



# Our Lady's School



## Transition Year Programme



**work experience**  
 completed projects  
 challenge  
 sign language  
 sewing  
 business  
 website  
 musical  
 first aid  
 coaching  
 new skills  
 swimming  
 christmas fair  
 baking  
 carlingford  
 confidence



## Part 1: Introduction to Transition Year at Our Lady's School

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Our Lady's School Mission Statement:

*Our Lady's School is a community that embraces Christian values. The education it provides is rooted in a deep sense of faith.*

*We aim to create a positive, inclusive environment which enables everyone to reach their full potential. We promote mutual respect within the school community and strive to provide a happy and secure atmosphere which fosters a love of learning.*

*We encourage the development of the whole person, by fostering the personal, spiritual and moral development of every student. The realisation of individual talents and academic excellence is paramount.*

*We aim to create a friendly, healthy, safe and caring environment which affirms our pride in the school.*

*We promote the development of the necessary skills so that students may become responsible members of society. It is our wish to see every student leave Our Lady's School with moral integrity and a heightened sense of social conscience.*

The Department of Education Transition Year Programme Guidelines (1995) assert the mission of TY '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.'

This governing aim resonates closely with the ethos of Our Lady's School and Transition Year has formed an integral part of the Our Lady's School curriculum since 1976. Since then our programme has evolved and developed to meet the changing needs of our students. Careful planning, which has taken account of the views of students, parents, staff and management, has informed this progression. Our Transition Year Programme offers students a variety of subjects and educational experiences designed to help our students to make the transition from the highly structured environment of the Junior Cycle to one where they will take greater

responsibility for their own learning and decision making at Senior Cycle, and beyond. The TY Work Experience programme is a central component of this transition.

Informed by both DES guidelines and our school mission statement, our aims for the Transition Year Programme are:

- Create space and opportunities for meaningful, enjoyable learning experiences through which the key competencies of students can be developed in the classroom and school, in the home and local community and in their roles as national and global citizens.
- Expand the student's experience and awareness of diverse future pathways and nurture the student's capacity to sustain their growth and development through a process of lifelong learning.
- Evolve continuously to meet the needs of the student through an evidence-informed reflection and renewal process, involving students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and community partners.
- To bring new kinds of learning opportunities to students and provide an orientation towards the world of work, including a component of actual work experience and community service.
- To provide 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 contributing positively to a team.
- To develop general, technical and academic skills whilst engaging students in independent, self-directed learning required for Senior Cycle and life beyond school.
- To promote a learning environment in line with DES (1994) and NCCA guidelines (2023) that establishes Transition Year as a one-year programme that forms the first of a three-year senior cycle and continues to bridge the gap between the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes.
- To create opportunities for students to build on their academic progress from Junior Cycle with a view to working towards the demands of Senior Cycle.

## Part 2: Programme Design

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The TY Programme is designed based on four layers (as per diagram below):

✓ **Core layer**

Core subjects are studied all year and are JC and LC subjects – eg: Maths

✓ **Subject sampling**

These are optional subjects which will be on offer at LC and are tailored for TY – eg:  
Home Economics

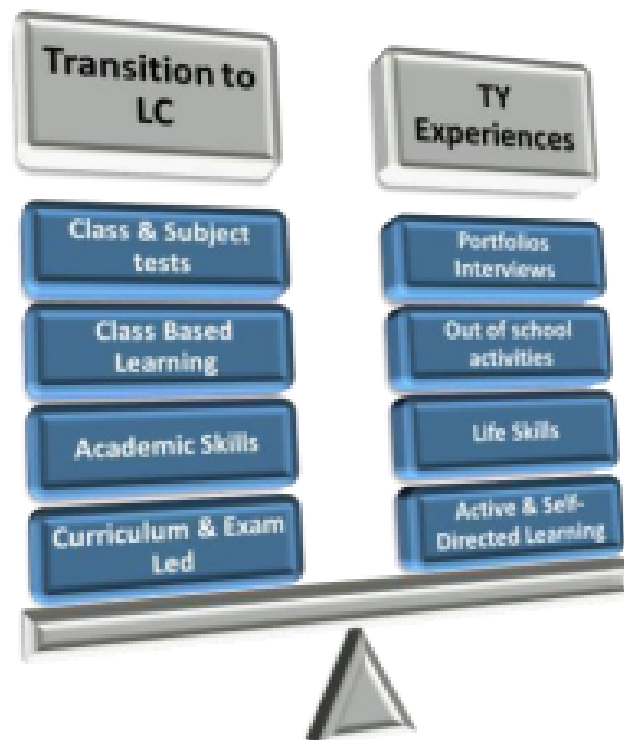
✓ **TY specific**

These subjects are specific to TY – eg: Psychology.

✓ **Calendar**

The calendar layer consists of highlights/activities/events specific to TY.

It is envisaged that the balance of these layers within the curriculum will reflect the need to maximise students' TY experiences while also paving the way forwards as part of their transition into Senior Cycle.



## Part 3: Organisational details

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### 1. TY Team

- ⊙ Co-ordinator: Lyndsey Phelan
- ⊙ School Management: Marguerite Gorby, Aoife Ronan, Stephen Rhatigan
- ⊙ Year Leaders: Clodagh Finnegan, Megan Bateman
- ⊙ Form Teachers
- ⊙ Career Guidance department: Lesley Porter, Fionnuala Bannan
- ⊙ Parents, students, school community

### 2. Class groupings

TY form classes are restructured from Junior Cycle. Students are allocated into classes TY1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. They are divided in an equal ratio from the previous form classes. The purpose of this restructure is to encourage students to get to know more people in their year group and develop their holistic education. Students remain in these classes for some subjects and are mixed for other subjects. Students will revert back to their Junior Cycle form classes for House Activities throughout the year in order to support the House System. This will also support students transition back into their Junior Cycle form classes for Senior Cycle.

### 3. Assessment: December/May reports

- **Subject specific assessment tools** vary considerably from project work to portfolio assessment, presentations to website design, peer teaching to reflective journals, written, oral and aural exams.
- **Exams** take place during specific Examination windows in December and May. These form part of the school's in-house exam system. These exams will take place in the 4 core subject areas; English, Irish, Maths and MFL.
- **Portfolio:** Each student uses a portfolio in order to compile evidence of learning and experiences throughout the year. Some subjects use this platform as part of their assessment procedure. Within the portfolio, students complete 5 end-of-term reflections, which their form teacher evaluates for end-of-year credits.
- **TY Interviews** offer students a formal opportunity to showcase their learning experiences and to articulate their reflections on the year so far at their mid-year interview and for the year as a whole on their end of year interview.

- **Credit system for Certification**

Credits are awarded for student **effort and participation** in different areas of Transition Year. A maximum of 400 credits is available.

Certificates require the following accumulation of credits:

400 - 301	:	Distinction
300 - 201	:	Merit
200 - 101	:	Credit
100 - 0	:	Certificate

Credits are accumulated as follows:

Subjects: 160 credits - broken down as follows:

Core Modules/Subjects: 80 credits

Teachers award students marks out of 100 for effort, participation and .....in each of the core subjects; English, Irish, Maths and MFL. Each subject represents 20/80 credits.

Subject Sampling Modules: 40 credits

TY Specific Modules: 40 credits

Attendance: 50 credits:

Up to 5 days absence throughout the year will not be penalised. After this, 2 credits per absence will be deducted. Certified medical absence will not be penalised.

Work Experience & Community Service: 60 credits:

Submitting paperwork by required deadlines and securing placements. Daily reflections, weekly reflection and submission of evaluation (15 credits per placement).

Journal Presentation: 10 credits:

Students will be marked on their Journal and its reflection exercises. 5 marks are allocated to December reporting and the remaining 5 marks are awarded on completion.

Interview: 30 credits:

Students will be marked on their two TY interviews. One mid-term interview and one end of year interview. This requires students to reflect on their TY

experiences. Each of the interviews carry up to 15 credits. A no show automatically results in 0 credits.

Portfolio: 30 credits:

Students will be marked on their portfolio that is completed throughout the year during. Time is allocated to this during Pastoral Care. 5 credits are allocated during each of their Interviews. 10 Credits are allocated to December reporting and the remaining 10 credits are awarded on its completion.

Conduct: 10 credits:

Marks incur a 1 credit deduction. Detentions incur a 10 credit deduction.

Initiative: 50 credits:

Pupils are awarded 10 credits for involvement in each extra-curricular activity, up to a maximum of 50 credits.

#### **4. TY Induction**

TY students attend TY induction day on the first day back to school. The TY Co-ordinator, Year Leaders and form teachers are present. The TY Coordinator leads the session based on the TY philosophy and what the year entails. The TY Team emphasise the importance of getting involved, being open-minded, taking increased responsibility, independent, self-directed learning and discovering personal strengths. They also emphasis the importance of academics from subject sampling to the importance of the core subjects. The TY team promotes the concept that transition year is a one-year programme that forms the first of a three-year senior cycle and continue to bridge the gap between the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes

The Work Experience Coordinator presents a Work Experience Preparation Workshop. Students are given an information pack, which the TY Co-ordinator leads them through, covering:

- The TY team
- Communication channels
- TY timetable
- The TY calendar & key dates
- Assessment
- Credits

- Portfolios
- The TY Journal
- Gaisce

*Note: Students are strongly encouraged to pursue the Bronze Gaisce Award. See [www.gaisce.ie](http://www.gaisce.ie) for further information.*

## **5. TY Programme Evaluation**

Students, staff and parents complete annual programme evaluations which identify strengths and needs of the programme in order to inform planning for the future.

## **6. TY Certification and Celebration**

At the end of the year, a TY Showcase afternoon is held in school to showcase to parents, students and staff the variety of work that has been undertaken and to celebrate students' achievements. Students are awarded their TY Certificate at this event, as well as any other certs they may have attained throughout the year (e.g. first aid, public speaking, etc.). Students who have completed their Gaisce Bronze Award are presented with their medals at the ceremony.

## **7. Trips**

Each year a trip to an outdoor pursuits centre is undertaken in early October. All students are encouraged to attend and parents are notified in May of the previous year allowing financial planning to be put in place. This trip is a TY trip that serves to open the year on a note commensurate with the philosophy of TY – one of personal challenge and group cohesion. This trip has well and truly become a highlight of the TY calendar and is conducive to setting a tone of adventure, comradery and positivity for the year.

Other trips may be offered during the year, for example, previous groups have travelled to Krakow, Barcelona, Lake Garda and Santiago de Compostela. These trips are subject to change from year to year. Information on what will be on offer for any particular year will be communicated to parents before the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> Year along with projected costs.

## **8. Costs**

TY related costs including stationery, Recreational Studies activities, workshops, etc. come to approximately €460, which will be included in the stationery fee request note that will be mailed to parents/guardians in June.



The other key expense for the year is the TY trip to Carlingford Adventure Centre, which costs approximately €260. We encourage all students to participate in this trip as it is an important opportunity for them to bond as a year group and to form new friendships and develop a better understanding of each other. Parents/Guardians will be asked for payment for the Carlingford trip before school ends this year in order to secure our booking.

## Part 4: Work Experience

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Work Experience is a core component that forms part of the multi-layered approach to the Transition Year programme, specifically related to the Calendar Layer and is completed at designated times throughout the academic year. These placements enable the students to experience a workplace setting for a short duration, which has many educational benefits. It encourages students to take initiative, build confidence, develop social skills and work as part of a team. It provides students with opportunities to explore various career interests that they may have developed in addition to enabling students to explore and nurture their skills, passions and signature strengths.

**Work Experience takes place for 3 set weeks across the year and 1 set week of community service. The dates are:**

- 20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- 29<sup>th</sup> January - 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024
- 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024

In order to support students and parents in their preparation for TY Work Experience, the following steps are taken:

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year (March - May):

- The TY Coordinator speaks to the parents of incoming TYs about Work Experience. Dates, formal procedures and the value of the placements are discussed.
- Work Experience Policy shared with parents including a letter to parents regarding work experience dates for the coming year (Appendix 1).

- Students are given a similar talk about sourcing and applying for work experience for the following year. It is noted that for certain placements, such as An Garda Síochána, medical roles and the media, positions are limited so immediate application is essential. Work experience procedures, additional work experience, work experience credits and reflections and Garda Vetting requirements are outlined.
- Students are given an opportunity to interview current Transition Year students about their experiences of work in TY.

#### TY Induction (August of TY):

- Work Experience Preparation Workshop with the TY Coordinator. Topics covered such as:
  1. Garda Vetting and application for additional work experience
  2. Problem scenarios on the first day of employment
  3. Expectations of employers
  4. Health and safety
  5. Appearance: Grooming/appropriate attire as directed by the school and place of employment
- The students are reminded that it is vital that the necessary Google forms for placements are completed in a timely manner and within deadlines.
- Students who are finding it difficult to find placements are to speak to either the TY Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Students are shown where all necessary work experience documents including insurance forms are located within the TY Google Classroom.

#### Throughout TY:

##### The TY Coordinator:

- Distributes a list of students and employers to the TY Teaching Staff. In turn all employers are contacted via phone or email to see how the students are faring on placement and to thank them for their participation in our Work Experience programme. This also enables the building up of a database of placements for future years.
- Uploads daily reflection form on Google Classroom each day for students to complete each evening. Also uploads the final weekly reflection form on Google Classroom on the last day of each placement for students to complete within one week.

- Creates an assignment on Google Classroom, for students to upload their completed work experience evaluation. This is to be completed no later than one week after the students' work placement has been completed.
- Collects and files employers' evaluation forms that have been returned directly to the school by the employer. These will be returned to the students and can then be used as references for future job opportunities.
- Allocates work experience credits to the students. These credits are allocated based on submission of work experience documentation including, submission of employer details, evaluation, daily reflections and final reflection for each of the four placements. In order for a student to receive the allocated credits all submissions must be done by required deadlines. (A total of 80 credits is available for work experience).

Students (All documentation is submitted digitally through Google Forms on Google Classroom)

- Submission of employer details by the required deadline (Three weeks prior to placement).
- Completion of daily work experience reflection (each evening - to be completed before the next day's work experience).
- Completion of the final work experience reflection which is made available to students on the final day of work experience and must be completed within one week.
- Submission of Work Experience Evaluation form. This is either submitted by the student directly and sent by the employer directly to the school. Submission must be made no later than one week after the completion of the placement.
- Students must complete a Work Experience review and evaluation on their e-portfolio.

A full 'Transition Year Work Experience Policy' is available on the school website and students Google Classroom.

## Part 5: Subjects

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### 1. Option subjects

Option subjects are TY specialist subjects chosen towards the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Students choose their two option subjects for the whole academic year.

They will choose one subject from Journalism & Film Studies, Junk Kouture, Musical Production, Sports Leadership & Active Schools Flag, Enterprise & Money Smarts.

They will choose a second subject from Restorative Practice, Art, Young Scientists, Chinese Language & Culture, Philosophy & World Affairs. We strive to assign every student to their preferred subject, however due to class size this is not always possible.

It is recommended your daughter considers her 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice carefully.

### 2. Block subjects

Block subjects are studied for a set amount of weeks and then rotated to the next block. All blocks are mandatory.

Blocks 1: Accounting, Economics, Business, Geography, History  
2 Periods per Week  
10 Classes Approximately

Block 2: Careers 1, Careers 2, LCVP, Coding, Drivers Education  
1 Period per Week  
5-6 Classes Approximately

Block 3: Information Technology 1, Information Technology 2, Psychology,  
Environment & Society, Digital - Podcasting  
1 Period per Week  
4-5 Classes Approximately

Block 4: Agricultural Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, CSI, Home  
Economics, Music  
2 Periods per Week  
6 Classes Approximately

### **3. Core subjects**

The four main core subjects studied in TY for the whole year are English, Irish, Maths and MFL.

Other subjects that students engage with for the year are SPHE, Religion, GMetrix and Recreational Studies.