

An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí

Junior **CYCLE** for teachers

Junior Cycle for
Teachers

Leadership Supports
for the
implementation of the
Framework for Junior
Cycle (2015)



Introduction

Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) is a dedicated continuing professional development (CPD) support service of the Department of Education and Skills. Our aim is to support schools in their implementation of the new Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) through the provision of appropriate high quality CPD for school leaders and teachers, and the provision of effective teaching and learning resources. The Junior Cycle for Teachers Leadership team supports school leaders on an ongoing basis through twice-yearly leadership seminars which take place in Autumn and Spring of each school year. These seminars are delivered at education centres nationwide and school leaders can book their places online using www.jctregistration.ie

The aim of this document is to inform newly appointed school leaders of the range of supports that exist in the system and where these can be accessed. We hope that this will mean new school leaders can easily navigate the existing supports and access more readily what they need to support their own schools as they embark on their school leadership journey.

The Junior Cycle for Teachers has been supporting school leaders since 2015. An overview of the CPD opportunities provided since then are listed, in order of delivery, below. The supports they contain can be accessed through the links and will be discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

Autumn 2015 [The Junior Cycle Framework – An Overview](#)

Autumn 2016 [Curriculum Planning and Timetabling](#)

Spring 2017 [Wellbeing in the Junior Cycle](#)

Autumn 2017 [Leading Teaching, Learning and Assessment](#)

Spring 2018 [Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning 1](#)

Autumn 2018 [Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning 2](#)

Spring 2019 [Student-centred Strategic Planning](#)

In addition to the twice-yearly leadership seminars, JCT Leadership in collaboration with the JCT L1/L2LP team gave a further support to school leaders regarding *Level 2 learning programmes* in their school context. [Leadership and Level 2 Learning Programmes](#)

As part of the JCT Weeks of Webinars, the Leadership team addressed the issue of *Engaging Parents with Junior Cycle* in our webinar during March 2019.

[Engaging Parents with Junior Cycle](#)

The arrangements for the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle are subject to Department of Education and Skills Circular letter.

The CPD supports outlined in this document have evolved in relation to the circular letters issued by the DES. The most recent circular letter [0079/2018](#) is the most relevant reference point for school leaders engaging with these supports.

May 2019

The Junior Cycle Framework – An Overview

The leadership seminar delivered in 2015 gave an overview of the changes to Junior Cycle education as laid out in the Framework for Junior Cycle with a focus on the changes to assessment and the increased emphasis on Formative assessment. A short video from [Dylan Wiliam](#) used on that day is a useful resource which could be used to engage teachers in a reflective conversation around formative assessment in their practice.

During this professional learning experience school leaders used a [Junior Cycle Assessment Glossary](#) resource as a support to guide teachers through the changed landscape of assessment. This seminar also focused on introducing Classroom-Based Assessments to school leaders, outlining in particular the relevant information for the CBAs in English, as the first to be experienced in the system. A resource detailing what [Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings](#) are was used. This resource details what should be done, before, during and after a SLAR meeting.

The challenge for school leaders in leading the change was addressed in this day and continues to be addressed in subsequent supports for school leaders. A video of [One School story of change](#) is a helpful way to begin discussing leading this change and in particular looking at key skills in the learning in one school.



***'The secret of change is to focus all of your energy
not on fighting the old but on building the new..'***

- Socrates

Curriculum Planning and Timetabling

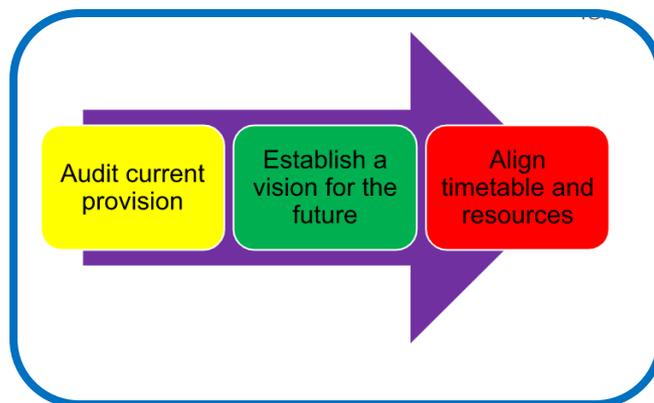
The Autumn 2016 support for school leaders looked at guiding schools through;

- Curriculum Auditing and Time Considerations
- Wellbeing/Time Considerations and class duration
- Designing a New Curriculum using the JCT Curriculum Planning Tool

The curriculum auditing discussions used the 24 [Statements of Learning and explanation of learning experiences](#) document to support the use of the statements as a basis for the analysis of the current curricular provision in schools. This CPD explored how, and with whom, school leaders would consult in auditing the school's curricular provision. Options for schools to consider enhancing the curriculum and the time allocation considerations that are linked to those opportunities were explored.

School leaders developed their understanding of Wellbeing in the context of Junior Cycle and timetabling of Wellbeing was discussed in relation to the time requirements and the implication for 40-minute and 60-minute classes. [One school's story](#) of making the change to 60-minute classes was evidenced on the day. One of the learning intentions of the CPD was to empower school leaders to lead a timetabling discussion with teaching colleagues, student and parents.

The final section of this CPD took school leaders through how to explore a variety of curriculum options using a [JCT curriculum planning tool](#). This very useful resource allows school leaders to assess a variety of scenarios and brings them closer to deciding on their next steps based on this evidence.



Wellbeing in the Junior Cycle

In Spring 2017 the leadership seminar explored Wellbeing in Junior Cycle. The aspect of Culture and Relationships was examined. Session 2 on the day, developed further the considerations for developing a Wellbeing Curriculum that was introduced in the previous seminar on Curriculum planning and timetabling.

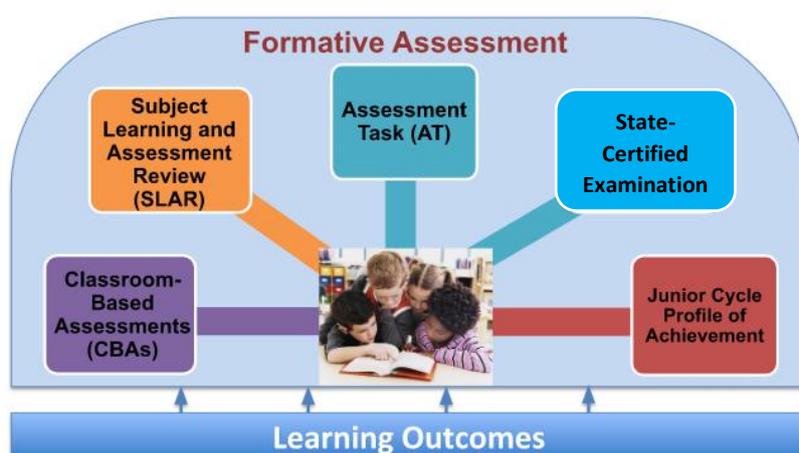
The content of the [Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines \(2017\)](#) heavily informed the professional learning for school leaders in this seminar as did the then most recent [DES circular 0015/2017](#)

Appendix H, from the Wellbeing Guidelines (2017)– A self-evaluation questionnaire for school management and staff, was discussed as a starting point for consultation towards an effective wellbeing programme. A possible process outlining the possible next steps for developing a Wellbeing programme was explored on the day. A [Wellbeing and Formative Assessment Video](#) used on the day can be a helpful tool to discuss how formative assessment approaches in the classroom can link in with student wellbeing in the culture and relationships aspect.



Leading Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Autumn 2017 Leadership seminar considered the impact Junior Cycle reform would have on Teaching, Learning and Assessment and explored how to lead and support teachers in implementing this change. The importance of teacher professional collaboration to help mediate this change and deepening our understanding as school leaders of this was a focus of this CPD. This day supported school leaders in mapping out their possible next steps in supporting this changing landscape of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in their schools.



Changes in the System

The experiences of the Classroom-Based Assessment Oral Communication [video](#) highlights the experiences of student and teachers with some of the assessment changes to date.

A detailed explanation of the pillars of Formative Assessment as outlined by Thompson and Wiliam (2007) forms a part of this CPD.

The focus on teacher collaboration to lead change in our schools was supported by [Andy Hargreaves Deep Collaboration Video](#)

The new professional experience of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting was supported by a [SLAR Video](#) of practising teachers going through the process. The leadership supports in this area were explored on the day using [Looking At Our School](#) – A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools, as a reflective tool and in particular the Domain of Leading Teaching and Learning and the standard 'Promote a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment'.

Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning

The Junior Cycle for Teachers leadership Seminars for Spring 2018 and Autumn 2018 focused on Ongoing reporting for effective teaching and learning. This professional learning experience focused on the *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's* Reporting Guidelines ([Here](#)) published in March 2018.

The aim of this workshop was to deepen the School Leaders understanding of effective practices in teaching, learning, assessment and reporting in *The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* and how to manage these changes on the ground in school and lead all stakeholders in the community in valuing and implementing these new approaches.

School leaders had the opportunity in this Professional Learning Experience (PLE) to explore the connectedness of the Guiding Principles for Reporting and their impact on effective teaching and learning in the classroom. They examined how effective feedback supports student learning and the importance of student reflection in the learning process.

Participants explored the new *NCCA* reporting templates designed for reporting at the end of second year and began to make decisions around how they may use them in their own school context in 2019. The need to avoid 'over assessment' will again be a consideration for school leaders as students may be engaged in up to six Classroom-Based Assessments at the end of Second year of 2019. Leaders considered how they may support staff to develop the types of professional conversations required to engage fully with learning outcomes as they are the bedrock of ongoing assessment and reporting through units of learning, classroom-based assessments, the assessment task and the State Exams Commission exams.

A [Reporting Learning Activity](#), used in Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning 1, is useful to familiarise yourself with the new language of learning and open up a discussion with teachers about the opportunities and challenges of same. This could be used in tandem with a [Reporting Comment Activity](#) developed in Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning 2 to consider what the criteria for creating effective comments that place the student at the centre of the learning might be.



Student-centred Strategic Planning

The Spring Leadership workshop 2019 focused on Student Centred Strategic Planning. It aims to support School Leaders in deepening their understanding of how to plan a Junior Cycle curriculum which is needs and context driven, and student centred in approach. The *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* gives autonomy to schools to create a flexible curriculum responding to the learning needs of all their students and the unique context of their school.

During the workshop participants reflected on the vision for Junior Cycle which places the student at the centre of their own educational experience and explored how the curricular decisions School Leaders make in their schools can put the student at the centre. *Looking at our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools* ([Here](#)) highlights effective and highly effective practice in the Domain, *Leading Learning and Teaching*, in which School Leaders are tasked with *managing the planning and implementation of the school curriculum*.

As explored in previous workshops, teaching, learning, assessment and the reporting of learning in Junior cycle has changed. These changes are having a significant impact on the learning experience of students in the classroom and on how teachers plan. In the PLE School Leaders reflected on how these changes have been embraced and communicated at a whole school level to ensure consistency and coherency of practice across the school. In the workshop participants explored some of the new aspects of the recent *Circular 79/2018* and considered what may be the implications for their school curriculum particularly in the area of wellbeing provision, assessment and reporting.

Considering the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, participants explored a school scenario which documents how one school reviewed their curricular provision and, how they moved from 300 hours to 400 hours of timetabled wellbeing provision as part of this review. After exploring the scenario, participants reflect on what the Junior Cycle student experience looks like in their school and what process they may need to undertake to ensure that the curriculum offered in their school is student centred in design.

With the focus on leading change, School Leaders will explore the Domain, *Leading School Development - Manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education* and reflect on how they are mediating the whole school changes to assessment and reporting in their own schools.

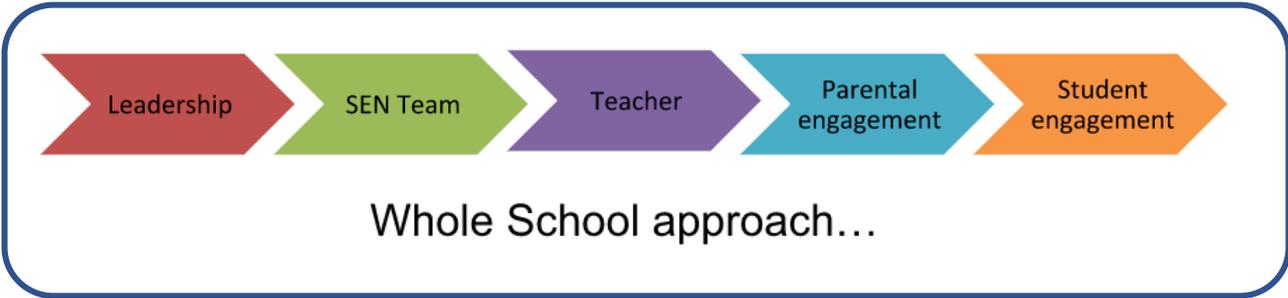
[Circular 79/2018](#) highlighted the ‘*broadening of the time- bands in which CBAs, SLARs and Assessment Tasks may be completed will allow schools greater flexibility to organise the timing of the CBA in way that suits the learning needs of the students and the organisational needs of the school*’. Key dates for Classroom-Based Assessments for 2019/20 have been issued by the NCCA. The JCT leadership team have created a supporting document to assist school leaders to collaboratively plan with these dates for the school year 2019/20. This document links with the proposed process for collaborative planning of the school assessment calendar which was supported during our Spring Leadership seminar in 2019. *The JCT Classroom-Based Assessment planning dates for the school year 2019/20 document* can be accessed [here](#)

Level 1/Level 2 Learning Programmes

JCT Leadership in collaboration with the JCT L1/L2LP team gave a further support to school leaders regarding **Level 2 Learning Programmes** in their school context. Four half-day workshops were provided in venues nationwide during May 2019.

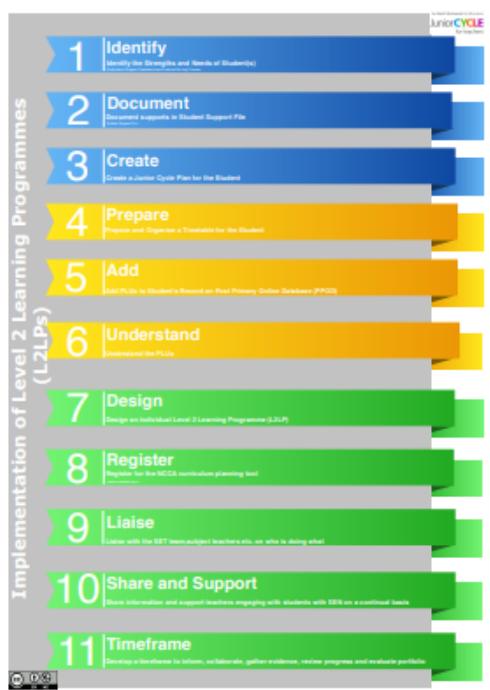
A useful [video](#) (described as the who, what, why, where and when of L2LPs) could be used to help inform teachers in a school embarking on the journey of L2LPs in their school

This PLE explored the implementation journey for L2LPs and looked at identifying the next steps for the Special Education Teacher team and subject teachers to work on an enactment plan for L2LPs in their own school context. The resources used on this day can be found in the leadership section of the JCT website. [here](#)

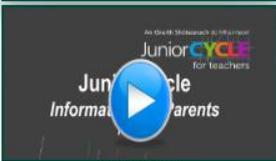
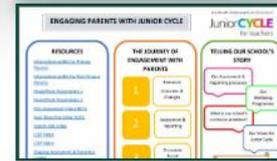


[SET department L2LPs planning poster](#)

[Mainstream teacher L2LPs subject poster](#)



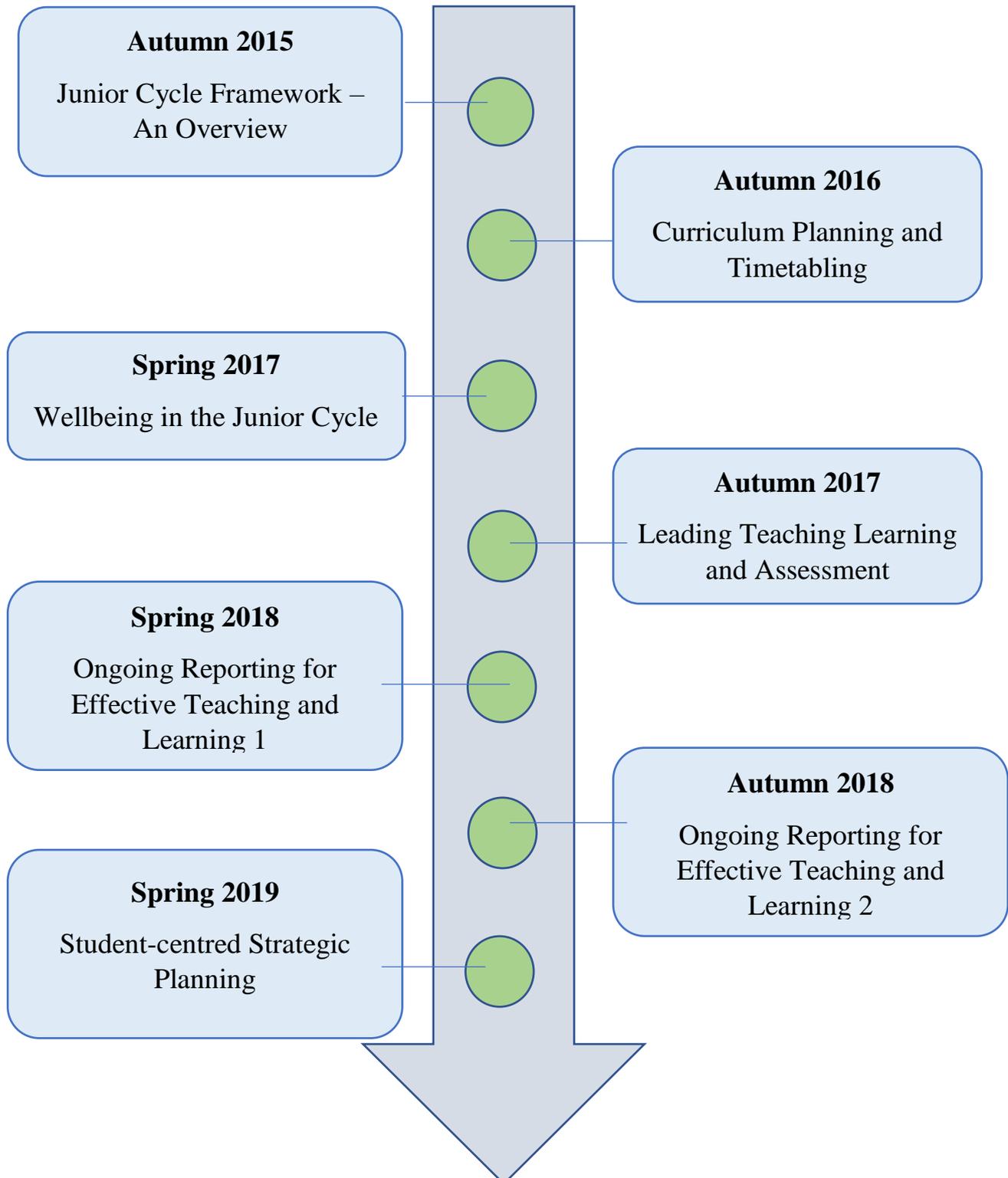
Engagement with Parents

<p>Parents' Presentation Part 1</p>  <p>File type: PPT</p> <p>Click to view or download</p>	<p>Parents' Presentation Part 2</p>  <p>File type: PPT</p> <p>Click to view or download</p>	<p>Parent Information Leaflet Post Primary</p>  <p>File type: PDF</p> <p>Click to view or download</p>	<p>Parent Information Leaflet Primary</p>  <p>File type: PDF</p> <p>Click to view or download</p>
<p>Orla Assessment NCCA Video</p>  <p>File type: YouTube</p> <p>Click image to play</p>	<p>Seán Reporting NCCA Video</p>  <p>File type: YouTube</p> <p>Click image to play</p>	<p>English CBA NCCA Video</p>  <p>File type: YouTube</p> <p>Click image to play</p>	<p>L1LPs An Introduction</p>  <p>File type: YouTube</p> <p>Click image to play</p>
<p>L2LPs</p>  <p>File type: YouTube</p> <p>Click image to play</p>	<p>Webinar Engaging Parents</p>  <p>File type: YouTube</p> <p>Click image to play</p>	<p>Engaging Parents Handout</p>  <p>File type: PDF</p> <p>Click to view or download</p>	<p>Ongoing Assessment and Reporting</p>  <p>File type: PDF</p> <p>Click to view or download</p>
<p>Ongoing Assessment and Reporting Poster</p>  <p>File type: PDF</p>			

As part of the JCT Weeks of Webinars, the Leadership team addressed the issue of **Engaging Parents with Junior Cycle** in our **webinar** on the 25th March 2019 which can be accessed [here](#). This support for school leaders suggests a timeline for communicating with parents on the changes in Junior Cycle and highlights the resources including videos, posters, PowerPoint presentations that can be used along this journey.

In an era of enhanced school autonomy, this webinar discusses the need for schools to communicate what the Junior Cycle experience will be like for your students in your school. An outline of the content of the webinar and links to all the resources discussed in this webinar can be accessed [here](#).

JCT Leadership Support Journey



The autumn Leadership Seminar 2019 will be delivered through education centres nationwide from the 5th of Nov until the 10th of December 2019. Schools will be notified when registration is open through www.jctregistration.ie.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding school leadership and the Junior Cycle please contact the leadership team at Fiona.obrien@jct.ie and Helen.Costello@jct.ie