

Transition Year

Augustinian Philosophy & Aims:

In the Augustinian Philosophy of Education the human person is seen as a rational believer in which reason and faith complement each other. The process of humanisation, leading to the synthesis of reason and faith operates through love, the most profound of human nature. According Augustinian education seeks to train people in and for love.

Good Counsel College aims to be an environment and climate:

- Which can lead to the emergence of a Christian community professing and proclaiming Gospel values?
- Which are conducive to the search for truth.
- Where the participants in that search for truth relate to each other in an obviously loving and respectful manner.
- In which members of the school community are helped to achieve personal wholeness.
- Which, in general, are meant to help young people to live out the Christian message.

These broad goals generate a number of specific aims and objectives for all Transition Year stakeholders which correlate with the specific aims of our Transition Year programme

Mission Statement

To promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous and responsible members of society.

The programme in Good Counsel College designed to help students broaden their interests, widen their educational

experience and experience a smooth transition to leaving certificate and beyond. Transition year provides students with the opportunity to mature and achieve personal wholeness, without the pressure of state examinations.

What is Transition Year?

Transition Year is a one year non compulsory programme between Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate which helps students experience a smooth transition to Leaving Certificate and beyond.

History of Transition Year:

Transition Year was introduced to schools in Ireland in 1973. Good Counsel College introduced Transition Year for the first time in 1994 with an up take by 54 students. Since then there has been 2/3 Transition Year classes each year in the school.

The Department of Education and Skills defines the mission statement of Transition Year in the following way: "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.

Aims & Objectives:

In Good Counsel College, we agree with the Departments of Education & Skills ideals but prefer to put it another way. Our Transition Year will attempt to prepare our students for Transition:

- From Junior Certificate towards Leaving Certificate: few students are prepared for the jump from Junior to Leaving Certificate. TY offers students a chance to explore new subjects and new approaches before deciding on Leaving Certificate choices and levels. TY offers a chance to catch up in subjects and provides a wide range

of study skills.

- From childhood towards adulthood: TY gives your sons an opportunity to get “stuck in”. TY challenges him to acquire new skills of responsibility and reliability, by involving him in projects, companies and activities with friends and on an individual basis. It encourages the growth of self esteem, the ability to set and achieve goals and the capacity to show initiative, as well as encouraging improved interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.
- From school towards community life and career: TY gives the students an extra year of “growing up time”, time which will spent learning what his options are, exploring new areas of interest, experiencing the workplace and preparing for job searches. TY allows the students the time to run his own business, so as to experience what working life is like. This experience will enable him to make more informed decisions about his life after the Leaving Certificate.

As such, our objectives are as follows:

1. To equip the students with a range of life skills which will help them on a daily basis and in their future adult lives – maturity, self awareness, self confidence, social awareness and self reliance.
2. To encourage the development of technical, academic and analytical skills, allowing students to set and strive towards their own responsibly goals. This also gives students a chance to improve on areas they found difficult at Junior Certificate level.
3. To create experiences of working and adult life, providing the pupils with interpersonal skills and preparing them for job interviews, living away from home, etc
4. To guide students into making decisions about their

future inside and beyond the school, to give them an insight into previously uncharted territory – new subjects, new experiences, new skills and new challenges.

Subjects offered in Transition Year:

Many parents are concerned that their sons will lose touch with Leaving Certificate in Transition Year. In fact, TY gives the boys a chance to do the following:

- To study the full range of Leaving Certificate subjects on offer in Good Counsel College, so as to get a “feel” for all the options and the demands which will be placed on the boys at Ordinary or Higher Level.
- To study these subjects in a different way, away from the immediate stress of the examination system. Subjects can become “fun” in such an atmosphere.
- To “catch up” on work which was difficult or missed during their Junior Cycle.
- To examine additional and optional areas of certain courses.
- To acquire new study skills which will be used in Leaving Certificate.
- The Department of Education and Skills used to put a limit on the amount of Leaving Certificate material which could be studied during Transition Year. This limit is no longer in place, although Transition Year should not be regarded as Year 1 of a three year Leaving Certificate cycle.

The academic subjects on offer in our Transition Year are:

- English
- Irish
- Maths

- Spanish/German/French
- Business/Economics/Accounting
- Art
- History
- Geography
- Biology/Chemistry/Physics/Agricultural Science
- DCG

Developmental Subjects on offer in Transition Year

The emphasis here is again on the “hands on” approach. The passive student is encouraged to become actively involved in class and outside the classroom. In this way, we aim to cultivate many of the life skills which have already been mentioned. The developmental subjects on offer in our Transition Year are:

- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Computers/ECD
- Cookery
- Electronics
- Social Education/YSI
- Community Care
- Photography
- Driver Theory/Road Safety
- Web Design
- Media
- Music
- Environmental Studies
- Careers & Guidance

Other activities essential to Transition Year:

Activities outside the classroom are necessary for achieving

the objectives of Good Counsel College Transition Year. Each year, we try to offer new activities and we listen carefully to the boys' evaluations so that mistakes are not repeated. The boys are invited to suggest activities, projects and modules for the benefit of the class. Throughout these activities, the students are encouraged to mix with new people, make new friends and find new interests.

In recent years, some of the following have been undertaken:

- Trips
- Talent nights with St. Marys
- School Magazine
- Golf
- Involvement in school musical
- Table Quiz
- Work Experience
- Self Defence
- Drug Awareness Module
- Horse Riding

Modules with St. Mary's School New Ross:

Transition Year students from Good Counsel College and St. Mary's are mixed and split into three groups each Tuesday afternoon. The purpose of this module is to forge a closer link with our neighbouring school, encourage students to mix, promote the learning of new skills and sharing of existing skills among students.

Monitoring students during Transition Year:

The essential element of a successful Transition Year is the inbuilt flexibility of the programme. The students should quickly become used to the increased freedom they will have throughout the year. They will learn how to handle this freedom, so that it does not become an excuse for opting out

of activities.

However, students still need guidelines. Each student is assessed at regular intervals during Transition Year. And must also learn how to evaluate and be responsible for his own performance. As parents of a Transition Year student, you will need to be kept informed of his progress.

- You will receive Christmas and Summer reports on your son's progress.
- You will be invited to attend parent-teacher meetings as in other years.
- Where problems occur, you will be notified immediately by the TY Co-ordinator, Principal, Year Head or Class Tutor, whichever is applicable.
- Your son will engage in regular, formal, self evaluation, to which you will have access. In this way, he will keep a record of his own achievements.
- Your son will also have class tests, homework, oral tests and projects to complete.
- Your son will receive a work experience evaluation form from his employer.
- You will be invited to celebrate your son's achievements at the Annual TY Presentation Night, at which he will be awarded the certificates he has earned throughout the year. On this night, he will also be presented with the Good Counsel College Transition Year Certificate, awarded at 'Distinction', 'Merit' or 'Participation' level.

The Work Experience Programme:

1. Transition year students will go on two sessions of work experience each of two weeks. One session generally takes place in November and the second session in February.

2. Students are encouraged to sample two different types of employment.

3. Students are expected to secure their own work experience.
4. Students are briefed before they go out on work experience on punctuality, full attendance, initiative, relationships with colleagues and customers, mode of dress, willingness to take orders etc.
5. At the end of each work session employers complete an assessment form which is returned to the school.
6. Students complete their own assessment booklet of work experience.

Some common concerns and questions:

Transition Year Option – “Transition Year Option” or “Take a year off”?

TY is not a “doss” year. Simply put, it is different from other years in school. There is an emphasis on the development of skills which will enable the student to create goals and challenges, to discipline himself and to study effectively. The timetable will address topics on the Leaving Certificate syllabus and students are expected to perform well in these areas. The students are subject to a system of evaluation outside the state examination system. By the end of the year, the student will have a portfolio of achievements of which he can be proud and which will look well on his C.V. It is envisaged that the skills learned in TY will facilitate an easy transition into 5th Year and the state examinations

TY right for your son?

Each student will be interviewed to assess his suitability for the programme by a committee of staff. A certain commitment from each student is required. What has your son got to offer? Absenteeism will be monitored and frequent absences will require explanation. Your son’s teachers will be able to advise you on his needs in school. You, yourselves, will

know if he would benefit from an injection of personal skills. Many parents use TY to give their sons an extra year of “growing up” before taking in the Leaving Certificate syllabus. However, age should not be your only consideration. A student is never too old or too young to learn a new skill. Will my son find it difficult to settle back into Fifth Year? Possibly! But, he may also find it difficult to settle back after Third Year. In Good Counsel College, we have generally found that students who go into Fifth Year after TY show a degree of maturity which may be lacking in other students. They appear more ready to work and more aware of the seriousness of the Leaving Certificate courses. They bring the skills which they have learned in Transition Year into Fifth Year. In most cases, the TY graduate is seen as a positive influence on a Fifth Year classroom.

Would my son not be better off repeating the Leaving Certificate?

This is a very personal decision. If your primary concern lies with CAO points, preliminary results from a study conducted by the NCCA for the Department of Education and Skills are interesting. This study tracked the progress of students from Junior to Leaving Certificate. It found that:

- TY graduates scored on average 26 CAO points more in the Leaving Certificate than students who had not done TY.
- This average was even higher among boys.
- TY graduates scored only 5 points less than repeat students. (The study did not indicate how many of these repeat students had come from TY)
- The TY Programme was seen to be particularly advantageous for boys.
- TY graduates were more inclined to select and stay with new subjects and at higher levels.

(Based on 1997 Leaving Certificate Examination results)

Selection Procedure for admission to Transition Year:

1. Parents are informed of T.Y. programme during the annual 3rd/T.Y./L.C.A. subjects and courses information night.
2. Good Counsel College students are informed of their options by co-ordinators, year heads and teachers during their 3rd year option talk. Courses and programmes are explained fully and students are made aware of what each course entails.
3. Students will complete and submit an application form to the T.Y. co-ordinator.
4. Each student will be interviewed by the co-ordinator and if deemed necessary the Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal.
5. Teacher's views will be sought to see if T.Y. is suitable for applicants. Students discipline records and demerits will also be considered very carefully.
6. A decision will be reached, parents, students and teachers will be informed on whether they are accepted into the programme or not.
7. Where more candidates have applied than positions available, the decision on whom to accept will be decided by the TY co-ordinator with consultation with the Principal and Programmes co-ordinator.
8. Parents and students may appeal a decision.

Other relevant information:

Students Induction to Transition Year:

At the beginning of Transition Year students meet with the co-ordinator for an induction. This consists of:

1. Explanation of timetable.

2. Introductions and various induction exercise.
3. Details of calendar and timetable of events.
4. TYs travel to Tramore surfing school for a team building outing. This encourages bonding, teamwork and the forming of co-operative relationships.

Teachers:

The TY teaching team for this year consists of 33 teachers. Many of these teachers have been involved in the programme for many years. Teachers take responsibility for assessment and evaluation in their own subjects. Each teacher is given details of relevant in-service. It is optional as to whether they attend.

Finance in Transition Year:

All TY students are asked to make a contribution for the programme in the school each year. This is paid directly to the office. Department funding is used to pay expenses throughout the year. Accounts and statement are given to Board of Management finance committee.

Organisational Details:

Mr. Ger Murphy is co-ordinator of the Transition Year Programme in Good Counsel College and is allocated 4 hours per week for duties. Mr. Seamus Walsh (TY1), Mr. Barry Quigley (TY2) and Mr. Nicky Flynn (TY3) act as class tutors.

Role of Co-ordinator:

The co-ordinator for this year is Ger Murphy who is allocated time for duties.

The role of the co-ordinator includes:

Disseminate information to:

- o Principal
- o Teaching Staff
- o Students
- o Parents

Perform functions in relation to administration.

Planning – this plays a role in timetabling issues, provision of teaching staff, budget and planning student

tasks.

- Relate to and motivate teachers and students to establish the profile of Transition Year in Good Counsel College.
- Have good organisational skills.
- Inform 3rd year students & parents of programme and interview those students applying for admission.
- Organise special features, events, trips and guest speakers.
- Assist with finance – collecting of fees, paying guest speakers, etc.
- Assist and aid students in finding work experience.