

St. Aidan's Comprehensive School Cootehill Transition Year 2024-2025

opportunities for a lifetime increased social awareness

develop new skills *varied teaching strategies*
 promote enterprise and initiative **self-directed learning**
Linking the School with the local community
 Orientation towards adult and working life
 Learning-Led, rather than examination driven
 'catch up' - with remediation and compensation
INTERNAL EVALUATION *Schoolbased certification*
 Promoting intrinsic motivation
 LEARNING HOW TO RELATE WELL TO OTHER PEOPLE
 a distinct one-year programme *education for maturity*
Teamwork skills *improved social competencies*
 work experience placements
developing study skills

Transition Year

SAMPLE SUBJECTS
 increased motivation
 LEADING TO MORE INFORMED CHOICES

Personal development *independent learners*
 enhancing self-esteem *inter-disciplinary learning*
multiple intelligences different learning styles

Trips *academically challenging* *activity-based learning*
short modules
 learning from experiences
Project work *varied forms of assessment*
 EXTENDING LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

From the dependency of childhood towards the independence of adulthood

Transition Year - a different year of learning



Introduction

Since the opening of our school in 1966 we have provided for the education and development of the young people in our community. Almost 60 years later we are continuing in that great tradition with our Transition Year Programme which will broaden the learning experience and potential of our students. This is a highly structured programme aimed at developing a more mature student ready for the demands of Leaving Certificate and later study or work. The course is designed to act as a bridge between the Junior and Senior Cycles.

Pressures on young people have never been so great as at present. Education in this era is challenging in new ways for all students and their families. It is important therefore that there should also be an emphasis on the personal development of the pupils and on developing their social awareness and competence. Our programme will offer a broad educational experience to the students. We have taken great care in the drawing up of our programme to include sufficient content to provide a very solid foundation for the Leaving Certificate.

A great deal of time and commitment has been invested by staff in preparing for the introduction of the Transition Year, they have researched best practice and explored ways of making the Transition Year an enjoyable, valuable experience for the students, while still ensuring that a solid foundation is laid to maximise achievement in the Leaving Certificate.

The Transition Year Programme is proving to be a very positive experience for our students, and we encourage all the third-year students with their parents/guardians to take this opportunity to find out more about the programme.



***“Tell me and I’ll forget. Show me, and I may not remember.
Involve me, and I’ll understand””***

Angela Flanagan
Principal

Niall Magee
Deputy Principal

Deirdre Marren
Transition Year Co-ordinator

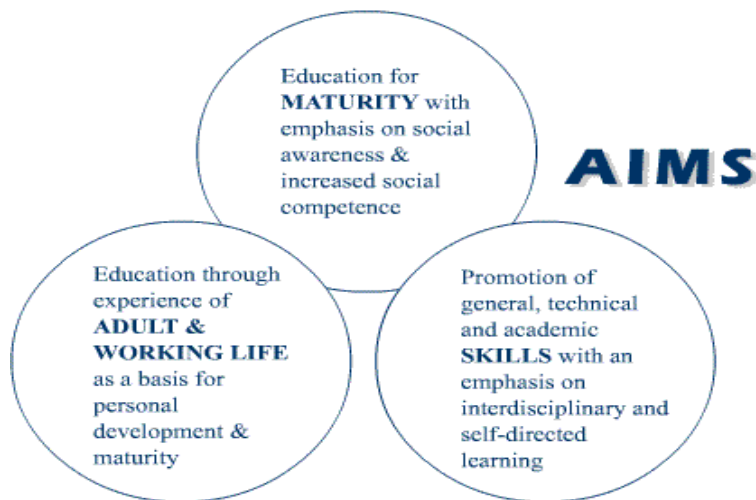
THE TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAMME

DES Mission Statement for Transition Year

“To promote the personal, social, vocational, and educational development of students and prepare them for their role as autonomous and participative members of society”

(DES, Transition Year Guidelines 1994/1995)

Transition Year Aims



Transition Year Rationale

- To provide a learning structure which promotes maturity
- To develop a wide range of cognitive and emotional skills
- To be learning led rather than exam driven
- To ensure breadth and balance in the curriculum
- To provide experiential learning
- To challenge students in all areas of development
- To facilitate interdisciplinary and cross-curricular teaching and learning
- To develop life skills
- To learn through networking with other schools and social agencies
- To encourage variety in teaching and learning styles
- To enable students to become independent, self-directed and self-regulated learners

Some recent research and findings are available here
<https://ncca.ie/media/3758/scr-erc-ty-research.pdf>



What do we know about Transition Year? Looking to the future



Author:
Dr Aidan Clerkin (Educational Research Centre, Dublin)

School-level provision of TY has increased consistently over time, from 60% of schools in 1994/95 to 89% in 2014/15.

Student-level uptake of TY (where available) has also increased consistently, from 31% of the eligible cohort in 1994/95 to 65% in 2014/15. Since 2008/09, a majority of students have taken part in TY each year.

Why opt for Transition Year?

Challenges Facing Young People

1. The Leaving Certificate & Points Race
2. Third Level Education
3. Adult and Working life.

1. Leaving Certificate:

- Informed Subject Choice
- Multiple Intelligences
- Study Skills
- Independent self-directed learning
- Assessment /Self assessment
- CAO choices /course requirements

Evidence:

- 2019 study ERSC
- Longitudinal Survey NCCA
- Commission on the Points System Report

2. Third Level:

- High dropout/failure rate /
- Age profile/maturity
- Life skills
- Self management skills
- Time management skills
- Study skills –independent self-directed
- Group /Project work /Research skills
- I.C.T. skills

3. Adult and Working life:

- Self esteem/awareness / assertiveness
- Relationships
- Teamwork
- Maturity /critical judgement
- Careers / Work experience /Work simulation
- Interviews – C.V., Portfolios
- Technical skills
- I.C.T. skills /I.C.D.L
- Health Education
- Certification

The Transition Year Programme in St. Aidan's Comprehensive – an overview

1. Core Subjects

- Irish
- English
- Mathematics
- Guidance/Reflection
- Religious education
- Physical education
- MFL -German/French/Spanish (must continue with MFL from Junior Cycle) Alternative available for those with no MFL from JC.
- SPHE
- Enterprise (there are options here e.g. Business enterprise, Junk Kouture, GAA Future Leaders – these may vary from year to year)

2. Currently we offer **20 modular options** (5 per block, approx. 7 weeks long) which include the 16 traditional Leaving Cert. subjects as well as non-exam tasters (these may change slightly at times)

Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Agricultural Science, Music, Accountancy, Business, Art, Home Economics, History, Geography, Construction, Engineering, DCG, Computer Science, LCPE, Photography, Driver Education, "Lift" (leadership) programme, Sustainability

3. Possible TY projects/activities

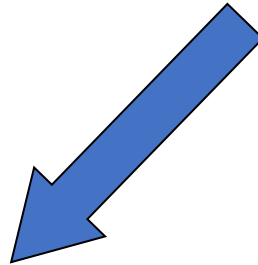
- GAA Coaching programmes
- Active Schools programme
- Young Social Innovators
- Mental Health Matters
- St. Vincent de Paul Youth for Justice Project
- "Dragon's Den" type business competition
- John Paul II Awards
- Mini-Med (online medical studies)
- Work experience placement
- Visiting speakers
- Field trips e.g. Ploughing Championships
- European Trip (voluntary)
- Outdoor trips/bonding activities e.g. Carlingford, Causey Farm.
- Trade fairs
- Fundraising activities
- Fun Run/Wellfest
- First Aid training
- Peer Education training.
- ICDL

4. other activities/events

There may be possibilities for the **students to work as a team** and engage in project management, to organize/be part of an event such as a charity or fundraising activity/show/musical/orienteering/national competitions.

SUBJECT/MODULE	CLASSES PER WEEK
MATHS	3
ENGLISH	3
IRISH	3
MODERN LANGUAGE	2
ICDL (I.T.)	2
RELIGION	1
HEALTH EDUCATION	1
P.E.	1
ENTERPRISE	1
REFLECTION/GUIDANCE	1
OPTION 1*	2
OPTION 2*	2
OPTION 3*	2
OPTION 4*	2
OPTION 5*	2

A sample TY timetable might look like this...



In 2023-2024 this is how the timetable worked, it is subject to change in terms of length of blocks (dependent on student numbers)

*The Options 1-5 changed in each block. There are 4 blocks per year which last for approx. 7 weeks and students are offered all the subjects listed in box 2 (see previous page)



Workshops/speakers/other activities

During the year there are varied team-building and bonding type activities, visiting speakers /workshops etc.

Recent examples include (this may vary year to year)



- Forensic Fun workshop
- Lego Brickx workshop
- Marie Keating Foundation Cancer Awareness
- "Don't be mean behind your screen" workshop
- Gambling/addiction awareness
- Law
- Ethics
- Coco's Law
- Linking with local businesses/Chamber of Commerce for events e.g. Christmas Markets/St. Patrick's Day parade
- SVP link
- TY Retreat
- Day trip to Emerald Park
- Activity Day in Causey Farm
- Pumpkin Carving
- First Aid
- Charity/fundraising activities
- John Paul II Awards
- LA519 QPR training
- Garda Open Days/visit to school

Work Experience



At St. Aidan's Comprehensive School, we see work experience as an integral part of education for working life.

Currently, students have one week of placement just before the Christmas break and two weeks before the summer break which give the possibility of 3 different weeklong experiences over the course of the year.

Work Experience aims to build students confidence, work ethic, curiosity and responsibility, all qualities, which heighten their maturity, hence helping them to make well informed career decisions.

Work experience gives students an insight into the world of work and helps them develop their social and life skills. It will be pre-planned followed up and supported by the Transition Year team. In organising work experience, matching the long-term interests and aspirations of the student is a priority.

Students will undergo a structured preparation for work experience and should maintain a folder detailing their experiences, which will include an employer's report. This folder may form part of the overall assessment for students.

Other external work experience opportunities may arise – e.g. Garda work placement, Northern Sound, Mental Health work experience in St. Patrick's – students can be facilitated to attend these during TY.

Career Investigation, Mock Interviews, Industrial visits, Guest Speakers and Study Skills may all form part of the Work Experience Programme.



2019 study findings in terms of how TY students benefit academically:

There is reliable evidence that students who do TY achieve a substantially higher performance in the Leaving Certificate than their peers who skip TY (even after their prior Junior Certificate performance and other background factors are taken into account). However, the reasons for this difference remain unclear. Possible contributors include:

- self-regulatory or organisational skills learned by TY participants;
- motivational differences related to students' attitudes, aspirations, or vocational intentions (for example, if exposure to a variety of subjects, work environments, and other experiences helps students to acquire more focused goals for the senior cycle or post-school life);
- differences in cognitive, behavioural, or emotional engagement at school (for example, students who perceive stronger relationships with teachers are more likely to ask for help, which could support subject content knowledge and broader learning strategies);
- students making better subject choices, informed by TY sampling and work experience placements;
- the differing demographic and educational profiles of students who tend to take part in TY and those who do not;
- or other factors.

A **NCCA Longitudinal Study** looked at the results of students who sat the Leaving Certificate in 1996 compared to those in 1997. Findings included: -

- Mean CAO points very similar for the whole cohort
- TY students do better by an average 46 points
- Repeat students only gain by an average of 5 points
- TY candidates more likely to be 'educationally adventurous'

What every parent and students should know about Transition Year

Among the reported benefits of TY participation are: (From ERSC 2019 study)

- making new friends and mixing with other groups
- forming better relationships with teachers
- having a break from high-stakes examination stress before entering senior cycle
- more varied teaching and assessment methods, such as portfolios and project work
- going on trips in Ireland or abroad
- getting to sample a range of subjects
- doing work experience and having opportunities to engage in the ‘adult world’
- thinking about and learning about possible future careers or areas of study
- making stronger subject choices for senior cycle (after subject sampling and insights achieved from work experience)
- taking part in events, mini-companies/fundraisers, and other medium- or long-term projects
- developing self-regulatory and organisational skills (e.g., time management)
- feeling more mature and independent
- finding new interests and developing new skills (personal, social, practical, and artistic)
- developing stronger social skills and confidence.



Profile of a Transition Year student

A student considering Transition Year should ideally display certain characteristics. One is expected to be:

- motivated
- hardworking
- committed to education.
- anxious to do well academically and in other areas of school life.
- committed to full attendance for all aspects of the programme
- willing to try new experiences.
- open to challenges
- ambitious
- able to work well independently and as a team member.
- interested in maximising their potential as students.

Assessment in Transition Year

“Assessment is an integral part of the Teaching and Learning process” (Dept. of Ed. Guidelines 1994/5)

Assessment is a key part of any worthwhile learning programme. Transition Year is an opportunity to move beyond the narrow focus of end-of-year, written exams. The emphasis is on varied and on-going assessment with students themselves becoming involved in diagnosing their own learning strengths and weaknesses. Project work, portfolio work and exhibitions of students' work are also encouraged. There will be reporting after each block to parents and certification of students who complete the programme.

Appropriate modes of assessment may include all or some of the following:

- Summative assessment
- Formative assessment
- Written, practical, oral and aural assessment
- Report of Work experience
- Projects, Portfolios and Exhibitions of Work
- Handwritten or digital/e-portfolios
- Pupil diary /Logbook recording personal progress
- Records of skills and competencies attained.
- Interview

Certification through Credits

End of year Certification and Awards in TY, (Pass, Merit, Distinction) are partially based on the acquisition of credits throughout the year. These are gathered by the coordinator after each of the four blocks. These are based on criteria such as...

Behaviour
Attitude
Homework
Course work
Participation
Punctuality
Enthusiasm
Initiative

Will students have homework?

Yes. Homework will be assigned regularly across the different subject areas and students will use the school journal as normal. This homework may include the traditional academic homework/project/presentation/oral work, different teaching and learning methodologies associated with the programme. This will help to establish best practice for the Leaving Certificate.

What about exams?

'Assessment should be an integral part of the learning process in Transition Year, not separate from it' (D.E.S.Guidelines)

Assessment/testing may take varied formats appropriate to the subject/module/activity

- Portfolio assessment
- End of block exams/reports
- Oral /Aural assessment
- Project work
- Self-assessment
- Peer-assessment
- Written /Practical Class test
- Skills assessment.

Focus within subject areas and how might this be of benefit in Senior Cycle

Students follow core subjects throughout the year and the options subjects for a block of 7/8 weeks. There may be a focus on some areas that are relevant for Senior Cycle e.g.:

- Irish and Mathematics are now banded in Transition Year, allowing a division into Higher and Ordinary streams.
- Oral skills in languages which will be beneficial for the oral exams in the Leaving Certificate.
- Research and presentation skills for projects/briefs in the Leaving Certificate.
- Alongside this, the Transition Year Programme aims to equip the students with skills to cope with the workload of the Leaving Certificate, to put in place strategies to organize and plan career options, and in general to deal with any anxiety/stress issues that may arise.
- Specific Leaving Cert course work may be completed.
- Activities in TY are also planned in such a way as to develop student confidence, maturity, motivation, initiative, responsibility, and leadership skills. All of this will be very relevant to creating a good Curriculum Vitae (CV) for college/work placement/summer jobs.

Is there a danger that students may lose study skills in TY?

There is this danger if the school and home do not work together to ensure that essential skills are maintained during the TY programme. However, at St. Aidan's Comprehensive School there is a defined policy regarding homework and assessment in Transition Year as in all years and this ensures study skills are maintained.

2019 research shows

Concerns over losing study skills over the course of the year, and the substantial additional expense associated with TY, are also common.

- These reservations can contribute to Third Year students who are interested in some of the other experiences of TY deciding not to enrol in the first place...
- ... or to TY students experiencing regret at the perceived loss of academic momentum in cases where they also feel that they gained relatively little from the extra year. (However, there is little evidence that Fifth Year or Sixth Year students who took part in TY experience any subsequent disadvantage.)

Cost

- The fee for Transition Year 2024-2025 is €300
- This includes ICDL accreditation which costs €100.
- It also includes payment for the TY journal and use of a locker.
- Payment links will be sent to you to enable online payments.
- The fee must be paid **IN FULL** before the start of the academic year. It can be paid in 3 instalments - (1 x ICDL - €100 and 2 instalments of €100 each)
- This fee covers activities/workshops and two away trips (e.g. Emerald Park and Causey Farm).
- We usually offer a separate, non-compulsory EU trip. The fee will be payable to the tour company Saffron Promotions on an instalment basis. This is not included in the TY fee.