



NORTH WICKLOW
EDUCATE TOGETHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL

Transition Year Programme

An Introduction for Students, Parents/ Guardians and Carers.

General Introduction:

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School (NWETSS) is dedicated to creating a coeducational, learner-centred, caring, happy and positive environment where equality and democracy are celebrated and nurtured. We are committed to enabling students to become creative, empathetic, life-long learners who are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century in a sustainable and ethical way.

We embrace collaborative educational practices both in our school and through engagement with the wider community. Through the process of teaching and learning we aim to inspire, support, and challenge all students to develop their skills and passions. In doing so, we dedicate ourselves to empowering all students to truly understand themselves and others better so that when they leave school, they are ready to actively engage in society and to lead purposeful, fulfilling, and happy lives.

What is Transition Year?

The Transition Year (TY) is a one-year optional programme taken after the Junior Cycle and before the Leaving Certificate Programme. It forms the first year of a three-year senior cycle. It is designed to act as a bridge between the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes.

Transition Year offers learners an opportunity to mature and develop without the pressure of an examination. It also provides an opportunity for learners to reflect on, and develop an appreciation of, the value of learning in preparing them for the ever-changing demands of the adult world of work, further and higher education and relationships.

What is the purpose of the Transition Year Programme?

The aim of Transition Year is to promote the personal, social, educational, and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative, and responsible members of society.

What are the benefits of Transition Year?

Almost 80% of pupils surveyed by the Irish Second-Level Students Union (ISSU) found TY to be a worthwhile experience. The Department of Education state that there are very high levels of satisfaction among teachers, parents/ guardian, and students with how TY supports learning and the all-round development and maturity of students. TY is valued for the variety of learning experiences, often in taster subjects and new areas of learning, that it offers students. TY contributes in significant ways to the broad skill development of students, particularly in personal and social development and life skills. Work experience and community placement are highly valued elements of the TY.

The development in students of a more mature, capable, confident, and assertive outlook are seen as successful features of the programme. In their feedback on TY, students frequently cite how TY helps them grow as a person, how they get to experience a great diversity of learning through TY activities, and how they learn a lot about skills that prove useful in study and in life after school. In addition, students taking TY generally perform better in Leaving Certificate examinations and make more informed choices when selecting their Leaving Certificate subjects.

What are the aims of the Transition Year programme in North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School?

- Give students the opportunity to become more independent in their learning and in social and work situations.
- Create opportunities for students to understand themselves and others better and in so doing to make good choices about Leaving Certificate, the world of work and further education.
- Enable students to become creative, empathetic, life-long learners who are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century in a sustainable and ethical way.
- To promote maturity in students by providing opportunities to develop:
 - work related skills
 - communication skills, self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility
 - more awareness of the world outside school

Do students receive a Transition Year Certificate?

Upon completion of Transition Year certificates are awarded based on credits earned.

Certificate	Credits
Platinum	72 – 80
Gold	60 – 71
Silver	44 – 59
Bronze	28 – 43
Certificate of Participation	< 28

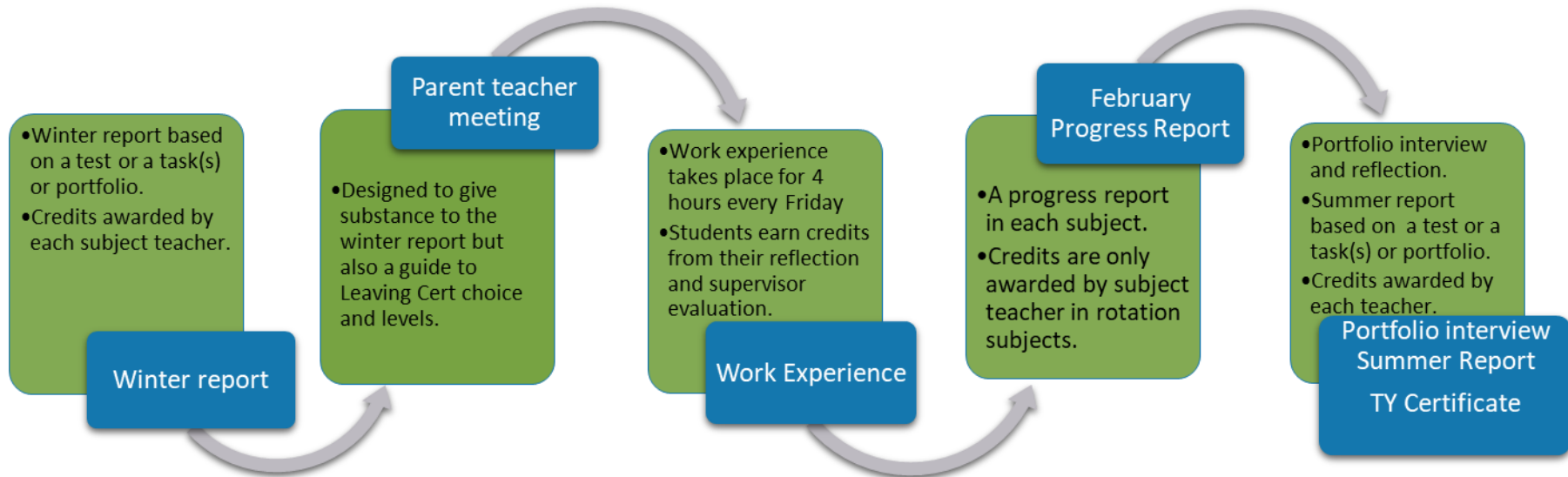
What is the breakdown of credits?

Categories	Credits	Awarded by
Subject and Portfolio Credits	30	Subject teacher
Work Experience Credits	15	Coordinator
Engagement / Participation	15	Coordinator & TY Tutors
Interview Credits / Portfolio	10	TY Coordinator, Clan Coordinator and TY Tutors
Attendance / Punctuality	10	TY Coordinator, Clan Coordinator and TY Tutors
Total Credits	80	

At the start of the year / subject rotation teachers will explain which tests, pieces of work, assessments, or other experiences which they are expected to present in order to attain credit for that subject.

What is the format of assessment and reporting in Transition Year?

Assessment is integral to the TY programme. Assessment tasks in TY are varied and assess learning in each of the four layers of the programme. Classroom practice in NWETSS is firmly rooted in assessment for and of learning. Self, peer, and teacher assessment are commonly utilised. In Transition Year, these practices continue with the following formalised assessment model in place for reporting on the learning taking place.



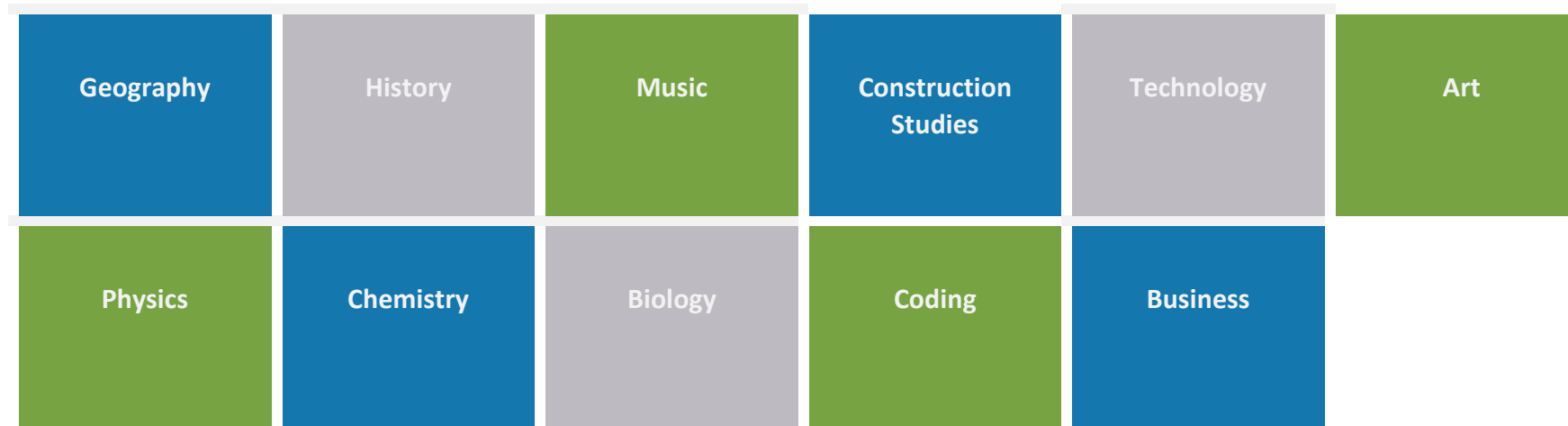
What subjects make up the TY Curriculum?

The following is an overview of the subjects offered on the TY programme. The TY programme in NWETSS offers students a broad and balanced curriculum and is underpinned by the four layers of core subjects: subject sampling, TY specific layer and the calendar layer. Some subjects are taken for the entire year whilst other subjects rotate over the course of the year. Students have a choice between some subjects. Students will be provided with specific details about their timetable and subject options available during the student induction. The subjects offered can change from year to year based on staffing, subject expertise of available teachers, TY class profile, and feedback from TY students.

Core Layer



Subject Sampling Layer



School Designed Module Layer

Printmaking	First Aid	Mini Company	Career Guidance	Coaching Studies
Outdoor Learning	Media Development	Animation	Journalism	Information & Communication Technology

Calendar Layer

Work Experience	Guest speakers	Workshops	Trips	Gaisce
-----------------	----------------	-----------	-------	--------

Other Experiences

Gaisce	LIFT School Leaders Programme	TY Ball	Portfolio Assessment	TY Celebration Night	Leaving Certificate Subject Fair
Irish Trip	Guest Speakers	Spanish Exchange trip	Events Organisation	Overnight Trip	Team Building Trips
Scavenger Hunt	Outreach	Water Sports	Science Trip	Geography Trip	Self-defence

The above list gives a flavour of some of the experiences that have taken place in the TY programme to date in NWETSS. This list will change incrementally year on year as the TY programme in NWETSS evolves based on new opportunities and feedback from students, parents, and school staff. Whilst the TY charge covers most experiences it typically does not cover the cost of overseas or overnight trips.

What is the TY portfolio?

The TY portfolio is a record of what students do throughout the year. It serves as a method of reflection for the student whilst also providing feedback for the teacher and showcasing student work and achievement. The TY portfolio will primarily be collated digitally in OneNote. Students earn credits from their teachers and TY coordinator for their portfolio.

Teachers will let students know what the requirements for the TY portfolio are at the start of the module. The student will give access to the digital portfolio to their teachers. It is the student's responsibility to maintain their TY portfolio. In the case of subjects where it is not possible to add physical examples of work to the portfolio such as in art and technology photographs of work produced can be added to the digital portfolio.

What is the format of Work Experience?

Work experience takes place every Friday for 4 hours throughout the school year. Work experience is divided into two sessions. Session 1 runs from September to December. Session 2 runs from January to May. Ideally, one of the work experience weeks should be in a voluntary organisation, charity or equivalent. It is the responsibility of the student with the assistance and support of their parent / guardian / carer to secure a suitable work experience placement. If Garda Vetting is required for the placement the parent / guardian / carer should contact the programme co-ordinator in a timely manner to receive instructions and forms for Garda vetting. The student's employer / manager / supervisor must fill out the employer's acceptance form in the student's journal. They should also mark the student's attendance and complete the employer's evaluation report at the end of the placement. It is the student's responsibility to provide the employer / manager / supervisor with their journal to do so.

How much does Transition Year cost?

The Transition Year charge is €190 per student. This charge is in addition to the school administration charge of €220. There will be an additional charge if there are overnight or overseas trips during the transition year. The TY charge covers a variety of costs during the school year for different activities and curricular related costs.

What is the purpose of school trips?

School trips provide opportunities for students to develop and to strengthen peer relationships and connections whilst developing skills and learning more about culture, geography, history, art, music, etc. Bonding activities are an important part of the TY programme.

Will a bus be provided to bring students on every trip?

No, a bus will not be provided for every trip. There is a greater expectation on students to find their own way to and from certain activities. It is not feasible or cost effective to hire coaches to go to every event especially if it takes place locally. For example, students have made their

own way using public transport to activities taking part in Dublin City Centre. In doing so students develop greater independence and maturity.

Is there a Transition Year Induction for students?

Yes, transition year induction takes place at the start of the academic year. Appropriate induction is central to the success of Transition Year. Induction will cover the format of the TY programme, allow students to select option subjects, outline the range of events, and inform students about the work experience weeks. The school aims to set high expectations and to prepare students for some of the ways in which they will find Transition Year different to Junior Cycle such as the TY portfolio, TY credits and certification, and greater independence.

What books and equipment do students need?

The TY book and equipment list is published on the school website.

My child has an additional need is transition year suitable for them?

TY is suitable for students with an additional need. Support is provided to students in line with the continuum of support. For more information contact the TY Coordinator or the ASN Coordinator.

What is the Gaisce programme?

Students can take part in the Gaisce programme. TY provides students with an opportunity to start the Gaisce programme and to be awarded the bronze award at the end of the TY programme. Gaisce or 'great achievement' is the President's award. It is a self-development programme for young people between the ages of 15-25 and has been in existence since 1985. To date over 300,000 young people have participated in the Gaisce programme. There are four key challenge areas: community involvement, personal skill, physical recreation, and an adventure journey. With exception to the Adventure Journey, each challenge area requires a minimum participation of 1 hour per week for 13 weeks. The Adventure Journey takes place over a minimum of 2 days and 1 night.

1. Community Involvement

Community Involvement is all about making a difference to other people's lives. Every student is unique and has something they can contribute to make their community a better place.

2. Personal Skill

Personal Skill gives students the chance to develop a new skill or interests. Working on a particular skill helps to boost students' self-esteem, develop other practical and social skills, and learn how to set and rise to a challenge.

3. Physical Recreation

Physical Recreation is about students becoming physically stronger and improving fitness. Students don't need to be very fit or have participated in any physical activity before.

4. Adventure Journey

Students plan, prepare and undertake an adventure journey over a number of days and nights in a group as part of an expedition. This trip is both fun and a great way of spending time with friends.

What is the LIFT Schools programme?

LIFT Ireland is a not-for-profit initiative aimed at increasing the level of positive leadership capabilities in Ireland. LIFT, which stands for 'Leading Ireland's Future Together', does this through its eight-part, group learning programme. LIFT's programme is being rolled out nationwide via a volunteer facilitator network with an overall goal of reaching 10% of the population within ten years.

Schools are a vital component of LIFT Ireland. To create a nation of leaders, LIFT shows students from an early stage what it takes to be a leader. LIFT Ireland's leadership learning process is based on eight key leadership values. While partaking in LIFT's programme, participants are introduced to one value per week, for 8 weeks. LIFT's leadership learning process provides students with the foundation to become leaders in their own lives. Students that have taken part in LIFT have improved their listening skills, increased confidence and become more empathetic, understanding, and positive.

When will the student decide on subject options for fifth year?

Transition Year students receive guidance and support over the year about the range of options open to them for fifth year. There will be a subject fair delivered by subject teachers for the established Leaving Cert and information will be provided about the Leaving Cert Applied. The subject choices chosen will be a function of the preferences of the majority of students. The Guidance Counsellor will oversee this process with support from other staff. This process will take place early in the calendar year.

References

Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) (2014). Transition Year, exploring the student experience. Department of Education and Skills.

