

St. Wolstan's Community School

Transition Year Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Transition Year (TY) is a one-year stand-alone programme¹, designed to act as a bridge between the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle.² It provides students with an opportunity to experience a wide range of educational activities, including work experience, over the course of a year that is free from formal examinations. The aim of TY is to educate students for maturity, with an emphasis on personal development, social awareness and skills for life.³

1.2 Research⁴ shows high satisfaction levels among parents/guardians, students and teachers with Transition Year, praising its support for holistic student development. Transition Year is valued for diverse learning experiences, skill development and beneficial elements like work experience. The programme's variety of assessment methods and qualification opportunities, e.g. Microsoft Certification, are viewed positively. Most importantly, Transition Year is credited for fostering a future-oriented, mature and confident outlook in students, reflected in improved Leaving Certificate performance and better subject choices. Students often highlight personal growth, diverse learning experiences and practical skill acquisition as key benefits of the TY experience. It must be noted that these benefits are only gained through consistent attendance and engagement by the student.

1.3 Transition Year in St. Wolstan's Community School is optional. The maximum number of available places each year is dependent upon, staffing, facilities and resources. The number is determined by the Board of Management on an annual basis. For acceptance on the Transition Year Programme, the school believe that a student can benefit from Transition Year and, equally, that her participation will not prevent any other student(s) from benefiting. Any decision in this regard will be taken by the Transition Year Admissions' Committee, following consultation with the student's teachers, the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student concerned.⁵

2. Application Procedure

Early in 3rd Year, the TY Programme Co-ordinator visits all 3rd year classes to explain the Transition Year programme, highlighting the importance of attendance, application & attitude to work, and behaviour.

2.1 In January of 3rd Year, a formal evening presentation will be delivered to parents/guardians of 3rd Year students interested in applying for a place on the programme.

2.2 Those who wish to proceed directly to 5th Year select that option. Students who select the TY option will be invited to apply for admission to the TY programme.

2.3 Students apply for a place by completing a formal application form, witnessed by their parent(s)/guardian(s). This is sent by the Programme Coordinator, via email, to the student's school email address, following the information event.

¹ TY does not constitute Year 1 of the Leaving Cert Programme – Leaving Cert is a 2 Year Cycle only (5th & 6th Year)

² NCCA 2023 - <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle/Transition-Year/>

³ [Department of Education July 2020 Transition Year V.1](#)

⁴ Ibid Section 1.2

⁵ See Criteria outlined in Section 4

2.4 The final submission date for applications will be specified at the parent/guardian information evening in January.

2.5 Applications will be considered valid only if they are fully completed and submitted to the Programme Coordinator by the specified deadline. Students are responsible for this action.

2.6 Any application received after the stated deadline will be considered only after students whose applications were submitted on time have been processed.

3. The Transition Year Admissions Committee

3.1 The T.Y. Admissions' Committee will be responsible for assessing applications and offering places. The committee will comprise of the Principal, Programme Coordinator, Additional Educational Needs Representative, Deputy-Principals, Guidance Counsellor Representative and Year Head of the current 3rd Year students.⁶

3.2 Members of the teaching staff will be advised of the list of applicants and can contribute to the process if appropriate.

3.3 The criteria outlined in Section 4 will be important factors in determining a student's admission to the Transition Year Programme.

3.4 The Transition Year Admissions' Committee reserves the right to meet with students and their parent/guardian, if necessary, in relation to their applications and their suitability for participation.

4. Criteria for Admission

4.1 Each application will be considered on its own merit. Entrance to Transition Year is by application and payment of TY Fee. It is important to note that not all students may be accepted.

4.2 Students must have maintained good attendance and punctuality, demonstrating a commitment to their academic studies and school community involvement.

4.3 Students must also have demonstrated positive behaviour in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. This includes respecting peers, staff and school property, as well as adhering to established rules and guidelines.

4.4 The student's holistic development, as communicated by the Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Additional Educational Needs Coordinator and/or other professionals in the school, will be considered, where appropriate.

5. Offer and Acceptance of Places

5.1 Places will be offered (in writing) via email to the email address⁷ of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of successful applicants.

⁶ A nominee of the Principal to replace one of the members if any member may be unavailable due to illness or other circumstances.

⁷ Provided by Parent/Guardian for communication purposes and recorded on VSware. It is the responsibility of each Parent/Guardian to ensure they are receiving correspondence from the school. Any change to email address, phone number or home address should be communicated directly to the school.

5.2 A member of the Admissions' Committee will meet with unsuccessful applicants. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of unsuccessful applicants will also be informed in writing⁸ and supplied with details regarding the appeals process.⁹

6. Appeals Process

6.1 In the case of a student who is not offered a place by the TY Admissions Committee, an appeal may be made in writing to the Principal, within ten school days of receipt of refusal onto the Programme.

6.2 In the case of a student who is not offered a place by the Principal on appeal, a subsequent appeal may be made in writing to the Board of Management within ten school days of the date on which the Principal's decision is issued.

7. External Applicants

7.1 Any application to transfer to St. Wolstan's Community School from another school will be considered strictly under the terms of the school's TY Admissions Policy. Any such applicants must also attend an interview with their parent(s)/guardian(s) and provide a reference from the school where they completed Junior Cycle in support of their application.

8. Transition Year Fees

8.1 The parent/guardian of successful applicants must formally accept the place by the date specified by the Programme Coordinator. Acceptance of a place in Transition Year (TY) is completed via the Microsoft Form, sent by email from the Programme Coordinator. This Form also requires consent for participation and use of images¹⁰ taken in all TY associated activities, provision of medical needs/details, a commitment to upholding the Code of Behaviour, commitment to an excellent attendance rate¹¹, and engagement in all aspects of the TY Programme, as designed by the school. This includes work experience.¹² Please note that several of the programme activities must be secured in advance and therefore an advance deposit payment of TY Fees will be requested upon receipt of the signed acceptance letter.¹³

8.2 The Programme's advance deposit payment and remainder fee, set annually by the Board of Management of St. Wolstan's Community School, are intended to assist in defraying costs associated with the various activities and courses fundamental to the programme. The fee will be used for buses and expenses for day trips as they arise, and to pay for workshops and other such activities. This fee also includes Personal Insurance cover, which is mandatory for all Transition Year students. Further details will be provided at the information evening in January.

⁸ Via email

⁹ See section 6.

¹⁰ For use on school sanctioned and managed media and communication channels

¹¹ Medical Certificate exempt. Application for non-medical extended absences must be submitted to the Principal or Board of Management

¹² See section 9.

¹³ Details of the schedule of payment of the remainder of the TY Fees will be issued to successful applicants following receipt of acceptance and consent gathered via the Microsoft Form outlined in Section 8.1.

8.3 Where the Transition Year fee represents a significant financial burden for a family, parent(s)/guardian(s) are invited to discuss the matter, in confidence, with the Principal. The school will be happy to facilitate phased payment plans where necessary.

8.4 At this stage, the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) are understood to be undertaking the commitments outlined in section 8.1 above, including the facilitation of work experience. Non-compliance with the Code of Behaviour may result in the withdrawal of a student from any Transition Year (TY) activity as a disciplinary measure, regardless of the payment of fees.

8.5 Please note that failure to pay the necessary Transition Year Fee or agree upon a schedule to facilitate the completion of the full payment¹⁴, will result in restriction of access to school activities/trips.¹⁵ It is important to maintain fairness and equity among all students.

8.6 The school reserves the right to remove a student from the Programme if there is poor attendance and non-engagement in the curriculum by students. This includes non-participation in the work experience programme, curricular, and extra-curricular activities. Students who start on the TY course and then wish to change to 5th year are not guaranteed of a place in 5th year and if there is a place available the student may not be able to choose certain subjects due to class numbers. Students will forfeit their deposits for TY if they change to 5th year.

9. Work Experience

9.1 Work Experience takes place three times during Transition Year at dates determined at the discretion of the school. These dates are communicated to TY students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) via the school calendar.

9.2 It is the responsibility of each individual student to organise work experience.¹⁶ It is suggested that students apply for work experience in writing with a CV and covering letter. Students will be provided with an employer's handbook which includes all necessary documents required by employers.¹⁷

9.3 Students must inform the school of their placement details, no later than 1 week before the placement commences, as the school will contact employers individually to assess the placement.

9.4 When students are participating in work experience, they are representing the school during such activities. As school representatives, they are expected to conduct themselves with the same level of respect, and behaviour as expected in any standard professional setting. Failure to adhere to these expectations may result in disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's policies.

9.5 Upon attaining the age of 16 while enrolled in Transition Year, students are mandated to initiate the process of obtaining Garda Vetting should they intend to partake in work experience within an environment necessitating such clearance, for example, a primary school. The requisite vetting application forms can be procured from the

¹⁴ Family financial concerns can be discussed with the Principal.

¹⁵ This includes application for 5th Year Foreign trips also.

¹⁶ Work Experience dates are specified by the school.

¹⁷ The Programme Coordinator and Guidance Counsellors support this process.

Administrative Team in Reception at St. Wolstan's Community School. It is imperative that all applications be submitted well in advance of the scheduled work experience date, given that the Garda led vetting procedure may take several weeks.

10. Curriculum and Assessment

10.1 The TY curriculum¹⁸ is designed to strike a balance between continuity of essential core subjects¹⁹, a tasting and sampling of other subjects, a variety of distinctive courses designed to broaden students' horizons, and some modules and activities specifically aimed at developing maturity.

10.2 Assessment is a key part of any worthwhile learning programme. Transition Year is an opportunity to move beyond the narrow focus of end-of-year, written exams.²⁰ The emphasis is on varied and on-going assessment, with students themselves becoming involved in recognising their own learning strengths and weaknesses.²¹ Project work, digital portfolio work, and exhibitions of students' work are included. Reports are issued three times a year on student progress via the school's management system of VShare²² and a Transition Year Parent/Teacher meeting is offered annually.

11. Parent/Guardian Role

11.1 The active participation of parent(s)/guardian(s) is of paramount importance for students enrolled in the Transition Year programme. To ensure that students derive maximum benefit from the presented opportunities, it is imperative that parent(s)/guardian(s) extend their support, fostering an environment that encourages consistent attendance and active engagement by their daughter. This collaborative effort between members of the school community is integral to the overall success of the Transition Year experience for students.

11.2 Additional Information for students and parent(s)/guardian(s) on Transition Year is available via the school website: [Link to St. Wolstan's Community School Transition Year Information](#)

12. Special Notes

12.1 Upon enrolment into Transition Year, students are assigned to base classes, a process meticulously crafted the school to ensure optimal educational learning groups. This allocation is the result of comprehensive deliberation and lengthy consultation by Senior Management, Year Heads, Tutors, Guidance Counsellors and additional educational needs team. Requests to change class are not facilitated. Various factors are considered to create effective class groups and for allocation of available resources.²³

¹⁸ Subjects and courses are subject to change depending on staffing, facilities and resources.

¹⁹ Example - English, Maths, Gaeilge, P.E., S.P.H.E.

²⁰ Summative assessment

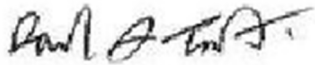
²¹ Formative assessment

²² [Link to Parent/Guardian VShare](#)

²³ See Class Policy on school website.

13. Review procedures

This policy will be monitored and subject to periodic review by the Board of Management of St. Wolstan's Community School.

Signed:  Date: 10th October 2024

Chairperson, Board of Management