TRANSITION YEAR NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026

Carlingford

By Sofia Soric

TY has just begun and it has already been packed with workshops and experiences, the first and possibly most exciting of these being the Carlingford trip. This began on the 26th of August and was a three day stay in Carlingford adventure centre, filled with fun activities. The bus ride was quite long, but it was all worth it when we got there! Most of the year went, and we were split into three groups upon arrival. Each group had the chance to take part in all of the activities over the three days. These included rock climbing (on a real cliff in the woods!), kayaking (and pier jumping), the aerial adventure, and a popular favourite; laser tag! They were all really captivating, especially since many of them were things we hadn't tried before. It was a very active trip, with early mornings, but the excitement definitely made up for that! The evening activities were more relaxing, thankfully, with a big campfire where we roasted marshmallows one of the nights. Another reason this experience was so enjoyable was because it was our first overnight trip with the school and our friends. It definitely made us all feel a bit more independent, and adventurous! It also gave us the perfect opportunity to connect with more people in our year and make new friends. I think it's safe to say that everyone loved Carlingford, and that it was one of the best things we've done!





Our First Term

By Caoimhe Cassin

It is safe to say that everybody was looking forward to Transition Year after the Junior Cert, and it certainly started with a bang. The workshops that our year has taken part in have been varied in both their teachings (develop me, forensics, law, and breast cancer) and our enjoyment of them. As someone told me once, you cannot know what you want to do, if you do not know what you dislike. So, even having the opportunity to try these things, is a formative experience for us, especially when the whole point of Transition Year is to experience new things.

The new taster subjects have also been an excellent experience for the furthering of personal preferences. It is so important to be able to test new things yourself and to develop your own opinions and it is great that we get to do that as part of TY. We are excited for the different subjects to come.

Our trip to Carlingford was also amazing, particularly because it gave us an opportunity to spend time with our year outside of school. The combination of this and the team building activities helped strengthen both pre-existing and new friendships. We had an incredible time together and are looking forward to our other trips!

I have loved Transition Year so far, and I think most people would agree with me. It is such a pleasant change from the academia of third year, and we cannot wait for the rest of it!

MODULE SPOTLIGHT

By Amelia Simmons Rea

Sustainability



In our Sustainability module, we focused on fashion, particularly fast fashion, and how we can make more sustainable choices when it comes to the clothes we buy and wear.

My group's main focus was teenagers who buy new outfits for special occasions because they feel they can't wear the same clothes more than once.

We then started brainstorming different ideas. We came up with everything from a clothes swap shop to a fashion competition where students could show off their outfits in a fashion show judged by teachers and other students.

Overall, I really enjoyed the Sustainability module because it made me think more carefully about things I wouldn't normally pay much attention to, especially when it comes to buying clothes. The biggest thing I've learned is that **you don't have to be perfect to be more sustainable.** Even small changes, like wearing an outfit again, buying fewer clothes or fixing something instead of throwing it away, can help. I think if everyone makes a little more effort, we can work together to protect the planet and make sure future generations get to enjoy it just as much as we do.

First Aid



The First Aid module has opened my eyes to the differences between a heart attack and cardiac arrest, particularly how to recognise the signs and symptoms of each condition and respond in an emergency. Before beginning this module, I had a basic understanding of these medical emergencies, but I did not fully appreciate how differently they can present or how quickly a person's condition can deteriorate.

One of the most surprising things I learned during our first lesson was that a person can experience a heart attack without immediately realising what is happening. Some heart attacks cause mild or unusual symptoms that may be overlooked or mistaken for something less serious. This was something that many of us in the class had not been aware of, and it made me realise how important it is to recognise potential warning signs.

Overall, the First Aid module has significantly improved my understanding of heart attacks, cardiac arrest and the importance of responding quickly and appropriately in a medical emergency.

I now have a much clearer understanding of the difference between signs and symptoms, how to recognise a cardiac emergency and the practical steps involved in performing CPR, using an AED and placing someone in the recovery position.

The most important lesson I will take away from this module is that having first aid knowledge is not just about understanding the theory; it is about being prepared to put that knowledge into practice when it matters most.

Most importantly, I now appreciate that first aid is a skill that could make a genuine difference to someone else's life. You never know when you might find yourself in a situation where another person needs help, and having the knowledge and confidence to respond could mean the difference between life and death.

Junior Cert Results Day

By Juno Neylon

On Wednesday the 10th of October, students received their Junior Cert results. All around the school, you could sense the excitement and nerves radiating off the girls wearing the blue hoodies of transition year. Mrs. Cuddihy Higgins and Ms. McGlinn assured us that we should be proud of ourselves and reminded us of all the hard work we did coming up to June, and during our first three years in Mount Sackville. Overall, it was a great, light-hearted day. Im sure I talk for everyone when I say that I am happy that I will never have to think about the Junior Cert ever again!

WORKSHOPS

Develop Me

By Rebecca Collins & Ruby Hassett

As part of our Develop Me workshop, we took part in a game called The Lost Dutchman's Goldmine, which challenged us to work together as a team to solve problems, make decisions and communicate effectively. We really enjoyed the game as it was fun, interactive and encouraged everyone to get involved. We also took part in a challenge where we worked together to build a massive bridge, which required creativity, teamwork and cooperation. It was great to see everyone sharing ideas, listening to each other and working towards a common goal. Although some of the challenges were difficult, we had great fun throughout the workshop and learned a lot about the importance of working together and supporting one another. Overall, the Develop Me workshop was a really enjoyable experience, and we came away with a better understanding of teamwork, leadership and problem-solving, while making some great memories along the way.

Law

By Mariam Syed Quadri

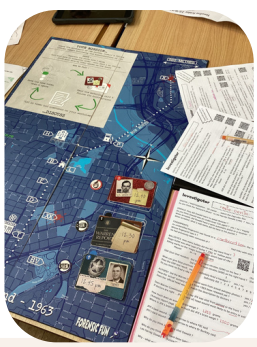
On Thursday, 8th October, Transition Years engaged in a Law workshop. Hosted by a guest Barrister, we looked over the court systems and and the different types of courts. Afterwards, we investigated earlier cases in Ireland, in particular the Ana Kriegel case and the murder of James Bulger. The barrister also talked about his experiences in the courtroom and how court law differs across each country. For example, in England and Wales, barristers must present themselves wearing wigs. This workshop was filled with great questions and insightful answers. It gave everyone an idea how the judicial system works, with real life examples.

Forensics

By Katie Carolan

On the 18th of September, Transition Year were treated to a Forensics workshop. It focused on the assassination of US President John F. Kennedy in 1963. We learned about the events leading to the assassination, then got to go around to different stations around the assembly hall to do our own investigations and come to our own conclusions on whether Lee Harvey Oswald was the real perpetrator. In small groups, we played with a board game-style reconstruction of the event to investigate the timing discrepancies that have led to many conspiracy theories surrounding the assassination. We got to witness the assassination ourselves through a VR headset, which was incredibly engaging. The group learned more about the man who supposedly committed the crime, Lee Harvey Oswald, and his ties to Russia which drove most of the suspicion around him during investigations. We also learned about other topics related to the case, such as fingerprints, autopsies, the use of nitrate tests to test for gun shot residue, and the conspiracy theories that relate to the case due to the logical discrepancies that surround it. We even got to pose with real (but obviously unloaded) guns! Transition Year really enjoyed taking part in this workshop, and we all felt that we learned a lot more about this interesting potential career path.









IAHW INTERNATIONAL ADOLESCENT HEALTH WEEK



From the 12th to the 16th of October, Mount Sackville celebrated International Adolescent Health Week (IAHW). We were honoured to be the first school ever to pilot this initiative, and a team of nineteen Transition Year students helped to run a variety of events across the week. It was phenomenal to be a part of this event.

For the First Years, we ran an 'Inside Out' themed colouring competition. The different characters represent different emotions, so we thought this activity might help them connect with their emotions. Each First Year wrote on their page a time when they felt the emotion that they were colouring. Each class will have one winner, who will win a prize. We also put up water charts in the First Year base classrooms to remind students to drink their eight glasses of water every day. The class who drinks the most water will receive prizes also.

On Thursday the 15th of October, the IAHW team wrote up positive affirmations and kind messages on small booklets of paper. We folded them up and added cute illustrations to the front, then stuck them with tape to lockers across the school. We hope that the affirmations gave everyone a confidence boost, especially considering there has been a lot of stress due to tests and assessments in the run-up to midterm!

On Friday the 16th of October, we baked treats for our teachers to show appreciation for all they do for us. During the first classes, a few members of the IAHW team went around to all the classrooms and offered teachers a variety of sweet treats, including cupcakes, caramel slices and apple pie. They went down very well with the teachers, and we even had some leftovers which we gave to the staff room! Later in the day, we welcomed TD Emer Currie and Ms. Suzanne Crowley to our school. They spoke to us at a year-wide assembly about our involvement in our initiative, and the members of the IAHW team received certificates for our participation.

It was amazing to be involved in the launch of this new programme. Every participant in the International Adolescent Health Week Team enjoyed taking part, and we hope to run more events promoting the health of both our students and our teachers further into the academic year.





By Katie Carolan

Looking Ahead.....

As the first term of transition year draws to a close, it's a good moment to pause and look back on everything we've packed into these few short months. If there's one thing we've learned already, it's that TY is nothing like the years that came before it — and that's exactly the point. Beyond the trips, workshops and modules, this term has been about the smaller moments too — taking on responsibility, meeting people we hadn't spoken to before, and building the kind of independence that TY is designed to encourage. We've been trusted to manage ourselves in new situations, and most of us have risen to it. As we move into the next term, we do so with more confidence than we had in September. The first few months have set the tone: TY is what you make of it, and so far this year group has made a great deal of it. Here's to what is yet to come!