

31st January 2017

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s),

It is now time to think about the subjects your son proposes to take for AS/A2 commencing September 2017. Included with this letter is the application form which is to be used to indicate the subjects your son would like to select. Please discuss the subjects available as set out on the form with your son, taking account of his strengths and interests, the information contained in his College reports along with the advice that you will receive at the forthcoming S2 Options Evening. To help you and your son make informed choices an A-level Options Booklet is also available online, www.stcolmans.org.uk or through our school App, available on the App store or Google Play – search for **St. Colman's College**.

Subject choice at A-level is very important in terms of accessing university courses. As a result I encourage you to attend the forthcoming **S2 Options Evening** as you will have the opportunity to hear about all aspects of the options process from College staff. You will also hear from a number of speakers about certain BTEC and other courses that we offer as well as information from a University representative.

Mr Doyle and I will be available during the Options Evening should you wish to discuss any aspect of your son's A-level options. All of the information available should be carefully considered before final commitments are made.

Parents, Guardians and students, should ensure that the appropriate subjects are selected when considering university courses which have specific requirements. Your son has already been given a substantial amount of information regarding subject choices but if you require further guidance, please seek information from university websites and from Mr O'Hare.

For reference the:

S2 Options Evening is on Thursday 9th February @ 7.00 p.m. in the Assembly Hall

As notified by Groupcall, the scheduled Parent Teacher Meeting for the 23rd February has been cancelled due to industrial action by teaching unions.

The completed subject application form must be returned to your son's Form Teacher no later than **Wednesday 1st March 2017** after which time a member of the SLT will discuss your son's options with him. It should be appreciated that the choices made by your son are subject to satisfactory performance in his GCSE examinations, acceptance that the choices made are most suitable for your son and normal rules and regulations governing progression into Sixth Form as outlined on the attached application form.

The A-Level timetable will be constructed on the basis of the information collated from the choices made. We will try to accommodate all the students' subject options, but if a particular subject has a smaller uptake than expected and cannot be offered, or if the particular selection of subjects that your son has made is considered unsuitable for him, or is not viable in the context of time-table structure, he will be asked to make alternative choices. It will not be possible to accommodate late changes outside of the timetable blocks that are created, so I ask you to seek all possible information and advice before you submit your son's application form.

I also wish to take this opportunity to inform you about a number of courses available to year 13 students in St. Colman's College, provided partly through the Newry and Mourne Area Learning Community.

Area Learning Community and the Entitlement Framework

The Newry and Mourne Area Learning Community has been set up to meet the statutory requirements set down in the Department of Education's Entitlement Framework.

The Entitlement Framework guarantees all post primary pupils aged 14 and above greater choice and flexibility, by providing them with access to a wide range of learning opportunities suited to their needs, aptitudes and interests, irrespective of where they live or the school they attend.

The target date for the full implementation was September 2015. From that date, schools were required to provide pupils with access to a recently revised minimum number of courses at Key Stage 4 and post-16 - 21 subjects in both cases. At least one-third of the courses must be general (academic) and at least one-third applied (vocational/professional/technical). The remaining one-third of courses is at the discretion of each school and provides schools with an opportunity to develop a unique and distinctive curricular offer. Of equal importance to the range of courses is the coherence of the offer which should enable young people to choose from a menu of courses that will allow progression to appropriate higher education courses that will equip them fully for the world of work.

Schools in the local community are currently working together to identify the needs and priorities within the area and to develop the necessary collaborative arrangements to maximise the offer to our young people.

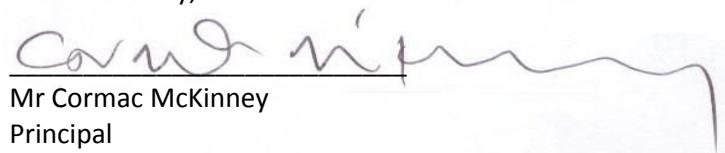
Current collaborations

At present St. Colman's College is engaged in a number of very successful collaborations with Our Lady's Grammar School, St. Mary's High School, Newry High School, Southern Regional College, St. Mark's H.S. Warrenpoint and St. Paul's H.S Bessbrook.

I look forward to meeting you on the Thursday 9th February.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Cormac McKinney
Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cormac McKinney".