

FAQs

1. What course is most suited to my child – an A or a B course?

We strongly recommend that all students attending Coláiste na bhFiann for the first time attend a B course regardless of their age (Please see the ruling for Course A and Course B)

2. My daughter's friend has been on a Rule B course and is now attending a Rule A course?

Would it be suitable for my daughter to attend with her? Coláiste na bhFiann strongly recommends that all students attending for the first time attend a B course regardless of where their friends are going.

3. We live close to the college in Ráth Chairn so want to send our child there?

Is this suitable? It is important to choose a course suitable to your child's ability as opposed to the location of the college. Please see the ruling on the A and B courses.

4. What time of the summer is most beneficial to attend a course?

Our August courses are most beneficial, particularly to those sitting exams the following June.

5. What does the course fee cover?

The course fee includes accommodation, supervision, meals, tuition, and all course activities. It also covers a ticket to Tóstal na bhFiann which takes place at the end of the summer. All students attending Coláiste na bhFiann may attend Cumann na bhFiann for a nominal charge.

6. When should I apply?

Coláiste na bhFiann's booking system works on a first come-first served basis. We strongly recommend from experience that each parent should book their son/daughter in as early as possible regardless of what friends may wish to do. Bookings open at Tóstal na bhFiann every year to past pupils and in the first week of September to all other students.

7. Are Coláiste na bhFiann courses run in residential colleges or in houses with Bean an Tí in a Gaeltacht area?

Coláiste na bhFiann offers courses in both residential colleges and in houses with Bean an Tí in Gaeltacht areas. The breakdown is as follows: Residential College: Ionad Óige na hÉireann, Droim Rí, Co Meath Houses: Ráth Chairn, Co Meath, Gaoth Dobhair, Co. Donegal, and Rosmuc, Co. Galway.

8. What is involved in an interview?

Before attending a Coláiste na bhFiann course each student accompanied by at least one parent, must attend an informal group interview. It is necessary to attend the interview for the full duration. This enables us to assess the student's standard of Irish and gives all concerned the opportunity to meet beforehand. A short video will also be shown to the group giving insight in Coláiste na bhFiann, covering all aspects of our courses. Any queries will be discussed along with each student's personal dietary/medical etc. requirements. A prerequisite of attending a Coláiste na bhFiann A course is learning both Amhrán na bhFiann and Amhrán an Choláiste while Amhrán na bhFiann only is required for a B Course.

9. What if he/she does not pass the interview?

Every child is given the opportunity to repeat an interview. The office will contact to make arrangements for this.

10. My son/daughter has been to interview before does he/she need to go again?

If your son or daughter has attended the same level course the previous year then there is no need for another interview. If a student is attending an A level course for the first time following a B level course then he/she will have to sit an interview.

11. When must I pay the balance of fee?

In the case of a new student the balance of fee must be paid on the night of the interview providing the student has secured a place (from a waiting list if applicable), whereas a returning student who is not obliged to do an interview will receive a balance of fee notification during the first week in March. Where a course has a waiting list balance of fees must be paid by the final date (March) otherwise the place may be offered to a person from the waiting list.

12. My child is on a waiting list for a course. Do I need to pay the balance of fees?

Balance of fee is not due for those on waiting lists, as you are not guaranteed a place.

13. Does Coláiste na bhFiann organise transport to the courses?

Coláiste na bhFiann does not organise transport to or from the colleges.

14. My son will have four football matches during the course that he will have to attend. Is this possible?

No. Coláiste na bhFiann run total immersion courses so it is important that students are committed to attend the course in full.

15. My daughter and her friends would like to be housed together? Can this be organised?

It is policy not to house friends or family members together due to the total immersion nature of the course. Habits of a lifetime cannot be changed overnight in terms of language. By separating young people who are used to speaking English to each other there is less chance that they will speak English to each other. It can also be off-putting for students attending on their own to see groups of friends attending together. We strive to create an environment whereby all students get to know each other within the first 2-3 days, thereby eliminating the risk of cliques.

16. What is the insurance cover in relation to personal items?

We have made every effort to ensure that all aspects of our course and activities are properly covered by insurance. Coláiste na bhFiann cannot be responsible for students' personal property and it is not possible to obtain insurance cover for such items e.g. clothing, make-up/toiletries, jewellery, musical instruments, sports equipment, etc. On the advice of our Insurers we are recommending that all valuables which the students may bring with them on the course be covered under the 'All Risks' section of the home insurance. Musical instruments and sports equipment are the most likely items in question. All students will be

responsible for their own personal belongings and we suggest that they do not lend them to other students. Unfortunately, we cannot assume responsibility for lost property.

17. Would it be possible for my son to use his mobile phone in the evenings?

There is a zero-tolerance policy with regards to mobile phones. Contact with your child can be facilitated through the college mobile phone should it be necessary.

18. When can my child write home?

All students send a letter home on the first Tuesday of the course and at regular intervals throughout. These are all posted on the Tuesday. Should you not have received it by Thursday please phone the course. Receiving letters is very important to the students. We ask that all parents make an effort to send letters or notes to their children while they are with us.

19. When can I visit my child?

Visiting is for 2 hours on a Sunday. This runs from 2.30 – 4.30. College activities continue during this time.

20. Who is the main point of contact while my child is on the course?

The course manager or an Bainisteoir is the main point of contact while your child is on the course. You will receive their number on the first day. Alternatively contact the Head Office during office hours (9.30 - 5.00 Monday to Friday)

21. Is there a closing ceremony on the course?

Yes. All courses have a closing ceremony which showcases the work the students have done during the course. It is important that parents and family are in attendance.

22. Does Coláiste na bhFiann provide opportunities to use Irish during the year?

Yes. Coláiste na bhFiann has a nationwide network of youth clubs, Cumann na bhFiann, that run on a weekly basis from September to Easter. This provides an opportunity for your child to maintain the fluency they have attained on the courses.

23. What are students not allowed bring with them on the course?

English books/ dictionaries, Walkman/iPod/mp3 player, Mobile phone, Hair straightener, Aerosols, Digital Camera (Disposable recommended)

24. What should students bring with them?

- Rain gear
- One set of good clothes and sufficient clothes for the full course (Labelled in Irish)
- Whatever musical instrument the student plays
- Sportswear, swimwear, swim cap, runners and flipflops
- Some stamped addressed envelopes (home address in Irish)
- Duvet or sleeping bag with pillow and sheets
- Sufficient towels and toiletries
- A bag for laundry