



ARKLOW CBS

Transition Year A Guide for Parents and Students

Arklow CBS, Coolgreaney Rd, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, Y14 RV04
0402 32 564 fadmin@arklowcbs.ie www.arklowcbs.ie

What is Transition Year?

Transition Year, or “TY”, is a one-year programme offered by second-level schools in Ireland. It is designed to help students transition from the more directed learning of Junior Cycle to the more independent, self-directed learning of Senior Cycle. The purpose of this guide is to explain what can be achieved during TY and to encourage parents and students to make the most of the opportunity.

The idea of TY can inspire different reactions, with parents in particular sometimes divided as to its merits. Some think it provides an immeasurably rewarding experience at a crucial age in a young person’s development. Others think that it can be a largely unproductive year. In Arklow CBS, our view is that, for many students, TY can be tremendously beneficial if approached in the right way. It can open up a whole new world of possibilities. The emphasis during TY is on self-directed learning and taking responsibility for yourself, for your work, and ultimately for your life ahead. Boys need time and space to mature and TY affords the boys the time and space to do so. But the key to making it successful lies entirely in the level of buy-in from the student. The more you put in to TY, the more you will get out of it. How successful TY is for you, depends on you.

The Aims of Transition Year

Transition Year at Arklow CBS aims to provide students with a broad, balanced and engaging educational experience that supports their development as they progress into Senior Cycle and prepare for life beyond school.

In accordance with the Transition Year Programme Statement, our programme is designed around the four Student Dimensions of **Personal Growth, Being a Learner, Civic and Community Engagement, and Career Exploration**.

The aims of TY at Arklow CBS are:

- **Personal Growth:** To provide students with opportunities to mature socially and emotionally and to develop greater self-confidence, independence, resilience, autonomy, empathy, leadership skills and a stronger sense of their own identity.
- **Being a Learner:** To support students in becoming more independent, motivated and self-directed learners; to encourage them to discover their individual strengths and interests; and to develop the learning skills, strategies and personal responsibility required for Senior Cycle and lifelong learning.
- **Civic and Community Engagement:** To encourage students to make a positive contribution to their school and wider community, to develop an understanding of their responsibilities to others, and to become active, responsible and considerate local, national and global citizens.
- **Career Exploration:** To enable students to explore a broad range of future education, training and career pathways through work experience, career-related learning and engagement with the world of work, helping them to make informed decisions about their future.
- To provide opportunities for students to discover and develop their individual gifts, talents, interests and strengths.
- To help students develop clearer goals and aspirations for their lives and become better equipped to make informed decisions.

- To encourage students to develop positive relationships and the interpersonal, communication and collaborative skills necessary to work effectively with others.
- To provide opportunities for students to broaden their experiences through academic learning, projects, enterprise, sport, cultural activities, trips, community involvement and other learning experiences.
- To encourage students to build a meaningful portfolio of learning and achievement, including projects, work experience, certifications, skills and other accomplishments.
- To give students the **time, space, opportunities and responsibility to mature**, enabling them to approach Senior Cycle and their future with greater confidence, independence and purpose.

Academic Education During TY

Academic learning remains an important element of Transition Year. While TY provides a broader educational experience than other years, students continue to engage with a varied academic programme designed to support their development throughout the year. The emphasis is on developing students as independent, reflective and engaged learners, in keeping with the TY Student Dimension of **Being a Learner**.

Students will continue to study a range of **core subjects** throughout the year. In addition, they will experience a broad selection of **module subjects and learning experiences**, providing opportunities to explore new areas, discover individual interests and strengths, and develop knowledge and skills beyond the traditional classroom.

The **number and duration of module rotations may vary from year to year depending on the number of students participating in Transition Year, available subject options, staffing and the organisation of the TY timetable**. This flexibility allows the school to design a programme that best meets the needs of each particular TY cohort while ensuring students have access to a broad and balanced range of learning experiences.

Teaching and learning during TY places particular emphasis on **active and experiential learning**, including project work, collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, research and presentations. Students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to develop their confidence, independence, curiosity and ability to work effectively with others.

Through this approach, the academic programme contributes to the wider aims of Transition Year and supports students in developing the knowledge, skills and personal qualities that will benefit them throughout Senior Cycle and beyond.

Trips and Excursions

Trips, excursions and learning experiences outside the classroom form an important part of the Transition Year programme. They provide students with opportunities to develop independence, confidence, teamwork and social skills while experiencing learning in new and engaging environments.

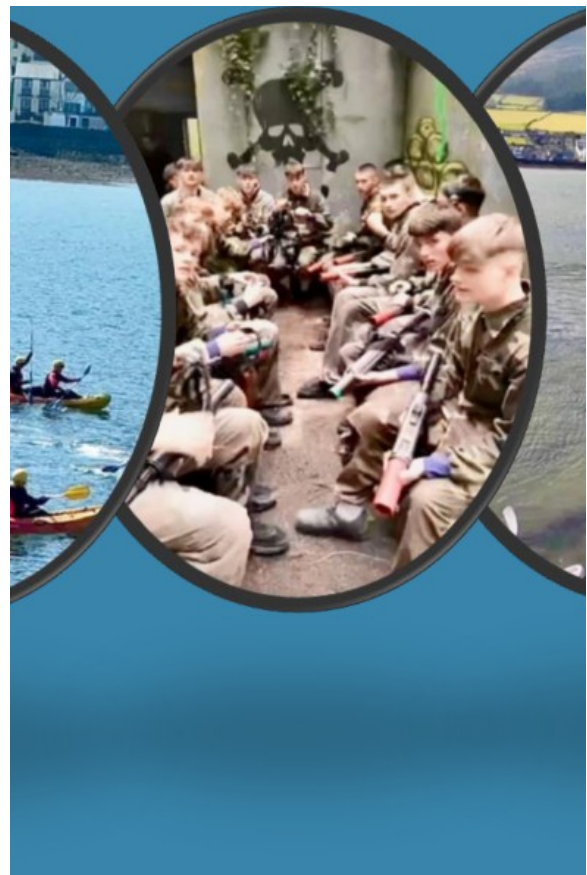
Throughout the year, a variety of **day trips, activities and excursions** may be offered to TY students. There may also be opportunities to participate in **overnight trips within Ireland and optional school tours or trips abroad**.

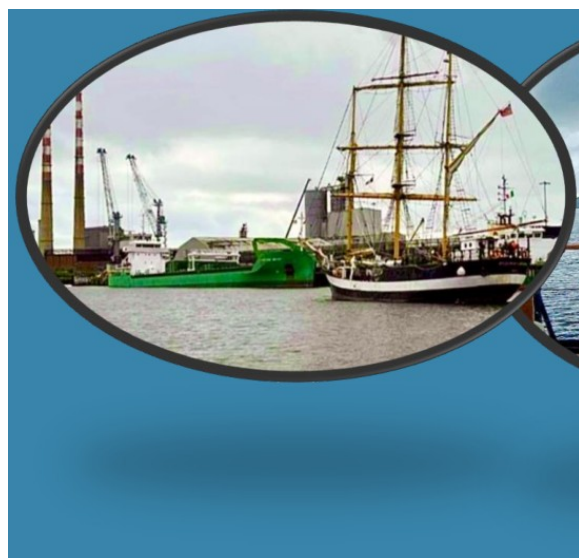
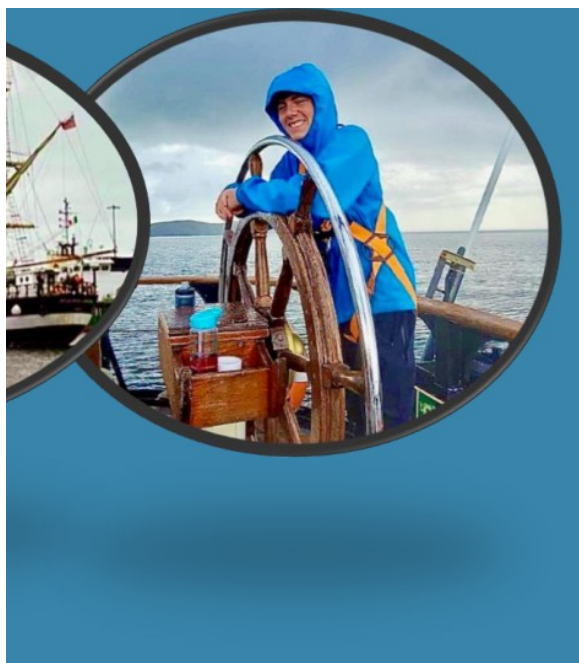
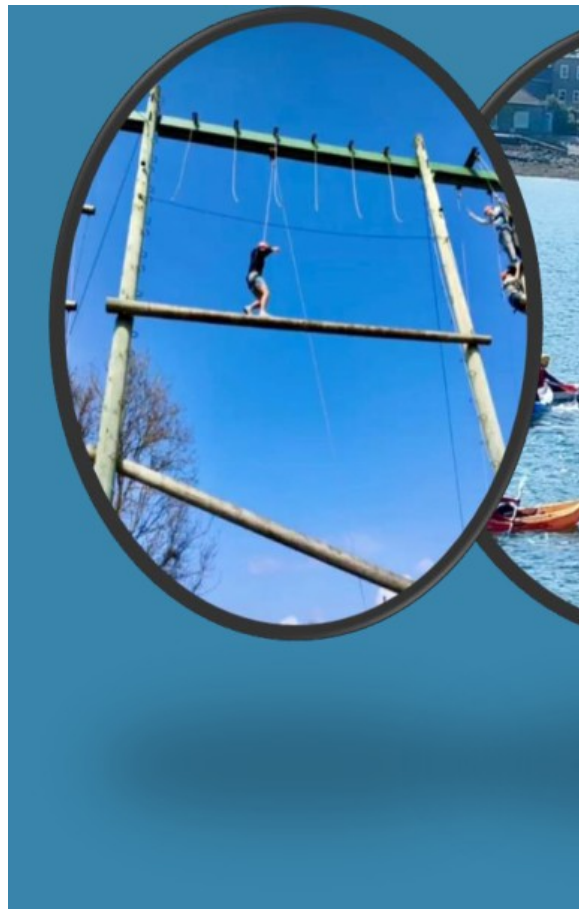
The range of trips and activities **may vary from year to year** depending on availability, student numbers, cost, scheduling and other practical considerations. Examples of experiences that may be offered include:

- Team-building and fitness activities;
- Educational, cultural and historical trips;
- Outdoor and adventure activities;
- Virtual reality and problem-solving experiences;
- Kayaking, surfing and other sporting activities;
- Irish-language activities, including experiences linked to *Seachtain na Gaeilge*; and
- Other educational, recreational and cultural experiences that complement the TY programme.

These activities provide opportunities for students to learn beyond the traditional classroom setting and can contribute to the TY Student Dimensions, particularly **Personal Growth, Being a Learner, and Civic and Community Engagement**.

Students are encouraged to participate fully and positively in the opportunities available to them. The programme of trips and excursions will be communicated to students and parents throughout the year and is **subject to change depending on availability and circumstances**.





The overnight trips include:

- The Arklow CBS School Tour, open not just to TY students but to all senior students, featuring a different destination each year (generally arranged for either the February mid-term break or the first week of the Easter holidays);

- Skiing trip, organised if there is enough interest (subject to change but generally February);
- Foreign language trips, organised each year generally in Germany and France, either as part of an exchange programme or as a stand-alone school tour (see further below regarding foreign language programmes for TY);
- Sailing trip for TY students, which can be arranged for a number of potential destinations, including around the British Isles and France;

and others.

The cost of all day trips is included in the transition year fee. There is a charge for the overnight trips. However, some of these are heavily subsidised and sponsored (for example, the sailing trip), so as to ensure that it is more affordable for parents should they consider it. Not all students will go on all of the overnight trips, and parents and students may wish to consider which if any might be of interest to them at the outset of the year when planning the year ahead.

Work Experience

An integral part of TY is the element of work experience. Each student is expected to organise 3 separate week-long work placements during the school year. Whereas there is flexibility around the time at which these are taken depending on the proposed employer, to minimise disruption to the curriculum ideally these should be arranged for the week before the October midterm break, the week before the February midterm break and the week before the Easter break (depending however on the time of year at which Easter falls).

There are a number of work experience programmes in which students can immerse themselves. In particular, there are a number of very worthwhile TY work experience programmes organised by many professional bodies, state bodies, international companies, and other well-known institutions for which students can apply. Some of these require an application and selection process and in-person attendance for a specific period of time. Others are open to everyone without limitation and are available to be completed online at a time of the student's choosing, either in conjunction with or in addition to the 3 work placements. Most of these programmes are free of charge to students. These programmes often reward the student with a certificate upon completion and are useful additions to the student's CV going forward.

Examples of in-person programmes for which students can apply include:

- The Royal College of Surgeons Mini-med Programme;
- Transition Year programmes with the Irish Army and the Irish Navy;
- Oireachtas Transition Year Experience;
- Private companies such as Investin (London) which offer experience programmes in all career areas.

Examples of online courses which students can arrange include:

- Transition Year Law Module with The Law Society of Ireland;
- Institute of Chartered Accountants Bootcamp;
- Goodbody Stockbrokers online courses in investment banking and stockbroking; and
- The wide variety of online work simulation courses available at www.theforage.com.

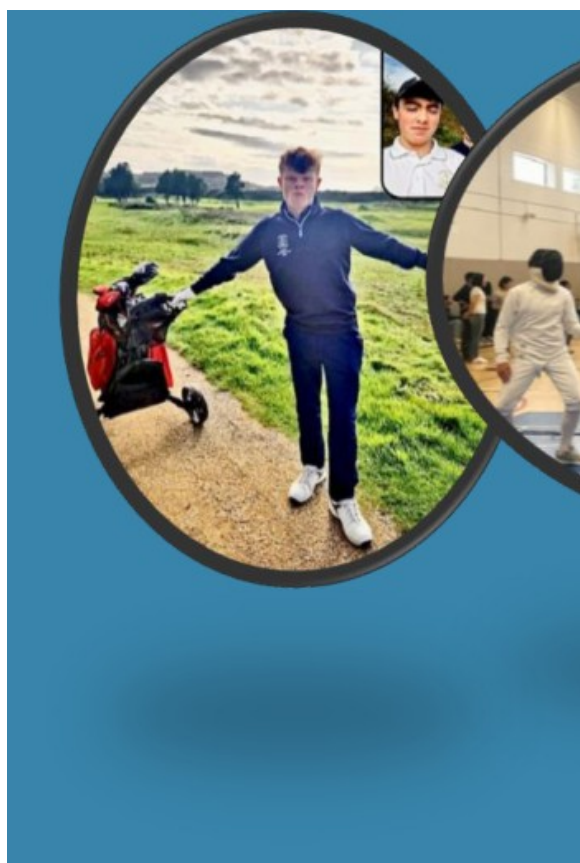
There are also a number of well-known companies, local to the area, which offer valuable placements positions to our TY students each year.

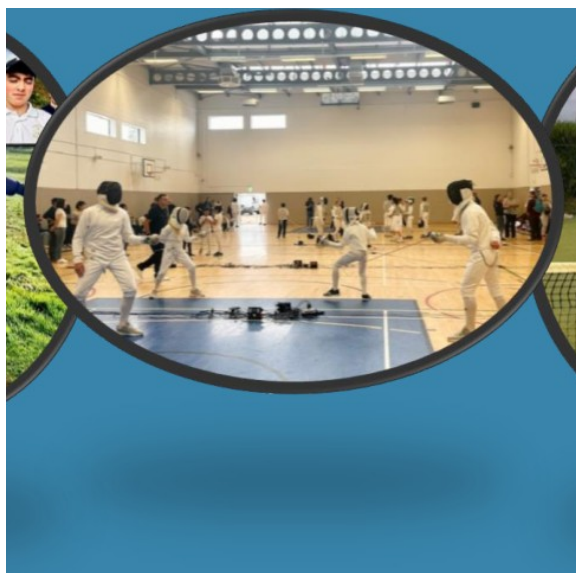
Students will need to take a proactive approach in organising these placements for themselves, and parents should be involved at the outset of the academic year to ensure that the student is engaged in this process. Should any student still have difficulty in securing a placement, the TY coordinator is always there to assist.

Sport & Fitness

All TY students complete a 5-week gym program in Stephen Hurley Fitness. This programme takes place in the first term and is a hugely successful part of the TY programme, often acting as a motivational turning point in encouraging boys to take their fitness more seriously throughout the year and into the future.

TY is also provides an excellent opportunity for the boys to throw themselves into sport and to try out different sports or take up an entirely new sport.



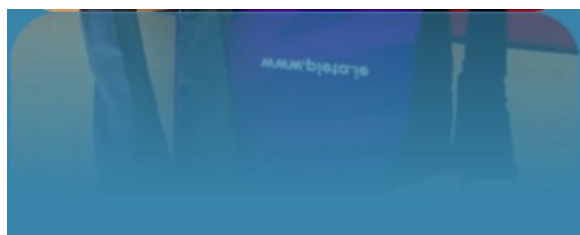


Personal & Spiritual Development, & Charity Work

An important part of TY is the opportunity it provides in allowing students to work on their personal development, their spiritual development and their character formation.

With this in mind, students are encouraged to get involved with a number of charities and community groups throughout their TY year, including the Arklow Parish Youth Group, Talk to Tom, Arklow Cancer Support, The Hope Foundation, Arklow Tidy Towns, and many more. Students will also have the opportunity to take part in Gaisce - The President's Award.

These connections afford invaluable opportunities for the students to find out more about their purpose in life, about the community in which they live and how they can contribute to it in meaningful ways, often paving the way for further community involvement throughout their adult life.



Furthering Language Skills During TY

Irish and a third language are still required for a wide variety of third level courses (many of which are entirely unrelated to languages). It is potentially possible that dropping a language at Senior Cycle could ultimately lock a student out of their chosen career path, so it is imperative that students

discuss this language requirement with their parents before deciding to drop a language subject. For students intending to take Irish and a foreign language for the Leaving Cert, TY affords a very useful opportunity to develop language skills. There are a variety of opportunities available, some of which are organised by the school and some of which can be arranged directly by students and parents.

Opportunities organised by the school include the school foreign language trips and exchanges typically arranged to Germany and France each year for TY students. Trips are also organised by the school to the Gaeltacht or as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge such as the surfing trip for TY students each year.

In addition to these, the school can make information available to any parents wishing to arrange additional time during TY for their son to spend on an Irish or foreign language immersion programme. Companies who provide these opportunities include:

- ELC, a group which runs total immersion language 2/3 week courses (similar to the Gaeltacht) in French, German and Spanish in boarding schools in Westmeath, Limerick and Kerry;
- Companies such as Tribe, Living Languages, HLI and Apple, which organise language stays in France and Germany for TY students, where students attend French or German school, generally for a number of weeks, either living with a host family or in a boarding school;
- FrancoIrish Exchanges, one of a number of groups which organises exchanges between Irish students and their counterparts abroad.

During TY, students might also consider the many day and online courses run here in Ireland by groups such as Alliance Francaise, which can be taken at any time during the Senior Cycle and which can be beneficial in furthering a student's ability in their chosen language.

Students wishing to spend longer in the Gaeltacht can take part in an Irish language immersion programme during the summer months and there are a host of summer programmes available within the Gaeltacht areas and within schools throughout the country.

Parents wishing to enquire further about any of these options this should contact their student's language teacher, preferably at the outset of the year, who will be happy to provide further information.



Day Courses

Throughout TY, the school organises a number of day courses and guest speakers for students on a wide variety of topics across all areas.

These include:

- Law School with the Law Society of Ireland;
- Createschool, a workshop on how to create, record and present a podcast;
- Self Defence classes;
- Money Sense with the Bank of Ireland;
- Social Skills and Business Etiquette with School of Life Workshops;
- NBK Survival, on mental health, fitness and resilience;
- Sound Out Rhythm, a workshop on percussion instruments with bodhrans and drums;

and many others.

Developing Digital and Coding Skills

Developing strong digital skills is an important part of the Transition Year programme. Throughout the year, students will have opportunities to develop their confidence, creativity and problem-solving skills through **coding and digital technology**.

As part of the programme, students use **Coding Ireland** to engage with coding, programming and technology-based learning. Students work through a range of practical activities and projects designed to develop their understanding of coding concepts and encourage them to become active creators of technology rather than simply users of it.

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop skills in areas such as **coding, computational thinking, problem-solving, creativity, logical thinking and project development**. Students are encouraged to work both independently and collaboratively, learning through practical, hands-on activities.

These experiences support the TY Student Dimension of **Being a Learner** by encouraging students to experiment, solve problems, learn from challenges and take greater responsibility for their own learning. The digital and coding skills developed during TY also provide students with valuable transferable skills for **Senior Cycle, further education, training and future employment**.



TY Mini Companies

The TY Mini Company Programme runs from September to May and all TY students are encouraged to participate. Students get to do everything a real-life entrepreneur would do, from producing a business idea to preparing a business plan, setting up the business, marketing and sales. Students then display their mini company at our Christmas Trade Fair in Arklow CBS.

Our students' mini companies are also entered into a national enterprise competition, and during the Trade Fair, guest judges from the enterprise competition come to interview the student and

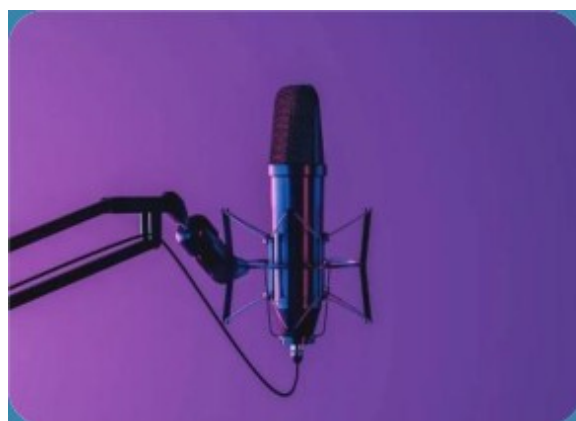
assess their project. The winning students then proceed to the regional finals of the enterprise competition.

Other TY Opportunities

There are many ways in which students can broaden their skills and experience during TY and, from the outset, each student should give thought to what can be achieved during the year. Options include:

- Learning a musical instrument;
- Taking up a new sport;
- Developing a new hobby or interest;
- Obtaining a Safe Pass;
- Passing the Theory Test for Driving;
- Undertaking Speech & Drama or Public Speaking Royal Irish Academy of Music exams;
- Partaking in grind courses to boost confidence in academic subjects, with groups such as ExamRevision and The Institute of Education;
- Taking part in the School Debating teams in both English and Irish;
- Entering the BT Young Scientist Competition;
- Entering many other competitions available to TY and other students in areas such as maths, history, science, technology, agricultural science etc.

Parents and students who have an interest in learning more about any of the above are encouraged to get in touch with the school to obtain more information on how to pursue these goals. The school will facilitate and assist the students in as many of these opportunities as possible, but a proactive approach on the part of students from the outset of the year is essential if they are to take part in these experiences.







TY Portfolio and Year-end Assessment

Towards the end of TY, each TY student will be expected to prepare and collate a thorough portfolio of work undertaken and completed throughout the year. This portfolio should outline the skills they have developed, the work experience they have undertaken, the certificates and other achievements they have earned, and the academic project work they have completed throughout TY. This portfolio should be of a standard sufficient to present at interview.

At the end of the academic year, TY students will be required to sit an exit assessment interview. The interview panel, which is made up of teachers, tutors and the TY coordinator, will meet individually with each student. The student will be required to properly present themselves for interview and to select a minimum of five pieces of work from their TY portfolio for discussion. The student will present these pieces to the interview panel and to give detailed analysis as to what they have learnt. The students will be assessed and graded on their work output, their conscientiousness throughout the year and their performance at interview, and they will be assigned a grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction accordingly.



Parent Day

Given the unique experience of TY, it has been determined that traditional parent-teacher meetings are not necessarily the most effective way of communicating with parents on students' progress. Instead, a Parent Day "meet and greet" is organised towards the conclusion of the year.

On Parent Day, each TY student will set up his own individual display setting out the various elements of his portfolio and will be expected to talk about his work with parents who are invited to inspect the portfolios and meet with the students.

Parent Day is a wonderful opportunity for parents to see what their sons have achieved over the course of TY and to congratulate them on their work.



TY Fees and Costs

The fee payable for participating in TY is €500. (For international students, the fee is €1,000). This fee covers the cost of most of the extra-curricular opportunities organised by the school during TY, including the costs associated with the day-trips mentioned above. Arklow CBS has organised the TY programme to ensure that the only key cost is the TY fee payable at the start of the year and that students and parents will not be faced with a level of additional costs more than they would in any other year. Where possible the school has attempted to subsidise the cost of opportunities that are offered to students.

There are a number of optional activities during the year which are open to students, such as foreign language trips and school tours, the cost for which is additional. However, none of these programmes are compulsory and typically only a portion of students will choose these options. Factors which influence whether or not students decide to opt for these opportunities include not only cost, but also their busy TY timetable, their ideas around their intended career path, their proposed Leaving Certificate subjects, and other commitments throughout TY such as work experience.

Contact & Information

If you have any queries or require information at any time, please do not hesitate to contact the TY coordinator, who is the dedicated teacher lead responsible for TY within the school. Our current TY coordinator is Ms Ciara Garvey and she is contactable at cgarvey@arklowcbs.ie.

In addition, parents should be aware that there is a dedicated Microsoft Team for TY students to which all information regarding upcoming excursions, competitions, opportunities and any other relevant information is posted. This is used instead of a journal during TY. Parents can view the information posted in this Team by downloading the Teams app to your phone and using your son's login to check in from time to time.

The school wishes our incoming TY students all the very best throughout the coming year and sincerely thanks the parents and students for their input in making it the success that it is intended to be.