



NORTH WICKLOW
EDUCATE TOGETHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL

Transition Year Policy

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.

Introduction to 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.

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.

Admission to the Transition Year programme

Most NWETSS students opt to join the TY programme upon completion of their Junior Cycle. Some students join the Leaving Cert Applied programme if it is running in the September following their Junior Cycle or apply to the Leaving Certificate Established programme.

Rationale for providing the Transition Year Programme

Almost 80% of pupils surveyed by the Irish Second-Level Students Union (ISSU) found Transition Year 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 programme.

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.

Aims of the Transition Year programme in North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School

The aims of the TY programme in NWETSS are to:

- 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

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.

Transition Year Curriculum

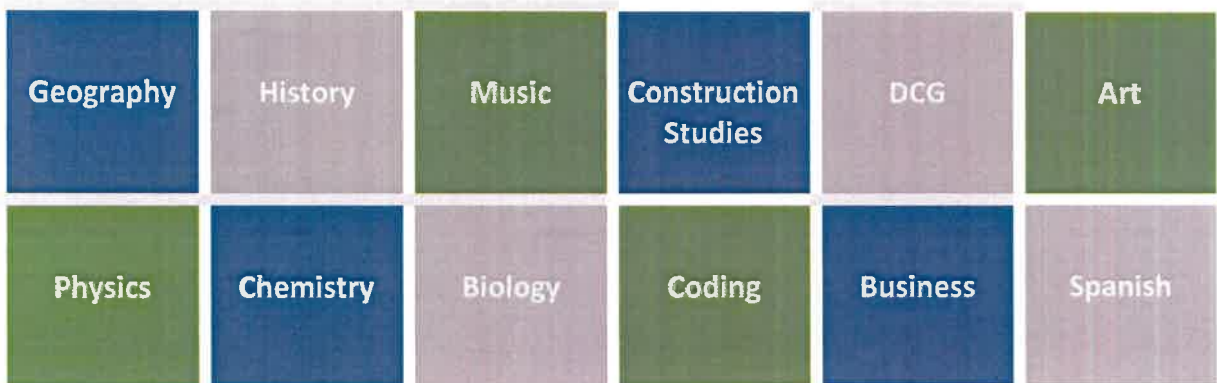
The following is an overview of the subjects offered on the TY programme. The TY programme in NWETSS offers students a broad and balanced curriculum as it is underpinned by four layers. The four layers consist of the core subject layer, subject sampling layer, TY specific layer, and the calendar layer. 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



TY Specific Layer



Calendar Layer



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 sessions should be in a voluntary organisation, charity or equivalent.

Rationale for a weekly work experience placement

A weekly placement provides time to ensure all students have a suitable placement compared to block release for work experience. A weekly placement provides the student with regular feedback and guidance from their employer.

Securing a work experience placement

It is the responsibility of the student with the assistance and support of their parent / guardian / carer to secure a suitable work experience placement. The student's employer / manager / supervisor in conjunction with the student must fill out the employer's acceptance form in the student's journal.

Garda Vetting

Some areas of work such as working with children or vulnerable people may require students to be Garda Vetted. Students over the age of 16 at the time of employment may be Garda Vetted with parental / guardian / carer consent. If Garda Vetting is required for a work experience placement the parent / guardian / carer should contact the programme co-ordinator in a timely manner to receive instructions and forms for Garda vetting. Please note that Garda Vetting is a lengthy process and may take several weeks/months to be processed. Students under the age of 16 cannot be Garda Vetted

Attendance and Punctuality

Students must attend work experience on each designated day. If unable to attend the student / parent / guardian / carer must notify the employer as soon as possible (and notify the absence to the school through the school app). Students should aim to always be punctual for their work experience and this means that students should arrive at least five minutes before the appointed time. If the student is going to be late, the student must notify the employer of this as soon as possible.

Monitoring

Students are monitored by the school and evaluated by their employer. The employer should mark the student's attendance each week in the student's journal. At the end of the placement the employer / manager / supervisor should complete the employer's evaluation report in the student's journal. It is the student's responsibility to provide the employer / manager / supervisor with their journal each week.

Students also reflect on their work experience placements as part of their portfolio.

Insurance

Some employers request a copy of a "confirmation of insurance" letter from the school's insurance broker. This letter is available upon request from the TY coordinator. It is very important to note that some exclusions apply to the school's insurance policy in relation to work experience placements. Typically, the insurance policy does not cover work experience in building trades or with a mechanic. For this reason, the student and / or their parent/guardian/carer must confirm the work experience placement with the TY coordinator before commencing the placement.

Safety

It is important to note that there is no legal requirement for Garda Vetting of staff members in many businesses, etc. that offer a work experience placement to school students. If a student does not feel safe in their work experience placement or if they experience bullying or harassment, they should let their parents / guardians / carers and the TY coordinator or TY tutors know. If there is an immediate threat to the safety of a student, the student should immediately leave the placement and immediately inform their parents / guardians / carers and the TY coordinator or TY tutors.

Representing North Wicklow Educate Together

Students are representing North Wicklow Educate Together while on work experience and are reminded that they remain subject to the school's code of behaviour. Students should be courteous to colleagues, management and customers. Students are expected to dress appropriately for their employment and present themselves in a neat and tidy manner. They are also expected to comply with the direction and guidelines of their employer / manager / supervisor.

Remuneration

Employers are not expected to remunerate students during work placement, or to pay travel or subsistence costs incurred.

Work experience for students with additional support needs

Students with additional support needs are required to undertake work experience placements. NWETSS understands that there needs to be flexibility around the requirements and expectations of a work experience placement for some students with additional support needs. NWETSS is not in a position to provide the same level of supports to students in a work experience placement as is provided to the student in the classroom.

Flexible Learning Opportunities

There are many organisations that facilitate valuable work experience programmes, outside of those specified by the school. The TY coordinator will share many of these opportunities with the students on their TY Team. Students are encouraged to apply and attend these additional placements. This is on the understanding that students will catch up on any work missed during that time. Students must confirm their attendance with the coordinator. If demand exceeds available places for a flexible learning opportunity the TY coordinator will determine the most appropriate method to select students for the placement based on the nature of the placement.

Continuum of support and TY

NWETSS is an inclusive school which encourages the full participation of all students. Universal Design for Learning is used in the classroom to enable the highest level of participation possible. Students with additional support needs in TY will be allocated support in line with the whole school Continuum of Support Policy, which follows the NCSE's continuum of support model. Parents/Guardians/Carers must inform the school of any diagnoses or information which will impact on their level of need for support in school.

TY Core Team

Members of LCA core team are the principal / deputy principal, program co-ordinator, TY class tutors and two other teachers.

LIFT Leadership Programme

NWETSS runs the LIFT leadership programme with TY students. LIFT stands for 'Leading Ireland's Future Together.' LIFT is a leadership programme which is built on a desire to change Ireland for the better by changing the way people view leadership. It aims to do this through its eight-part, group learning process. LIFT's programme is being rolled out nationwide via a volunteer facilitator network with a goal of reaching 10% of the population by 2028. LIFT's leadership learning process is based on eight key leadership values; Listening, Positive Attitude, Respect, Competence, Dedication & Determination, Empathy & Understanding, Accountability, and Honesty & Integrity. The LIFT programme in NWETSS is typically facilitated and delivered by the TY tutor team.

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 do not 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.

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.

It is important to note that 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.

The NWETSS code of positive behaviour applies to all TY events and trips.

Guest Speakers and Workshops

As part of the calendar layer students will receive presentations from guest speakers and workshops which can either take place in school or out of school. Focus of guest speakers and workshops will include but not be limited to giving students a perspective on real-world experience, career exploration, motivation and engagement, networking opportunities, team building, cultural, social, and environmental awareness.

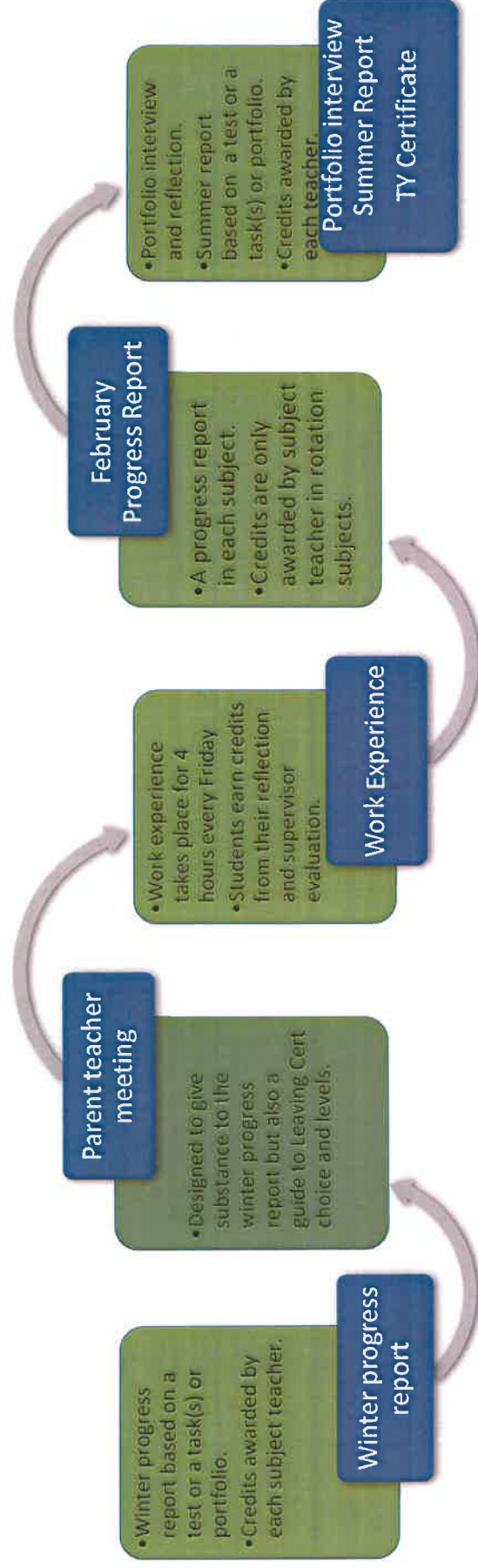
TY portfolio

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.

Assessment, Reporting and Certification 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 NWEETSS 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.



TY Certification and Credits

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

Breakdown of TY 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 and TY Tutors
Attendance / Punctuality	10	TY Coordinator and TY Tutors
Total Credits	80	

Transition Year cost

The Transition Year charge is currently set at €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. This charge is subject to review between the programme coordinator, principal, finance sub-committee, and Board of Management, and consultation with the Parent-Staff Association.

Transition Year Induction

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.

Books and equipment

The TY book and equipment list is published on the school website. Students require their own laptop.

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 (if applicable). 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 the school leadership team and other staff. This process will take place early in the calendar year.

Our Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies in NWETSS. Most policies are available on the school website or by contacting the school office.

Policy Ratified

Date of Meeting 21.3.24

Date of Review of Policy – Academic Year 2026/27

Chairperson of BOM 

Principal 