



## Transition Year Policy

In Sandymount Park Educate Together Secondary School, we strive to create a vibrant, welcoming school community in which every student feels a sense of belonging. Our aim is to become a school of teaching and learning excellence where students will flourish; enabled to reach their full potential whilst becoming confident, considerate, active members of society. We focus on providing students with opportunities to develop their own identity, both as individuals and as learners and to build strong bonds with others and the wider world.

Our values include: Kindness, Respect, Empathy, Hard Work, Participation, Curiosity, Creativity, Democracy, Community.

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**Ratified: February 2024**

**Review date: February 2025**

## **What is Transition Year?**

*The Transition Year is a one-year stand alone programme that forms the first year of a three-year senior cycle. It is designed to act as a bridge between the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes. Each school designs its own Transition Year programme, within set guidelines, to suit the needs and interests of its students.*

*Transition Year offers learners an opportunity to mature and develop without the pressure of an examination. It also provides an opportunity for learners to reflect on, and develop an appreciation of, the value of learning in preparing them for the ever-changing demands of the adult world of work, further and higher education and relationships.*

*There is no state examination at the end of Transition Year. Assessment is usually carried out on an ongoing basis and can include school-based assessment of projects or portfolios, oral, aural, practical and written activities. – NCCA*

## **Aims of the Transition Year Programme**

Sandymount Park ETSS's Transition Year (TY) Programme is grounded in the interconnected principles of excellence in teaching and learning, positive relationships and student voice which are central to all aspects of school life. Our TY programme is divided into eight strands: Health, Language, STEM, Aesthetics, Humanities, Enterprise, the World of Work and Communication, with a unifying theme of personal growth and development through opportunity and challenge.

It is essential that Transition Year Programmes offer a challenge to pupils in all areas of their development and our aims are to empower students with opportunities:

- To discover and develop their individual talents, aptitudes and abilities.
- To experience a year where the emphasis will be on self-awareness and independent learning.
- To engage in experiences with an emphasis on individual responsibility and participation.
- To broaden their educational experiences beyond the classroom within a safe working environment.
- To experience the world of work and further develop as confident, considerate, active members of society.
- To facilitate a smooth transition of students from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle.

## **Benefits of Transition Year Programme**

- The Transition Year Programme challenges students to develop a broad skill set.
- TY candidates more likely to be 'educationally adventurous'- try new subjects, discover topics linked to their subject independently.
- TY students generally achieve higher grades when completing Leaving Cert.
- Students can make informed choices about academic studies and work placements.

(Statistics from Education by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI))



## Transition Year Opportunities

Transition year aims to give students opportunities to:

- Make informed choices about Leaving Certificate subjects through subject sampling.
- Develop a variety of new skills across a variety of areas.
- Discover new talents.
- Learn more about the working world through work experience.
- Learn through experiences outside of the classroom.
- Work as part of a team and learn about co-operation and leadership.
- Adhere to strict deadlines for projects and assessments.
- Focus on independent and self-directed learning.
- Grow in confidence as a person through discovering new strengths.
- Add a valuable set of experiences to their CV.

Transition Year is an opportunity for students to develop personal, social, and academic skills to prepare them for their future. We strive to encourage, promote and uphold our TY values of ***Fun, Friendship, Freedom and Future***. Tailoring this programme to meet the needs of our students is a priority for us.

## Admission to Transition Year

All 3<sup>rd</sup> year students progress to Transition Year unless in the following circumstances:

- i) Where, due to individual circumstances, a student wishes to progress directly to 5<sup>th</sup> year. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should write a letter to the Secretary, Board of Management, Sandymount Park ETSS or via email to [office@sandymountparketss.ie](mailto:office@sandymountparketss.ie) before the Easter break in 3<sup>rd</sup> year, outlining the reasons why the student wishes to progress directly to 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The Board will consider each request, on a case by case basis, at the next scheduled Board of Management meeting and respond in writing.
- ii) The school must be of the opinion that a student is capable of benefiting from participation in Transition Year and, equally, that their participation will not prevent any other student(s) from benefiting from participation. Where, despite interventions (such as meetings, behaviour support cards, learning opportunities, pastoral care team supports etc) a student has a record of not cooperating with the school's code of behaviour, the principal may recommend that the student progress directly from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> year.

The principal will meet with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) before the end of April of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.



## **External Applications to Transition Year**

Any application to transfer to Transition Year in Sandymount Park ETSS from another school will be considered strictly under the terms of the school's Admissions Policy in relation to such transfers. Transfers into Transition Year should keep in mind that they may not be able to participate on trips abroad as bookings are usually made in the final term of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

## **Participation in the Transition Year Programme**

Students must be willing to participate in all elements of the TY Programme both school based and external. In the event of an individual student not engaging with all aspects of the programme, that student may be asked to leave the programme and continue to 5th year.

## **Tours/Trips/Outings**

The length of a Transition Year outing or trip may vary from a short local visit for 1 day or part thereof to a foreign tour involving staying away for several days. Transition Year trips, outings and tours are a privilege, and students must meet minimum standards of behaviour while at school in order to be eligible to participate on trips, outings and tours. Students who do not meet minimum standards of behaviour, as decided by the Principal/Deputy Principal and Progress Leader, may be refused permission to participate in a Transition Year outing, trip or tour.

The Principal/Deputy Principal and Progress Leader reserve the right to disallow a student from participation in a school outing, trip or tour if in their opinion, the health or safety of the student, other students or teachers is placed at risk. All school rules and all school policies apply while on school trips.

In particular, parents/guardians and students should be aware that permission to travel on a school related activity is conditional on an individual student's adherence to the Sandymount Park ETSS Code of Behaviour. The School Trips Policy is available on our website [www.sandymountparketss.ie](http://www.sandymountparketss.ie).

## **Transition Year Fees**

A fee of €495 will be charged for participation in the Transition Year Programme. This fee will cover costs relating to the TY Programme apart from trips abroad, the Gaeltacht trip, Gaisce trip and any other activity not undertaken by the TY group as a whole. There is an additional Materials Fee of €80 due to cover the cost of student insurance, journal, lockers, class materials.

The fee is payable in two instalments (a) the first instalment on June 15th (b) second instalment on August 14th. If there are difficulties with payment, alternative arrangements for payment may be considered in consultation with the principal.



## **Class Groups**

Students will be assigned to a class group at the beginning of Transition Year. Movement to another class group is only facilitated in exceptional circumstances and can only occur in consultation with Principal/Deputy Principal, Progress Leader, TY Co-ordinator and Guidance Counsellor.

## **Assessment in Transition Year**

*“Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It should be diagnostic, to provide accurate information with regard to pupil strengths and weaknesses, and formative, so as to facilitate improved pupil performance through effective programme planning and implementation.”*

(Transition Year Programme Guidelines, Department of Education)

Students in Transition Year will be assessed using a variety of methods:

- Oral/aural assessment
- Project work
- Presentation
- Written/practical class tests
- Summer examinations in core subjects
- Portfolio. Students will complete a portfolio throughout the school year, with two deadlines for completion. Part A of the portfolio is due in December and Part B of the portfolio due for completion before the end of the school year.
- Interview. Students will sit an interview in December. The interview will be based on the construction of their student portfolio and their experience and learning to that point in Transition Year.

## **Certification**

Students in Transition Year receive the following certification on completion of the programme:

- Gold/Silver/Bronze Transition Year Certificate
- Portfolio of official certificates of skills and achievements acquired during Transition Year (First Aid etc.)
- Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)
- Transition Year Showcase and End of Year Graduation Ceremony



**Sandymount Park ETSS — Transition Year Policy**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21/02/24  
Date of next review: February 2025

Vaessa Barcroft,  
Chairperson BOM

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Date

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Paula Mulhall,  
Principal

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Date

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