



Association of Community
and Comprehensive Schools

*Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail
agus Cuimsitheacha*

29th May, 2023.

**The Secretary,
Board of Management and
School Principal in
each Community and Comprehensive School.**

Members of the Executive of ACCS.

ACCS/Info Bulletin 13/23. Re:

1. **[Circular 0028/2023](#): Updates on the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, with Particular Reference to the School Year 2023/24.**
2. **Letter from NCCA to Principals re Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Updates with Particular Reference to Sensitive Content.**

1. **[Circular 0028/2023](#): Updates on the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, with Particular Reference to the School Year 2023/24.**
(Published 25th of May 2023)

Updates for school year 2023/24

- a. The adjustments made to assessment arrangements for the 2022/2023 academic year will be maintained for one further year. Students entering third year in 2023/2024:
 - will be required to complete a minimum of one CBA rather than the usual two.
 - will not be required to complete Assessment Tasks (ATs) in the relevant subjects.
- b. All first years in 23/24 will study:
 - the newly redeveloped SPHE short course specification and the 135-hour Physical Education (PE) short course specification (*Jun. Certificate syllabus for PE and NCCA 100-hour short course are discontinued from Sept '23*)
 - the newly developed History (Level 2) short course where relevant (*for students following Level 2 Learning Programmes*)
- c. Reminder re [Circular 0015/2023](#) issued in March 2023 on Gaeilge re: amendments to prescribed literary texts and to arrangements for (CBAs) 1 and 2. The changes arose from the NCCA early enactment review of the specifications for JC Gaeilge (T1 and T2). Omission from the appendix to the original document corrected in March 2023.
- d. The provision of management resource hours will be continued for the 2023/2024 school year.
- e. In planning their Wellbeing programme, schools are reminded that from September 2022 onwards, the use of the Junior Certificate syllabuses for SPHE and CSPE was discontinued. From September 2023, the use of the Junior Certificate syllabus for PE and the NCCA 100 PE hour short course are also to be discontinued.

- f. It is inappropriate to use resources/materials produced or funded by the alcohol industry for education and awareness on alcohol in schools, or attendance at associated training for teachers which may be offered by organisations funded by the alcohol industry.

Ongoing review of Junior Cycle Implementation

The NCCA is currently undertaking early enactment reviews of the implementation of Junior Cycle Visual Art and Modern Foreign Languages as well as early insight reviews of the NCCA-developed short courses in Digital Media Literacy, Coding and Chinese Language and Culture. It is also due to begin a follow up review of Junior Cycle Gaeilge T1 and T2 along with early enactment reviews of the implementation of Junior Cycle Mathematics, Music, Home Economics, History and Geography in September 2023.

The University of Limerick has been commissioned by the NCCA to conduct a research study - Exploring the implementation and impact of the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle in post-primary schools. The University of Limerick has published two interim reports, in October 2022 and April 2023. This longitudinal research, which began in late 2020, will continue until 2024. A link to the study can be found in Appendix 1 of [Circular 0028/2023](#).

Reminders:

3.3 General Information about Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

As subject specifications include ongoing feedback, formative assessment, CBAs, Assessment Tasks (students in third year in the school year 2023/24 will not be required to complete ATs in the relevant subjects) as well as final examinations, there is a need to consider the cumulative burden on students and teachers of multiple assessments across the full range of subjects. In this context, the CBAs **will** substitute for other assessments currently undertaken in the school such as in-house examinations. Schools are reminded that they should examine their own assessment policies and must plan for the replacement of in-house examinations with CBAs for students, where relevant.

3.10 The Department has established a dedicated email account

CBAUPLOADS@education.gov.ie, to allow school Principals to advise the Department of particular issues in their school in relation to the finalisation of CBA assessments for uploading to PPOD.

3.10.3 JCPA Retention and Records Management

Schools should retain copies of the JCPA, either digitally or in hard copy for each student for 7 years after the age of majority (18 years). The retained records should be used to meet requests by students for their JCPA, including after the students have left the school. Schools should have regard in this context to the GDPR requirements introduced in May 2018.

4.1 School Self-Evaluation and Junior Cycle

Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools, published in August 2022, is available in Appendix 1. Requirements in respect of School Self-Evaluation (SSE) 2022 to 2026 are set out in Circular Letter [Circular Letter 0056/2022](#).

4.2 Oide and CPD for school leaders and teachers

- An extensive programme of elective, or supplementary, CPD will be provided by Oide throughout 2023/2024, in an online and face-to-face format and in collaboration with Education Centres nationwide and a range of external partners, which teachers may engage with in their own time.

- Management in each school is required to update their register of teachers with Oide, including their school-based email addresses, and facilitate their attendance at CPD events, where applicable.
- Approval continues for schools to close, with BOM approval in 2023/24 for:
 - one day of subject specific CPD school cluster events which will take place online in the period from November 2023 to March 2024. Where a school closes, all teachers must attend the school cluster online event and engage in the CPD activity.
 - one day of whole-school planning and self-evaluation for Junior Cycle implementation for each year of implementation in the school year 2023/2024 it may be used by schools to support the embedding and/or continued development of the underlying Junior Cycle Framework on a whole-school basis. This may involve schools reviewing their current policies and practices, as well as planning and monitoring for the changes being introduced under the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015.

2. Letter from NCCA to Principals Re: Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Updates with Particular Reference to Sensitive Content. (Including links to resources for schools)

Dear school leaders,

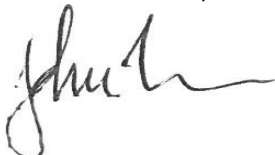
You will be aware from media reports that an updated Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum is now published and available at [SPHE \(curriculumonline.ie\)](https://www.ncca.ie/curriculumonline). We are aware that school leaders are receiving some critical commentary on the updated SPHE curriculum. To support you in dealing with queries, the NCCA has produced a short information note for [parents](#) and more extensive information is available [here](#). In many instances, these comments do not accurately reflect the content, aim and rationale of the [updated Junior Cycle SPHE course](#) and we would therefore encourage schools to share the updated curriculum with parents and highlight the important life-skills that learning in SPHE develops for young people.

*In instances where questions or concerns arise about the teaching of specific topics such as consent, pornography, sexual orientation and gender identity, you can share **the attached guidance for teachers** which provides clarification on the intended learning (also available on the SPHE toolkits).*

*You might wish to let your **SPHE teachers** know that extensive guidance materials and classroom resources are available to support teaching and learning in this new curriculum and can be accessed here: [SPHE toolkit \(curriculumonline.ie\)](https://www.ncca.ie/curriculumonline). This Toolkit provides a one-stop shop for classroom activities and lesson plans linked to each strand and topic within the updated SPHE curriculum and removes the need for SPHE textbooks.*

*Should you require further information on any aspect of the SPHE curriculum development work, please contact sphedevelopments@ncca.ie
- NCCA JC Team*

Is mise,
le mór mheas,



John Irwin,
GENERAL SECRETARY.