

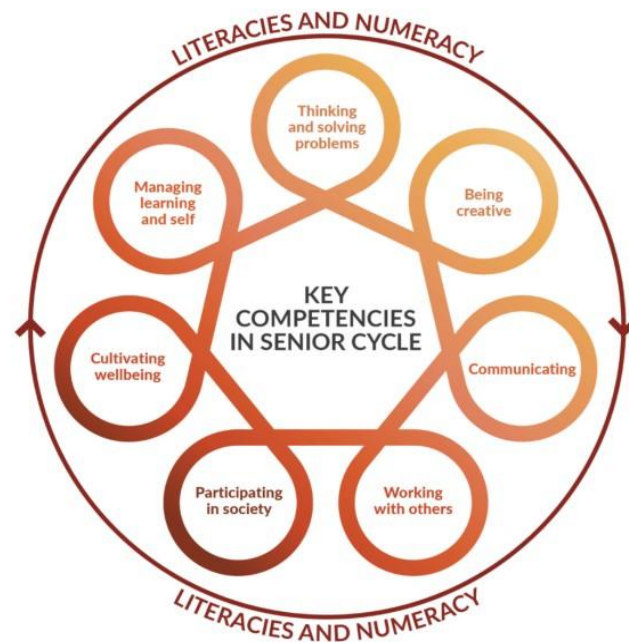


MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL, KILBEGGAN

Do Chumas a Bhaint Amach

Senior Cycle Redevelopment

Parent Information Evening
Monday, 28th September



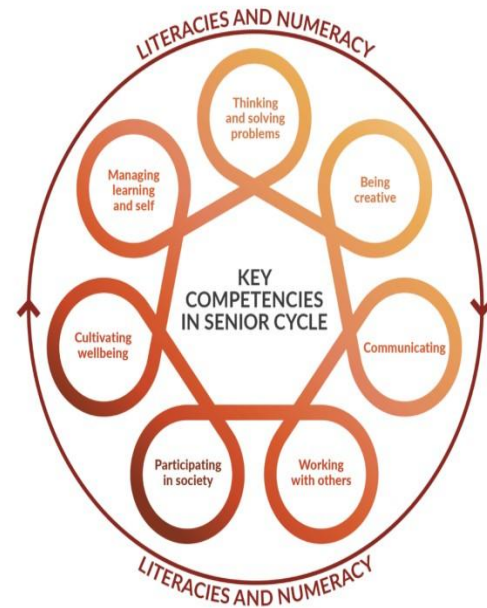


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This talk aims to:

- **Outline key changes** to the Senior Cycle Programme
- Explain some of the **key terminology** that students will become familiar with
- **Describe an AAC** (Additional Assessment Components)
- Explain the **roles of both teacher and student**, as we engage with AACs
- Explore some of the **rules around AAC completion** and submission - *how will additional project work be graded and how will the State Exams Commission maintain the integrity of the Leaving Certificate process/results?*
- **Explain how we will support students** through these changes in MSSK and consider how students can best be supported from home





Why is the Senior Cycle Programme changing?

- The redevelopment of the Senior Cycle Programme in Ireland aims to ‘*enhance the educational experiences of future generations of students in their senior cycle years, **striking a balance between conservation and change** so that every student can experience meaningful learning and achievement*’ (NCCA Advisory Report, 2021)
- The Senior Cycle Curriculum has not been thoroughly updated in over 20 years. The NCCA Advisory Report found that the broad changes that have occurred in society must be reflected in the vision, aims and purpose of education for senior cycle students in Ireland.



Senior Cycle Redevelopment seeks to:

- include every student
- provide a challenging, engaging and high quality education with opportunities for critical, creative and innovative thinking
- deepen students' capacity to meet the challenges of life both within and outside of school
- offer choice and flexibility as students combine their learning and explore individual pathways
- develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions as they navigate the Senior Cycle Programme.



How will redevelopment of the Senior Cycle programme impact my son/daughter this year?

- New subject specifications are being rolled out in schools on a phased basis
- Current 6th Year students are engaging with redeveloped courses in Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Business
- Current 5th Year students are engaging with redeveloped courses in Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Business, Geography, Engineering, Construction Studies, P.E. and LCVP modules (now called LCW)
- These updated courses require students to complete an AAC (or Additional Assessment Component) which is worth up to 40% of their final grade.



- **What might an AAC Brief and learning experience look like?**

Example - 'Biology In Practice'

Create a Biology in Practice investigation and report based on the following:
Membranes, Osmosis, Food Preservation

Your Biology in Practice Investigation should involve the following six stages:

- Stage 1: Initial Response to the Investigation Brief
- Stage 2: Background Research
- Stage 3: Designing and Planning the Experiment
- Stage 4: Conducting the Experiment
- Stage 5: Data Analysis and Conclusions
- Stage 6: Finalising the Biology in Practice Investigation Report

- ★ Takes approximately 20 hours
- ★ Integrated into the course of ordinary teaching and learning
- ★ NCCA provide clear instructions and guidelines



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5. Topic for the Business Alive Investigative Study

Complete a Business Alive Investigative Study and Report based on the following:



gov.ie

‘Digitalisation is a major driver of productivity growth through the improvement of process efficiency and the quality of products and services. The growing adoption of technologies is disrupting traditional roles and transforming the world of work.’

Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
Adapted from www.gov.ie

You are required to investigate how a work practice that uses digital technology is impacting either employers or employees.

Support your investigation with appropriate primary and/or secondary data.

Business Brief (for completion in March, 2027.)

An investigative/research study, followed by a report (1500 words)

Stage 1: Getting Started

Stage 2: Developing a question to research

Stage 3: Developing a project plan

Stage 4: Identifying sources and gathering information and data

Stage 5: Analysis and evaluation

Stage 6: Applying learning and drawing conclusions
Compilation of the final report



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6. Business Alive Investigative Study Report Structure

The structure of the Business Alive Investigative Study Report should consist of the following section headings, **each with a suggested word count**. You should include these headings in your Report. Suggested indicative content for each heading is given below.

1. Introduction

approx. 200 words

- State your research question
- Explain the rationale for choosing this question
- Reflect on how you engaged with your project plan

2. Investigation and Findings

approx. 400 words

- Explain the purpose and relevance of the different research methods and sources used appropriate to your research question
- Present your research findings in appropriate formats
- Consider a variety of perspectives

3. Analysis and Evaluation

approx. 600 words

- Analyse your research findings
- Evaluate your research findings
- Demonstrate originality and critical thinking throughout your analysis and evaluation

4. Conclusions

approx. 300 words

- Present conclusions justified by the analysis and evaluation
- Outline how your planning contributed to the successful completion of the study
- Discuss how your perspective evolved as a result of the study
- Consider how your findings connect to the real world of business

5. References

- Appropriately record the sources of all the information gathered.

Worth 200 marks
- **40%** of final
grade

Common Level

1500 words,
written in clearly
set out sections

***Investigative
Folder/Journal**



ACC Briefs vary by subject and will change each cycle

ACC Briefs are designed around skills and competency

Different subjects have different **completion dates** for AAC's

NCCA Subject Guidelines inform teachers about how and when to integrate AAC work into day-to-day teaching and learning

Engaging With AAC's

Role of Student

- The student thinks about the brief
- The student makes decisions, creates, reflects on and produces the final piece of work, to be **assessed externally by the State Examinations Commission**
- Students should focus on the whole process, rather than a finished product

Role of Teacher

- The teacher teaches content relevant to the brief
- Guides individual students, facilitates their investigations
- The teacher monitors progress and supports but does not complete or shape the students' work

The teacher **authenticates** completed student work



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ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS (AACs)

KEY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



AUTHENTICATION

ENSURING WORK IS GENUINELY
THE STUDENT'S OWN



AACs must be the **student's own individual work**.



Teachers monitor the development of the work to support authentication.



Students may be required to retain **drafts or other evidence** of the development process.



Work that cannot be authenticated as the student's own **may not be accepted for assessment**.



PLAGIARISM

USING OTHERS' WORK WITHOUT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



All sources used must be appropriately **acknowledged and referenced**.



Presenting another person's work or ideas as the student's own **constitutes plagiarism**.



This includes unacknowledged material from **websites, books and AI tools**.



Plagiarism is a serious matter and may result in **SEC penalties**.



USE OF AI

SUPPORTING LEARNING RESPONSIBLY



AI-generated material is considered **source material**.



Where permitted, AI-generated material must be appropriately **acknowledged and referenced**.



AI-generated work **must not be presented** as the student's own original work.



Students must follow the specific **SEC requirements** for their subject and AAC.



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Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan - AI Policy (Student Version)

Our message to students

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an important part of everyday life. It can help us find information, solve problems, create content and learn new things. At Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan, we want you to become **confident, capable and responsible users of AI**. AI can support your learning, but it must **never replace your own thinking, effort, creativity or responsibility**.

Our main rule is that **AI can support your learning. It must not do your learning for you.**



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What Supports Are Available To My Son/Daughter In MSSK?



- Dedicated **Senior Cycle Redevelopment Coordinator**
- Dedicated team of interested, caring teachers and support staff, who are committed to professional development and want to help all students achieve their personal best
- Increased availability of devices for students, to complete various aspects of their work
- Regularly updated Senior Cycle Noticeboard in 6th Year Area
- Weekly AAC *Drop-In Hub* available for all students, where they can solve problems or seek guidance
- Student-friendly version of SEC 'Key Completion Dates Schedule' for AACs
- Student-friendly version of MSSK Artificial Intelligence Policy
- Student-friendly guide to Harvard referencing



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Student
Friendly
Support
Literature

<https://www.examinations.ie/mis-c-doc/EN-EX-77058330.pdf>



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STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

KEY DATES 2026/2027

SIXTH YEAR – COURSEWORK COMPLETION AND ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

Monday 2 November 2026	Home Economics Food Studies Coursework
Friday 11 December 2026	Physics Practical Investigation (AAC)
Friday 18 December 2026	Physical Education Physical Activity Report
Friday 15 January 2027	Design & Communication Graphics Practical Coursework
Friday 26 February 2027	Biology Practical Investigation (AAC) LCVP Link Modules Portfolio
Friday 5 March 2027	Engineering Project Component
Friday 12 March 2027	Business Alive Investigative Study (AAC)
Tuesday 16 March 2027	Computer Science Coursework Project
Friday 19 March 2027	Physical Education Performance Assessment
Saturday 20 – Thursday 25 March 2027	Leaving Certificate Oral Examinations (Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Polish and Arabic)
Friday 9 April 2027	Applied Mathematics Mathematical Modelling Project
Monday 5 April – Friday 16 April 2027	Music Practical Examinations
Friday 16 April 2027	Art Practical Coursework
Tuesday 20 – Thursday 22 April 2027	Art Practical Examinations
Friday 23 April 2027	Chemistry Practical Investigation (AAC)
Tuesday 27 – Thursday 29 April 2027	Construction Studies Practical Examinations
Wednesday 28 April 2027	LCVP Link Modules Written Examination (10.00 – 12.30)
Friday 30 April 2027	Agricultural Science – Individual Investigative Study Geography – Geographical Investigation Report History – Research Study Report Construction Studies – Project Component
Tuesday 4 May – Thursday 6 May 2027	Engineering Studies Practical
Wednesday 19 May 2027	Leaving Certificate Computer Science Written Examination (Higher and Ordinary Level) Section A & B: 9.30 – 11.00 Section C: 11.30 – 12.30



Support is
always available
at the
Drop-In Hub.

Thursdays
Lunchtime
Room 50

Contact: duignanm@mercykilbeggan.ie – Mrs. Duignan – Senior Cycle Redevelopment Coordinator

HARVARD REFERENCING

CREDIT YOUR SOURCES. AVOID PLAGIARISM. SHOW YOUR RESEARCH.

WHAT IS HARVARD REFERENCING?

Harvard referencing is a way of acknowledging the sources you use in your work. It uses brief in-text citations in brackets and a full reference list at the end.



It shows where your ideas and information came from and helps your reader find your sources.

HOW TO USE HARVARD REFERENCING

- FIND YOUR SOURCE**
Find the information you need from a book, journal, website, article or other reliable source.
- CITE IN THE TEXT**
Add the author's surname and year of publication in brackets.
Example: (Smith, 2020)
- ADD TO YOUR REFERENCE LIST**
Write the full reference details for your source at the end of your work.
- CHECK AND PROOFREAD**
Make sure all in-text citations appear in your reference list and vice versa.
Double-check punctuation and spelling!

EXAMPLES

IN-TEXT CITATION EXAMPLES

- One author: (Smith, 2020)
- Two authors: (Jones and Patel, 2019)
- Three or more authors: (Brown et al., 2021)
- Direct quote: "Climate change is a global crisis." (Lee, 2021, p. 45)

REFERENCE LIST EXAMPLES

Book:
Smith, J. (2020) *Introduction to Psychology*. 2nd edn.
London: Pearson.

Journal article:
Jones, A. and Patel, R. (2019) 'The impact of social media on mental health', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 22(3), pp. 345-360.

Website:
World Health Organization (2023) *Mental health*.
Available at: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health>
(Accessed: 12 May 2024).

DOs

- DO cite every source you use.
- DO include the author's surname and year in brackets.
- DO include a full reference list at the end.
- DO use a consistent format and punctuation.
- DO check that all in-text citations are in your reference list.
- DO proofread carefully.

DON'Ts

- DON'T copy and paste without citing.
- DON'T forget to include sources in your reference list.
- DON'T guess details—check your source for accuracy.
- DON'T mix Harvard with other referencing styles.
- DON'T use "Anonymous" if the author is known.
- DON'T leave citations or references until the last minute!

NEED HELP? TRY

www.citethisforme.com

Cite This For Me is a free, easy-to-use tool that helps you create accurate Harvard references in seconds!

- Website, book, journal, video and more
- Automatic in-text citations and reference list entries
- Save, edit and export your references
- Great for essays, assignments and projects

It's quick, reliable and perfect for students!

HOW IT WORKS

- Go to www.citethisforme.com
No sign-up required!
- Choose your source type
e.g. website, book, journal, YouTube video
- Enter the details
Add the information about your source.
- Get your citation
Cite This For Me will generate the in-text citation and full reference – ready to use!

More time for learning, less time formatting!

TOP TIPS

- Keep track of your sources as you go.
- Be consistent with formatting.
- Always check your institution's guidelines.
- When in doubt, cite it!

GOOD REFERENCING = GREAT ACADEMIC WORK!



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How Can I Best Support My Son/Daughter From Home?



ATTENDANCE

Ensure your son or daughter attends school regularly.



ORGANISATION

Help your son or daughter keep their notes and resources organised.



MEETING DEADLINES

Encourage your son or daughter to plan ahead and meet deadlines.



PRIORITISING

Support your son or daughter to manage their time and prioritise tasks.



COMMUNICATION

Talk regularly with your son or daughter about their AAC requirements and progress.



A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Provide a quiet and distraction-free space for them to work.



ENCOURAGEMENT

Recognise their effort and celebrate progress.



SEEK HELP EARLY

Encourage your son or daughter to speak with their teacher if they have questions or are finding it difficult.