



CORK EDUCATE TOGETHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL

Transition Year Policy

2019/2020

Mission Statement

Transition Year is an integral and compulsory programme in the curriculum of Cork Educate Together Secondary School. Our mission embodies the mission statement of the school as a whole: *We will learn together and our diversity will be our strength. We aim to educate our students to the best of their individual abilities in a caring and supportive environment*. We believe that Transition Year provides a bridge to enable students to make the transition from Junior to Senior cycle. It encourages academic, personal and social development and recognises the need for students to grow in independence and agency as they approach key decision-making years. The CETSS TY programme was developed in consultation with all stakeholders at the school and is open to annual review on an ongoing basis.

Aims

The aims of the Transition Year Programme reflect those specific to the guidelines published by the Department of Education and Skills, namely:

1. Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.
2. The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with the emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.
3. Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal development and career imagining and planning

Expectations

Transition Year is an activity-based, self-directed programme, which entails learning both inside and outside the classroom. Students, who are self-motivated, can work hard, and adapt well to new learning experiences gain most from the TY Programme.

- There are many trips and educational events in TY
- Students receive certification and experiences that adds value to their CV.

- Students have a great opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities.
- There are many opportunities for developing leadership potential, organisational experiences and training.
- We expect our students to approach Transition Year with openness and enthusiasm.

To graduate from Transition Year students must satisfy the following:

- Submit a signed and agreed TY Code of Relationships and Behaviour
- Attain 90% attendance for the year (medically certified illness exception)
- Complete two weeks of work experience and reflection workbook
- Complete one week of community experience and reflection workbook
- Sit two formal sets of academic exams (winter and summer)
- Submit a completed portfolio and portfolio interview (May 2020)

Transition Year Themes

Conscious TY

At CETSS we are committed to sustainable means of achieving our aims. We believe in offering an affordable TY Programme that is mindful of financial barriers. We intend to utilise methods of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. In line with our other school policies we will try to reduce our use of single use plastics and recycle. We intend to be mindful of our school's carbon footprint and offset any usage where possible.

Outdoor TY

We will endeavour to keep the TY programme as active and outdoor as is possible throughout the year. Our Physical Education, Field Studies and Citizen Science programmes will all include outdoor elements (weather permitting!).

Restorative TY

At CETSS we have consistently adopted a restorative approach to building relationships and preventing conflict which directly aligns with our school values: Care, Inclusion, Resilience and Respect. We use RP to promote positive relationships throughout the school community. We endeavour to preserve the personal dignity of all members of the school community, encompassing the idea that every person belongs, is respected, valued and cared for, and has the right to be treated fairly. We use RP to make agreements: regarding what needs to happen to set things right, diffuse conflict, and restore positive relationships.

Ethical TY

Ethical Education is a core subject at CETSS. It will continue to be delivered in TY. We will also endeavour to incorporate elements of the Ethical Education programme across all TY subjects e.g: Power and Participation, Gender Equality, Values Education etc. We will also use some of the strands of our Ethical Education Programme to frame our foreign trip.

Procedures

- All existing Third Year Students will be automatically eligible for TY as it is a compulsory programme in our school. Cork ETSS believes that students benefit more from a full six-year programme at second level to enhance their employability and further educational progression.
- External applicants must, in the first instance, complete an official Application Form for admission to the school and satisfy the school's transfer procedures in full.
- Offers to External applicants for Transition Year places will be made by no later than August 1st in the year of application.
- Transfer applicants must be no older than is appropriate to their peers.
- CETSS values multiculturalism and connectedness. We welcome visiting international students to enhance the diversity of our school. Should transfer places remain available in TY by the end of June visiting students can be offered a place in TY via our International partners (with a preference for full-year-visits).
- Students who want to take leave from TY (under exceptional circumstances e.g. a unique work or community opportunity with vocational or educational benefits) must formally apply to the school using the TY School Leave Form (Schoology) and be granted permission by the school.

Transition Year Programme

The Transition Year Programme in Cork Educate Together Secondary School has 5 key components:

1. **Academic Core** – maintains academic standards in core subject areas.
2. **Once off modules** - allows students to focus on areas of special interest to them.
3. **Options** - allows students to experience a broad range of subjects for the Leaving Cert.
4. **Portfolio Preparation and Interviews**
5. **Work and Community Experience Programmes**

The school reserves the right to make changes to class groupings based on factors including: classroom needs, staffing, resources, allocation and student numbers.

TY students will go on an essential overnight team bonding exercise in the first week of term (September). A payment fee has been set up on VShare for this activity (not covered by the TY fee).

TY Students are encouraged to participate in all activities and to apply themselves to mentoring and leadership positions in the school.

Throughout the year there are various guest speakers, workshops and modules, and related out-of-school trips and activities.

TY Subjects Offered at CETSS

- English, Drama, Creative Writing
- Gaeilge
- Maths and Personal Finance
- Espanól
- Life Skills Programme (Cookery/Enterprise/ Drivers Ed)
- Physical Education (Modules in: Rowing, Gym, Ultimate Frisbee, Yoga etc)
- Citizen Science (Biology/Physics/Chemistry sampling)
- Career Guidance and the World of Work
- Languages: Chinese/ French/Coding (options)
- Field Studies/ Adventure Skills: (Geography/History & Outdoor Education)
- Social and Ethical Education (Ethics/Philosophy/Psychology and Sociology)
- School Show (Art/Music/ Technology with a practical focus)
- Change Makers (course that focuses on student political activism and action)

Work and Community Experience Programmes

The dates have been assigned for the Work and Community Experience Programmes and are available on the school app. The documents for applying for placements will be available on the school app in September. Each Student will be assigned a Work and Community Experience Teacher who will monitor their performance by contacting their Employer/Community contact at key dates throughout the year. Completing the relevant sections of the work and community experience parts of the Transition Year portfolio (in an orderly and timely manner) is compulsory.

Assessments and Examinations

Several modes of assessment and examination are used in TY. In school-based subjects, both continuous assessment (e.g. classwork & homework) and examinations are employed by teachers. In other areas e.g. the First Aid course, students will be assessed by an outside agent on their ability to perform certain First Aid tasks and receive a certificate if successful. They are monitored by both the work experience employer and the school when engaged in work experience. The school will issue two reports during the school year for winter and summer assessments. All Students must produce a Portfolio of Work which they are assessed on at the end of the year. These portfolios will be distributed to students on the first day of school and are included in the overall fee for TY.

Finance

Transition Year is a unique experience, in that it includes programmes and experiences that are beyond the typical school curriculum. In CETSS, this programme is designed to include the wishes of parents, students and teachers alike. These additional initiatives often involve a cost, which, although subsidised by the Department's TY grant (95 euro per student), cannot be supported by the general school finances.

Whilst the school makes every effort to subsidise the costs and to keep student charges to a minimum, there is a need to request a charge from parents. This is common practice in most schools.

This charge is not a tuition fee, which are banned for non fee-paying schools; it represents the *true cost* of the cumulative expenses. It is acceptable for non-fee charging schools to pass on these costs.

From a planning perspective, it is substantially easier to process single annual payments, compared to hundreds of small transactions. For this reason, we ask parents to pay, if possible, in one payment.

However, if necessary, we can of course, accept money in stage payments. In exceptional circumstances, the school can come to other arrangements with families in financial difficulty. Towards this end, parents should contact the school as soon as possible, to come to an arrangement.

However, in general, it is imperative that all charges fees are paid for students participating in the Transition Year Programme, so that the school can meet the necessary running costs associated with all the various activities and courses fundamental to the programme.

Currently the school charges €350 per student for TY and this should be paid by 1st September. This fee will be agreed annually with the Parents' Council.

Budgeting for TY is complex, as some items of expenditure are more predictable than others.

Should a substantial number of parents not pay the charge, the programme will be affected. By definition, this would mean either cancelling the activities which have already been planned/booked, and for which other parents have already paid, or running the activities only for those who have paid. Whilst neither option is desirable for a school, we shall operate on the basis of the latter, so as to protect the integrity of the programme, and to be fair to those who have paid for the additional costs.

This will mean that students, whose parents/guardians have not made an alternative arrangement regarding charges, will not be able to participate in activities for which there is a 'true cost'. The school shall endeavour to provide alternative supervision, in other year groups, during these activities, should numbers allow. participate in activities for which there is a 'true cost'. The school shall endeavour to provide alternative supervision, in other year groups, during these activities, should numbers allow.

School Trip

An optional Foreign Trip will be organised during the year. The cost of the foreign trip is not included in the Transition Year fee. The cost varies from year to year. School trips are organized in accordance with the School Trips Policy. Should students not wish to take part in the school trip, they must participate in an activity agreed with the TY coordinator (such as extra work/community experience or a certified course, etc). Students wishing to spend time studying elsewhere, must use the 'TY Leave' proposal document, which can be found on Schoology.

TY Policy Version 1.0

Ratified by BOM on date: 03/10/2019

Signed by BOM Chairperson: