



St. Kilian's
Deutsche Schule Dublin

Transition Year

[Programme 2019-2020]



(Outdoor pursuits at Tanagh)

A guide for parents and pupils

What is Transition Year?

Transition Year is a one-year educational programme available to pupils who have successfully completed the Junior Cycle. The framework and guidelines were first devised by the Department of Education and Science over 30 years ago, and our programme in St. Kilian's was introduced in 1987. A Transition year programme is now presented in practically every Secondary School in Ireland. More information is available on the [Department of Education & Skills website](#).

Transition Year Objectives

It is acknowledged that teenagers go through a tremendous amount of change during their progress throughout secondary school, in particular an extraordinary '*transition*' from the innocence and security of primary school and junior cycle, to the daunting challenge of living and surviving in today's modern world. In an effort to help and guide the young pupil along the way, Transition Year aims to promote the

1. Personal
2. Social
3. Educational and
4. Vocational

development of the pupils, and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative & responsible members of society.

The principal aims of the year as they have been developed at St. Kilian's can be summarised as follows ;

- to facilitate personal growth & the social development of the pupil; increase self-knowledge and awareness, and nurture an understanding and tolerance of others (i.e. Social Action, Human Rights)
- to provide a bridge between Junior and Senior Cycles, and thereby to lay the foundation for further academic study (i.e. Core academic subjects, Mini-Business, Fieldwork)
- to engage pupils in the practice of autonomous learning thereby equipping them with the relevant skills for life-long learning (i.e. research, presentation and delivery of project work)
- to emphasise the German language and culture (i.e. *Internationale Geschichte, Landeskunde*, Hamburg student exchange, etc.), leading where appropriate to the successful completion of the *Sprachdiplom Certificate* Level I & II and/or the Sek. I Exams.
- to prepare pupils for the world of work (Career Guidance/work placements).

Development of Multiple Intelligences

The following components of the Transition Year Programme aim to engage pupils in activities which will promote and develop their *multiple intelligences* and exploit these intelligences as a means of learning. The modular structure of TY in particular allows for development of the multiple intelligences not necessarily catered for, or tested within the academic curricula at Junior, nor at Senior level. Below, are some examples from this year, reflecting the range of modules and their associated skill-sets;

Photoshop/Drama/Cooking (Visual, Spatial)

Self-Defence/Dance/Yoga (Kinaesthetic)

Debating/Public Speaking/TY.Magazine (Linguistic)

Mini Company/Young Scientist (Logical, Analytical)

Philosophy/Psychology/Mindfulness (Compassion, Empathy)

Work Experience/Team Tasks/Adventure Trip (Inter-personal)

Portfolio: Record of events & Modules completed (Intra-personal)

In each of the areas Personal, Social, Educational and Vocational, the Transition Year aims to consolidate what pupils have already learnt in the Junior Cycle. They will however, encounter core curricular subjects through different learning and teaching methodologies. For example; Business Studies will be experienced through the setting up of a Mini-Company, Build a Bank or a Dragons Den project; History & Geography will include fieldwork, selecting and editing information; Project work undertaken in the areas Maths, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, and German, will all practise the skills needed for the process of autonomous learning; (namely focussed research, visual presentation and/or oral delivery, etc.)

Observing the *world-of-work* through the Work Experience component, allied with regular careers instruction, aims to facilitate pupils to encounter the world of work and to enable them to make informed subject choices for Senior Cycle and future career paths. (Three weeks Work Experience is deemed adequate.)

Academic Areas

Academic subjects continue to be studied during Transition Year, and constitute an important component of the Year overall. Although not specifically directed towards the State Examinations, instruction in the core areas of German, Maths, English, Irish and the Sciences provides not only key content, but allows pupils the opportunity to re-inforce and build on subject knowledge acquired at Junior Cycle. These core subjects remain as main elements of the TY programme, and as such, **Positive Participation is required** in

- **Class-work**
- **Home Work**
- **Study & Revision**

Pupils will be required to sign a *Contract of Engagement* at the start of the year regarding attitude to work and overall behaviour, encompassing every aspect of their participation in the TY challenge.

[Pupils studying for **Sek-I or Sprachdiplom, Level 1** - it is important to note that those exams are **not** optional. Pupils will also be encouraged to take equivalent exams in French (DELF) and in Irish (TEG) if they have not done so in the Junior Cycle.]

Advice to Parents

Transition Year is a school-based year from 8.25am to 4.10pm. As in all other years **attendance** and **punctuality** are monitored daily. **Pupils are expected to be in school, and on time, every day.** The successful completion of the Transition Year programme and Certification for same, is contingent on pupils' participation in *all* of the activities throughout the year.

Any **planned absences** from School arranged by parents for their son's/daughter's benefit, **must be conveyed & agreed with the School Principal at least 2 weeks in advance.** As for every year, whenever a pupil is absent on a given day, a written explanation must be passed on to the Class Teacher.

Structure of the Year

1) Induction

The first week back at school will involve a dedicated programme through a series of talks and workshops, designed to focus pupils on the aims and objectives of Transition Year. We also take the pupils on an overnight trip to Tanagh Outdoor Activities Centre on the day Junior Cert results issue.

2) E-Portfolio / Folder of Excellence

The Portfolio is an essential part of Transition Year, elements of which will be regularly monitored and assessed and may be made available for a Department of Education inspection. It functions like a diary of the year and should be a personal response to everything in which the pupil engages during the course of this year. The Portfolio provides every pupil with the opportunity to reflect on *what* has been learnt, and *how* it has been learnt. This self-analysis of learning methods and outcomes will help pupils develop strategies for learning which are most suitable to the individual, and provide valuable insights into what works best for each pupil.

The compilation of the Portfolio should begin on the first day back in school. All material needs to be written up regularly, for example during the KL period, and **not** left until the last minute.

Each pupil is required to purchase a hardback Folder where they should file their best work throughout the year. Items are chosen from the different subject areas with a justification as to why a particular piece is included. Reports on Modules, Work Experience, other significant events etc. also need to be recorded.

Folders will be kept in the Class Teacher's room, and will be checked and graded for every term. Assignments should be presented neatly and typed if possible. For CV purposes, pupils might consider saving his/her completed work on file. The following should be included in the Transition Year Folder:

- Contract of Engagement
- Aims and Expectations for the Year
- Reports on Work Experience
- Reports on Modules
- At least three examples of good work from each subject area.
- Reports on other significant events, presentations, etc.
- Any achievements pursued outside of school hours.

3) Work Experience

There are just three designated work-experience weeks scheduled throughout the year. One in November, then once again in April before the Easter break, for two weeks. Since not all pupils participate in the Hamburg exchange, those who do not are expected to undertake a two-week work experience here in Ireland. We will endeavour to facilitate placements through the German-Irish Chamber of Commerce, (where feasible). This is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to observe & experience the world of work.

The School needs to be informed in all cases of the relevant details and provided with a name and phone number of a contact person familiar with the pupil's participation at each work-experience placement.

4) Core Subjects

Pupils attend classes in the following subject areas throughout the year as in any other school year: German, Irish, English, Maths, Sciences, Computer Studies, Sport, Business Studies and French.

5) Science and the Humanities

Subjects are timetabled in parallel blocks to allow pupils experience the complete subject range in either half-year or a third of the year, which helps them to make informed decisions regarding subject choices for next year's Leaving Certificate course. These subjects are grouped in such a way as to facilitate each pupil's participation in all the key areas involved. Pupils chose between French and Business Studies ; however, pupils wishing to continue the study of French at Senior Cycle **must** take the French classes.

As part of the Science programme in all three subject areas, pupils will be required to prepare a project for (a) our own in-house science competition, and (b) the National Young Scientist Competition. The Science project may be undertaken in any of the relevant disciplines, Biology & Ecology ; Chemistry, Physics & Maths ; Social & Behavioural Science ; or from the world of Technology.

6) Personal Development

Every pupil participates in a module from each of the following areas during the year:

Creative writing, Drama, Film, Photoshop, Politics, Philosophy, Psychology, Mindfulness, Sport Science, & Cooking. Pupils are encouraged to be motivated, to work as part of a team, to be innovative and complete their tasks from start to finish, within a set time frame. There will be at least two other project-based modules; (Human Rights, Social Action).

7) Creativity & Citizenship

Alongside Art and Music, pupils will also have the opportunity to participate in the following ; Dance, Enterprise and Human Rights. Focus for that module has recently been ‘*homelessness*’ and ‘*freedom of expression*’. In enterprise, we are hoping to unlock pupils’ creativity and imagination in developing ideas, and presenting their endeavours at a school based *dragons’- den* event by the end of the year.

8) Career Guidance

During Transition Year, pupils are expected to actively prepare for, and experience the world of work. This is preparation for life after School. Guidance regarding best subject choices for later life is provided through testing, individual interviews and class-work. These key components allow pupils investigate their subject choices for Senior Cycle, and thereby encourage them to weigh up adequately their strengths and weaknesses. One period per week is offered in Guidance.

9) Gaisce ~ the President’s Award

Registration is compulsory, and will take place during September. Participation is monitored by our *Gaisce* liaison staff member. Pupils are encouraged to compete for the Bronze level of *Gaisce* during their Transition Year. This prestigious award requires that pupils complete a challenge in each of the following areas:

- Personal skill
- Physical skill
- Community involvement
- Adventure activity

Parental encouragement and support is vital in helping pupils to compete, and complete these tasks.

More information available @ www.gaisce.ie

10) Community Involvement / Charity Work

The TY pupils are the core of the School’s charity group. This is an ideal opportunity for pupils to demonstrate a willingness to give of their free time for the benefit of others in the community around them. It may serve both as an element of work-experience, and towards the *Gaisce* award challenge.

During the year, they will be asked to engage with local charities like St.Vincent de Paul, Christmas Child, St.Michael’s House, Daffodil Day, Blind Tennis etc. They will also be involved in the organisation and

planning of fundraising events for the above, and for the School's own specific ongoing third world charity, the *Schools & Health Foundation*. This works as an awareness raising experience, requiring a dedication to improve the lot of the disadvantaged living at the margins. It very often involves commitment outside of school hours, while also fostering organisational and marketing skills, team leadership, etc.

11) Mentor Programme

By the end of February, we will be encouraging 12 to 15 pupils to put themselves forward as mentors to the upcoming first year pupils starting at the end of August 2020. Pupils will be interviewed, as not everyone is chosen. A special workshop is organised to foster the relevant aspects of stewardship necessary for those who have been selected.

12) End-of-Year Project

Pupils select a topic from their own interests, and with the help of a supervising teacher must present a project based on their own research and study to be handed in by the beginning of May. Successful completion of TY is contingent on the submission of this End of Year Project, which clearly demonstrates the following ; multiple research resources, concise knowledge of topic, good communicative skills and, ability to select and analyse information gathered during an oral interview. Pupils should liaise regularly with their supervising teacher. Marks are also awarded for evidence of work-in-progress.

13) Transition Year Evening

At the end of the year, parents are invited to a Transition Year celebration, where the pupils showcase in an evening of entertainment, some of the highlights and achievements from throughout the year. Where appropriate, some of the best presentations will be selected for inclusion in next year's St. Kilian's *Jahrbuch* 2020, or (with agreement), for posting on our website.

14) Explorer Course

Pupils participate in an outdoor pursuits challenge, held usually at the end of May, and organised by the VEC at Cappanalea, Co Kerry. The pupils spend three days at specific skills training, (canoeing, abseiling, orienteering, team-building, camp-craft etc). The tasks are structured so as to engage pupils in planning and decision-making exercises which have immediate consequences on how successfully they carry out the assigned tasks. The preparation culminates in a two-day overnight, self-guided, mini expedition. At the end of the course a separate VEC./Cappanalea Certificate is awarded. Essential to completion of this exercise is the ability to lead a team for those chosen to be leaders ; and for other team members, the ability to follow through on instructions, and take the initiative where required. Each of these personal attributes are at the core of the Transition Year educational ethos.

15) German Exchange Programme

The pupils will spend a three-week period before Easter in Hamburg, living with a German family and carrying out a work-experience placement. The Hamburg exchange programme affords students the opportunity to enhance their language proficiency and knowledge of German culture, which are key components of the *Sprachdiplom* exams, indeed the Leaving Certificate programme. Their German exchanges on the other hand, will spend their three weeks here in Ireland this coming Sept./Oct. 2019.

16) SEK-1 (Please consult the relevant section on our website.)

Costs of Transition Year

Participation in Transition Year involves expenses over and above those incurred in other years. These include the cost of travel and catering on the Explorer Course, other excursions and outings, visiting instructors/speakers and materials. For the school year 2019-2020 the additional cost for Transition Year is €540. This should be paid along with normal school fees.

Assessment

Pupils will receive three academic reports (as in other years) ; and will also receive a School Certificate at one of three levels, based on the following criterion : ~

Participation : 60-40 credits

with **Merit** : 80-60 credits

Higher Merit / Distinction : 100-80 credits

This certification is designed to reward a pupil's *all-round positive participation* in every facet of the Transition Year Programme.

The assessment will include feedback from all the participating teachers and facilitators, taking into account the traditional subject areas, Module reports, 2 TY Projects, completed Portfolio & Folder, Work Experience reports, involvement in sport activities, as well as a willingness to participate in charity initiatives, helping out at parent-teacher evenings and other school projects (Christmas Bazaar, Schools & Health Foundation, etc.).

A Distinction can only be awarded to a pupil who has demonstrated a high level of motivation and positive commitment in successfully completing *all* aspects of the Transition Year Programme. An exception may

be made for pupils who are absent through a school approved arrangement (e.g. a term at a school abroad), provided all assignments are submitted as required, and on time.

Pupils who display a serious lack of engagement with the programme, or who fail to attend for reasons other than academic or work-experience, may have Certificates **withheld at the end of the year** !

Advantages of Transition Year

Young people in Ireland had been leaving school at a younger age than most of their European peers and sitting Leaving Cert exams at 17 years of age. It was felt that Transition Year would provide an opportunity for them to remain within the educational system for an extra year. The Transition Year Programme is specifically geared towards enabling young people to develop their own unique talents and interests ; it helps them make up their minds about the direction of their future education and career prospects ; additionally, the programme maintains and fosters young people's overall educational progress, as it allows them study subjects which are not regularly provided for in the Leaving Certificate Cycle. It contributes to making a more rounded, responsive, and responsible individual.

The success of Transition Year for a particular pupil will depend on the degree to which s/he **becomes involved**. It suits best those pupils who

- develop **self-discipline** and **self-motivation**
- have an ability and show a **willingness to take an initiative**
- **make the most of the various opportunities offered them**
- be active and take part **during the course of the year**

June 2019