



# Transition Year Policy

This policy has been drawn up by the students, staff, parents/guardians of Ratoath College.

Ratoath College offers Transition Year (TY) as an optional one-year programme, post junior cycle. We envisage that TY, through teamwork and communal learning, will enrich both our school and the wider community.

## Aims of the Transition Year Programme

The aims of the TY programme reflect those specific to the guidelines published by the Department of Education, specifically but not limited to:

- Education for maturity with emphasis on social awareness and increased social competence.
- Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.
- Provision of general technical and academic skills with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.

## Who is TY for?

- Students who wish to access to a range of subjects that will help them when choosing senior cycle subjects and considering a career.
- Students who want an opportunity to discover their own individual talents, aptitudes and abilities.
- Students who wish to further develop skills to enable them to deal with the self-reliant learning of third level education.
- Students seeking the challenge of work experience in areas of interest to them.
- Students who are leaders or wish to develop their leadership skills through a range of programmes unique to our TY curriculum such as Pay It Forward (PIF), Gaisce, Wellbeing.
- Students who have an understanding of their own educational needs and who wish to enrich their school experience through the challenges and successes unique to TY.
- Students who are self-motivated, positive, open minded and willing to work hard.

## Short Term Goals

- Broad educational experience that encourages self-confidence and responsibility.
- Develop communication and decision-making skills.
- Develop leadership skills through a range of programmes unique to our TY curriculum such as Pay It Forward (PIF), Gaisce, Wellbeing
- Work experience three times a year provides students with job responsibilities.
- Helps students choose 5th Year subjects, and provides an extra year to mature and develop.

## Long Term Goals

- TY students have been shown in studies (ESRI) to perform better in their Leaving Certificate examinations than their peers who have not completed TY.
- Students who do Transition Year are better equipped for Third Level.
- TY students are less likely to drop out at the end of first year in college.
- TY students are encouraged to develop independent learning and study skills.
- TY students have a more informed approach to eventually choosing a career area.
- TY students develop interpersonal skills to become part of a team in a workplace.



## Opportunities

- There are many trips and educational events in TY.
- TY students receive certification that adds value to their CV.
- TY students have a great opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities
- There are many opportunities for leadership and organisational experiences and training.

## Transition Year Programme:

The Transition Year Programme in Ratoath College has 5 key Components:

- Academic Core – maintains academic standards in core subject areas.
- TY Modules – allows students to focus on areas of special interest specific to TY including TY portfolio.
- Subject sampling – allows students to experience a broad range of option subjects from the established Leaving Certificate course.
- Work Experience Programme
- Workshops, speakers, school trips and courses.

All Students study Irish, English, Maths and a modern language, along with a selection of TY specific subjects such as Film studies, Pay It Forward (PIF), Politics & Society, Wellbeing, Legal Studies, Enterprise and Psychology. This list varies from year to year depending on demand, available resources and timetabling constraints.

TY students will go on a 1-night team bonding exercise during first term as well as five Shared Learning Experiences during the year. All TY Students are encouraged to participate in the Gaisce Awards Programme and apply themselves to leadership positions in the school.

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

## Work Experience Programme

Students complete four weeks of work experience placements during the year: one week in term 1, two weeks in term 2 and one week in term 3.

Students are responsible for sourcing their own work experience placement.

Each Student is given a work experience diary and letters/employer review forms before going on placement.

The TY coordinator speaks to the students regarding work experience in September. Placements are monitored and employers contacted during each block.

## Assessment

Assessment in TY is multifaceted. In school-based subjects, both continuous assessments and key assignments are employed by teachers. Assessment in Transition Year includes:

- Work produced (homework assignments, projects, presentations etc)
- Active participation in all aspects of the course.
- Skills used in various modules and core subjects.
- Class tests-given by individual teachers.
- Work experience report from employer/co-operating teacher.
- Key assignments in each module
- Memory box produced by students in conjunction with a memory box interview at the end of year
- Completion of a TY portfolio including a work experience diary in portfolio class
- Certain courses, such as First Aid, where they are delivered by an outside company or agency may be assessed and certified by that company/agency.



Students are expected to produce a portfolio of their work and will be interviewed about it. Students are expected to prepare and keep a memory box throughout the year and are interviewed about it in May as partial fulfilment of their final assessment. They are monitored by both the work experience employer and the school when engaged in work experience. The school issues two reports, at Christmas and in June.

## Cost & Budgetting

Student Direct Costs for TY are decided by the Board of Management and approved by the Board of LMETB and are advised to parents in April/May of each year for the following year, along with the payment schedule.

The school makes every effort to keep student direct costs for TY to a minimum. However, in order for the school to be able to plan effectively for the delivery of the TY programme, and for the associated costs involved, it is imperative that all student direct costs are paid for students participating in the programme.

An inability to pay student direct costs for TY should not be a barrier to a student participating in the programme and parent(s)/guardian(s) who are experiencing financial difficulties should contact the school in confidence.

Where a TY student's student direct costs have not been paid (or not been paid in full) and where the school has not been contacted by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) in relation to financial difficulty, this student may not be able to participate in the full range of TY activities and trips.

## The TY Admissions Team

The TY Admissions Team will be responsible for assessing applications for the programme and offering places.

The Team will include:

- Programme Coordinator (who will chair the team)
- Deputy Principal responsible for Junior Cycle
- Deputy Principal responsible for Senior Cycle
- Incumbent Third Year Moltóir
- Incumbent TY Moltóir
- At least one other member who does not hold one of the above posts

Should it be considered necessary or appropriate to interview prospective TY candidates, the interview board will be made up of Admissions Team members wherever possible.

## Admission to TY

Application for admission to TY is open to all students in Third Year and those interested in the TY programme should apply by completing an online application form.

**Acceptance of the application form does not confirm or imply an expectation of a place on the programme.**

A closing date will be clearly indicated on the application form and late applications may not be considered.

The number of places available in TY may vary year to year, depending on the number of students that apply and necessary restrictions imposed by timetabling and staff resources.

The Admissions process involves:

- **An information evening for the parents/guardians** of 3<sup>rd</sup> year students on senior cycle options, including TY, in November of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

***Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh sí***



- **An information session for all 3<sup>rd</sup> year students** presented by the Programme Coordinator on TY in November of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- Those interested in the TY programme should apply by completing the **online application form**. Each applicant must complete all sections of the online application form for TY and submit it on or before the deadline given.
- It is the responsibility of each student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that their online application has been completed and submitted correctly.

Once the Application/Recommendation process is concluded, all applications for TY are then reviewed:

- The Programme Coordinator **checks the Dialanns** of all applicants.
- Together with the Dialann check, the Programme Coordinator will liaise with the relevant Caomhnóirí and Moltóir to assess the **disciplinary and behaviour record** of each applicant as well as all applicants' **record of attendance and punctuality**.

**A consistent record of positive attendance and behaviour at Junior Cycle is required for admission to TY. Applicants who are unable to demonstrate this may not be offered a place in TY.**

All applicants must complete a **Group Task** assigned by the Programme Coordinator. Applicants are marked by facilitators on their work within the group to which they are assigned.

**Applicants may be interviewed** for the programme by members of the Admissions Team.

Having conducted the comprehensive review of each application and applicant's school record as outlined above, along with the applicant's participation in the Group Task and at interview, the Admissions Team will then decide whether the applicant is suitable for admission to TY. This decision will be communicated to the student and their parents in writing. Where the Admissions Team considers an applicant unsuitable for TY, the reason(s) for this will be outlined to the student and their parents.

Where the number of applicants deemed suitable exceeds the number of places available in TY, places will be allocated by way of lottery and a waiting list formed.

Where a student is offered a place in Transition Year and subsequently withdraws from the programme and opts for the established Leaving Cert, their subject options for Fifth Year will be allocated only after the options process for Fifth Year students who did not apply for TY has been completed.

## **Provisional Admission to TY**

The Admissions Team may, at its discretion, decide to provisionally admit a student to TY. Students provisionally admitted to TY will be assessed based on a set of specified targets and criteria prior to the end of the school year (Third Year). Where a student has not met the specified targets and criteria, their offer of a place in TY may be withdrawn and the student will be placed in an established Leaving Cert class.

Reasons why the Admissions Team may decide to offer a provisional place include, but are not limited to:

- The student's prior record of attendance would not meet the standards required in TY.
- The student's prior record of behaviour and discipline would not meet the standards required in TY.

Where a student is offered a provisional place in TY, the reasons for the provisional nature of the admission will be communicated to the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) along with:

- The specific targets and criteria under which the student will be assessed at the end of Third Year.
- The date at which the review of these targets and criteria will take place in May of Third Year.



## Withdrawal of place in TY

While every effort will be made to assist those admitted to the TY programme in ensuring they are able to engage successfully with the programme, it may become necessary to withdraw a student's place in TY after they have commenced the programme.

Should this become necessary, the decision will be made by the Deputy Principal responsible for Senior Cycle in consultation with the Programme Coordinator and the TY Moltóir and communicated in writing to the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

Reasons why a student's place in TY may be withdrawn as outlined above include, but are not limited to:

- The student's record of attendance and punctuality is consistently failing to meet the required standard and has not improved to an acceptable level despite repeated interventions.
- The student's record of behaviour and discipline is consistently poor and has not improved to an acceptable level despite repeated interventions.
- The student's continued participation in the programme is considered to be detrimental to the order, discipline and educational welfare of the other students in their class.

## Appeals

Where a student already enrolled in the school has not been offered a place in TY or has had their place in TY withdrawn, the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal this decision to the Principal in writing. The appeal must be made within seven days of the date of the written notification of the decision not to offer or to withdraw a student's place in TY sent to the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

The decision of the Principal on appeal is final.

## External Applications

Applications for admission to Ratoath College are considered under the terms of the school's Admissions Policy and Admissions Notice that are in force at the time of the application.

The number of places available in TY may vary year to year, depending on the number of students that apply and necessary restrictions imposed by timetabling and staff resources. As a result, places in TY will not be offered to external applicants until after the internal TY admissions process has concluded in any given year, usually early January.

## Late Applications

Applications made after the deadline for TY will only be considered under the following circumstances:

- *A family bereavement*
- *Serious illness and/or injury resulting in significant time missed from school*
- *Mid academic year transfer to school*

If places are available at the conclusion of the application process for TY, a late applications form will be available at the beginning of the following academic year until mid-September. Students who wish to apply for a place in TY during September of Fifth Year should, together with their parent(s)/guardian(s) contact the programme coordinator and TY Moltóir in writing regarding their application. If a place is available, a meeting will be arranged with the TY coordinator, TY Moltóir, applicant and their parent/guardian to discuss their application. Late application process will include the following.

- *Meeting with the applicant, parent(s)/ guardian(s), TY coordinator & TY Moltóir*
- *Completion of application form*
- *Written references from two 3<sup>rd</sup> year teachers, one to be 3<sup>rd</sup> year Caomhnóir or Moltóir*
- *Dialann check*
- *A 2-week trial in TY*
- *Review meeting following this 2-week trial to discuss final offer of a place*



## Conclusion

Transition Year does not suit all students. TY 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. For students who are unsure about whether to apply for TY, a good idea would be to speak to some students who are currently in TY or who have completed the programme previously about their experience of the TY in our school.

However, when considering whether to do TY, one of the most significant benefits of TY is highlighted in a recent ERSI Report:

*“Taking Transition Year has an impact on students’ academic outcomes, even taking account of initial differences between participants and non-participants. On average, students who take part in Transition Year achieve higher Leaving Certificate exam grades and are more likely to go on to higher education than non-participants.”*