KEY SKILLS OF
JUNIOR CYCLE

NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

KEY SKILLS OF JUNIOR CYCLE

Learners need a wide range of skills to help them face the many challenges presented to them in today's world. They develop specific skills in their subjects and other courses. But there is also a more general set of skills that are needed to support learners in their personal, social and work lives. We refer to these as the key skills of junior cycle. As learners develop each of the key skills in an integrated way they will also become better learners.

The six key skills of junior cycle are Managing Myself, Staying Well, Communicating, Being Creative, Working with Others, and Managing Information and Thinking. Working with digital technology also forms part of each of the skills.

Research with teachers and learners in the classroom has shown that these skills are relevant to all subjects and that they improve the learning experience. Therefore they will be embedded in the curriculum through the statements of learning and in curriculum specifications. Teachers are encouraged to build them into their class planning, their teaching approaches and into assessment.

The key skills also support the development of literacy and numeracy, which is crucial for learners to access the curriculum. For example, skills in communication, problem-solving, and accessing and selecting information will contribute to literacy and numeracy development.

STAYING WELL

WORKING WITH OTHERS

MANAGING INFORMATION & THINKING

KEY SKILLS OF JUNIOR CYCLE

MANAGING MYSELF

COMMUNICATING

BEING CREATIVE

Literacy and numeracy are not listed as key skills, but are seen as providing the foundation on which the curriculum is built and will be integrated through every level of the curriculum and its assessment.

Developing these skills in a way that will lead to their integration in the daily lives of students requires a creative approach to teaching and learning. Learners will need to encounter each of the skills frequently throughout the school day in different contexts. It follows therefore, that as the key skills are embedded in the curriculum and brought to life through the learning experiences encountered that they should also be included when planning for assessment.

In this document you will see that each key skill is presented as a set of elements and the learning outcomes describe what the learner is expected to know and be able to do. A range of tools and other support materials are available at **www.juniorcycle.ie** to illustrate how the key skills can be integrated in teaching and learning.

MANAGING MYSELF

This key skill helps learners to understand themselves both as individuals and as learners so that they can develop personal goals and plans. It also helps them develop strategies to make considered decisions, to take action and to reflect on their progress.

STAYING WELL

This key skill recognises that learners' overall wellbeing must be supported alongside their intellectual development. Being healthy, physically and emotionally, being socially active and being able to take care of oneself and of others helps learners become happy and confident. This key skill also helps young people become positive and engaged in their learning and supports them in the safe and ethical use of digital technology.

COMMUNICATING

This skill helps learners develop good communication skills in all aspects of life, using a variety of media. As well as developing literacy skills it also develops learners' confidence in communicating, expressing opinions, writing, making oral presentations and performing.

BEING CREATIVE

This skill enables learners to develop their imagination and creativity as they explore different ways of doing things and of thinking. Students learn to stay with challenges or tasks to completion and to learn from their experiences.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

This skill helps learners develop good relationships and to appreciate the value of cooperating to reach both collective and personal goals. Students also learn to value diversity and to engage in collaborative work aimed at making the world a better place.

MANAGING INFORMATION AND THINKING

This key skill helps learners gradually improve their capacity to search for information from different sources. They also develop their skills in judging and discriminating between information types and sources and they develop strategies for organising information so that they can understand it and use it later. This skill also develops learners' thinking skills so that they can become more skilled in higher order reasoning and problem-solving.

KEY SKILLS OF JUNIOR CYCLE

MANAGING MYSELF

- Knowing myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals
- Being able to reflect on my own learning
- Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning

STAYING WELL

- Being healthy, physical and active
- Being social
- Being safe
- Being spiritual
- Being confident
- Being positive about learning
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

COMMUNICATING

- Listening and expressing myself
- Using language
- Using numbers and data
- Performing and presenting
- Discussing and debating
- Using digital technology to communicate

BEING CREATIVE

- Imagining
- Exploring options and alternatives
- Implementing ideas and taking action
- Learning creatively
- Stimulating creativity using digital technology

WORKING WITH OTHERS

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Co-operating
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Learning with others
- Working with others through digital technology

MANAGING INFORMATION AND THINKING

- Being curious
- Gathering, recording, organising, and evaluating information and data
- Thinking creatively and critically
- Reflecting on and evaluating my learning
- Using digital technology to access, manage and share content

MANAGING MYSELF

Elements	Learning outcomes I can ……
Knowing myself	• recognise my personal strengths and weaknesses • identify influences that make me who I am • express my opinions and feelings appropriately • find ways of dealing with setbacks and difficulties
Making considered decisions	• understand the importance of thinking through my decisions • consider a number of possible consequences when planning and deciding on actions • listen to different perspectives when considering my options • choose between different courses of action and explain my choice • make plans in order to act on my decisions
Setting and achieving personal goals	• set personal goals • identify what I need in order to achieve my goals • ask for help and know where to go when I need help • prepare detailed plans • learn from my past actions and make changes if necessary
Being able to reflect on my learning	• set learning goals and evaluate my progress towards achieving those goals • receive and make use of feedback on my learning • assess my own learning and suggest ways that it can be improved
Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning	• use different technologies to plan, manage and engage in my learning • express, share and present opinions through the use of digital technology
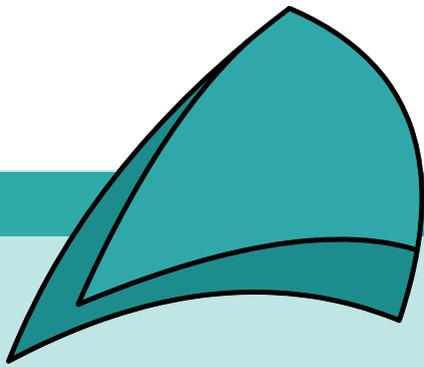
STAYING WELL

Elements	Learning outcomes I can ……
Being healthy, physical and active	• make informed choices in relation to my food, personal care and life-style • demonstrate care and respect for myself and other people • use a range of coping strategies to deal with personal problems and stress • practice relaxation and mindfulness techniques • participate in regular physical exercise and recognise its benefits
Being social	• participate in actions that make a positive contribution to my school, community and the wider world • recognise my rights and responsibilities as a local and global citizen • make decisions based on 'the common good' • recognise the qualities of relationships that are positive and of those that are not • develop positive relationships
Being safe	• identify the likely consequences of risky and unhealthy behaviours • recognise when my personal safely is threatened and respond appropriately
Being spiritual	• recognise that there are different ways of expressing spirituality • respect life, in all its diversity, and know that life has a meaning and purpose • ask questions to broaden my understanding of various world views
Being confident	• feel positive about myself • express and manage different emotions • communicate my opinions and beliefs with confidence in a variety of ways • contribute to decision-making within the class and group • stand apart from the crowd when needed
Being positive about learning	• find enjoyment and fun in learning • learn from my mistakes and move on • stick with things and work them through until I succeed • recognise and celebrate my achievement
Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology	• identify situations where my personal safety and wellbeing, and that of others, is put at risk by digital technology and know how to cope • respect the rights and responsibilities of others in using digital technology • protect my personal privacy online
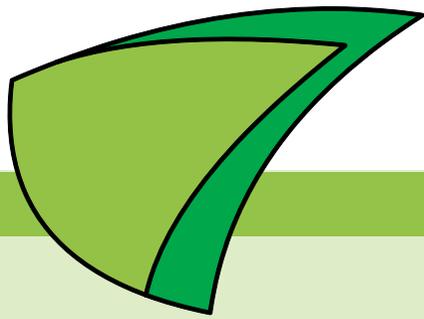
COMMUNICATING

Elements	Learning outcomes I can ……
Listening and expressing myself	• listen actively • express what I think and feel clearly in an appropriate tone • agree or disagree respectfully • use suitable body language and expression • ask well thought-out questions and listen to the answer • use different styles of communication suited to the situation
Using language	• understand and use a wide vocabulary • speak and write in well-constructed sentences • edit, correct and improve my written work • use a range of writing forms to express my ideas
Performing and presenting	• express my ideas and emotions through performance and presentation such as visual art, music, drama, design and graphics • make choices about how I can best present my ideas to others, taking account of my audience • communicate using a variety of styles, including roleplay, drama, posters, and storytelling
Using numbers and data	• use numerical data for a range of different purposes • present, interpret, and compare information and data using charts/diagrams
Discussing and debating	• participate confidently in class discussion • present my point of view and be able to explain and support it • respond to opposite arguments constructively
Using digital technology to communicate	• use digital technology creatively to present, interact with and share ideas for different audiences • make decisions about how best to communicate for particular purposes • be respectful and responsible in my digital and online communications

BEING CREATIVE
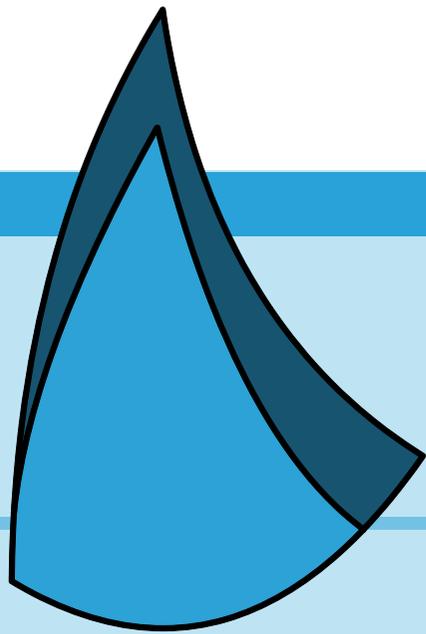
Elements	Learning outcomes I can ……
Imagining	• use different ways of learning to help develop my imagination • imagine ways that I can make a positive difference in the world • take inspiration from the courage and imagination of others • express my feelings, thoughts and ideas through movement, writing, music, art, story-telling, drama and imaginative modes of expression
Exploring options and alternatives	• think through a problem step-by-step • try out different approaches when working on a task and evaluate what works best • seek out different viewpoints and perspectives and consider them carefully • imagine different scenarios and predict different outcomes • take risks and learn from my mistakes and failures • repeat the whole exercise if necessary
Implementing ideas and taking action	• test out ideas • evaluate different ideas and actions • see things through to completion
Learning creatively	• participate in learning in creative ways • suggest creative ways that help me to learn • use a variety of learning tools that help me to be creative
Stimulating creativity using digital technology	• be innovative and creative in using digital technology to learn, think and express myself • explore the possibilities of mixing different technologies and digital media to help me reflect, problem solve and present ideas • create digital media objects which demonstrate creativity and imagination to present learning

WORKING WITH OTHERS
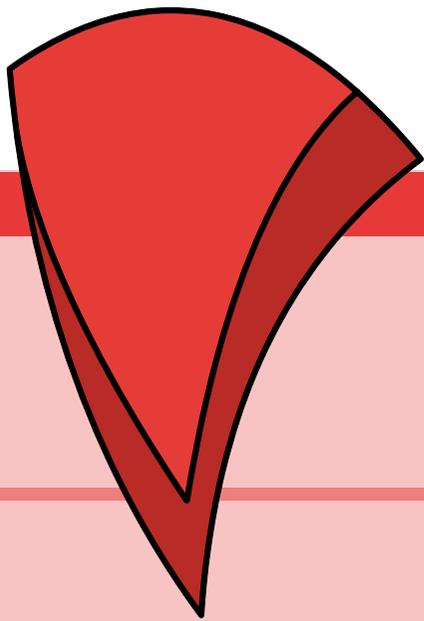
Elements	Learning outcomes I can ……
Developing good relationships and resolving conflict	• share my ideas honestly and with sensitivity • name, express and manage my emotions appropriately • show respect for different positions and different points of view • prevent and manage conflict situations • give and receive praise and criticism constructively
Co-operating	• take on different roles within groups • agree collective goals and work with others towards achieving shared goals • be flexible and willing to make compromises to achieve a common goal • show appreciation for the contribution of other team members • contribute to decisions as part of a group
Respecting difference	• appreciate others' similarities and differences as a valuable part of life • show respect for people of different cultures, backgrounds, beliefs and sexual orientation • show openess to learning from different people
Contributing to making the world a better place	• believe in my ability to make a difference • think critically about the world and its problems and propose solutions • get involved in my community—including family, school, local, global, virtual – towards creating a better world • make connections with others who are working to make a positive difference
Learning with others	• work in pairs and larger groups to help each other when we are learning • help other students to understand and solve problems • recognise that many different people can support my learning and know how to get that support
Working with others through digital technology	• demonstrate collaborative learning using digital technology • use digital technology to participate in collaborative learning and communication spaces • respect the rights and feelings of others when using digital media
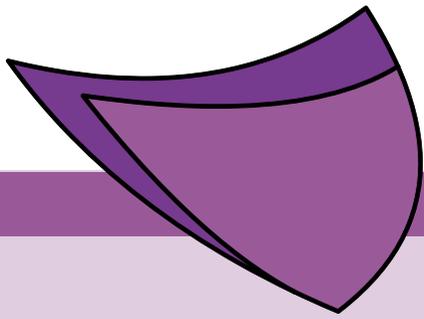
MANAGING INFORMATION AND THINKING

Elements	Learning outcomes I can ……
Being curious	• look for new and different ways of answering questions and solving problems • ask questions to probe more deeply • look for new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world
Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information and data	• recognise what I already know and the wide range of information available to me • use a range of strategies to find information and data • analyse information and data presented in a variety of forms • evaluate the quality of that information and data and their sources • make judgements about how valid and reliable that information is • prepare and organise information and data so that it makes sense to me and others
Thinking creatively and critically	• question ideas and assumptions, both my own and other peoples' • make estimations and predictions and compare them with others • make connections between what I already know and new information • adjust my thinking in light of new information
Managing my learning	• reflect on and review my own progress • identify blocks or barriers to my learning and suggest ways of overcoming them • set realistic targets • use a range of tools to help manage my learning • keep believing that with continued effort I can succeed
Using ICT and digital media to access, manage and share content	• source, share and evaluate information that I find in different technologies and digital media formats • use digital tools to expand my thinking and source information • understand how to use content and present it differently while respecting copyright • use different technologies and digital media tools to give and receive feedback