



# Academic School Programme

‘Irish Experience’





## Academic School Programme

Our academic school programme 'Irish Experience' is available for international students aged 11 to 18 years. Students should have an Intermediate level of English (minimum requirement). It is possible to attend for varying durations: month, term or year. We collaborate with a wide range of schools in Ireland - primary and secondary (high) schools. Our educational consultants will be able to advise you which school is the right one for you.

We endeavour to offer the best advice on programmes in accordance with the needs, preferences, and academic qualifications of prospective students. Attending an Irish school will allow you to further your education at undergraduate level in an Institute of Technology, University or any other third level education institution in Ireland and other countries.

### Inclusive services in our academic programme 'Irish Experience':

- Free consultation and advice for your 'Irish Experience'
- Selection of a suitable school (primary / secondary school)
- School tuition fees in the selected school
- Local orientation upon your arrival to Ireland
- Assistance and support of our local coordinator
- Emergency telephone contact 24/7
- Frequent academic reports for the parents at home
- Class text books and school uniform (included only for full academic stay)
- Irish SIM-Card for mobile phones (included only for full academic stay)
- Airport transfers upon arrival and departure (assistance with other transfers)
- Full board accommodation
  - in a carefully selected host family (single room)
  - in a boarding school (dormitory)
- Short holiday breaks (up to 1 week) to be spent in Ireland (students usually spend Christmas and Easter holidays in their home country)
- A successful and great 'Irish Experience' in a friendly and welcoming environment









## Why choose mackdonald language academy?

- Expertise and experience placing students in a wide choice of both private and state-run schools with boarding and host family accommodation.
- Highly flexible programme with varying durations: month, term or full academic year.
- Dedicated and motivated team offering a detailed orientation on arrival, with regular counselling and reporting throughout the academic programme.
- Experts in ensuring that everyone maximises their time in Ireland and most of all: have a successful and memorable 'Irish Experience'.
- Educational service and personal assistance during the entire process.





## Irish Education System



**The Irish High School System is divided into two cycles:**

- Junior Cycle which lasts for 3 years (for students aged 12-15 years)
- Senior Cycle which lasts for a further 3 years (for students aged 15-18 years)

The **Junior Cycle (Year 1-3)** is non-specialised and students usually take between 9 and 13 subjects per school year. At the end of this three-year cycle the Junior Cycle finishes with a State Examination called the Junior Certificate.

Students take up to 9 subjects. International students take two core subjects; English and Mathematics and several electives to include science and technology, languages, art, music as well as more traditional subjects such as history and geography.

The first year of the **Senior Cycle (Year 4)** is called Transition Year (TY) which constitutes a break between the junior cycle and the senior cycle. The programme varies from school to school but it is usually less academic than other school years.

TY is designed to give students, usually aged 15-16 years, the tools necessary to make informed choices about their future study and possible university or other Third Level choices.

TY is an excellent year for international students to begin their academic studies in Ireland as it provides valuable opportunities to develop English language ability and life skills. It allows for personal development without the pressure of preparing for a state exam as it is a combination of academic, vocational, personal and social development.

The final two years of the **Senior Cycle (Year 5+6)** constitute a two-year study program which leads to a State Examination called the Leaving Certificate. This examination is both, an exit exam from high school and a university entry exam.

The Leaving Certificate is recognised and highly regarded by academic institutions in the UK, Europe, the United States and across the world. International students must take a minimum of 6 subjects including the 2 core subjects of English and Mathematics. Students can then choose their other subjects from a broad range, including science and technology, languages, art, music as well as more traditional subjects such as history and geography.

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# School Types

## State Schools

State schools in Ireland can welcome overseas students from the EU and EEA. Many schools are run by the state, others by religious orders (either Catholic or Protestant faith). Some may have originally been private schools, but they are now fully funded by the Irish government. There are boarding and day-schools, as well as mixed and single-sex schools available.

## Private Schools

Private schools can welcome students from all over the world, including non-EU and non-EEA member countries. The majority were founded by religious orders (either Catholic or Protestant faith). There are boarding and day-schools, as well as mixed and single-sex schools available.

## Timetable

09.00-09.45	English Literature
09.45-10.30	Mathematics
10.30-10.40	Short Break
10.40-11.25	History
11.25-12.05	Physics
12.05-12.50	Physics
12.50-14.00	Lunch
14.00-14.45	French
14.45-15.30	Computer Studies
15.30-16.15	Business Studies



Presentation



CBS



Newtown





## High School Curriculum

High schools in Ireland follow a curriculum set down by the Irish Department of Education and Science. So, in private as well as in state-run schools, all students follow the same curriculum and take the same state examinations.

At Junior cycle level, students usually take a minimum of 8 academic subjects and at Leaving Certificate level a minimum of 6 academic subjects. Students may take each subject at higher or lower level. For example, normally our High School programme students take ordinary level English.

The most common subjects for the Leaving Certificate are shown in the table below:

### Core subjects - obligatory

- Maths
- English
- Irish\*

*\* Besides English, Irish is one of the two official languages in Ireland. Today, Irish is still spoken in some rural areas and remains an official language often heard on television, radio and seen on official government signs and documents. International students are not required to study Irish. Usually, overseas students use these periods in school as study time or they can take an extra subject or even extra English lessons, where available.*

### Elective Subjects - usually 1 modern language of choice and 4 or more other subjects

- Modern Languages: French, Spanish, German, Italian
- Physics, Business Studies, Music, Design and Technical Graphics
- Chemistry, Accountancy, Art, Engineering
- Biology, Economics, Classical Studies, Construction Studies
- Agricultural Science, History, Home Economics, IT
- Applied Mathematics, Geography, Technical Drawing



A full-page background image showing two young women with long blonde hair sitting on a wide wooden staircase. The woman on the left is wearing glasses, a grey patterned scarf, a white cable-knit sweater, and blue jeans. The woman on the right is wearing a dark blue hoodie and blue jeans. Both are smiling at the camera. The staircase has wooden treads and metal railings.

## School Locations

We work with a wide range of primary and secondary schools across Ireland. The majority of our partner schools are based in and around Kilkenny in the South-east of Ireland. We also have strong partnerships with primary and secondary schools in other cities such as Dublin, Limerick, Waterford and Carlow.





## Accommodation Options

### **Day-Schools** - accommodation with host families

All students attending a day-school will stay with one of our nice and welcoming Irish host families. Host family accommodation allows the student to experience first-hand, Irish family life and culture. A host family can be either a traditional family (with mother, father and children) or a single host mother with or without children.

Accommodation includes full board and students are provided with their own single room. Students of other nationalities may also be staying in the house (in separate bedrooms), with a maximum of 3 international students per host family.

All our host families are carefully selected and we regularly inspect families to reassure ourselves of their high standards. They all conform to the standards laid down by the Irish Department of Education and Science for hosting of international students ([www.acels.ie](http://www.acels.ie)).

We are in continuous contact with all our host families. During the student's stay in Ireland, we also visit the host family to ensure everyone is enjoying their "Irish Experience".

### **Boarding Schools** - accommodation on campus (5 or 7 day boarding)

The boarding option gives students the opportunity to live in a caring and supportive community with their fellow students and friends. On campus, there is plenty of opportunity for optional activities, recreation and sports.

Normally, students stay in rooms with approx. 2 - 6 other students per room. All meals are provided in the canteen on campus (mostly buffet-style).

Some schools only provide partial boarding (4 or 5 nights per week). In this case, 2 or 3 nights per week are spent with a host family nearby.

During the mid-term breaks (in October and May) and for the Christmas and Easter holidays, students are generally expected to leave the boarding school. Students then either stay with their host family or spend the holidays in their home country.





## Selected schools in our High School Programme



### 'St. Brigid's College' Secondary High School, Callan

St. Brigid's College is an 'all-girls' school, situated between the cities of Kilkenny and Callan. The school is well renowned for its long and rich tradition (founded in 1831) with an excellent university track record (more than 80% of all students continue their education in third level).

Students are given the opportunity to study in a peaceful setting and participate in a wide spectrum of classes - regular and extracurricular.

In addition to the courses, there are interesting offerings that maybe important for a student's professional career after high school: practicing interviews or community projects and training in first aid. Different trips to interesting places in Ireland take place throughout the school year.

**Sports (selection):** Camogie (Rugby for girls), Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Track and Field

**Clubs (selection):** Debating, Music and Theatre, Book club, Choir, Art, Drama, Artistic Design, First Aid Courses, Games Club, Business Club, Volunteering activities

**Student numbers:** approx. 300 girls

**Accommodation:** Host family



### 'Presentation' Secondary High School, Kilkenny

Presentation is an 'all girls' school located in a quiet suburb and a 10 min walk from the city centre of Kilkenny. Close to the school is a large sports complex, allowing students to choose from a large array of sports including football, aerobics, dancing, hockey and horse riding. On a regular basis, external speakers visit the school and present an interesting topic of choice to the students.

Students can get involved in many different areas, ranging from the choir club to societies such as 'Young Scientist' or 'Energise Week'. Listed as a 'Green School', the school takes an active role in showing the importance of environmental protection.

**Sports (selection):** Horse Riding, Hurling, Athletics, Basketball, Tennis, Volleyball, Hiking, Camogie, Soccer

**Clubs (selection):** Debating, Choir, 'Young Scientist', Theatre, Art, 'Energise Week'

**Student numbers:** approx. 900 girls

**Accommodation:** Host family



### 'Kilkenny College' Secondary High School, Kilkenny

Kilkenny College (KCK) is a vibrant and dynamic school offering a wide range of classes, courses and extracurricular activities. Whether you're talented in linguistics, athletics or art - KCK has something on offer for everyone.

Rich in history (founded in 1666), KCK has gained the reputation of an excellent high school with students attending their modern and large campus from all over the world. KCK is an outstanding school in all respects and is one of the 10 most established institutions in Ireland.

The on-campus sports facilities are superb: besides a large indoor sports-hall, there are several outdoor sports fields (rugby, hockey, football etc.), 12 tennis courts and many green areas.

**Sports (selection):** Horseback Riding, Athletics, Basketball, Tennis, Badminton, Rugby, Field Hockey, Volleyball, Swimming, Golf, Football

**Clubs (selection):** Debating, Musical, Theatre, Art, Various Musical Instruments, Dancing, Computer Club, Drama.

**Student numbers:** approx. 800 boys and girls

**Accommodation:** Campus dormitory



### 'CBS' Secondary High School, Kilkenny

CBS is an 'all-boys' school and situated in the heart of Kilkenny City, only a 2 min. walk from high street. It was founded by the Christian brotherhood in 1860. There are very good sports facilities on and off the campus. The buildings have been recently renovated and are equipped with computer and science labs.

CBS offers a wide range of academic subjects, with specialisation in areas such as wood processing, graphic design and art. There are many extracurricular courses on offer, particularly from the musical spectrum e.g. a choir and jazz band, just to name a few.

**Sports (selection):** Horse Riding, Hurling, Athletics, Handball, Basketball, Golf, Football

**Clubs (selection):** Debating, Musical, Theatre, Art, Various Musical Instruments, IT Club, Chess, Jazz Band.

**Student numbers:** approx. 650 boys

**Accommodation:** Host family





## Frequently Asked Questions

### Application procedure

We provide comprehensive information about our partner schools (incl. the school's website). Parents and students can make an informed decision about the kind of school they wish their child to attend. As we know our partner schools best, we review each provisional request for information and suggest schools which match the student's profile.

Once a school has been chosen, we gather all necessary documentation and the deposit for the upcoming "Irish Experience". We then make the application to the school on behalf of the parent. If the application is unsuccessful, we can make a new application to another school. If requested, we happily make arrangements to visit the selected school before the start of the academic year.

### Arrival to / departure from Ireland

We will meet all academic students at Dublin Airport (DUB) and transfer them to their accommodation (host family or boarding school). An airport transfer is also provided for students upon their departure from Ireland. We gladly offer our assistance with all other mid-year airport transfers (at an additional charge).

### Emergencies & medical issues

Both, parents and students are given a 24-hour, 7-day week emergency number. In emergencies, we can always be contacted. When deemed necessary, a representative from mackdonald language academy will accompany the student to the doctor or the dentist and will assist with any documentation necessary for insurance.

### Extracurricular activities & sports

Upon request, we help our students arrange and organize activities and sports outside of the school (e.g. music lessons, choir, swimming, horse-riding, ballet dancing etc.).

### Holidays & mid-term breaks

During mid-term breaks (October and May), students stay with their host family (inclusive).

During the Christmas and Easter holidays, students either stay with their host family (at an additional charge) or spend the holidays in their home country.

### Host family accommodation

We ask all our students to complete a detailed host family application form. The provided information is used to match each student to the best possible host family.

All our host families have been carefully selected and are continuously checked to meet our very high standards (and also to fulfil the requirements of host families as advised by ACELS, the Advisory Council for English Language Schools). We will visit the host family during the student's stay in Ireland to ensure everyone is happy. We believe in active communication: students can always contact us if there is a problem.

### Orientation event

Shortly after their arrival to Ireland, all academic students meet for a full-day orientation event in Kilkenny. Depending on the exact arrival date and time, this can be done on an individual or small group basis.

Each student is given assistance with shopping for the school uniform, text books and any other necessary items. All students are given essential information regarding their upcoming stay in Ireland incl. our 24-hour emergency number.

### Reporting & counselling

We provide full academic reports to the student's parents by forwarding all school reports to the parent as soon as they become available. We believe in active communication: we are always there to help. Our educational counsellors regularly meet with each student and keep up to date with how everyone is progressing in school.

### Social programme & ESL lessons

Students receive an itinerary of the activities planned during their "Irish Experience", including social outings, full-day excursions and events organised by mackdonald language academy. A 2-hour per week English language programme (ESL) for our international academic students in Kilkenny, is available at an additional charge.





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