



CLONGOWES

CLONGOWES WOOD COLLEGE SJ



TRANSITION YEAR PARENT HANDBOOK

TY PARENT BOOKLET SUMMARY

Transition Year (TY) is compulsory in Clongowes and offers students space to learn, mature and develop through a broad variety of learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.

- Students have a full timetable of 30 class periods per week. These include classes in:
- Core subjects: English, Irish/EAL, Mathematics and French/German/Spanish. - Formal examinations in these subjects at Christmas and Summer.
- Taster subjects for Leaving cert: Science Subjects, Business subjects, History, Geography, Music, PE, Drama, Latin, Computer Science, etc.
- TY specific subjects: Career Ed., Creativity, Green Schools, Sustainability, Mini Company (out of timetable), Development Ed., Health Ed., Logic
- There is also one reflection period a week for all students.
- Social Awareness programmes such as Social Outreach and Age Action which are central to TY in Clongowes and to developing our ethos of “Men for Others”.
- A core element of TY in Clongowes is career guidance and subject choice.
- Students participate in and attend a wide range of workshops, seminars, class trips, university visits, visiting speakers and activities throughout the year. These take place on average once a week and have an impact on regular classes. There is a charge of €330 per student to cover participation in all of these. This is charged in September and is used to top up the TY budget, which is drawn from the normal fee.
- In addition to the timetabled classes, we run optional evening courses in Cookery, Life Saving, Yoga, Scuba Diving and Tech Create. There may be extra charges to cover the cost of these.
- Sport and the full range of co-curricular activities, such as music instrumentation, orchestra, choir, etc., run as normal.
- Students will go on a two-night residential outdoor education trip in October. Boys will need to return to Clongowes after the September break with the appropriate clothing for the trip.
- Students are timetabled for at least one hour of regular study and one hour of computer study most evenings, with an hour of DEAR on Wednesday.
- Students will spend at least three weeks in addition to normal breaks and vacations away from Clongowes on work experiences – two one-week placements – **first week beginning 19th October and second week beginning 5th April and social placement - 1 week beginning 23rd November.**
- If students do not go on the Jesuit Ethos Cultural Experience in May they must go home to do work experience or social placement instead.
- Students may arrange up to **three** extra work experience/social placements throughout the year-see Work Experience Section.
- Students and parents who are interested in taking part in our European exchange programme should read the guidelines for participation and only then apply. No student is guaranteed a place on our exchange programme and all applicants must be

approved for participation by a selection committee. Please consider carefully whether your son is a suitable candidate and/or if you are in a position to host an exchange student. Flexibility is essential.

- Families who are restricted in their ability to host an exchange student may wish to arrange a private stay abroad for their son. They should apply to the Headmaster for a leave of absence for the duration.
- All students are encouraged to participate in our annual TY charity fundraiser, "The Duck Push" which runs events across the school year
- Clongowes TY Certificates are awarded with Distinction, Higher Merit, Merit or Pass at the TY Graduation Ceremony.
- Students are assessed on their Portfolio both at Christmas and Summer and have an accompanying formal interview in May

KEY DATES

Work Experience 1

Monday 19th to Friday 23rd October (Leads into Halloween Break)

Social Awareness Placement

Monday 23rd to Friday 27th November 2026 (Leads into December Break)

Work Experience 2

Monday 5th April to Friday 9th April 2027 (Leads out of Easter Break)

Outdoor Adventure Trip – Monday 27th to Thursday 30th September 2026

Ski Trip – Saturday 23rd to Saturday 30th January 2026

European Ignatian Immersion Trip (Camino)

26th April to 30th April 2027 (Leads into May Break)

CLONGOWES WOOD COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Clongowes Wood College is to educate its pupils according to the vision of the Gospel and the best traditions and highest standards of Jesuit schooling, as expressed in The Characteristics of Jesuit Education.

Clongowes is a Catholic boarding school located in beautiful surroundings twenty miles from Dublin and draws its pupils from all over Ireland and abroad. It aims to create an open, happy, stimulating, mutually respectful and supportive community where young people are able to develop the full range of their talents and academic abilities in a balanced, integrated and generous way, striving for excellence in all that they do.

It is our conviction that human fulfilment is to be found through faith in Jesus Christ and service of Ireland and the world in imitation of Him. In partnership with parents, we seek to form pupils who will strive to develop that faith and to give Christian leadership through the example of their lives and their commitment to a renewal of the Church and a more just, inclusive and caring society.

The Transition Year will offer students space to learn, mature and develop through a broad variety of learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.

Teachers of TY in Clongowes are informed by the awareness that we have a responsibility to care for the individual student, regardless of their competence, aptitude or interest (*cura personalis*) in keeping with the principles of Ignatian pedagogy.

PREAMBLE

It is the policy of the school that all students who attend will take part in the Transition Year Programme.

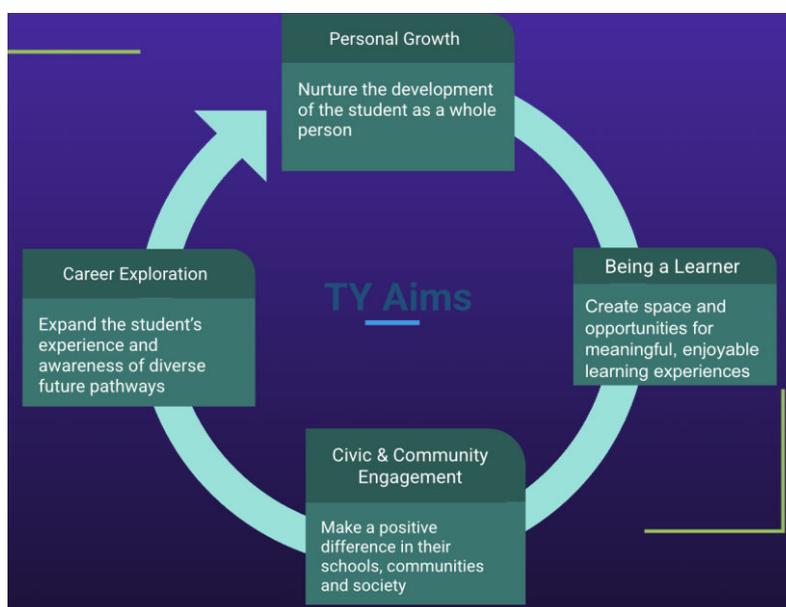
In keeping with the DoE's Transition Year Programme Statement, The Transition Year Programme in Clongowes Wood College aims to promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of students and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society.

There are four broad aims:

- nurture the development of the student as a whole person by building on their previous experiences, through a curriculum designed by the school
- create space and opportunities for meaningful, enjoyable learning experiences through which the key competencies of the student can be developed in the classroom and school, in the home and in their role as local, national and global citizens
- expand the student's experience and awareness of diverse future pathways and nurture the student's capacity to sustain their growth and development through a process of lifelong learning
- evolve continuously to support the learning and development of the student through a reflection and renewal process involving students, teachers, school leaders, parents and community partners.

THE AIMS OF TY IN CLONGOWES

- To inspire students to become “Men for Others”
- To give students opportunities to discover and develop their own individual gifts and strengths.
- To enable students to become more independent-both as learners and thinkers.
- To allow students to experience a year where the emphasis will be on individual responsibility.
- To enable the nurturing of thinking, caring, articulate and self-confident people.
- To provide students with the skills and support necessary to discover their individual talents, aptitudes and abilities.
- To enable students to understand their own educational needs.
- To facilitate the development of those skills and competences necessary to cope successfully with the students current stage of development.
- To continue to build on previous learning and experiences that students had in Junior Cycle to provide them a platform to engage with the Senior Cycle
- Make students aware of the development indicators involved in Transition Year to allow them to create goals based on them and review them on a regular basis
- To allow as broad a range of student experiences as possible



In keeping with the mission of Clongowes Wood College and the Jesuit educational tradition, the Transition Year programme aims to nurture the full personal, social and intellectual development of each student. Over the course of the year, students are supported in becoming more reflective, autonomous and responsible learners, capable of taking ownership of their learning and personal growth. Through engagement with a wide range of academic, creative,

physical and experiential opportunities, students develop confidence, resilience and a deeper awareness of themselves and others. The programme encourages students to grow as *Men for Others*, fostering empathy, social awareness and a commitment to service, while enabling them to make thoughtful and informed choices as they prepare for Senior Cycle.

PROGRAMME COORDINATION AND OVERSIGHT

Clongowes devises its own timetabled programme to cater for the needs of its diverse students. This is done in accordance with the Department of Education & Science guidelines and school and community resources. The programme is designed and delivered by the Coordinator, core team and teaching staff in consultation with management. These Leadership actions and structures in the Transition Year programme allow Clongowes to strive for improved consistency and quality of provision that should enhance our students' experience.

This team provides strategic oversight of the programme, ensuring that it remains faithful to its stated aims and to the ethos of the school. Modules and learning experiences are reviewed regularly to ensure coherence, balance and alignment with the distinctive purpose of Transition Year. Ongoing communication with teachers, tutors, guidance and pastoral staff supports a consistent and holistic approach to student development, reflecting the school's commitment to *cura personalis*.

TEAM MEMBERS

TY Coordinator & Academic Year Head	Mr. Liam McGovern
Coordinator of Work Experience and Social Placements	Mr. Noel Murray
Lower Line Prefect	Mr. Michael Boyd
Syntax Prefect	Mr. Joe Curran
Assistant Lower Line Prefect	Mr. Connor Gunn
Coordinator of GAISCE Awards	Ms. Patricia Frampton
Director of Ethos	Ms. Elisabeth Clarke
Guidance Counsellor	Ms. Maria Shaw
Coordinator of French Exchanges	Mr. Francis Marron
Coordinator of German Exchanges	Ms. Irene O'Rourke
Coordinator of Spanish Exchanges	Mr. Gerardo Leon Moguer
Coordinator of the Social Outreach Programme	Ms. Elisabeth Clarke
Coordinator of Age Action	Mr. Francis Marron
Coordinator of Learning Support	Ms. Patricia Frampton

TIMETABLED PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The proposed weekly structure comprises 27 classes of 60 minute duration and 3 classes of 40 minute duration. All TY Subject Descriptors are accessible as links below and are modelled on the language of the Development Indicators and Student Experiences that are outlined in the DoE TY Programme Statement. SPHE and TY Reflection Meeting were two notable additions to the structure of the programme this year.

Subject	Number of Classes Per Week
English & Literacy	2 & 1
Irish & Cultural Studies/Athletic Development/EAL	3
French/German/Spanish	3
Maths & Numeracy (rotation)	2 & 1
Science (Biology, Sustainability, Chemistry, Physics)	3
Religion	2
PE	1
SPHE	1
Career Education	1
Finance	1
Module 1: (Latin, Ag Science, Geography, History, Music)	2 Students taking Latin do so for the year, the other 3 subjects for one third of the year each.
Module 2: (Art, Computing, Film Studies, Health Education)	2 Students taking Art do so for the year, the other 3 subjects for one third of the year each.
Module 3: (Creativity, Drama, Logic, Development Education)	2 Students taking Drama do so for the year, the other 3 subjects for one third of the year each..
Social Outreach/Age Action	2 Students take each subject for a half of the year each.
TY Reflection Meeting	1

The extensive list of trips, placements, visiting speakers and important dates are available on the [Syntax Calendar](#).

The list of **Subjects and Modules** on Clongowes' curriculum is available [here](#).

ASSESSMENT, REPORTING & CERTIFICATION

It is school policy:

- That assessment in TY will adhere to the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL)
- To encourage staff to be flexible in assessments and in facilitating the demands and overall aims of the programme.
- That TY be learning-led rather than exam-led.
- To use a variety of methods of assessment including oral, aural, and written exams, project work, unit work, continuous assessment, an online portfolio, as well as an end of year interview.
- To provide certification which will be school-based.
- To have a living, breathing portfolio that charts students progression throughout the year

Students are assessed in a variety of ways during TY.

These include:

- Headmaster's Reports for diligence in all subjects and attainment in some as outlined in the school calendar.
- Formal Examinations in Core subjects at Christmas and Summer.
- Written reports on TY Activities, Work Experience & Social Placements are reviewed by the TY team throughout the year.
- Presentation of their individual Web-based Portfolio.
- End of year interview.

CAREER EXPLORATION IN CLONGOWES IN TRANSITION YEAR

Career exploration is a central component of the Transition Year programme in Clongowes Wood College and is designed to support students in developing informed, reflective and realistic understandings of future pathways. Through structured guidance input, work experience placements, guest speakers, workshops and opportunities for reflection, students are encouraged to explore a wide range of careers and life choices. This process supports students in identifying personal strengths and interests, developing transferable skills and making thoughtful subject and career decisions as they prepare for Senior Cycle and beyond.

Please read our policy on work experience before confirming placements. The policy can be found [here](#). This should also be read in conjunction with Clongowes' [World of Work](#) framework.

EVALUATION OF TY IN CLONGOWES WOOD COLLEGE

It is school policy to ensure ongoing review of the TY programme with a view to improving all aspects over time.

The TY Core Team engages in both reflecting back - considering what worked well and what did not work well in each Curriculum Dimension as well as reflecting forward - planning how to build on successes and learn from shortcomings in each Curriculum Dimension.

With the introduction of the new programme statement, it is hoped that we will engage parents in an evaluation at the end of the 25/26 year also.

The TY Coordinator in conjunction with teachers, students and management regularly evaluate the efficacy of the Transition Year modules, subjects, activities and events and discuss any necessary changes. The formal interviews of students at the end of the year often give excellent anecdotal information that the TY team can reflect on. At the end of each year the TY Core team meets to discuss any recommendations or changes that may be appropriate for the following year. This meeting incorporates the views of students, wider staff and the TY team and change occurs on the back of considered reflection with the TY Coordinator and the Senior Management Team. Evidence from student feedback, teacher reflection and programme evaluation informs ongoing planning and ensures consistent quality of provision across the programme.

STUDENT VOICE AND LEARNER ENGAGEMENT WITH TY PROGRAMME

Students complete a **written evaluation** of their TY at the end of the year. This is collated and reviewed by the Transition Year Coordinator, the Director of Studies and the Deputy Principal and changes are made where appropriate and practical. At the end of this year, the newly formed TY team will review student and parent feedback to inform planning for the coming year.

Consistent with the TY philosophy of active participation and personal responsibility, student voice is central to the design and ongoing development of the Transition Year programme. Students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences, evaluate modules and activities, and articulate their learning through structured feedback opportunities like the Syntax Student Council and engagement with the TY Coordinator through individual meetings throughout the year. Student feedback is considered carefully by the TY Core Team and informs decisions relating to programme content, balance and delivery. This process ensures that students experience TY as a collaborative and responsive year, where their perspectives are valued and where learning is shaped through dialogue and reflection. In the past, student voice has led us to change modules and introduce cookery and scuba diving as well as students having input on speakers and experiences (Westport trip, ski trip being added after students and staff conversation).

There are significant leadership opportunities for students in TY. Student Council, the Duck Push Committee, Debate Leaders, Educational Buddies during study for Elements are just a few examples of students taking leadership roles within the school.

FINANCES & COSTS

In addition to the normal school fee the following approximate extra charges are foreseen in TY.

Outdoor Ed. Trip	End of September (compulsory)	€340 (TBC)
Skills, Workshops, Visiting Speakers, Buses & Excursions	Sep – May, Billed for in September	€330
Ethos Trip (optional)	April (full payment for flights at time of booking)	€1250
Cookery Course (optional)		€100
Life Saving (optional)		TBC
Yoga Classes (optional)		Free
Ski Trip (optional)	January (payment system with travel company)	€1999
Scuba Diving	Term 1 & 2 if demand is there	€350 (tbc)

Charges for Exchanges (Flights etc.), Orchestra and Rugby trips are not included here.

If in exceptional circumstances parents wish to withdraw their son for Transition Year the following charges apply in order to retain the student's place for Poetry.

50% of the annual school fee is payable in June of Grammar year followed by a non-refundable deposit of the first moiety of Poetry fees in January of Transition Year.

There will be no reduction in fees for students who go on exchange or take a shorter leave of absence during the year.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

- Encourage your son to make the most of the Transition Year programme. It really is a year from which the benefits accrued directly relate to the effort put into it. Keep in touch with what is current.
- Demonstrate as much interest in your child's daily educational activities as you would when he is following a Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate programme.
- If you do not understand the rationale behind any TY activity the school organises, ask the TY Co-ordinator, or any of the support team.
- Familiarise yourself with all the 'extra' and optional opportunities the school plans to provide during the year. Students may only convey what they are interested in to their parents and many valuable opportunities may be overlooked. Sometimes parents only discover what was on offer at the end of the year!

- Acclimatise yourself to having a student who will not necessarily have traditional 'homework'. Transition Year opens doors to 'other ways of learning'. The TY student will tend to have other forms of homework. He may have projects to complete questionnaires and surveys to conduct or oral presentations to prepare. Should your son report that he has little or no work to do, do contact the Academic Year Head.
- Please continue to develop good levels of communication with your son's prefect.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that your son is well motivated and has a positive attitude towards the programme.
- If you have an area of interest e.g. Local Politics or an expertise e.g. Interview skills, or willing to give or organise a talk or workshop consider offering your services to the TY Coordinator at +353 (0)45 838202 or lmcgovern@clongowes.net

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Transition Year?

A one year programme taken after the Junior Certificate and before the Leaving Certificate Programme.

What's the purpose of the Transition Year Programme?

To promote maturity:

- Maturity in studies by making students more self-directed learners through the development of general, technical and academic skills
- Maturity in relation to work and careers by developing work-related skills
- Personal maturity by providing opportunities to develop communication skills, self-confidence and a sense of responsibility
- Social maturity by developing greater 'people' skills and more awareness of the world outside school

Who decides on the Transition Year Programme?

Each school devises its own TY programme. The teaching staff draws up a programme in the light of the Transition Year Guidelines and the Resource Material published by the Department of Education and Science. They also consider students' needs, parents' views, employers and the wider interests of the local community. Each year the programme should be evaluated, with inputs from all these parties, and revised by the teaching staff.

What subjects are studied?

This varies from school to school but in every school students follow a timetable as they do in other years. Most programmes work towards getting a balance between some continuation of essential core subjects, 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 promoting the maturity that is central to the whole Transition Year ideal.

Even if all these programmes are different, surely there are some features common to the programme in a lot of schools?

Many schools offer modules, short courses on particular topics. Most schools offer a work experience programme. Mini-enterprise, where students set up and operate a real business, is a popular way of learning. The use of visiting speakers as well as trips beyond the classroom is a feature of many programmes. Project work, where students undertake independent research, usually more extensive than traditional 'homework', is also common to many programmes.

What about exams?

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. The emphasis is on varied and on-going assessment with students themselves becoming involved in diagnosing their own learning strengths and weaknesses. Project work, portfolio work and exhibitions of students' work are also encouraged. Each individual school makes its own arrangements for reporting to parents and for the certifications of students who complete a TY programme.

Can the Transition Year be part of a three-year Leaving Certificate programme?

The Transition Year programme is a school-designed, distinctive programme and should not constitute year one of a three-year Leaving Certificate. TY is part of the Senior Cycle experience and lays a solid foundation for Leaving Certificate studies. TY programmes should challenge students intellectually, give them an orientation to the world of work and cater for the development of their personal and social awareness. The exploration of any Leaving Certificate material should be in a way that is original and stimulating and significantly different from the approach taken during a two-year Leaving Certificate programme.

Is Transition Year available to all students?

TY is compulsory for all students in Clongowes.

Is Transition Year suited to all students?

With its emphasis on development and maturity, all young people can benefit from the programme. Transition Year, in particular, can allow for the development of an individual's multiple intelligences-linguistic, logico-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist. The Transition Year programme can also develop key skills for the 21st century such as the three Ts: thinking, teamwork and technology.

How are parents involved?

Parents' understanding of and support for student learning in TY is a key factor in a successful Transition Year experience. Some parents make their particular expertise available to the school during the TYP. Parents should encourage their sons and daughters to avail of the numerous opportunities offered by this unique programme.

PAST PARENT TESTIMONIALS

'From a parents perspective TY has been a fantastic opportunity for Tom! He really made the most of it. In his particular case, having dedicated time to explore potential career opportunities was the clincher. He is quite driven, so he jumped into work experience and sporting opportunities that interested him and was able to delve deeper into what they had to

offer. He also did a few weeks of voluntary work (the 7am shift!) at a local animal shelter and was exposed to other work experience related opportunities in finance & risk management some of which he decided were less suited to him. The extracurricular activities provided by the school such as skiing, forthcoming Camino & the trip to Eclipse Island served to provide him the opportunity to bond with his mates outside the formal school setting and these are a nice addition to the overall TY experience. That said, we were very proactive in setting up opportunities for him in advance, and our view is that some parental involvement is a must.'

'From a parents perspective all you want is for your son to enjoy a year and really try new things. Dara has loved TY , he comments all the time about how much he enjoyed and is enjoying the year.

Dara has gotten to do work experience and try different businesses and one of the reasons I love this is that at 15 the pressure on kids to know what they want to be , when they have never been anything but a student is immense. TY work experience is really good at signalling what you may want to do but equally what you don't want to do.

Dara has gotten to travel and make new friends through TY and his experience has been top class. He really loved it. Sporting wise Dara got to take a year out from rugby , although he played he didn't take it as seriously as he previously had, this allowed him also to pursue basketball which he loves. This I know he is also grateful for as basketball is now his game of choice.

While Dara has decided over the course of the year what he wants to study in 3rd level, the experiences, the travel , meeting new people , talking to peers from other schools and work experience have helped him enormously to shape his thinking.'

After making the decision to send our son to Clongowes Wood College we have to say that we are delighted with the decision we made. From day one the correspondence with the school staff has been excellent. We had concerns like, would our son fit into TY coming from schooling abroad, would he make friends, could he manage the boarding life? These were all positively answered and more. He has made some great friends, embraced new academic subjects and seems to be organised and managing his time well. He quickly got up to speed with the routine, the laundry bags were an early challenge but he managed! The TY team have been very supportive and always on hand when we needed them. Academically he is doing very well. In TY the boys are given the opportunity to take different subjects which broadens their options for the Leaving Cert subject choices. After each term so far we have received his school report which allows us to see his grades and his efforts. There is a strong focus on career guidance and our son is meeting regularly with the career guidance teacher which is helping him to understand his third level education options. The school also offers many extra curricular programmes including sports, music, choir, diving, first aid, cooking, trips away which all help to develop comradery, confidence and character. We would highly recommend Clongowes to anyone thinking of sending their son to boarding school in Ireland.'

APPENDICES

[European Exchange Guidelines](#)

[The Duck Push](#)

[Integrity of the TY Programme](#)