



TY Handbook, 2023/2024

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Coordinator's Welcome

On behalf of myself and the entire Transition Year team, I would like to extend a warm and enthusiastic welcome to all of you. We are thrilled to embark on this exciting journey together as we explore new opportunities, foster personal growth, and expand horizons throughout the year.

Transition Year is a unique phase in your educational journey, offering a wealth of experiences and learning beyond the traditional classroom setting. It is a time of exploration, self-discovery, and skill development, where you will have the chance to engage in a diverse range of activities, both academic and non-academic.

During this transformative year, we aim to empower you to become independent learners, critical thinkers, and active contributors to society. Through a well-rounded curriculum, we will provide you with opportunities to develop essential life skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, communication, and leadership.

All the dedicated teachers and staff at ETSSW are committed to creating a supportive and stimulating environment where you can flourish academically, creatively, and personally. We encourage you to embrace new challenges, push your boundaries, and discover your passions. Whether it's through participating in community projects, undertaking work experience, or engaging in extracurricular activities, Transition Year offers a wealth of opportunities for personal and social development.

Throughout the year, you will have the chance to explore various subjects, engage in practical projects, and participate in exciting excursions and trips. We will also provide guidance and support as you consider your future pathways and make informed decisions about your further studies and career choices.

We recognize the importance of collaboration and open communication between students, parents, and teachers. We encourage you to actively engage in the Transition Year program, share your ideas, and contribute to the development of a vibrant and inclusive community.

As your Transition Year coordinator, I am here to support you every step of the way. Please feel free to approach me or any member of our team with any questions, concerns, or ideas you may have. We are committed to ensuring that your Transition Year experience is enriching, memorable, and transformative.

I would like to express my gratitude to the parents and guardians for entrusting us with the education and well-being of your children during this crucial year. Together, let us create an



environment where our students can thrive and develop into confident, well-rounded individuals ready to take on the challenges of the future.

Once again, welcome to Transition Year! Let's embark on this remarkable journey together and make the most of the incredible opportunities that lie ahead.

Wishing you all a wonderful adventure.

Kind Regards,

Alicia Devlin Byrne
TY Coordinator



1. Introduction

Welcome to Our Transition Year Programme: Unlocking Boundless Opportunities

We are thrilled to present to you our Transition Year (TY) programme, a transformative experience designed to ignite the passion for learning, self-discovery, and personal growth. Here at ETSSW, we believe in providing our students with a holistic education that goes beyond the confines of traditional classroom settings.

Transition Year is a pivotal stage in every student's educational journey, where they have the unique opportunity to explore, experiment, and embark on an exciting voyage of self-exploration. It serves as a bridge between the structured Junior Cycle and the demanding Senior Cycle, allowing students to develop essential life skills, broaden their horizons, and make informed choices about their future paths.

Our TY Working group have meticulously crafted a dynamic TY program that encompasses a wide range of experiences, blending academic pursuits with practical, hands-on learning. Our program is firmly rooted in the principles of experiential education, promoting active engagement, critical thinking, and creativity in all aspects of learning.

Our program places a strong emphasis on formative assessment, recognizing that learning is a continuous and ongoing process. Through a variety of interactive and engaging activities, we foster an environment that encourages critical thinking, creativity, and personal development. We are committed to providing guidance and support as students embark on their individual journeys of self-discovery.

While formative assessment is central to our approach, we also recognize the importance of summative assessments to gauge students' progress and achievement. These assessments occur periodically throughout the year and offer valuable feedback on students' understanding of various subjects. Our goal is not only to promote academic excellence but also to cultivate well-rounded individuals with a range of skills and competencies.

During Transition Year, students are encouraged to discover and pursue their passions through a diverse array of subjects and activities. They have the freedom to choose from an extensive selection of modules, covering areas such as arts and culture, entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability, technology, sports, and community outreach. These modules allow students to delve into areas of interest, nurturing their talents and acquiring new skills along the way.

Beyond the classroom, our TY program is distinguished by its focus on experiential learning. We believe that true education extends far beyond textbooks and tests. Our students actively participate in exciting projects, collaborative group work, field trips, work experience placements, and community engagement initiatives. These immersive experiences provide



them with invaluable real-world exposure, fostering resilience, adaptability, and a sense of social responsibility.

Furthermore, our Transition Year program encourages personal development and well-being. We offer a wide range of activities designed to promote mental and physical well-being, such as mindfulness workshops, outdoor pursuits, and team-building exercises. We understand that a holistic approach to education encompasses not only academic achievements but also the cultivation of emotional intelligence and a healthy lifestyle.

At the heart of our TY program lies the belief in empowering our students to become active, engaged, and responsible members of society. We aim to nurture their leadership potential, encourage independent thinking, and instil a lifelong love for learning. Through various initiatives, such as volunteering opportunities, charity fundraisers, and social justice projects, we inspire our students to make a positive impact on their local and global communities.

A cornerstone of our Transition Year program is the implementation of a digital portfolio. This innovative tool allows students to curate and showcase their work, accomplishments, and personal growth throughout the year. The digital portfolio serves as a reflective space, enabling students to document their achievements and experiences across different subjects, extracurricular activities, community service, and personal projects. It fosters self-awareness, encourages goal setting, and enhances their ability to present their accomplishments effectively.

To celebrate the culmination of a year filled with growth and achievements, we organise a Graduation evening. This special event serves as a platform for our Transition Year students to demonstrate their progress, share their experiences, and showcase their remarkable work to their families, teachers, and peers. It is an evening of recognition, appreciation, and celebration, where the talents and accomplishments of each student are spotlighted.

As you embark on this incredible journey of self-discovery during the Transition Year, be prepared to unlock boundless opportunities, forge lifelong friendships, and create memories that will shape your future. Our dedicated team of teachers and staff will guide and support you every step of the way, ensuring that your Transition Year is a transformative experience filled with growth, learning, and personal triumphs.

Welcome to our Transition Year program, where the possibilities are endless, and the adventure begins.



Rationale of Transition Year

The TY program is a valuable educational initiative designed to bridge the gap between secondary education and higher education or the workforce. The rationale behind implementing a TY program stems from the recognition that students can greatly benefit from a structured period of exploration, personal growth, and skill development before committing to specific educational or career choices. This rationale is supported by several key factors.

1. **Personal and Social Development:** The TY programs provide a crucial opportunity for students to mature personally and socially. The program allows them to explore their interests, strengths, and values through a variety of experiences, such as volunteering, work experience, community engagement, and personal projects. This personal growth fosters increased self-esteem, adaptability, and a stronger sense of purpose, which can positively impact their future academic and professional endeavours.
2. **Academic Exploration:** During TY, students have the opportunity to explore various academic disciplines, helping them make more informed decisions about their future studies. By sampling different subjects or participating in specialised workshops, students can gain a deeper understanding of their interests, strengths, and aptitudes. This exposure allows them to make more confident and informed decisions when choosing their university majors or vocational training programs. The exploration of different academic paths encourages intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and a broader perspective, all of which contribute to well-rounded individuals.
3. **Career Readiness:** The TY program supports career exploration and development by providing the opportunity to engage in work experience placements, career counselling, and workshops on employability skills. Students can gain first-hand experience in various industries and professions, allowing them to make more informed decisions about their future career choices. Additionally, the program can offer guidance on resume writing, interview skills, and workplace etiquette, ensuring that students develop the necessary skills to thrive in the professional world.
4. **Practical Life Skills:** In addition to academic and career exploration, during TY students can focus on developing practical life skills that are often not explicitly taught in traditional educational settings. Skills such as financial literacy, time management, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork are vital for personal and professional success. The program provides workshops, seminars, and hands-on experiences to equip students with these essential life skills, empowering them to navigate challenges and responsibilities effectively.



5. **Well-being and Resilience:** The TY program recognizes the importance of prioritizing students' well-being and mental health during this period of change, as students move from Junior Cycle into Senior Cycle. By providing access to, mindfulness training, stress management techniques, and fostering a supportive community, the program promotes resilience and emotional well-being. Students can develop coping strategies and learn to balance their academic, personal, and social responsibilities, setting them up for success in the long term.

2. TY Programme Overview

Our TY programme is structured like an onion, with layers of learning. At the core, we have subjects that ignite students' academic growth as they progress towards the Leaving Certificate. Our teaching and learning methods foster critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Anchoring all methodologies is the goal of promoting active and self-directed learning.

- **Core Subjects:** These are the subjects typically timetabled for the entire year and are Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate subjects e.g. Irish, English, Maths.
- **Subject Sampling:** These are tailored to suit the TY programme and prepare students to make informed subject choices for the Leaving Certificate. For example, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Business, Accounting, Economics, History, Geography, Art, Music, DCG, Construction Studies, Home Economics & Computer Science.
- **TY Modules :** These are specific to Transition Year that may include several Transition Units for example Mini Company, Junk Kouture, Radio, 121 digital, HACCP and SciFest.
- **Calendar “Once Off”:** These are events or activities that take place on specific dates or times during Transition Year such as work experience, tours or trips, musicals etc.

Core Subjects

Course outlines for all core subjects can be found below in *Appendix 1*.

Subject	No of Periods a Week
Irish	3
English	3
Maths	3
French/Spanish	2
Ethical Education	1
Portfolio	1
Career Guidance/SPHE	1
Work Experience/Community Care	6



Subject Sampling Modules

Subject	No of Periods a Week
Science (Biology/Chemistry/Physics – rotate 11 week blocks)	1
History/Geography	1
Art/Music/Construction Studies (rotate in 11 week blocks)	1
Business/Home Ec/Computers (rotate in 11 week blocks)	1
Exercise group (LC PE taster/Gym/Tennis)	1

TY Modules

The schedule below for the rotation of modules can be found on the student's e-portfolio and the TY notice board.

Subject	No of Periods a Week
Musical (split across the week)	1
121 Digital/ HACCP/ Radio (rotate in 11 week blocks)	1
Junk Koture/ Mini Company/MUN	1

Events/Trips

A highlight of Transition Year is participation in events and trips.

World of Work	Courses	Trips/Events	Guest Speakers/Events	Volunteering/ Fundraising Work
Work Experience Community Care SparkEd	Self-defence First Aid Boxing	Carlingford (optional) Mondello Art Trip College Open Days Careers Events	Law Module Flashmob Fighting Words Video Production Shine Festival	121 Digital Musical Fundraisers Events for 1 st / 2 nd year Litter-picking



	STEM Passport for Inclusion			
	Spatial Reasoning	Ice Skating	SATU Workshop	
	HACCP	S.O.S Wellbeing Walk	S.O.S Wellbeing Workshop	

Calendar

This calendar is subject to change and is non-exhaustive (further activities and events are in the process of planning at the time of writing). All open days are subject to interest & numbers.

Month	Event/Trip
September	7 th The Greatest Showman Flashmob 25 th – 27 th Carlingford 14 th , 21 st , 28 th Summit Sisters (provisional) Rotary Club Leadership Competition
October	5 th Gr8 2b Yng Workshop 6 th UG Open Day 9 th Law Module 12 th Shine Festival 13 th Gr8 2b Yng Walk 26 th UL Open Day Rotary Club Leadership Competition
November	17 th TU Open day Anyone4Science Workshops TBC 17 th & 24 th Video Production Workshop 22 nd NCAD Open Day 25 th IADT Open Day
December	Ice-Skating TBC Coco's Law Talk TBC
January	First Aid Training TBC
February	5 th & 12 th Mondello
March	2 nd DCU TY Open Day



	Avondale Trip TBC
April	School Summit TBC
May	Mystery Tour TBC 23 rd - TY Graduation

3. Student Responsibilities

Contract for Learning

To ensure a productive and engaging year, we have established a Transition Year Learning Contract. This contract outlines the expectations, responsibilities, and goals for both students and teachers throughout the year.

The Transition Year Learning Contract is designed to empower you to take ownership of your education, foster a sense of independence, and facilitate personal and academic growth. It provides a framework that encourages active participation, self-reflection, and collaboration. By signing this contract, you are making a commitment to fully engage in your learning journey and make the most of this unique educational experience.

Throughout the year, you will have the opportunity to explore a range of subjects and activities, including academic subjects, project-based learning, work experience, community service, and extracurricular activities. This diverse curriculum aims to broaden your horizons, develop your critical thinking skills, and help you discover your passions and strengths. In return, the school and teachers will provide guidance, support, and resources to help you navigate through the year successfully. They will encourage creativity, foster a positive learning environment, and offer opportunities for personal and academic development. Together, we will work towards achieving the goals outlined in this contract and ensure that your Transition Year is a rewarding and transformative experience.

Remember, this contract serves as a mutual agreement between you, your teachers, and the school. By adhering to the terms outlined in this contract, you will not only enhance your educational experience but also develop important life skills such as responsibility, time management, and teamwork. We are confident that by embracing this learning contract, you will embark on an enriching journey of self-discovery, personal growth, and academic achievement during your Transition Year. It is important too for parents and guardians to know of the expectations of their daughters in Transition Year. To this end, we ask parents to sign the Contract for Learning which will be uploaded on the students' digital portfolio

Please see *Appendix 1* for the Contract of Learning.



Attendance

Normal school rules in terms of attendance apply. Additional rules to note in Transition Year are:

- Participation in activities and trips is mandatory; students must attend.
- For the academic year with an overseas tour, students must maintain a minimum attendance of 80% to be eligible for the tour. If attendance falls below this threshold, the Transition Year (TY) Coordinator and Principal will review the student's case to determine tour participation.
- When students go on a trip outside the school premises, they must sign in before departure. If the departure is scheduled before the school opens, the accompanying teachers will keep an attendance record.
- If a student knows in advance that they cannot join a trip, they must inform the trip organizer and provide a note in their journal from a parent/guardian explaining the reason for the absence.
- If a student becomes unable to attend the trip on the day due to illness or an unexpected event, they must notify the school as early as possible.

Code of Behaviour

The school's code of behaviour applies to all students, including Transition Years. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the school's Code of Behaviour. In addition, please note the following:

1. Unless authorised by the class teacher, it is expected that a Transition Year student remains in class at all times.
2. In cases of misconduct within or outside school premises, the TY Co-ordinator and Principal retain the authority to prohibit a student from participating in an overseas tour.
3. When students are on off-site trips, they should always bear in mind that they are representatives of the school, and as such, they are expected to display exemplary conduct.
4. It is important for students to express gratitude towards teachers, speakers, bus drivers, and anyone involved in organising an event.
5. Students should treat one another with respect and refrain from excluding any fellow students in their class or year group.



Punctuality

Punctuality is key to the smooth running of Transition Year. Being on time for classes, buses, guest speakers, interviews, work experience, etc. are life skills that we value and instil.

Commitment & Involvement

In order to fully utilise the benefits of Transition Year, it is essential to exhibit a high level of dedication and active participation in the programme. The staff at ETSSW will encourage students and provide opportunities to facilitate student commitment and involvement. However, it is crucial for students to demonstrate an additional determination to truly engage in the Transition Year experience, as it is a key component for an extraordinary year.

4. Community Care/Work Experience

The Community Care and Work Experience modules are a valuable component of our educational program, providing students with a unique opportunity to engage with the community and gain practical work experience. These modules are specifically designed to enhance students understanding of social issues, foster empathy, and develop essential skills that will prepare them for future endeavours.

Taking place every Tuesday of the school term, the TY classes will follow a rotating schedule wherein students actively participate in both community care activities and work experiences. This rotation ensures that they have a well-rounded exposure to diverse environments and develop a comprehensive skill set.

Work Experience Dates:

TY 1; 29th August – 24th October (excluding 26th September); 7th November – 19th December.

TY 2; 9th January – 6th February; 20th February – 19th March; 9th April – 21st May.

Community Care Dates:

TY 2; 29th August – 24th October (excluding 26th September); 7th November – 19th December.

TY 1; 9th January – 6th February; 20th February – 19th March; 9th April – 21st May.



Community Care

During the community care, students actively contribute to various service projects, volunteering their time and effort to support local organisations, charities, and community initiatives. This hands-on involvement allows them to witness the challenges faced by marginalized groups, gain insights into societal issues, and develop a sense of responsibility towards their fellow citizens. Activities may include assisting at homeless shelters, organizing fundraisers for a cause, participating in environmental conservation projects, or engaging with underprivileged youth and elderly individuals.

Active participation in the community care module contributes to a student's overall assessment at the end of TY. The assessment of the community care module incorporates various elements, such as students' journals/reports and employers' evaluations. Furthermore, the assessment aims to recognize the student's dedication throughout the entire journey, from preparation to evaluation.

In the community care module, students will record their experience, just like they will in the work experience module.

Important documents for students are:

- Letter to Employers *Appendix 2*
- Work Experience Placement Form *Appendix 3*
- Work Experience Attendance Form *Appendix 4*
- Work Experience/ Shadowing Diary *Appendix 5*
- Employer Evaluation Form *Appendix 6*
- Reflection after Work Placement *Appendix 7*

Work Experience

Introduction

In today's competitive job market, work experience holds immense value and plays a crucial role in shaping a successful career. Work experience refers to the practical knowledge, skills, and insights gained through active participation in professional environments. Work experience provides individuals with numerous advantages that are highly sought after by employers and beneficial for personal growth.

First and foremost, work experience allows students to apply their academic knowledge to real-world situations, bridging the gap between theory and practice. It provides an opportunity to understand how concepts learned in classrooms are implemented and adapted to meet the demands of specific industries and organisations. By working in a professional setting, students



gain a deeper understanding of their field and develop practical skills that enhance their overall competency.

Additionally, work experience helps students cultivate essential soft skills that are highly valued by employers. Skills such as effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and time management are honed through real-life work scenarios. Employers often prioritize candidates with proven abilities in these areas, as they contribute to a productive work environment and facilitate seamless collaboration within teams.

Moreover, work experience allows students to gain insight into their own strengths, weaknesses, and career preferences. Exposure to different work environments and roles helps students make informed decisions about their professional paths. It enables them to identify their passions, refine their career goals, and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their chosen field.

Lastly, work experience enhances a student's employability. When recruiters review resumes, they place significant emphasis on relevant work experience, as it demonstrates an individual's ability to thrive in a professional setting. Having practical experience in the field provides a competitive edge over other candidates with similar academic qualifications but limited practical exposure.

Information for Students

It is important for each student to source their own work experience and community care, however, we can support students in finding work experience and community care. To enhance their learning journey, students are advised to seek two distinct types of work placements. Every year, numerous renowned organisations and public entities offer work experience programs for Transition Year. Typically, these programs involve an application process, an early deadline, and attract a significant number of interested applicants. Some examples of these programmes can be found on the following websites:

- A. <https://ty.ie>
- B. Careers Portal <https://careersportal.ie/workx/student>
- C. Failte Ireland <https://www.failteireland.ie/tourism-careers/ty-work-experience-programme.aspx>

Students will be informed in careers class of assignments they will need to undertake before, during, and after the work experience, e.g. logbooks or diaries in the e-portfolio.

Work Experience encompasses students actively engaging in the day-to-day operations of their selected field. This practical placement entails performing fundamental workplace tasks, with an emphasis on skill development.



Advantages of work experience:

- 1) **Explore career options:** Students explore different career paths by exposing them to various industries and job roles. It allows them to make informed decisions about their future career choices based on their experiences and interests.
- 2) **Develop transferable skills:** Helps students develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, time management, and adaptability. These skills are highly valuable in any career and can be transferred to different situations and industries.
- 3) **Build a professional network:** Building connections with industry experts, mentors, and potential employers can be advantageous for future job prospects and gaining valuable insights and advice.
- 4) **Enhance self-confidence:** Students often step out of their comfort zones and face real-world challenges. By successfully overcoming these challenges, students gain confidence in their abilities, boosting their self-esteem and self-belief.
- 5) **Improve resume/CV:** Work experience can enhance a student's resume or curriculum vitae. It demonstrates initiative, motivation, and a proactive approach to learning, which can be impressive to college admissions officers or future employers.
- 6) **Clarify career goals:** Students have an opportunity to test out different career options and gain clarity about one's future goals. It allows students to better understand their strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes in the professional context, guiding them towards a more suitable career path.
- 7) **Learn workplace etiquette:** Students are exposed to professional codes of conduct, workplace etiquette, and industry norms. It helps them understand the expectations and behaviours required in a work environment, preparing them for future internships or jobs.
- 8) **Gain references and recommendations:** Successful work experience in TY can lead to strong references and recommendations from supervisors or employers. These references can be valuable assets when applying for future internships, jobs, or college programs.
- 9) **Personal growth and maturity:** Engaging in work experience promotes personal growth and maturity. It provides students with the opportunity to take responsibility, manage their time effectively, and develop a strong work ethic, which are essential life skills beyond the academic setting.



Work Shadowing involves closely observing someone at work doing a role rather than taking on the working role itself. It provides valuable understanding of the job's nature and the necessary skills. Nonetheless, it's unlikely that your daughter will enhance her own skills or establish connections that could be advantageous in her future job search. Work shadowing experiences are typically shorter in duration compared to work experiences, usually lasting only a day.

- **Gain first-hand exposure:** Work shadowing allows students to observe and experience the day-to-day activities and tasks of a specific job or profession. It provides an up-close and personal view of what it's like to work in that role.
- **Learn from professionals:** By shadowing experienced professionals, students can learn valuable insights, tips, and tricks from those who have expertise in the field. They can observe their work style, problem-solving approaches, and communication techniques.
- **Explore career options:** Work shadowing offers a low-risk opportunity to explore different career paths.
- **Clarify expectations:** Work shadowing helps students develop a realistic understanding of a job's expectations, responsibilities, and challenges.
- **Enhance professional development:** Observing professionals in action allows students to learn new skills, techniques, and industry-specific knowledge. It can contribute to their professional development by exposing them to different work environments, practices, and tools.
- **Boost confidence and motivation:** Work shadowing can inspire individuals and ignite their passion for a particular career.
- **Personal growth and self-discovery:** It allows students to explore their strengths, interests, and values in a practical setting, helping them align their career choices with their overall goals and aspirations.

In terms of finding out what it is like to work in a new and different environment, it is usually recommended that students do not opt to work in a family business or where another family member is working. However, if a student has a family business, perhaps they could offer a placement to another student.

Work experience will take place every Tuesday of term and this will alternate with the Community care placement.

In order to fully engage in the learning process, it is important that students take time to reflect on the experiences and knowledge they have acquired. This reflection will be done through a



reflective journal of their experience, as well as constructive feedback from the employer through the evaluation forms, both of which should be included in their digital portfolio. Students should also write 'Thank You' letters to the employers.

Active participation in the work experience module contributes to a student's overall assessment at the end of TY. The assessment of the work experience module incorporates various elements, such as students' journals/reports and employers' evaluations. Furthermore, the assessment aims to recognize the student's dedication throughout the entire journey, from preparation to evaluation.

Important documents for students are:

- Letter to Employers *Appendix 2*
- Work Experience Placement Form *Appendix 3*
- Work Experience Attendance Form *Appendix 4*
- Work Experience/ Shadowing Diary *Appendix 5*
- Employer Evaluation Form *Appendix 6*
- Reflection after Work Placement *Appendix 7*

Information for Parents & Guardians

How parents can help:

Parents and guardians have numerous opportunities to assist their child during work placements. Although this experience may be thrilling for many students, it can also be intimidating, and parental support and motivation can play a crucial role in maximizing the placement's success. Here are some suggestions to keep in mind during your child's placement.

Before the placement, parents or guardians should ensure that their child:

- Has a clear understanding of the location of the placement, how to get there, and the estimated duration of the work commute.
- Dresses appropriately, considering the specific requirements of the placement.
- Possesses sufficient funds for transportation expenses and lunch breaks.
- Carries any required documentation.
- Identifies the appropriate contact person upon arrival at the work placement.
- Is familiar with start and finishing times as well as any break arrangements.

During the placement, parents or guardians should ensure that their child:

- Arrives on time every day.
- Gets enough sleep – workdays are longer than school days!



- Shares with them their experiences at work every day. (Students will only receive a debriefing in school at the end of the placement, so the opportunity to share daily experiences and receive encouragement and reassurance is important.)
- Completes their diary after each day of placement.

If your child is experiencing any difficulties during placement, it is advisable to first try to get them to work through the problem themselves. If they are unable to do so, please contact the TY Coordinator.

After the placement, it is recommended that parents or guardians:

- Engage in a conversation with their child, discussing the knowledge and insights they gained from the experience, and how it might have impacted their future career aspirations.
- Emphasize to their child the significance of expressing gratitude and encourage them to write a thank-you note to the organisation that provided the work experience, acknowledging the valuable opportunity and the skills acquired.

Information for Teachers

Teachers' Role

The Coordinating team will monitor students while they are on work placement. It is the responsibility of the teacher to know the whereabouts of all students, and to be able to contact students or parents whenever necessary. **It is each student's responsibility to give the TY Coordinator two completed forms with details of their work experience.**

During the Placement

A brief visit of a staff member to a student participating in work experience can hold significant importance in instilling confidence in students, employers, and parents regarding the school's emphasis on the program. This visit grants the teacher/coordinator a chance to personally observe the work environment, which proves beneficial when evaluating any subsequent feedback provided by the employer. Additionally, it serves to strengthen the relationship between the school and local employers.

While it may not be feasible to physically visit every student during their work placement, it is advisable to establish phone communication with the employer and separately check in with the student to ensure the smooth progress of their placement. These calls demonstrate the school's dedication and concern for a successful program, enhancing the likelihood of a rewarding experience for both the employer and student. Furthermore, this approach may create opportunities for the employer to consider offering future placements.

After the Placement

One of the principal tasks after the placement is **to retrieve the evaluation forms from employers.** These will have been issued to the employer in advance of the placement or



during it and given to the employer by the student. These can be posted/emailed to the school directly and form an essential part of the evaluation of the overall programme.

To complete the learning process, it is important for students to have the opportunity to reflect on their experience and what they gained from it. This will take the form of evaluation worksheets that they will complete in their ePortfolio.

Getting each student to present a summary of their experience to the whole class is recommended as it develops many core skills as well as providing insight into the working life of a variety of career areas to all students.

Students should also be encouraged as part of the completion process to write 'Thank You' letters to the employers.

Participation in work experience programmes forms part of a student's overall assessment at the end of a school year. Students' diaries and reports, employers' reports and perhaps notes made by a teacher will form part of the assessment. In addition, the assessment should reflect the effort a student has put into the whole process from preparation to evaluation.

Information for Employers

Before the Placement

When students approach potential employers for a work placement opportunity, they will give them with a letter from the school containing relevant details such as the duration of the placement and other general information. Please refer to *Appendix 6*. If an employer agrees to provide the work placement, the student will provide them with an Employer Evaluation Form at the beginning of the placement.

During the Placement

Employers are kindly requested to reach out to the TY coordinator if any difficulties arise. Additionally, a staff member may contact or visit the employer to ensure the smooth progress of the placement. Employers are also requested to maintain a record of attendance and hours worked by completing and signing the Attendance Record provided by the student. Please see *Appendix 4*.

After the Placement

One of the main tasks following the completion of the placement is to collect feedback/evaluation forms from employers. These forms will have been distributed to the employer before or during the placement and given to them by the student. They can be



submitted to the school via email or postal service directly, and they constitute a vital component of the overall program evaluation. Please see *Appendix 6*.

Insurance

School insurance covers students while on work experience.

D. TY Personnel

Transition year is supported by the whole school staff, including:

- The Board of Management
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- The Transition Year Co-ordination Team
- The Teaching Staff
- Guidance Counsellor
- Transition Year Class Teachers

Students

Students are divided into classes. Therefore, there will be two Transition Year classes. We believe that this year is a prime opportunity for students to interact, connect, and work together with their peers in their year group, which is why they will not be in the same Junior Cycle base classes. Students' evaluation of Transition Year has shown that while they were at first nervous about this arrangement, they were overwhelmingly in favour at the end of the year.

While core classes have a capacity of 28, module subjects, choice subjects and practical subjects will have a maximum of 20-25 students per class depending on the subject.

Teaching Staff

English Teachers: James & Grace

Irish Teachers: Jessica & Clare

Maths Teachers: Lucy & Patrick

Ethical Education Teachers: Amy, Saoirse & Shauna

Spanish Teacher: Sheena

French Teacher: Esther

Geography Teacher: Robert

History Teacher: Sarah Culleton

Art Teacher: Amanda

Music Teacher: Shauna

Construction Studies: Cian



Business Teacher: Patrick

Computer Studies: Ali

Home Economics Teacher: Amy

Career Guidance: Stacey

Science Teacher: Alicia

At the start of the academic year, there will be a gathering for all teachers participating in Transition Year. During this meeting, the Transition Year Coordinator will present the objectives of Transition Year, provide information about activities and events, and address any inquiries. Throughout the academic year, Transition Year-related topics will be discussed as needed in subsequent staff meetings. Additionally, during the last term, there will be a comprehensive staff meeting that includes a specific session dedicated to Transition Year, aimed at informing the planning for the following year.

Tutors

The TY coordinator liaises with Class Tutors on a regular basis. Particular attention is paid to individual student's attendance and overall participation and attitude towards Transition Year.

Coordinating Team

The Co-Ordinating team and the Principal hold weekly meetings to plan and discuss on-going issues. Minutes are retained of all meetings.

E. Student Assessment

“Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It should be diagnostic, so as to provide accurate information with regard to pupil strengths and weaknesses, and formative, so as to facilitate improved pupil performance through effective programme planning and implementation.” (Transition Year Programmes, Guidelines 1994-95)

Throughout the year, the majority of assessments take place continuously. However, students will be required to take examinations in core subjects during the block examination periods. Regarding continuous assessments, each teacher will employ diverse methods to evaluate the performance of students in their respective subjects. Some examples of Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL) are:

- Homework.
- Student self-assessment is facilitated through reflections and Portfolio diary.



- Project work is encouraged to promote self-regulated learning. Individual teachers outline the assessment criteria for his/her students.
- Oral presentations.
- External assessment - The employer assesses each student's work experience.
- Students are awarded certification in many courses accredited internally by individual teachers and externally by outside agencies (E.g. MOS, HACCP).
- Digital Portfolio- Each student maintains a digital portfolio into which he/she uploads completed projects, certificates of achievements, assignments, reports on modules, trips, talks, work experience etc. The e-portfolio is worth 10% of the summer assessment.

Summative assessment of student performance in Transition Year takes the form of reports after each 11 week block, which is sent to parents/guardians. At Transition Year Graduation on Thursday 23rd May 2024, students who have successfully completed Transition Year will be presented with a Record of Achievement, Certificates they earned throughout the year & present their portfolios/work/achievements from the year. A special class award will be given to a Transition Year student who has excelled. In addition, the Spirit of Transition Year and Student of the Year Award will be presented to one student.

Reports

Students will receive three formative and summative assessment reports throughout the year. Teachers of core subjects award grades for student according to the criteria of participation, attitude, effort and work ethic during the course of the term. Teachers also refer to the student's work and assignments and their learning log on their digital portfolio. Students can achieve the grades Distinction, Higher Merit, Merit and Achieved. Grades are entered on the school's VSWare facility by teachers; and a report is sent to Transition year students and parents.

Final Certificates

At the Transition Year Graduation Ceremony, students are presented with a Record of Achievement based on their performance throughout their Transition Year. For core subjects, students are awarded grades by their teachers based on participation, attitude, effort, and work ethic. The grades are Distinction, Higher Merit, Merit, Achieved. Students also receive Certificates for the successful completion of First Aid, MOS, Paired Reading, HACCP etc. Students receive an overall school Transition Year Certificate with their overall grade. The e-portfolio will account for 10% of the final assessment.



F. Communication

Effective communication among Students, Teachers, Parents, and the Transition Year Coordinating Team is crucial to ensure the successful implementation of the Transition Year programme. Students and parents are strongly encouraged to reach out to a member of the Coordinating Team (TY coordinator or Tutors) at any time should they have inquiries, concerns, or suggestions for enhancing the Transition Year experience.

Information Meetings

- In November 2022 a meeting was held on zoom for parents of 3rd year students to inform them of TY matters and to address any questions.
- On Monday 28th August 2023, there will be an Introduction Meeting for Transition Year students with the Transition Year Co-ordinating team. Students will receive information on everything there is to know about Transition Year. This is an important forum to answer any questions which students may have.
- An information evening at the beginning of the academic year will be scheduled for all TY parent and guardians.
- Parent Teacher Meetings for Transition Year Students will also take place on Thursday 29th February.
- Parents are invited to attend a Careers Fair on Thursday 14th March from 6.00pm – 8.00pm.

Ongoing Communication

Other areas of communication are:

- Students will have a Portfolio class once a week with the TY Coordinator – this class will be used as regular check in with students.
- Informal chats with students.
- Emailing on Office 365.
- Messaging on the student's digital portfolio.
- Information on the school website.
- Letters to Families
- Social media (Twitter and Instagram)
- Direct contact with a parent by phone or email where necessary.



Appointments

Students and parents may wish to make an appointment to see a teacher, the Transition Year Coordinator, a counsellor, or management to discuss matters. This can be done by emailing or where the email address is not known, by phoning the school secretary to make an appointment.



Appendix 1

Contract for Learning Transition Year 2023-2024

Transition Year will help you make the transfer from Junior to Senior Cycle.

The aims of Transition Year are to allow you:

- The opportunity to grow and evolve without the stress of tests and assessments.
- To facilitate your growth in social, personal, physical, and academic aspects by engaging in a diverse array of endeavours.
- To become involved in subjects and activities that you may not experience otherwise.
- To experience the world of work and to examine possible future careers.

The school has high expectations of you in Transition Year. Here we outline our requirements about work and behaviour. To receive Certification for Transition Year you must contract with the school to fulfil these requirements throughout the year:

- A. Develop work and study habits as directed by subject teachers.
 - B. Establish positive and respectful relationships with both fellow students and staff.
 - C. Participate in classwork, complete homework and assignments on time and to the required standard.
 - D. Meet with organisational deadlines e.g. closing date for Work Experience applications, return of signed Consent Forms as required etc.
 - E. Observe the rules and regulations of the school.
 - F. Endeavour to participate fully in Transition Year by maintaining a satisfactory attendance record.
 - G. Participate fully in the complete range of Transition Year activities.
 - H. Inform the school in advance by email or phone if unable to attend a trip.
 - I. **Have a reading book in their bag at all times.**
-

I have read and accept the terms of this contract.

Signed: _____ (Student)

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Signed: _____ (Transition Year Co-ordinator)

I understand that details of all trips will be provided to parents/students in advance. I give my general consent that my son/daughter may travel to, or take part in, all activities organised by the school during her Transition Year. If I withdraw my consent for a particular event, I will inform the school in writing.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)



ETSS Wicklow

Appendix 2

ETSS WICKLOW

*ETSS Wicklow,
The Glebe,
Co. Wicklow.
A67 N797*



*ETSS Chill Mhantáin,
An Ghléib,
Co. Chill Mhantáin.
A67 N797*

Tel: 0404 33060 Email: reception@etsswicklow.ie

School Roll No. 68345R

To whom it may concern,

ETSS Wicklow actively engages in a Work Placement module for our Transition Year students. Within this module, every student is encouraged to acquire practical Work Experience every Tuesday throughout the academic year.

The school's insurance policy has been extended to cover each student during their Work Experience placement.

The students understand that they must comply with any conditions you lay down regarding activities, safety, and confidentiality. They are also given instructions beforehand about attendance, punctuality, and codes of behaviour in the workplace.

The school appreciates your assistance in accommodating one of our students. I would be most grateful if on completion of the work experience you could complete the enclosed evaluation form. Your evaluation is part of their end of year grade and provides valuable feedback for the student. If you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact me at 0404 33060.

Thank you for your cooperation and time.

Yours sincerely,

Alicia Devlin Byrne

Transition Year Co-ordinator

Email: alicia.devlinbyrne@etsswicklow.ie



Appendix 3

ETSS WICKLOW

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School Roll No. 68345R

Work Experience Placement Form 2023-2024

This form is to be completed by the student when the employer has confirmed that she /he is accepting the student. **It should not be sent to the employer. It should then be returned to the TY Coordinator on or before 5th September (Placement before Christmas) & 20th December (Placement after Christmas).**

Student's Name			Class	
Name of Employer				
Address of Employer				
Tel/Mobile of Employer				
Email of Employer				
Employer's relationship to student (e.g Parent, friend, uncle, none...)				
What will the T.Y. student be doing?				
Contact Person (full name)				
Dates of Placement		Times of Placement		
Dress code (if any)				



ETSS Wicklow

Appendix 4

ETSS WICKLOW

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Co. Chill Mhantáin.
A67 N797*

Tel: 0404 33060

Email: reception@etsswicklow.ie

School Roll No. 68345R

ATTENDANCE Work Experience/Community Care 2023-2024

Student Name: _____

Name of Placement/Employer: _____

Date	Attendance	Hours

Student _____ **Employer** _____



2023-2024 Work Experience/Shadowing Diary Template

(Also found in OneNote; TY Portfolio)

Employer Name & No.	
Dates of Work Experience	

Template for Work Experience Weekly Reflection (each section should have 200-300 words):

1. Outline the tasks/duties you were given to do today:

2. What skills and qualities did you learn/develop today?

3. Identify some things (at least 2) you did well today:

4. What did you find difficult or challenging today (at least 1)?

5. How well did you respond to the challenges presented to you today?

6. Describe how well you related to:

- a. Supervisors

- b. Fellow workers

- c. Customers/clients



Appendix 6

ETSS WICKLOW

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Co. Wicklow.
A67 N797



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Co. Chill Mhantáin.
A67 N797

Tel: 0404 33060

Email: reception@etsswicklow.ie

School Roll No. 68345R

Employer Evaluation Form

Student Name	
Employer Name	
Employer Address	
Employer Phone No.	

At the end of the placement please rate the student by placing a tick in the appropriate boxes. Many thanks for taking the time to fill out this evaluation. We would be grateful if you could return it to the school as soon as possible (by email to alicia.devlinbyrne@etsswicklow.ie or by post).

Rating	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Time Keeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ability to follow instructions & learn new skills & procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Level of competence in completion of tasks given	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Overall attitude towards job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Ability to communicate with staff, supervisors and the public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



8. Suitability for this type of work

☐☐☐☐

Any additional comments you would like to make:

Appendix 7

REFLECTION AFTER WORK PLACEMENT 2023-2024

(Also found in OneNote; TY Portfolio)

i) Does this type of career appeal to you? Yes/ No. Why?

ii) What are the main differences between the world of work as you experienced it and work in school?

iii) In the light of your work placement, what do you consider to be the most important factors employers look for in their employees?



- iv) How can this work experience/shadowing help your future studies/career aspirations? Are there any extra skills you now feel you need to develop while you are still at school?

- v) How can what you have learnt from your work placement be used?

- (1) In the home
- (2) At school
- (3) In the local community

- vi) What skills and personal qualities did you develop as a result of your experience?

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor
Attendance				
Punctuality				
Initiative				
Ability to relate to staff/supervisors				
Teamwork				

Student signature _____

TY Coordinator _____