

Geography Department Plan

Mission Statement

St, Nathy's College was established to act as a Centre of Learning. We strive to achieve this within a fostered Christian environment which equally provides for the faith and personal development of each student.

All of our school endeavours and activities are directed towards these objectives.

Co-ordinator: Declan Dunne

Teachers:

Declan Dunne

Seamus Curley

Ronan Brett

Teresa Flatley

Jimmy Tuohy

Jacqueline Mullen

Anne O'Brien

Gearoid O'Suilleabhain

Aim:

That students would acquire an awareness and understanding of the processes involved in their physical, social and economic environment in relation to Ireland, Europe and the world. They also develop a range of practical, social, valuing and communication skills, which are of geographical and general significance.

Objectives:

Our objectives are that students should acquire a knowledge, an understanding of concepts and develop skills and attitudes through the geography topics dealt with in class.

Skills:

In the course of their studies students should acquire, develop and practice skills in:

- Map interpretation
- Figure interpretation
- Photograph analysis
- Numerical skills and calculations
- Picture interpretation
- Figure drawing
- Map drawing
- Fieldwork/Street work
- Sampling

Course Content:

The junior cert geography course is divided into three sections each based on a broad theme. In first year our students should acquire knowledge of the physical landscape and the processes at work therein.

In second year the focus is on social geography, population settlement and urbanisation.

In third year our theme is economic, involving primary, secondary and tertiary activities. Throughout the course we are building on and developing the skills and knowledge already acquired in an integrated way.

The leaving cert geography syllabus is divided into core, electives and option topics.

In year one physical and regional syllabus units are covered.

In year two core unit 3- the geographical field study, elective 5-patterns and processes in the human environment and option 7 and ecology are covered.

Grouping of Students:

All Geography classes, junior and senior cycle, are mixed ability groups.

Student Access to Subject Level:

Geography is taught at higher level to all students up to junior certificate level. Students are encouraged to take Geography at the highest level according to their ability. After junior certificate level students have the option to continue the subject or not.

Textbook and Course Materials:

Junior Certificate: New Complete Geography, Charles Hayes (Gill and Macmillan) with the accompanying workbook. Junior certificate examination papers in third year.

Leaving Certificate: ECO, Ray Quinn (Folens) with the accompanying workbook. Leaving certificate examination papers in fifth year.

Planning for Students with Special Needs:

The geography department tries to meet the needs of all students and is particularly sensitive to the Special Educational Needs of Students.

They:

- Consult regularly with Resource and Learning Support teachers regarding the needs of individual students.
- Refer continually to Individual Educational Plans of students and work with them.
- Modify teaching methods, content, questions, homework and examinations.
- Attempt to deliver content in a manner that is easily understood.
- Ensure that all classes are inclusive and that affirmation of students takes place.
- Expose all students to all aspects of the course.

Planning for Culturally Diverse Society:

- Geography is a subject that examines culturally diverse societies and encourages respect and tolerance.
- Students from different cultural backgrounds are encouraged to relate their own experiences through the Geography of their own country, which can be achieved through project work.
- Particular care is taken when teaching Irish Geography.
- Language skills can be developed through classroom discussion and homework.

Cross-Curricular Planning:

- There are many links between Geography and other subjects; Business Studies, History, Religion, CSPE, Mathematics, Science, Computers and Agricultural Science.
- Planning between the Geography department and other subject departments is mainly informal.

Effective Teaching Methodologies:

Individual class teachers tailor teaching methods to suit the needs of their students, while following a general departmental programme and methodology.

Teachers teach through:

- Instruction
- Questions and Answers
- Discussion
- Group work
- Themed Teaching
- Fieldwork Investigation
- ICT
- Project work
- Role-play
- Workbook
- Brain Storming
- Research tasks
- Diagrams and Sketch Map

Homework and Assessment Procedures:

- Written homework is given in almost every class. This is often given so as to consolidate what the student has learned in class and therefore enhance academic achievement.
- Liaison with Learning Support Teachers takes place to devise suitable homework tasks for students with special needs.
- Students are advised to revise course content regularly.
- Class tests are given at regular intervals during the year.
- First year students are given a common examination paper for their Summer Examination.

Record Keeping Procedures:

- Class teachers keep their own records of examination results, assessments, attendance, homework etc.
- Student assessment reports are passed on to the next geography teacher if there is a change of teacher.
- A record of in-service courses attended by teachers is kept in the school office.

Communication Procedures:

- Formal subject department meetings are held at regular times throughout the year.
- Informal meetings between Geography teachers take place regularly.
- Teachers communicate with parents through the school journal, report cards and formal Parent-Teacher meetings.

Reporting Procedures:

- Formal reports are sent to parents following Christmas and Summer examinations and after Junior and Senior Mocks.
- Teachers informally tell students of their progress and areas in which they can improve on.

Health and Safety:

A copy of the school's Health and Safety Policy is kept in the staff room which includes a section on fieldtrips. Geography teachers are advised to make themselves familiar with this document.

Range/Variety of Resources:

Teaching resources are catalogued and stored in the geography room- which include

- Textbooks
- Workbooks
- Videos
- Atlas's
- Internet
- Overheads

Availability/Use of ICT Facilities:

- Computer room available to Geography teachers.
- Data Projector available in Geography room.
- Use of mobile laptop computer and data projector.
- All classrooms have access to internet broadband.

Rationale

‘Geography is the study of people and their relationship with their environment’ (Department of Education and Science syllabus).

The philosophy of the Geography Department is to assist students in coming to an understanding of this relationship in an interesting, challenging and rewarding way, where students are able to ‘function more effectively as members of society’ (syllabus).

The subject is taught and learned in an environment that is open, inclusive and supportive. A variety of teaching methodologies and resources are used to cater for the different ways in which a student learns. It is studied against the ‘background of a world’ (syllabus) that shows us:

- Multi-cultural societies
- Sharp social and economic inequalities
- Increasing pace of socio-economic change
- Declining environmental quality in many regions

The focus of study looks at local, national and international issues. We as a department focus on the development of skills rather than on the retention of learning for learning sake. We work within the framework laid down by the syllabus. Our aim is to provide our students with the opportunities to develop their concepts, knowledge, skills and attitudes through the use of encouragement, assistance, opportunity, practice/ application, models, theories and principles. It is through this that we hope to develop a ‘positive attitude towards themselves, others and their environment’ so that they can achieve a ‘sensitive awareness of the aesthetic quality of the natural and cultural environment’ so that it will instil in them a ‘desire to maintain this quality’ (syllabus).

The learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus centre on:

- Knowledge and understanding of phenomena, processes, interaction, principles, models, theories, issues and problems.
- An ability to recall, use, select, interpret, represent, communicate, evaluate and apply.