

Transition Year 2010-2011



'Tis Education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclin'd'
Alexander Pope 1688-1744

Introduction

The Junior Certificate is a three year course with very little time for students to learn outside the curriculum. The aim of Transition Year is to provide the student with a year in which to mature and develop as an individual, while completing an array of subjects not normally studied through a variety of mediums. Transition Year also has to maintain the core subjects carried through to the Leaving Certificate – Maths, English, Irish – therefore students are expected to commit themselves to this section of the year with equal enthusiasm. In the end, Transition year is about what the student can give to the programme as well as about what the programme can do for her.

<p>‘Children have to be educated but they have also to be left to educate themselves’ Ernest Dimmet</p>

The Transition Year Programme

The programme is divided into various elements of learning –

- Core subjects
- Optional subjects
- Skills
- Work Experience
- Performing Arts
- Sports and Outward Bounds
- Community Awareness and Charity work
- Careers

The aim is to provide the student with a rounded learning experience. Students will be expected to extend themselves outside of their usual comfort zones. While the programme is structured and results-driven, the sheer range of activities, both academic and social, really expands the students’ horizons. They discover their individual aptitudes and interests, and Transition Year puts students in a much better position to make informed, mature choices about Leaving Certificate options.

Our Transition Year Co-ordinator will be supported by a Team TY which is set up to involve teachers from various areas of the curriculum in the running and planning of the course. There is also a set of form teachers for students to liaise with concerning their progress who meet with the co-ordinator once a week to discuss the progress of pupils and other issues. The aim is to help each student reach her potential during this year.

TY 2010/2011

Core Subjects – (all students take these subjects for the whole year)

Subject	No. of periods per week
English	4
Irish /(Project Management)	3
Maths	4
Languages (French, Spanish, German)	3
PE	3
Lecture/Community awareness	3
Careers	1
SPHE	1
RE	1
TY Musical/Drama (Performance and Production management)	3

Rotation Subjects – all students take each subject for one third of the year

Rotation	Subjects	Periods
A	Biology/Chemistry/Physics	4
B	Keyboard skills/Digital Media/TY magazine	3
C	Psychology/ Driver Education/Law	2
D	Swimming/Pilates/ Yoga or Kick-boxing	2

Rotation Subjects – all students take each subject for one quarter of the Year.

D	Art / Bridge / Cooking / Jewellery Making	2
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Optional Subjects – students choose TWO subjects from each option for half year courses.

Option	Subjects	No. of periods
X	Geography / Business/ Interior Design / Music Workshop / Language / Latin	3
Q	Home Economics / History / Japanese / Classical studies / Accounting	3

Transition Year Subjects

Core Subjects

Religious Education

Issues of social concern, such as injustice, poverty and prejudice, are highlighted in the Religious Education course, with a focus on individuals and organisations that help the poor and the sick. The course looks at highlighting the ordinary heroes amongst us whose work makes such a difference, hoping that it will inspire the student in her community service.

Careers

Students learn important career skills, working with the School's Career Guidance Counsellor, in this first year of a three year Careers Programme. The world of work, the myriad of work sectors and job options, and skills such as the preparation of a curriculum vitae and job applications, are all part of the programme. There is the opportunity to review the various third-level institutions and courses, and to engage in some vocational testing to assess interests and aptitudes. This module also helps students prepare for, and review, their Transition Year Work Experience so that they can make a more considered choice of subjects for Fifth Year.

Work Experience

All students engage in three weeks of valuable work experience, one at the end of November and the other two usually during February. They must secure the placement themselves, keep a daily logbook, and write up a report on their experience. Employers are also asked to provide a report on the student. Ideally, students should look for their placements before the end of the current school year, and follow-up the request in September. It is also recommended that students seek placements with a view to exploring their future career interests, if possible.

S.P.H.E.

This course aims to foster confidence and self-esteem. It covers relationships and sexuality, as well as challenging topics such as decision-making, diet and lifestyle, substance abuse, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, serious illness, stress and relaxation.

Physical Education

Holistic education promotes training of the mind and the body. A varied range of activities is covered, during class and after school, including health-related exercise, netball, basketball, hockey, athletics, tennis, rounders, cricket, dance, gymnastics, swimming, golf, tag rugby, pilates, ice-skating, and more. Swimming is a compulsory element of the programme and the course caters for all abilities. Students are taught self-survival techniques and basic life-saving, and can take the Life-Saving Certificate Examination, and can go on to take the Life Guard Certificate.

English

Poetry, the novel, drama, film appreciation, and creative and practical writing, form the backbone of the course, helping the student to realise the importance of English in all areas of life. Participation in competitions, plays, public speaking and debating is encouraged, and while enjoyment of the subject is the main aim, the course is a good foundation for the subject at Leaving Certificate level.

Students, for whom English is not their first language, take an English language test at the start of the year and can also have TEFL classes (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), if required, at an extra charge.

Irish

Irish in Transition Year comprises oral and aural work, language and grammar skills, and a fascinating course in Folklore and Mythology. Students are set in Higher and Ordinary level classes, although all levels complete the same modules. The course is an important foundation for the Leaving Certificate, while also encouraging a true appreciation of the Irish language and culture. Students will also prepare the school for Seachtain na Gaeilge.

Mathematics

The aim of the Transition Year programme in Mathematics is to increase student confidence by consolidating basic mathematical concepts and algorithms and to encourage more students to continue with this subject at Higher Level in the Senior Cycle. Students are set into two mixed ability Higher and two set Ordinary groups.

For all students the year is broken into modules to allow team teaching. Among the modules included are one on the consolidation of algebra at both levels, and another which promotes spatial awareness and preparation for Project Maths, using material which is practically orientated and 'pupil-friendly'. Assessment is by way of tests at the end of each module and for those in the higher groups a terminal examination in May.

Students who have not taken the Junior Certificate examination in Mathematics may be required to sit an assessment at the start of the school year.

Digital Education

In the Digital Education class students will be exposed to all aspects of technology, from the technical foundations of the things we take for granted to the application of modern technology in their daily lives, education and future workplaces. Students will develop technological skills that can be used across the curriculum and produce an assignment over the course of the module.

TY Magazine/Newspaper

The idea behind this course is to teach each group the work behind putting together a newspaper. They will learn how to work as a group, choose storylines, write articles, hold interviews, edit work and above all be creative in their ideas and expression. Each class group would be responsible for three monthly editions as part of their assessment whilst also ensuring that each student is given a role on the paper.

Driver Education

This course aims to provide students with a thorough understanding of the fundamentals of driving and the rules of the road. There will be emphasis on developing responsible attitudes and driving behaviour.

Keyboard Skills

In order to maximise our interaction with technology it is a huge advantage to have fast and accurate keyboard skills. This module will be an opportunity for students to improve their current skills using a variety of programmes, games and fun activities. Each student will be assessed at the end of the module and will be given a certificate with their 'words per minute' and accuracy scores.

Performing Arts and Production Management

Drama and Dance and *Vocal and Choral Training* are two sections within this module which combine and culminate in the acclaimed Transition Year theatrical production, and the Irish Board of Speech and Drama Musical Theatre examinations. In drama and dance, students work on self-expression, characterization, stagecraft, improvisation, dance and acting skills.

Students who do not wish to be a performer will be part of the Production Team. These students will have responsibilities in the areas of PR, Budgeting, Sales, Costumes, Set Design, Stage Management etc.

Each year our students find this module to be a highlight of their overall Transition Year experience and the sense of achievement is shared by all.

Physics

This course aims to be of general interest and to show the practical relevance of physics to both society and the individual. The theme of the course is 'Harnessing Energy' and it looks at three main areas; the History of Technology; Electricity - Friend and Foe; and Energy and Sustainability. This course is very beneficial for those who may be considering Physics for Leaving Certificate, and forms a good foundation for further study.

Chemistry

Students gain a fuller understanding of what chemistry is about, and its relevance to everyday life. The module will focus mainly on Cosmetic Chemistry. Students will gain an understanding of the application of Chemistry in industry in order to develop a broader range of practical techniques.

Biology

As well as extending the knowledge and skills-base of the student, the biology course stimulates interest in the living world, encourages students to investigate and discuss topical issues in biology, and broadens their awareness of the range of careers in biology and related areas. Students learn practical skills and techniques, including planning an investigation and dealing with data, and the course complements, and prepares students for, Leaving Certificate Biology, without encroaching on the Biology syllabus.

Psychology

This course gives a broad introduction to the wide-ranging discipline of Psychology. It will touch on a number of topics and theories including psychological research, the brain, cognitive development, stress, language development, social development, emotional development and multiple intelligences. The course will follow a directive path leading towards each student undertaking and reporting on an individual child study project.

Law

This course will deal with the main areas of Law, to include amongst others the Constitution, Criminal Law, Contract Law, Company Law, Labour Law, Tort and the difference between Criminal and Civil Law. The students will learn how an Act comes into existence. Case Law will be dealt with and past and current cases as reported in the Media will be discussed to encourage the students to take an interest in television and newspaper reports. They will learn that Justice, must be administered in public and that the courts are open to everyone (in

camera cases excepted) and they will be encouraged to visit their own local courts and the Four Courts.

Cookery from around the World

In this module, students will get the opportunity to prepare, cook and serve traditional cuisine from a variety of countries including Japan, India, China, Thailand and Italy over a 6 week period. They will also experience the traditions and eating habits of each culture. In the final week, students will be faced with the challenge of working in groups to produce an appropriate dish, from a culture of their choice, using a specified range of ingredients.

Jewellery Making

This course really speaks for itself with students being challenged to design and create their own jewellery which can then be used as part of a mini-company venture or as Christmas gifts or sold for charity!

Bridge

This is a short introductory course in the card game of Bridge. The basics of the game will be taught with students will be given the chance to play in teams and compete in a tournament ladder which will also run during some lunch-times.

Art

The aim of this course is to develop, through structured practical work, the student's aesthetic sensibilities and powers of critical appraisal, appreciation and evaluation. It will enhance the student's qualities of imagination, creativity, originality and ingenuity in a relaxed environment. Each student will be expected to produce a finished work of art at the end of their short course.

Lecture Period/Community Awareness

This period each week will be an opportunity for a variety of activities.

1. There will be a programme of guest speakers on a wide range of topics including current political and environmental issues and interesting career choices.
2. There will be a focus on Community Awareness and students will be encouraged to become involved in some capacity in their community during Transition Year.
3. Charity and Fundraising events are an important part of Transition Year. Students will be encouraged to come up with innovative ideas for fundraising as well as being involved in our whole school SUCH organisation.
4. Some trips will also be organised in this timeslot.

Optional subjects students may undertake

Please note that any student who intends taking a particular language in the Leaving Certificate must take that language in Transition Year. French and Spanish classes are limited to students who have taken that subject for Junior Certificate. This year we are introducing German for beginners if there is sufficient demand.

French

Students gain a deeper awareness of francophone culture, literature and life, using written and aural extracts from authentic material. The approach integrates speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, and incorporates other school subjects and Transition Year experiences. There are grammar-based tests as well as reading, oral and aural exercises during the year, and Transition Year French builds on, and expands, the work of the previous three years, providing a solid foundation for Leaving Certificate French.

Beginners German

For students taking Beginners German the core elements of the language will be covered-oral, aural, written and reading. The course will aim to provide the student with some practical aspects of the German language. Students will undertake role-plays, which will be turned into short film pieces. Learning a language is a way to get to know a country and its people. An awareness of German, Austrian and Swiss culture will be fostered through the use of magazines, newspapers, TV and film.

Spanish

This course aims to consolidate and broaden the students' knowledge of the language and the culture of Spain, and other Spanish-speaking countries. There will be a strong emphasis on the acquisition of oral and aural skills, using websites, podcasts and DVDs as well as worksheets, role-play, games etc. There will be weekly classes on the computers, where the students will use the internet and selected Spanish language web pages to enhance their computer skills, further their knowledge of Spanish and provide them with the opportunity for autonomous learning. Each student will prepare and present a portfolio of their year's work for assessment.

Latin

This course consolidates the Junior Certificate course with the continuation of translation from Latin to English and a far greater emphasis on translation from English to Latin. The English to Latin translation will greatly enhance the pupils' knowledge of Latin grammar. As with any language practice makes perfect and pupils will have written homework on an ongoing basis to prepare them for the Leaving Certificate course by constantly revising vocabulary and applying the rules of grammar. Pupils will have access to news programmes in Latin on the internet. The course will provide an opportunity to look at the history and civilization of Imperial Rome and the lives of the early emperors following the death of Julius Caesar through the use of CDs relating to ancient Rome.

Japanese

In 2002, following the Post Primary Languages Initiative by the Department of Education and Science, the Japanese Transition Year module was introduced, producing impressive results. The study of Japanese is totally new, presenting a different challenge to that of European

languages, and this Transition Year module allows students consider the possibility of taking Beginners' Japanese as a Leaving Certificate subject.

Students use specifically created materials that give a taster of the basic spoken language, the three main alphabets, and cultural activity such as calligraphy and origami. Japanese animation and Manga, along with videos from the Japanese Department of Foreign Affairs, are also used to introduce the country's popular youth culture and the many faces of Japan.

Geography and Environmental Studies

The course will mostly focus on environmental studies and fieldwork. The student will be involved in a garden project for the environmental section of the course which will help Rathdown School in the attainment of its Green Flag. They will also conduct Biome studies, fieldwork locally and design a town. It is a course which will reflect the varied occupations that can be pursued with a Geography degree.

Classical Studies

The world of ancient Greece and Rome, and the legacy these important civilisations left to the modern day, is brought to life! A broad range of topics is covered including myth, poetry, history, drama, classical society, religion, art and architecture, both increasing general knowledge and providing a useful background to other academic pursuits, such as English and History. Assessment is based on written and oral work, and two major projects, one on Greece and the other on Rome. Class work and homework involve questionnaires, further reading, and internet use.

History

History in Transition Year examines civil and human rights and man's continuing failure to deal with racism and sectarianism. It looks at the economic realities of political decision making, and the less altruistic motives of world powers.

Topics covered will be selected from the following:

- The Holocaust/Arab-Israeli relations
- Black Civil Rights in the USA
- The Cultural Revolution in China
- The Apartheid System in South Africa

Skills for the new Leaving Certificate History are taught, including analysis and lateral thinking for a broader understanding of world politics and society. There is also an introduction to the Special Studies project, (20% of the Leaving Certificate course), allowing students to prepare background work before Fifth year.

Interior Design

The idea of this short course is to introduce the student to the various elements of Interior Design. Each student will be asked to plan her own room with swatches and fabric pieces, to show her colour choices and design concept. There will be an internal competition for the best design. They will do library and internet research on different influential Interior Designers and become aware of the different courses based Interior Design available to them after School.

Business

This course will follow on from Junior Certificate Business while introducing some practical applications of the course in the areas of Mini-Company and Build-A-Bank. Those who have not taken Junior Certificate Business are also welcome, as it will provide a useful introduction to some of the elements of Leaving Certificate Business.

In the Mini-Company part of the course, enterprise, creativity and imagination will prove invaluable, where the objective is to give students a basic understanding of the skills necessary to run a small business, and to expose them to the particular difficulties and stresses of working as part of a group. Students experience a wide variety of activities associated with business life, including setting up a company, market surveys, finance, raising capital, business plans, division of labour, book-keeping skills, quality control, pricing and subcontracting, all of which culminates in winding down the company, holding a shareholders' AGM, and liquidating assets, thereby answering the essential question as to whether or not the business was a practical success.

Accounting

This course is primarily for students who have not done Junior Certificate Business and who may be interested in doing Leaving Certificate Accounting. It involves instruction on the principles of Double-entry book keeping and will enable the student to be confident in the preparation of the final accounts of a limited company, sole trader and a club/service company. In the past, students from this course have gone on to become the financial managers of the SUCH show and audit their accounts.

Music Workshop

Students have the opportunity to explore and develop their interests in all the different types of music, ranging from classical to popular, and from rock to contemporary styles. The aim is to draw on the enthusiasm, ability, and technical competence of the student, encouraging individual and collective projects, and the development of confidence in performance.

Music technology, including Apple 'GarageBand' and 'Sibelius' means students can compose collaboratively and produce their own song tracks. It is not necessary to have studied music at Junior Certificate Level, but an interest in music in general is desirable. This module is of benefit to those students intending to study Music for the Leaving Certificate where the Music Technology option currently can account for 25% of the performance option.

Home Economics

Home Economics will provide students with knowledge, attitudes and skills in many areas such as Food Studies, Consumer Studies and Social Studies.

Food Studies will focus on learning about various diets, foods and food safety. Home Economics will allow students to become more discerning consumers, learning about their rights and consumer law. Social Studies will focus on various aspects that affect the individual and the family including appreciating various marital arrangements from around the world, family types, Family Law and making a will. Students will also be introduced to Fashion design. In this module there is more emphasis on theory rather than practical work and this provides a sound knowledge base for the uptake of this subject at Senior level as well as the fundamentals of nutrition necessary for everyday life.

Transition Year participants are more than twice as likely as non-participants to apply for tertiary education this is due to the fact that they achieve higher grades in the Leaving Certificate.

The Transition Year Programme: Innovation within Upper Secondary Education in The Republic of Ireland - ESRI Sept 2003

Off-Campus Activities

There will be many off-campus activities for the students to enjoy throughout the academic year; including the following:

- Adventure Centre Trips – one will be held in September for three days to allow for bonding within the group.
- Camping Nights - these may be organised in the final term for students to experience living without the frills!
- Trip Abroad – traditionally Transition Year are offered the opportunity to take a trip within Europe – more details will follow.
- Film and Theatre Nights – to provide the student with a taste of the most recent productions.
- Field-trips for their various subjects.
- Ice-skating at Christmas
- Charity collecting throughout the year.
- Work Experience

There are many more other outings throughout the year but not all can be included here.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There are opportunities to take part in various competitions and training, such as Gael-Linn media studies, Féis Ceoil, the Student Enterprise Awards, Model United Nations, Young Scientist and An Gaisce (the President's award scheme). Students will also take part in debating and public-speaking competitions. There will be opportunities for students to enter their creative writing in national competitions and their films in the 'Fís'. As in the last four years, Transition Year students will be in the vanguard of operating SUCH, our own internal charity fund-raising organisation, which has now been responsible for raising over 140,000 euro in the four years of its operation.

Boarders in Transition Year

This year we plan to introduce a weekly boarders' evening for TY students to include a cookery club and card game club.

Assessment and Certification

The different subjects in Transition Year use a variety of assessment methods, including portfolio and project work, oral presentation, aural, oral, practical and written tests. Students, as usual, receive reports on their academic subjects at Christmas and in June. Certificates are awarded for subjects where academic reports are not suitable, and are presented at the Graduation Ceremony at the end of the year.

Costs

To minimize expenditure during Transition Year, a charge of €330 is made to cover the cost of textbooks, portfolios, sporting activities and other charges associated with the year's extra activities. Only textbooks which will be used in Fifth and Sixth Year are charged directly to students. All other texts are purchased by the school and loaned to students as required.

Some optional activities carry an extra charge e.g. the Model United Nations, evening trips to concerts and theatres, and extra sports-related courses, but these are optional activities with no compulsion for any student to participate.

Attendance and Certification

Daily attendance is compulsory in Transition Year, and students will not be awarded a Transition Year Graduation Certificate if their attendance record is not deemed satisfactory. Students who do not complete their assignments in the individual modules and options will not be awarded a certificate for these subjects or modules.

Senior Scholarship

The Board of Management is offering the opportunity to all Transition Year students to sit for a full scholarship for the senior cycle in Rathdown. This examination will consist of an academic component and an interview. Students will not be permitted to sit for this scholarship examination if their attendance record in Transition Year is poor, or if their level of participation and standard of behaviour is below par.

There is growing evidence that students who have taken the Transition Year programme are more self-reliant learners, when they enter third level education, than their peers.

Commission on the Points System - Final Report & Recommendations, 1999

‘Education makes us what we are.’
Helvetius 1715-1771