. It also raises one's awareness of political and economic trends in modern society.

Geography: Geography brings an appreciation of the environment and the impact of daily living on the world around us.

Religious Education: As a Catholic school, religion imbues the whole ethos of the school, and all students are required to take part in both class and out of class religious activities. R. E. is a state examination subject for all Junior Certificate students in Woodbrook College currently.

Science: Science is one of the subjects most in demand in this technological age. It divides into four subjects after the Junior Certificate: Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Agricultural Science. Very often one of these subjects is a requirement for many third level science related courses e.g., engineering, medicine, physiotherapy, and food science. The Government, colleges and employers are all attempting to get more students to take up Science at Junior Cycle Level.

For these reasons, though Science is not part of the National Core Curriculum, all students do Science in Junior Cycle in an effort to support their options for science subject at Leaving Cert level and must be one of the four options chosen.

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

In addition to the core curriculum above, students will take an additional three additional subjects.

Business Studies: Business is a very important subject in our modern society. It gives a grounding in general business practices and principles. Divides into three specialised subjects at Leaving Certificate level: Business, Economics and Accounting and is an ideal subject for people interested in commerce, accountancy, retail business etc...

Modern Languages

French, German, Spanish

A 'modern European language' is a requirement for entry to practically all colleges of the National University of Ireland and is highly recommended for many other courses and jobs e.g., Tourism, Hotel and Catering, Communications.

The continental languages currently being taught in Woodbrook are French, Spanish, and German. It is really a personal choice as to which language you choose. Students currently are unable to choose two Modern Foreign Languages. The number of places in each language is limited therefore in filling the form please ensure that you fully explore the potential of before making a language part of your first choice.

The Humanities

Art: Art is an excellent subject for anyone who intends to study or work in areas like Advertising, Fashion Design, Decorating etc.

Music: Not confined to a life in music outside of secondary school, music can be a subject that promotes self-confidence, teamwork and enhances creative thinking.

Applied Science

Home Economics: This broad-ranging subject covers craft work and design, home management, health and fitness and food preparation. It is a good preparation for students going into a range of course such as catering, food science, hairdressing, dietician etc.

The Technology Subjects

Technical Graphics: a very relevant preparation for students who wish to go on to study engineering, design, draughtsmanship, apprenticeship in many trades etc.

Materials Technology (Wood): Woodwork is a practical subject where students can see the results of their efforts in a practical way. It is a good preparation for apprenticeships, building construction, engineering, etc.

The process

We will ask you to complete your top five (5) choices. One (1) being the subject you want most and two (2) being the next desired one and so on. While places are limited to 24 in all practical subjects, we run multiple classes in the majority of these and therefore typically are able to offer your son or daughter their top two choices.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The philosophy of education in Woodbrook College is a holistic one. We seek to develop the full potential of the individual: academic, moral, physical, and spiritual. For this reason, we are committed to a diverse programme of extra-curricular activities in the school. **Students have the opportunity to have their extra-curricular involvements recognised as part of their Junior Cycle Profile Achievement.**

We encourage all incoming first year students to get involved in at least one extra-curricular activity in the school up to a maximum of three. Involvement in these activities helps personal development but is also a great way to get to know other students and to settle into the school.

Students should keep an eye on the Extra Curricular notice boards to spot the opportunities in their area of interest. The Students' council runs a Clubs Day in 1st term where all the clubs and groups in the school are represented, giving a chance for the new students to join up. A weekly schedule of extra-curricular activities will be compiled in the 1st term when all the activities have been organised by staff.

Some of the different offerings in Woodbrook: Soccer, Basketball, Futsal, Spike ball, Gaelic Football, Drama, Hobbies Club, Badminton, Athletics, Games Club, Model, United Nations and many more. Most of these activities have both female and male teams and the remainder are mixed.

Transition Programme and Supports for First Year Students

In Woodbrook College we are committed to the welfare of all the students in our care. In particular, we are committed to ensuring that each student gets the best possible start in their new school and that the transition is as easy as possible for them.

Class Groups

In first year, we try to ensure that students have as much stability as possible. As in Primary School, students will have a '**base class group**' with whom they may have up to 75% of their classes. This provides an ideal

opportunity for them to get to know each other. In first year, students are assigned to mixed ability classes on the basis of their subject choices.

The Class Tutor - Morning Assembly/Registration

Each class has a Class Tutor - a teacher who will meet them each morning for the assembly/registration period. This constant contact means that new students have a person in the school with whom they have contact each day and to whom they can talk if there is any problem with which they need help.

The Year Head

Each year group has a Year Head Teacher who has overall responsibility for the year group. They, in conjunction with the class Tutor, deal with **pastoral** and **behaviour** issues in the year and have a great deal of contact with the students. If there is any difficulty with attendance or a student requires a prolonged absence from school - the Year Head should be informed by email, phone call or the App.

Induction Day

First year students begin on their own at the start of the academic year. This first day is an important orientation day for the students. It allows them a chance to get to know their school, classrooms, timetable, and some teachers before the other year groups arrive back in school.

Support for Learning (SfL)

SfL is available to students who have been granted hours by the Department of Education on the basis of an educational assessment by a Department-recognised psychologist.

If any student has been assessed in Primary School, please submit the assessment to the school when accepting your place, this allows us to be prepared for your son or daughter. Please arrange to speak to a the SfL coordinator regarding any special need's requests.

Exemption from Irish

Only students who have an **official exemption from Irish**, granted by the Department of Education, are considered to be 'exempt' from the subject.

Irish is mandatory for all other students. If you have been granted an exemption in National School, please submit a copy of the exemption to the school on or before Admissions Day.

Study

Success in second level demands the development of good study skills and the establishment of a consistent pattern of study, which includes homework, revision, exam preparation and self-directed learning.

Homework

Students should get into the habit of noting all of their homework in the School Journal. It is recommended that parents check the journal each night to ensure that this is being done and that each student is completing all the homework assigned. Approximately one hour, on average, is targeted for homework per night. The skill associated with managing time and prioritising is one that will remain for life, so it is essential that these skills are fostered by parents and guardians at the earliest convenience. A strong partnership between school and home contributes greatly to good standards in second level and will encourage students to work consistently. Study should be done in a quiet environment without the distraction of TV, conversation, music, or mobile phones. An average week's study should be a combination of homework, revision, exam preparation and self-directed learning. It will not be possible on every evening to include all aspects, yet it is important that students learn the centrality of revision from the start of first year.

Homework Club

Supervised study is available in school every day, except Wednesday, from 3.45 to 4.45pm, providing a structured environment conducive to productive study. This is a free support; however, places are limited and request for a place should go to the Year Head.

Lockers

Each student will receive a locker in the school. Lockers will be allocated in the first week back to school. We recommend that students leave any valuables they have in the locker. You will be aware, from the Relationship and Behaviour Policy Code, that mobile phones must be switched off on arrival at school. Students should also use the lockers as much as possible for their books as this cuts down on the considerable weight of the bags. Students should get into the habit of going to lockers at break times to gather the books for the classes in the next session as students are not allowed to go to lockers between classes.

Support Initiatives

A number of initiatives are organised by the school. These include a Breakfast Club, paired reading and Support Maths programmes, Parenting Support Groups, and individual subject support. Support initiatives are circulated through the students, communication from the Principal and through the App. Please contact the main office at the school number if you wish to join this voluntary group or avail of the supports.

Communication with parents/guardians

Woodbrook College will always inform you of events in the life of the school. Most, if not all will be transmitted either through our school App which also allows for access to your son/daughter's examinations results, attendance, behaviour log, special events in the school day/calendar and also allows for parents/guardians to send in notes regarding attendance, lateness, permission slips and leaving school early confirmation.

At the beginning of your child's time in Woodbrook College we ask you for your contact details such as address, email address and mobile number. **If any of these changes, please contact the main office** to have them update your details as it is essential that we can contact you in an emergency.

Parents' Council

We hope that as new parents to the school community, you will become actively involved in the life of the school. The Parents' Council meets each month and engages fully in the life of the school - having an input into shaping policies and promoting initiatives to enrich the educational opportunities available to students in Woodbrook College. If you are interested in getting involved, please give your name to a parent on the Council - they will be present at most parent talks and events. Please visit the Parents' Council web page for more information at: www.woodbrookcollege.ie/parents-council/

Student Leadership

There is a major focus on Student Leadership in this school. Each class elects one class representative who represent the students of that class. The reps are members of the student council.

The job of the council is to represent the views of the students to school management and to assist in the running of the school. Each year the council takes on a series of projects and initiatives in which students get involved.

There are three main committees focusing on important aspects of student life: health and fitness, ecology, and inclusion. Students are invited to put their names forward each year for election by their class group to the council.

Contact information:

Main office 01-2822317 and is open from 8.15am to 4.45pm each day

Each member of staff has a school email address, and this is available from the main office.

We have one general rule in Woodbrook College, "please ask us, and we will do our best to help"

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram to keep up with school events and activities or visit the school web page for the school calendar and up-to-date news: www.woodbrookcollege.ie