

Transition Year 2019/2020

St. Mary's Secondary School

Transition Year is a one year programme. It provides a bridge to enable students make the transition from Junior to Senior Cycle. It encourages **personal and social development** and recognises the need for students to grow in independence. **T.Y. fosters academic achievement** as students prepare for the Leaving Certificate Programme, further study and adult working life. It encourages the development of a wide range of transferable critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills.

“There is a 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 of the points system, Final report & Recommendations 1999, p46)

Advantages of doing Transition Year in St. Mary's

- ✓ Students become more confident
- ✓ Students become more responsible
- ✓ Students become more focused on their studies
- ✓ Students become more aware of their subject and career choices
- ✓ Students become better leaders
- ✓ Students become more socially developed in interactions with adults and their peers
- ✓ Students become independent thinkers
- ✓ Students who do T.Y. achieve better Leaving Certificate results (on average an extra 40 points in all girls schools)
- ✓ Students who are under achieving academically in third year are provided with the opportunity to improve their performance
- ✓ Students who do T.Y. have a better idea of what course they wish to pursue at third-level. They are less likely to swap from one course to another.

TY prepares students for college life. As part of student's end of year exams students may be asked to do project work & oral presentations, these skills are taught to students during TY.

Aims and Objectives

- From junior Certificate towards Leaving Certificate: few students are prepared to go straight from Junior Cert to Leaving Cert. Transition Year offers students a chance to explore new subjects before deciding on Leaving Cert choices and levels.
- High achievers: research has proven that **students who do Transition Year score on average 40 points higher in the Leaving Cert.**
- Under achievers: it provides opportunities for students who have been under-achieving to improve their performance.
- A year of wide ranging study: free from the pressures and constraints of a State Exam.
- Space to Learn, Mature, and Develop and grow in confidence.
- It Endeavours to Enhance study skills and to encourage and promote personal responsibility for learning.
- It provides a solid foundation for Leaving Certificate and beyond.
- It gives students experience in the world of work.

- Increased self-confidence and self-esteem makes students more focused.
- This increased self-confidence enables them to participate and ask questions more freely in class, thus improving their progress hugely.

Subject Options

Academic Subjects	Non-Academic Subjects
Gaeilge	Religious Education
English	Enterprise
French or German	Web Design/Electronics
Mathematics	I.T Skills- ECDL(European Computer Driving Licence)
Biology	Preparation for working life/Career Guidance
Chemistry	Physical Education/Sports Leadership Award
Physics	Public Speaking
Art, Craft & Design	Young Social Innovators Programme
Business	Film Production/Film Studies
Economics	Health & Fitness
Accounting	Enterprise
Design Communication Graphics	Electronics
Figurative Sculpture	Drama

The programme is updated each year and is tailored to meet the needs of each year group in so far as possible.

Opportunities

Many parents are concerned that their daughters will lose touch with Leaving Cert. material in Transition Year. In fact, T.Y. gives the girls a chance to do the following:

- ❖ To study the full range of Leaving Cert subjects on offer in St. Mary's. This will give the students an opportunity to experience each subject and make more informed subject choices.
- ❖ To study these subjects in a different way, away from the stress of exams. Subjects can then become "fun" and relevant to real life experiences.
- ❖ To "catch-up" on work that was difficult or missed in Junior Cycle.
- ❖ To acquire new study skills that will be used in 5th & 6th years and at 3rd level, the study skills workshop in T.Y. helps to achieve this.

Work Experience

A good Transition Year programme should include a comprehensive Work Experience Module, through which the students can prepare for the adult world and the world of work. Many students have not yet decided what to do after they leave school. The programme we offer here in St. Mary's provides the pupil with skills applicable to all walks of life, prepares them for job applications and gives them valuable experience of being part of a working organisation. Students currently are engaging in work experience one day per week from September to May.

Here in St. Mary's we have built a healthy relationship with businesses and places of work in the area. We also encourage students to go away from home for one placement (maybe for a week or

so), particularly if opportunities for certain careers are available elsewhere. The students work in a setting of their choice so as to provide them with a realistic base on which to make a more informed choice about the future.

Some areas which have been explored by our TY students:

Journalism	Pharmacy	Primary Teaching
Veterinary	Graphic Design	P.E Teaching
Physiotherapy	Interior Design	Leisure Management
Law	Garda Training/Recruits	Architecture
Accountant	Horse Management	Photography
Social Work/Social Care	Teaching the Handicapped	Horticulture/Agriculture
Nursing	Laboratory Technician	T.V Work (RTE)
Hospitality/Tourism	Pharmaceutical Companies	Occupational Therapy
Medicine	Engineering	Retail

Assessment

The students are continually assessed on all aspects of the programme. Assessment includes

- **Portfolio:** where students store all work which is built up throughout the year. Students and Teachers have access to the portfolio.
- **Diaries:** Students keep a weekly diary where they record the activities and lessons they found most **interesting, beneficial and challenging** throughout the week. **In the diary they reflect on how they could improve the following week.** The Diary includes:
 - I. Guest speaker assessment pages
 - II. Educational outing assessment pages
 - III. Activity report page
 - IV. Project report page

(Students must complete all of this work)

- **Interview:** Lions Club volunteers give students interview skills and experience. Their interviews are assessed.
- **Class tests:** regular class assessments ensure an on-going learning cycle
- **Credit System:** Students are awarded credits based on their class participation, assignments and general participation throughout the term.

They will receive reports at Christmas and summer. You, the parents will be invited to attend Parent-Teacher meetings, as in other years. Where problems occur you will be notified immediately by the Co-ordinator, Principal or Deputy Principal. You will be invited to celebrate your daughter's achievements and progress at the Annual T.Y. Presentation Night, at which she will be awarded the certificates she has earned throughout the year.

Other Activities Essential to Transition Year

Activities outside the classroom are necessary for achieving the objectives of St. Mary's Transition Year. Each year we try to offer new activities and we listen carefully to the girl's evaluations so that mistakes are not repeated. The girls are invited to suggest activities, projects and modules for the benefit of the class or future classes.

In recent years, some activities undertaken have been:

- Leadership and Team Building Workshop
- Personal Safety & awareness Workshop
- Law Workshop
- Set Dancing
- 3 day adventure activities in Carlingford, Co. Louth
- Basketball coaching of Primary School students
- Substance abuse workshop
- Debating and Public Speaking
- Road Safety Day
- Visits to the elderly in the community
- Preparation for Driver Theory Test
- Young Scientist Competition
- Sci – Fest in association with Waterford Institute of Technology
- 2 day retreat in Grace Dieu
- Pantomime or Drama presented to local Primary Schools
- Table Quiz
- Trip to the National Concert Hall for a concert with the National Concert Orchestra
- Film Studies Module
- Samba Drumming
- First Aid
- Safe Food for Life Certification
- Poetry Workshop
- Gaisce Presidents Award – involving a 26km walk in Glendalough
- Volleyball Coaching Course
- 1916 Rebellion tour of Dublin

Will my daughter find it difficult to settle back into Fifth Year?

In St. Mary's we found that students who go into 5th year after T.Y. show a degree of maturity which may be lacking in students who progressed from 3rd year directly into 5th year. They are more ready for school work and are more aware of the seriousness of the Leaving Cert. Generally, the graduate of T.Y. is seen as a very positive influence on a 5th year class.

Students will be:

- More focused on studies.
- More mature & aware of the amount of work they need to do to achieve their goals.
- More aware of what grade they need to achieve in each subject so that they will get the correct amount of points they are after for college.
- Take school work more seriously
- Confident to ask questions freely of the teacher if they want clarification on any topic.
- Able to express opinions openly and appropriately