



St. Patrick's College Ballymena

Prospectus
2021





St Patrick's College

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Chairman of Board of Governors:
Mr Cathal Hughes



From the Principal's desk,

The year 2020 will go down in the annals of history as a year to be remembered. The Covid-19 virus attacked the world population and forced us into previously uncharted territory. Through global chaos and pandemonium, schools forged ahead dealing with related issues as directed by the government and Public Health Agency. Pupils experienced a mix of online and classroom teaching and a new blended learning approach began to take root within our educational framework.

Thankfully, St Patrick's College adapted to changes quickly. Staff, parents and pupils accepted the new norm and continued to keep a strong focus on the importance of teaching, learning and a robust pastoral care programme. As a result, our GCSE and 'A' level results continued to improve. Year 8 pupils flocked to the school and our post-16 retention rate reached new levels.

Such results are only achieved when students are placed in the care of those who value the worth of each person, nurture talent and take a personal interest in every pupil. Any young person or parent considering St. Patrick's should feel secure in the knowledge that the journey through secondary school will be fruitful, memorable and successful.

We offer a full complement of subjects at GCSE and 'A' level. Pupils leaving school at the end of Year 12 or Year 14 are equipped to compete at the highest levels in further or higher education and in the job market. A number of vocational and academic courses are facilitated through the Ballymena Learning Together programme and the Northern Regional College. This helps motivate students to avail of new opportunities, explore new challenges and develop new skills.

Please take the time to read our prospectus and reflect on all of the good work we do in St. Patrick's College. Due to health and safety requirements we cannot offer an Open Night this year, but we will be glad to take phone calls and you will be able to link to our school video on our website.

Stay safe, stay healthy, stay well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Dr. M. Knox'.

Dr Martin Knox
Principal



Our Mission Statement

*To nurture and value each person's
worth through living and practising
our faith and our commitment
to one another*



Ethos

The Curriculum of St. Patrick's College is built upon the foundation of the Catholic ethos, which values the worth of each individual pupil. Teachers will therefore seek to develop in their pupils self-confidence, self-discipline and respect for others.

Teachers will endeavour to promote the essential elements and practices of the Catholic faith in an atmosphere consistent with Catholic beliefs. These ideals are enshrined in the school aims which follow.

School Aims

1. To actively promote, through co-operation between home, school and community, the spiritual and moral values of the Catholic faith and to help pupils to learn to respect and value themselves and others.
2. To seek to provide a caring, supportive and educational environment in which each pupil may develop his/her potential in the personal, social, intellectual, physical, cultural and environmental aspects of life. This will include:
 - providing a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the needs of each pupil at each stage of his/her development
 - providing a variety of knowledge, skills and experiences
 - promoting numeracy and literacy
3. To work positively towards:
 - restoring pupil confidence and self-worth in the aftermath of the selection procedure
 - creating a framework for pupils to experience success in various aspects of life
 - developing personal qualities such as self-discipline and independence, thereby preparing pupils for the experiences, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life
4. To be sensitive to staff needs and professional development.

My favourite thing about St Patricks is my friends. I am the only pupil from my primary school so I was very happy to make new friends quickly. We have started Gymnastics in PE, it is tough but really good fun.

Fionn Wigglesworth
(8 Lagan)



Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral Care programme is based on the belief that a child will be happier and perform better if someone takes an interest in them personally. Given that belief, the school has set up a Pastoral Care Programme whereby each first year pupil has the same Form Teacher, over the course of Years 8 to 12. The role of the Form Teacher is to establish a positive relationship with each pupil to facilitate the development of the whole person through adolescence and in preparation for adult life.

There are also six Year Tutors who have a special role in the pastoral care of pupils. They work with Form Teachers to monitor pupil progress, liaise with parents and deal with matters of discipline. The Year Tutor has overall responsibility for pupils in the year group and for the organisation of an information evening for parents.

The Pastoral Care system in St. Patrick's is based on the principle that the key to good learning and teaching lies in good relationships. All pupils in St Patrick's have a daily Life Skills period with their Form Teacher. This period is used to focus on the College's Pastoral Programme and also to develop Literacy and Numeracy skills. A well-established Induction Programme is in place for Year 8 pupils and Sixth Form students act as Mentors for our Year 8 pupils.



At the start of the school year we had an induction day that gave me a good 'Vibe' about the school. I had some people from my primary school in my class but I have made other new friends. I hope to have good attendance and to do well in all my assessments so I can reach my achievement point target.

Summer Brett
(8 Foyle)





Induction

Our Induction Programme for Year 8 pupils includes seminars addressing specific issues important to the development of the child and not dealt with in the normal curriculum. In St Patrick's we believe that the key to our pupils' success lies in the establishment of good relationships with all of our young people from when they first arrive in the school.

We have a well established Student Mentoring programme for our Year 8 pupils which helps the young people coming to us for the first time to settle with confidence. Each Sixth Form Mentor is assigned one or two pupils to whom they make themselves available during break and lunch in order to befriend and support.



I love the canteen food and the canteen ladies are very nice. We have different options to choose from. My favourite food is pasta with bolognaise sauce. My favourite subject at present is RE. The teacher is very kind and we are learning about the early life of Jesus.

Teagan Mc Quitty
(8 Lagan)



Healthy Eating

St. Patrick's College aims to present consistent healthy eating and drinking messages through:

- the taught curriculum
- the provision and promotion of healthy food and drink during the school day and on school trips
- the school environment

We realise that a healthy diet is one of the best ways of maintaining young people's health, both now and in the future.

Breakfast Club

The School Canteen opens at 8.30am and pupils can purchase hot drinks and toast.

Mid-morning Snacks

The school provides healthy snacks such as fruit, toast and scones for all pupils which can be purchased in the Canteen. Children may bring fruit or a healthy snack from home to eat during break. All sweets, chocolates and crisps are banned in St. Patrick's.

Lunch

A selection of nutritionally balanced hot and cold meals are available each day. A pasta and noodle bar is also available three days each week.

The pupils are free to choose a complete meal or order individually prepared sandwiches.

Pupils can enjoy their lunch in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere in either the Canteen or Lunch Room.

Drinks

Fizzy and carbonated drinks are not allowed in school, as they can be unhealthy. Instead, we encourage pupils to drink water, as a regular intake of water has been proven to help children perform better across the school day. Bottled water is available in the Canteen and in the school Tuck Shop.

Vending Machines

Pupils have access to vending machines that offer bottled water, both flavoured and non-flavoured.



The canteen in St Patrick's is the best. I can choose what I want to eat and there is a great variety of food. We also have a breakfast club for all the pupils who arrive early to school. I go to the canteen at break and lunchtime with my friends. We get to eat good food and catch up with my other friends who are not in the same class as me
Bobbi-Jo Kennedy
(10F)





Homework Policy

It is school policy to set homework as this extends the learning experience. Homework can be used to support classwork, increase overall understanding, give evidence of progress to parents and teachers, develop skills necessary for independent study and sometimes undertake tasks which are time consuming in school. It is expected that pupils record all homework in their Student Planner. The support of parents in encouraging pupils to do homework carefully and thoroughly is of paramount importance. It has been our experience that those pupils who achieve most during their years in school are those whose parents have taken an active interest in their progress.

Obviously not all homework assignments are written. There are many kinds of task which may be set, including:

- drawing
- making something
- planning or preparing for a task
- reading, learning
- personal research
- revision for tests or examinations
- watching a particular television programme
- online learning/Google Classroom.



Assessment for Learning

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process and informs our tracking of pupil progress, enabling decisions to be made about how best to support and develop progress to maximise the achievement of each pupil.

Our system of assessment, tracking, reporting and target setting helps to empower pupils to take responsibility for the progress of their learning. There are four assessments throughout the year and departments ensure the quality of assessment is high and the data used effectively to monitor the progress of students in order to set them challenging and achievable targets.

Regular feedback from teachers makes pupils aware of how they can improve their work and achieve their target. This helps pupils learn more effectively by making clear what it is that they need to do next in order to improve.

Pupils are very much involved in the target setting process and we keep parents informed through the Student Planner. This helps parents identify the ways in which they can support their child with work and offer encouragement at home.

At the start of school, we had two induction days with our form teacher Mr Gribbin. Our teacher is great fun and very helpful. I knew that I would enjoy my time in St Patrick's from day one. My favourite subject is PE as we get to play Bench ball and we have been working on our fitness. I was able to complete a mile run at the Ecos Centre.
Franek Listkowski
 (8 Lagan)





Individual Pupil Support

This school believes that a supportive, educational and caring environment in which each pupil may develop his/her potential is best achieved for pupils who experience difficulties in learning by placing them in small classes. In this way they can receive specialist and individual help. Provision for these pupils therefore contains the following:

1. Specialist teaching for English and Mathematics.
2. Small group teaching with emphasis on individual needs.
3. A special Reading Room to facilitate a Reading Support Programme.
4. Liaison between specialists and other members of staff.
5. Access to full programmes of study.
6. Home/School Links including parental involvement in the implementation of Education Plans.
7. Special Needs Policy is based on the Code of Practice.
8. Individual support is provided by a committed team of Learning Support Assistants.

Newcomers

We have been pleased to welcome to St Patrick's in recent years a number of Newcomer pupils from other countries. We value the cultural diversity which these new pupils have brought to our school community, and we work to support Newcomer pupils in achieving their full potential.

Two Polish teachers and Czech, Romanian and Bulgarian Learning Support Assistants work with Newcomer pupils to help them develop their skills in English, as well as to help them settle into a new school environment.

Whether a Newcomer child is transferring to St Patrick's from one of our feeder primary schools, or is coming directly from a school in their own home country, we assess each child's level of attainment in English and provide an appropriate level of support to enable the child to further develop his or her skills, in a welcoming, inclusive environment which respects and celebrates the cultural diversity of all.



My first day at St Patrick's was really stressful. I was afraid I would end up in a class with random people that I didn't know. However, I did know people from my primary school and I have also made a lot of new friends.

Wiktoria Marczevska
(8 Braid)





Promoting Positive Behaviour

In St Patrick's College we believe that it is an important aspect of a child's development that they behave in an ordered and disciplined fashion. In school we do all that we can to encourage this by making each pupil take responsibility for his/her own actions.

We aim to achieve this in practice

- through the Pastoral Care system where the structure allows each child to build up a relationship with the Form Teacher in a small, secure tutorial group where each individual is valued and supported
- by developing close links with parents and the wider community in which there is mutual support. These links are built up through organised Parents' Evenings and equally importantly through many informal meetings, interviews, visits and telephone calls
- by the promotion of **Positive Behaviour** which presents many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility as class captains, team captains, librarians, senior prefects, members of the School Committee or School Council and bus prefects. On Prize Day academic and merit awards and attendance certificates are presented to acknowledge the achievements of pupils in every class in every year group
- through having a set of well-defined school rules and well-defined sanctions. Great emphasis is placed on the need for pupils to attend school regularly and to wear the correct uniform. All pupils are expected to complete classwork and homework to the best of their ability. Pupils who encounter problems and difficulties will find teachers sympathetic and fair. Those who are inconsiderate of other's feelings, welfare or property and those who are disruptive will be supported in addressing their issues
- by encouraging pupils to contribute to their own Pupil Profile which records positive achievement and progress in all aspects of school life

A Reward Scheme is also in place to acknowledge positive behaviour. This is based on good attendance, pupil presentation and pupil contribution to school life. KS3 pupils are rewarded twice per year with out-of-school activities. A school trip is organised at the end of the year for those pupils who gain the designated number of merits. Other rewards events are organised during the year. Parents are able to monitor their son/daughter's progress by checking the Positive Behaviour Management Record section in the Student Planner.





The Student Voice

School Council

The purpose of our School Council is to:

- meet the needs of every pupil in the school
- meet the needs of the whole school community
- make the school a better place
- make appropriate positive changes
- give pupils a voice so they can be heard

Members

One person is elected from each Form Class to represent the views of their Form Class.

Elections

Any pupil interested in representing their class must produce a Manifesto explaining why their class should choose them as their representative.

The Manifesto must be in writing and presented to the class.

Each class member is given the opportunity to vote for who they wish to represent them.

Class Representatives

Representatives communicate information / issues / ideas between the class and the Council.

The Council's Chairperson and Secretary meet regularly with the Principal to put forward the views of the School Council.



The first two days of school I was very nervous and excited to meet new friends, get my timetable and to see all around the school. I have been trying very hard to get achievement points for doing good work and behaving well. If we get enough points we will be rewarded with a trip at the end of the year.

Erin-mae Mitchell
(8 Braid)



Curriculum

Key Stage 3

In Years 8 - 10 a system of broad banding according to ability is used to determine class groupings with each year having a supported learning class. Classes are banded into smaller groups for practical subjects.

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 includes English, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Geography, History, French, Irish, RE, PE, Art, Music, ICT, Business Studies, Drama and Library. In addition, all pupils will follow a programme of Learning for Life and Work, containing Citizenship, Home Economics, Personal Development and Education for Employability.



I am really enjoying school at present. So far we have had a few assessments but I am finding the work ok and I have achieved well in my tests. The year 8's are getting Chrome books to help with their learning. I can't wait to get mine as I like ICT.

Callum Logan
(8 Braid)



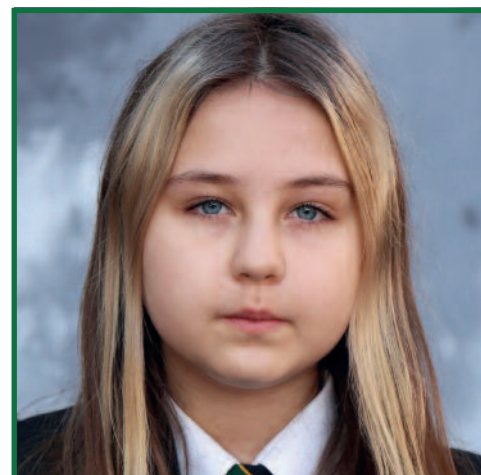
Curriculum

Key Stage 4

In Years 11 and 12 a system of broad banding according to ability is used for the compulsory core subjects. Pupils in other subjects in these years will be banded if appropriate.

All students in Years 11 and 12 will study English, Mathematics, Science, Religious Education and a taught Careers Education Programme. Further subjects are available as options. Pupils take eight at least GCSE courses in Years 11 and 12. Many also study Double Award Science, English Literature and GCSE Learning for Life and Work.

We also offer students the opportunity to follow the Prince's Trust Personal Development and Employability programme, equivalent to two GCSE grades.



My favourite subject is English. I like writing as you can be creative and I enjoy reading. I also like Art as it is calming to draw and focus on the piece your doing. I have settled well into school life and have made some new friends.

Michelle Trawinski (8 Braid)

THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS ARE OFFERED TO GCSE LEVEL

Art & Design	ICT (Applied)
Business & Communication Systems	Learning for Life and Work
Child Development	Mathematics
Construction	Motor Vehicle and Road User Studies
English	Music
English Literature	Performing Arts
French	Physical Education
History	Polish
Home Economics	Religious Education
Irish	Science (Single and Double Award)





Occupational Studies

Students in Years 11 and 12 have the opportunity to avail of Occupational Studies at the Northern Regional College one day per week.

These courses are designed to provide a more 'hands-on' approach to learning.

There are a number of areas of study from which pupils can select:

- Catering
- Brick Laying
- Motor Vehicle
- Plumbing
- Joinery
- Beauty
- Hair Dressing

Learners' achievements are based on evidence from practical work completed throughout their course.

These qualifications are approved by the Department of Education for teaching at Key Stage 4.

A Level 2 Certificate in Occupational Studies is graded at the same levels as a GCSE A* - C on the National Qualification Framework and a Level 1 Certificate at the same levels as a GCSE D - G on the National Qualification Framework.

Achievement below Level 1 is also recognised by CCEA as a First Skills Certificate which equates to Entry Level 1, 2 and 3.

These courses enable progression to other courses, particularly vocationally related courses, and to training and employment.



Sixth Form

A LEVEL/BTEC QUALIFICATIONS

ADVANCED QUALIFICATIONS (Post-16)

The Sixth Year in St Patrick's offers a Programme of Study for students who want to work towards Higher Education courses. The College offers the following Advanced Level programmes, with the list below also showing the subjects which our Sixth Form students can access as part of the Ballymena Learning Together community:

Offered in St Patrick's College (available in Single or Double Award)

OCR Cambridge Tech Applied Art & Design (Single Award) GCE English
GCE English
GCE Applied Health & Social Care (Single and Double Award)
GCE History
OCR Cambridge Tech ICT (Single Award)
GCE Performing Arts
GCE Polish
GCE Religious Studies
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma/BTEC Diploma in Sport (Single Award) BTEC
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Construction

Ballymena Learning Together Options

CTEC Applied Business
GCE Environmental Technology
GCE Chemistry
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Engineering
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Hospitality
GCE French
GCE Mathematics
GCE Travel and Tourism



Students are able to combine these qualifications in preparing themselves for a university course. These additional courses are available as part of the College's ongoing collaboration with other local schools.

The student response to the Sixth Year programme remains excellent with a significant number of Year 12 students returning each year to our Year 13.

In addition, we are continuing to attract students from practically all of the neighbouring schools in the area.

This is something we are keen to develop and build upon in the future.





Transition Programme

Our Transition Programme is designed for students progressing from GCSE level who want to enhance their skills and improve their qualifications in order to make the most appropriate choices for their future career.

These new and innovative Post-16 courses develop relevant skills necessary for the very competitive world of work and also lay a solid foundation for further study at A Level.

This special curriculum affords the students a further year to mature as well as offering the opportunity to participate in a supervised and structured work experience programme which is now considered a valuable asset and much appreciated by employers.

The Transition Programme offers students a range of qualifications including:

Course	Level of Qualification
BTEC Level 2 Health and Social Care	GCSE A* - C (awarding body Pearson)
BTEC Level 2 Sport	GCSE A* - C (awarding body Pearson)
BTEC Level 2 Money and Finance Skills	GCSE A*-C (awarding body EDEXCEL)
GCSE English	GCSE A* - G
GCSE Maths	GCSE A* - G
Careers	
Work Experience	





Careers Education

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) is an important part of the school curriculum.

Pupils are involved in the process of Personal Career Planning throughout years 10-14. The programme aims to give pupils appropriate training and guidance in order to encourage them to set targets and take more responsibility for the direction of their own learning and development. Any pupil who requires individual guidance can receive support from the Department of the Economy's (DfE) Carers Service.

The programme includes the development of school/industry links, visiting speakers from Further education colleges, universities and other specific career areas. The staff and pupils participate in careers conferences such as NISCA, careers fairs, university roadshows, mock interviews and keep up to date with the labour market information. Pupils use a well stocked careers suite where they can access information through the Job Explorer Database, CASCAID resourses, prospectuses and a plethora of informative resurces. A range of courses and workshops covering careers education and other areas is provided by Young Enterprise and Sentinus throughout the year.



WORK EXPERIENCE

The school provides all pupils in Year 11 with one week in a work situation subject to Covid restrictions and Department of Education guidance currently in force. The purpose of this exercise is not only to acquaint pupils with a particular job but to give them the opportunity to go into a different environment, to relate to people within that environment, to make their own arrangements for travel and lunch and to deal with a work situation like an adult. Every effort is made to send pupils to a placement of their choice. Year 13 students also have the opportunity to go on work experience which is relevant to their future career plans.



Sport and Extra Curricular Activities

The College seeks to provide opportunities for pupils to participate in a variety of sporting activities, both individual and team, through both the P.E. programme and after-school activities. The College has excellent indoor sporting facilities including a Sports Hall, a Gymnasium and a Fitness Suite, as well as an outdoor all-weather playing area. Regular use is also made of local facilities including the Seven Towers Leisure Centre. Coaching and competitions are held in a wide range of sports including Athletics, Badminton, Basketball (both boys and girls), Camogie, Cross-Country, Gaelic Football, Golf, Hurling, Netball, Soccer, Table Tennis and Volleyball. A range of lunchtime activities is arranged, organised and supervised by staff. All events will be subject to Covid restrictions and Department of Education guidance currently in force.



During our induction day at the start of the year we got to meet our class teachers and we were shown around the school. I was very nervous about starting secondary school but I am very happy now. My favourite subject is History as we get to learn about the kings who ruled the land many years ago. I like our lunchbreak as you get great food in the canteen. There are a lot of food choices

Dominic Fijalkowski
(8 Foyle)



Fundraising



St Patrick's has a long tradition of fundraising. Over the last three years £4000 has been donated to a variety of charities including:

- Trocaire
- St Vincent de Paul
- Women's Aid
- Cash for Kids
- Macmillan Cancer Support
- Action Cancer
- Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust
- Poppy Appeal

Thanks to the generosity of our students and their families many people in real need have benefited from their kindness.





Uniform

A high standard of personal appearance is expected of all students and anyone arriving at the school in non-uniform clothing may expect to be sent home to get changed or may be withdrawn from class for that day.

General

Black Blazer (with integrated School Badge)
Green Pullover (Optional) Years 8 - 12
Charcoal Grey Pullover (Optional) Years 13 & 14
School Tie (Clip-on)
School Scarf (optional)
Black School Shoes
School Bag
No Jewellery allowed except a Watch
No visible body art

Girls

White Blouse
Black Knee Length Skirt (Years 8-10 Plain)
Black Knee Length Skirt (Years 11-14 Box Pleated)
Black School Fleece (Optional)
Black Tights
NO MAKE-UP
Hairstyle should be neat with no extreme colours

Boys

White Shirt
Black School Trousers
Black School Fleece (Optional)
Black or Dark Grey Socks
Hairstyle should be neat, collar length, with no extreme colours or less than number 2 cut. Shaven patterns or designs in hair are forbidden.
Clean shaven at all times

P.E. Strip

Top (Green, Black and White)
Shorts (Black and Green)
Sports Socks (Green with Black stripes)
Tracksuit (Optional)
Swimwear - all Year 8 pupils

Uniform and PE strip available from:
Couples, 17 Ballymoney Street, Ballymena
Wallace's, Church Street, Ballymena

A scarf can be purchased at the School Office.
A cash grant toward cost of full School Uniform
may be available from Education Authority





Year 14 Comments

I found Sixth Year different from 5th Year. The teachers expect you to take more responsibility for your work and they ask us to help with jobs on the School Committee. I feel well prepared to move on to a Uni course.

Brianne

Over my 7 years in St Patrick's the most beneficial skill that I learned was to work independently.

Norbert

When joining St Patrick's in Year 13 I was rather nervous but I found it just like my last school. Going to St Patrick's was the start of a new journey. I feel that I have been supported every step of the way. The teachers and other staff have given me the opportunity to reach my full potential.

Oskar

A levels at St Patrick's have been I believe that with a lot of hard work and effort you can achieve the grade you desire.

Joan

I found St Patrick's really friendly. The courses and subjects offered are exactly what I was looking for. This gave me the opportunity to continue my education in the same school as I did my GCSEs. After 2 years spent in A level I feel well prepared for adult life.

Killian

For the past 2 years I have been doing subjects which I particularly enjoy and the teachers have given me great support throughout this time. I enjoyed going to do Business in Dunclug College and it gave me the chance to make new friends. This has enabled me to succeed in all of my subjects.

Diana







Our School Prayer

Dear Lord,

We thank You,

For our school community, here in St Patrick's,
For our friends and colleagues, and for all that we learn each day,
For the unity and fellowship that binds our school together,
Bless everyone who comes through our gates, to learn, to work and to teach.

May we make the most of the wonderful opportunities You give us
and guide us in the choices we have to make,

Be with each one of us, Lord, as we journey through our school life,
Give us the skills to use our talents wisely for the good of ourselves and others,
So that, when we leave, we go out into the world ready to love and to serve You,

Amen



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