

Welcome to Archbishop McHale College

Information pack for parents/guardians



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WELCOME

The aim of this booklet is to provide the information to best support you as the parents/guardians of a student in Archbishop McHale College.

Further information is communicated through email, text messages and/or phone calls.

Contact details are available on page 14 of this booklet, where you contact the school directly, and details of the social media platforms so you can keep up to date with the latest news and events.

STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL DAY

This is the layout of the day for first year, second year and TY students.

Period	Timing
Period 1	08.50 – 09.50
Period 2	09.50 – 10.30
Break	10.30 - 10.40
Period 2 (continued)	10.40 – 11.00
Period 3	11.00 – 12.00
Period 4	12.00 – 12.30
Lunch	12.30 – 13.00
Period 4 (continued)	13.00 – 13.30
Period 5	13.30 – 14.30
Period 6	14.30 – 15.30

This is the layout of the day for 3rd year, 5th year, 6th year and LCA students.

Period	Timing
Period 1	08.50 – 09.50
Period 2	09.50 – 10.50
Break	10.50 – 11.00
Period 3	11.00 – 12.00
Period 4	12.00 – 13.00
Lunch	13.00 – 13.30
Period 5	13.30 – 14.30
Period 6	14.30 – 15.30

- School finishes at 1pm on a Friday, with no lunch break.
- Junior students must stay onsite during school hours. They do not have permission to go to the shop at break and lunchtime.
- If for any reason you need to arrange a meeting with a member of staff, please either email the member of staff you wish to meet with directly or contact the Year Head. The member of staff will then get back to you to arrange an appropriate time to meet.

FOOD

Healthy eating and drinking is encouraged. As part of the Green Schools programme, students bring their own reusable bottle to school with them, reducing plastic waste. Fizzy drinks are not allowed.

The Hut

Lunch is available free to students from the Hut. This includes sandwiches, smoothies, and an array of snacks, such as croissants, yoghurts, etc.

UNIFORM

Our uniform is part of our identity and should be worn with pride. It identifies us as part of a team. Details of the current school uniform are provided below. School uniforms are available from a range of school uniform stockists, including School Wear Centre Tuam.

Boys

- Blue Crested Jumper
- Navy Pants
- White Shirt

Girls

- Blue Crested Jumper
- Navy knee-length skirt or Navy Pants
- White Shirt

Students can wear either **Black Shoes** or **Black Runners**. If a student chooses to wear black runners these must be completely Black and have no markings.



PE Uniform:

Navy track suit bottoms, with no markings

Navy sports shorts (optional) for warmer days

Runners and sports socks, (no canvas shoes allowed)

Navy & Blue Crested Training Half Zip {Available in the School Ware Centre Tuam}

Navy & Blue Crested Training T-Shirt {Available in the School Ware Centre Tuam}

In the interest of safety, no jewellery must be worn during P.E. classes and hair must be tied back securely.

WAY2PAY

Parents/Guardians can pay for the book rental scheme, planners, lockers, trips, etc on a system called Way2Pay. This means payments can be made by parents/guardians directly with the school, eliminating the need for carrying of cash to school.

If you need help finding the link for Way2Pay: On the website archbishopmchalecollege.ie , click on Parents and Students, Way2Pay and then click on the link.

VSWARE

VSWare is a system used to monitor attendance, behaviour (both positive and negative), reports and much more. Parents/guardians will receive emails weekly, so that means if a member of staff has logged a positive or negative comment on VSWare that week, parents/guardians will receive that information through email. This helps to provide parents/guardians with up to date on how their son/daughter is getting on.

These emails are in addition to reports sent out.

SCHOOL REPORT

Each term, parents/guardians will receive a report on how on their son/daughter is progressing in their subjects, as well as information as regards their attendance and punctuality.

PUNCTUALITY

It is important to develop good habits and students need to aim to arrive at school by 8.40am, the latest, each day. Being on time for school and to each lesson is essential to good time management and students will find it easier to always turn up to work on time.

The first class starts at 8.50am, any student who arrives after this time will have their lateness recorded.

Students who are **late three time in a term**, will be required to attend a meeting with school management and their parents to outline the importance of poor timekeeping, and the impact of arriving late to class, has on teaching and learning.

THE PLANNER

The planner is also the main form of communication between school and home. Parents/Guardians can write a note to the Year Head or class teacher if needed. The cost of the planner is €10, payable at the start of the year through Way2Pay.



Below are some tips for ensuring that all students use the planners effectively:

Students must always have their planners with them.

Students should record homework in their journal for all lessons.

Students must have their planner signed every week by their parent/guardian.

If a student loses their planner, you will need to purchase a new one. This will cost €10.

The contact section at the front of the planner must be completed in full, as well as the policies sections on pages 6, 10 and 11.

BOOK RENTAL SCHEME

Students can avail of the *Book Rental Scheme*. Students receive the books near the start of the school year and return the books near the end of the 3rd year, for Junior Cycle, and near the end of the 6th year, for Senior Cycle. In the case where a book changes for the next year, then the book will be given back to the school and the book needed for the next year(s) will be issued. An example of this would be the Maths books. At the end of first year, the Maths book is given back to the school and the book that is used in second and third year is issued to the student. All new texts are covered using a durable plastic cover.

Note: Workbooks and examination papers are not supplied by the scheme.

EVENING STUDY AND HOMEWORK CLUB

Evening study gives the students an opportunity to complete homework and revise in a quiet environment. Students have the option of evening study after school Mondays - Thursdays. Students can obtain a form from their Year Head.

Homework Club gives students an opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the work while completing their homework onsite. It helps to create good study habits which will be of help to them going forward in their secondary education and further studies.

Homework club has been running in the school since 2018 with first year students. If you would like your son/daughter to take part in homework club, you can email their Year Head.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Students should record homework in their journals, completing all work by the due date. Parents/Guardians are the most important support that a student has when completing homework.

Homework Policy:

After One no Homeworks in any subject, parents/guardians will receive an SMS home from the Year Head.

After Two no Homeworks in any subjects, parents/guardians will receive an e-mail home from the Year Head.

After Three no Homeworks in any subjects, parents/guardians will receive a letter home from the Year Head.

After Four no Homeworks in any subjects, parents/guardians will meet with the Year Head and Deputy Principal to see can we find a solution.

Anything after this, students will sit an after-school detention.

BEHAVIOUR POLICY

All students must follow the Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Behaviour is firmly rooted in mutual respect, justice, the common good and concern for health and safety.

Failure to follow the Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of behaviour will result in a one or more of the interventions outlined in the Ladder of Referral which is located under the Policies section on the website, archbishopmchalecollege.ie .

REWARDS

Archbishop McHale College aims to promote the highest standards of behaviour and learning through positive encouragement, support, and reward.



Staff will recognise when students do something deserving of praise.

This may

be done through:

- Speaking with students and/or writing a comment on their work.
- Recording it on VSWare; these reports are sent home to families on a weekly basis.
- Staff might also contact home through a phone call or sending a praise postcard.

Rewards trips are organised for each year group twice yearly. Some of the destinations are:

Tayto Park, Dublin Zoo, Bay Sports, Wildlands Adventure Centre, Go-Karting, Paintballing and Bowling.

MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

- On arrival all devices must be switched off, not just put on silent mode, and placed in the student's bag or secured in a locker.
- Electronic devices can only be used for educational purposes when this is part of a lesson and directed by the teacher with supervision.
- Students are not allowed to use their phones or their devices to contact people outside school, including parents/carers, during school time. In an urgent situation, where a child needs to make contact, they should see their Year Head or the vice principal, who will make a decision and if required, make the necessary arrangements.
- If parents/carers need to contact their child while they are on the school site, they should do this via Reception.
- If a device is used in school or found without permission, the phone will be confiscated and left into reception. A parent/guardian will then have to collect the phone.

INTERNET SAFETY

E Safety or electronic safety refers to the knowledge of the dangers that the Internet poses and the ability to prevent these dangers by taking action.

Here at AMC, we encourage our students to take the necessary steps to remain safe while using the Internet.

Ways in which students can ensure that they are safe online are listed below:

- Keep your privacy settings high so that only your friends can see your profile
- Don't post any personal information online such as your address or mobile number
- Never give out your passwords to anyone
- Don't meet up with people you've only met online
- Respect other people's opinions, don't post offensive comments or bully anyone online
- Always tell an adult if you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or worried about something you've experienced online
- Click the '**Report Abuse**' button to highlight abuse you might have encountered while on the Internet

If you think your son/daughter, or another student, is being bullied online or in person, please contact the school.

E-LEARNING PLATFORM

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is a platform that supports students' learning in the classroom. Students can access homework assignments, group projects, files, as well as ask questions in the group communicating with the teacher and/or the class.

Benefits to Students

Interaction with teachers and feedback - Each class and year group have a public stream for teachers to post announcements and students can post questions and comments and receive answers from their teacher. This gives teachers a very simple way to respond to student queries. This encourages students' involvement in both academic and social aspects of school.

Access to resources - Students will be able to see additional resources on Microsoft Teams. This will support them in completing their assignments.

Assessment - Teachers use Microsoft Teams to set assignments.

ARC and LIBERTY

Students with special educational needs are supported in the classroom alongside their peers by teaching assistants wherever possible. Staff are made aware of students' needs and are provided with appropriate advice and support strategies by the SEND team.

The ARC and Liberty are two areas where additional staff are present to support students, with additional resources to help support the students with additional needs.

TRANSITION YEAR

Archbishop McHale College's TY Programme presents students with opportunities to discover and develop their individual talents and strengths.

The main calendar events for the Transition Year Programme are listed below (These can be subject to change):

- **Work Experience**
- **Outdoor Pursuits**
- **Let's get talking programme**
- **Author in Residence Programme**
- **Introduction to law Programme**
- **Safety Skills Course**
- 121 Learning (Sharing digital skills)
- Gmetrix
- Basic Coding/Solid Works
- Young Social Innovators
- German Exchange Programme to Straubing, Bavaria in Germany
- Gaisce
- First Aid Course
- Dance-Set Dancing and Hip Hop
- F1 Schools Competition
- Gym and Fitness Classes
- Sport-Rugby Workshop, Basketball Blitz. Wheelchair Basketball (with Titans in Galway city)
- Big Brother Big Sister
- Guest Speakers
- Workshops
- Trips
- Climbing Croagh Patrick
- Swimming at Salthill
- Music Generation Pulse Programme
- Mini Company
- Poetry Aloud
- Erasmus (Three-year Project 2016-2019) Partnered with three schools in Pontareas, Galacia, Spain.

The methods of assessment carried out during the Transition Year include:

- Ongoing assessment for each student by the teaching Staff.
- Project work and oral presentations.
- Portfolio of work for some modules.
- Assessment of work experience and recorded report
- Reflective diary at the start of the year till midterm.
- Self-assessment
- Exhibitions of students work and performance of new skills.
- Practical assessment.
- Level of student participation in Gaisce, fundraising, charity work etc.

Archbishop McHale College presents the students with a school certificate awarded at distinction, merit or pass level. Certificates are also awarded externally for the successful completion of Gaisce, First Aid etc.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

The staff and students at AMC want to help in the community as much as possible. This has been done through raising money for people in need in Tuam and the wider community, as well as giving time. Here are a few of the ways this is being done:

Car Wash

MS Readathon

Shine a Light Appeal - Staff and students bringing in food in December and the food is then donated

Christmas 'Shine a Light in the Darkness Appeal' Raffle - A range of prizes raffled to raise money for those in need at Christmas

Carol Singing

TYs 'Hot Chocolate and Crepe' Event

TYs making thoughtful gifts for the residents of Aras Mhuire

Crisp packets collected to raise money for Care for Shane fund

Calendar of Hope

Remembrance Tree

LCA Bake sale / Coffee Morning for Tuam Cancer Care

Darkness into Light

Dress Up for Down Syndrome

AMBER FLAG AND GREEN SCHOOLS

Amber Flag

Archbishop McHale College received our second Amber Flag in 2021. Students and staff took part into Darkness Into Light in May to raise funds and awareness for Pieta House.

2020 was the year we received the Amber Flag for our school! Students' and staff wellbeing is very important, and Archbishop McHale College are committed to ensuring wellbeing is high on our priorities list.

Green Schools

Archbishop McHale College received the Green Schools Flag for Litter in 2020 and continues to engage in the Green Schools programme.

A team of enthusiastic, committed students make huge efforts to look at how our school can be more environmentally friendly and carry out green school initiatives during school. We as a Post Primary school believe that every small effort can make a big difference daily. The Green Schools Programme aims to include all members of the School Community. Parent participation is most welcome. We are open to new ideas and suggestions.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

At Archbishop McHale College, we offer a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which aim to cater for all students interests and abilities. Below is just an example of the many activities we have on offer:

Trad Group and Choir

Photography

SUMS – A drop-in centre for Maths

German Debating

Anime Club

Green Schools Programme

Student Council

Wellbeing Committee

Creative Schools

Sport: Gaelic Teams (Boys teams, Girls team), Hurling, Soccer, Rugby, Athletics and Basketball

TRIPS

At Archbishop McHale College, throughout the course of the year we offer all students the opportunity to enjoy educational and sports trips. We also aim to reward students for all their dedication to their learning, achievements, and good behaviour thorough year group rewards trips near the start of the year and the end of the academic year.

Some of the rewards trips are:

Tayto Park, Dublin Zoo, Bay Sports, Wildlands Adventure Centre, Go-Karting, Paintballing and Bowling.

Some of the other trips include:

Ploughing Championships

Escape Rooms

Theatre trips

Siúlóidí Gaeilge – Looking at how Irish is used locally

Straubing, Germany (Tuam's twin town)

MFL Junior Film Fleadh

Court Visit/ TCD Mock Trial

Biology Burren Ecological study of the flora and fauna of the woodland

Farmaphobia

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