

**ST DAVID'S HOLY FAITH SECONDARY SCHOOL,  
GREYSTONES, CO. WICKLOW**

**TRANSITION YEAR POLICY**

This Transition Year Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

Monday, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2022

## **Mission statement**

St David's Holy Faith Secondary School is a Catholic school and part of the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust. Our legacy stems from the Holy Faith Sisters, whose founder, Margaret Aylward, profoundly appreciated the gift of Faith, had an active commitment to those on the margins of society and who was convinced about the importance of education as a transformative tool for individuals and for society.

The overall mission of Transition Year is "to promote the personal, social, educational academic development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society".

Transition Year is one year programme which provides a bridge to enable students make the transition from Junior to Senior Cycle. It is available to students who have completed their Junior Certificate. St. David's Transition Year is offered on an optional basis, and we are proud that an average of 96%-98% of Third Year students complete Transition Year.

## **Objectives of Transition Year**

- To enable students to broaden their horizon and sample new subjects
- To help students become more well-rounded individuals and to promote their holistic development, through immersion with all programmes, workshops and activities.
- To sample careers and charitable work, through activities through the four one week work experiences
- To allow students to participate in learning strategies which are active and experiential and which help them to develop a range of critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills.
- To develop a sense of social awareness of selflessness and develop further their social conscience
- To develop entrepreneurial skills
- To promote academic and technical skills with an emphasis on self-directed learning and goal setting
- To provide an opportunity for students to reflect on, and develop and awareness of, the value of education and training in preparing them for the ever-changing demands of the adult world of work and relationships.
- To consolidate the work completed in Junior Cycle. This will help the students make more informed choice of subjects for Senior Cycle. This, in turn, will lay the foundation for improved performance in the Leaving Certificate. This foundation can also be a solid base for a more mature and consistent approach to Third Level studies.
- To empower students to be active leaders in the school and for the future
- To enhance collaborative and group work experiences and skills

We consider the benefits to be many and varied. It can help students discover more about their personal strengths. It can help develop maturity and foster self-confidence. It encourages students to build interpersonal and team skills. Above all it helps improve the students' self-esteem.

Students are placed in different base classes at the start of the academic year of Transition Year where they remain for the whole year. St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School, Greystones does not entertain any requests for students to be placed in a class with their friends. Parents, guardians and students will be directed to this policy should any requests be made.

## **Curriculum principles**

**The Transition Year programme is comprised of four layers:**

### ***1. Core Subjects***

Maths, Irish, English, RE, History, Geography, PE, Science Subjects, Business Subjects

### ***2. Subject Sampling***

This involves sampling subjects with a view to making well-informed choices about Leaving Certificate subjects. The following subjects are included but always subject to review: Public Speaking, Media Studies, Spanish Language and Culture, Media Studies, French, Chinese, Leadership Skills, Psychology, and Philosophy.

### ***3. TY specific layer***

This refers to modules which are increasingly becoming identified with TY often inter-disciplinary in character.

Mental Health Matter

YSI

Psychology etc.

Yoga

Leadership

Matrix,

Fitness and personal development

Film-making

Music creativity

### ***4. Calendar Layer***

This section includes once-off items such as work experience, placements, visiting speakers, outdoor pursuits, social outreach, field trips. Full details will be outlined in Transition Year Brochure 2022-2023.

## Teaching and Learning

A key feature of the Transition Year Programme is the wide range of teaching and learning methods used.

Some of these methods include:

- Activity-based learning
- Group work – discussion, debates, interviews, role plays
- Project work and research
- Visiting speakers and seminars
- Study visits and field trips
- Personal responsibility in learning
- Work experience and community service
- Exchange programmes – Spain and France (Covid-19 dependent)
- International trip – Continental Europe (Covid-19 dependent)
- Computer based learning
- Oral presentations
- Demonstrations

## Assessment

- Summative
- Written
- Oral
- Report of Work Experience
- Projects, portfolios, exhibition of work
- Pupil diary/log book to record personal progress;
- Rating scales, record of skills and competence attained.
- Individual and Group presentations on specific topics
- There are two large assessments for Transition Year students in January and May each year in English, Gaeilge, and Mathematics. These classes are streamed in Transition Year.

## Organisation

### ***At whole school level***

The Principal, Deputy Principal and school management team positively involve the entire staff in the TY programme as part of the total curriculum. The school liaises with the educational partners in their involvement within and outside of the school's TY programme.

### ***Coordination and Team work***

All members of the TY team are committed to the philosophy, aims and successful implementation of the Transition Year programme. The Transition Year Co-ordinator, Laura Courtney is responsible for running the programme and Morgan Ryan is the Year Head who has a pastoral and disciplinary role in relation to the Transition Year students and collaborates closely with the Co-ordinator. They are assisted by a core group of teachers. These teachers are drawn from diverse areas of the curriculum. Co-ordinator liaises with the Principal, school management, parents, community agencies and the non-Transition year members of the staff keeping them fully informed of developments.

### ***Planning***

- Communication and collaboration with all the educational partners.
- Links and partnerships with the local community and businesses.
- Links with the local primary schools.
- Meetings with parents.
- Clarification of the philosophy and expectations of the year.
- Involvement of the students in planning.
- Available resources and use of same.
- Balance, flexibility and perspective.
- Collaboration between different subject departments in the development of modules.

### **Work Experience**

St David's Holy Faith Secondary School requires that every pupil obtain school-approved unpaid work experience for three separate weeks and one week of community care/voluntary work during the school year: November, February, March/April and May. If students wish to take part in additional work experience this needs pre-approval from the school with a minimum two week notice period, which must be emailed to the Transition Year Coordinator.

#### **Work Experience aims:**

- To experience the nature and realities of working life.
- To identify skills and abilities required for particular jobs.
- To achieve a realistic knowledge of their own interests, ability and social skills.
- To achieve a knowledge and understanding of a job application and selection.

#### **Community Care aims:**

- To give the students a greater understanding of volunteering.
- To allow students to assist people who are possibly less fortunate than themselves.
- To enable students to give of their time to help others.

## **Certification**

The TY programme is not certified nationally by the Department of Education. However, the school provides a certificate of achievement and conducts its own graduation ceremony in May to celebrate the achievement of all the students. One student is voted by staff as 'Spirit of Transition Year' recipient at this event.

## **Application Process**

All Third Year students will be issued with a Transition Year Pack, in January of Third Year. Selection criteria are stipulated to the students in communications issued verbally and in written form, and also contained in the TY handbook. In order to be able to apply to do the Transition Year programme, the following are the criteria for the allocation of places:

- Students who have shown themselves to have reached a sufficient level of maturity to benefit from Transition Year and who are likely to make a positive contribution to Transition Year. Students who have been involved in extra-curricular activities and who have contributed positively to school life will be favoured.
- A student's personal motivation in applying will be considered.
- A student's record of work, behaviour and co-operation with the school will be considered.
- A student's motivation during their Junior Certificate years will be considered.
- A student's attendance, dependability and punctuality will be considered.
- A student who has been suspended in Second and/or Third Year in St David's Holy Faith Secondary School, or any other school, will have this factored into any decision taken by the Principal, Deputy Principal and Third Year Head (of year of application)

Once these criteria are fulfilled, then the student is issued with an application form from the school to be able to participate in the programme.

## **Parent/Guardian Information Meeting**

This meeting takes place in the first Tuesday of February each year. For Transition Year 2022-2023, this is Tuesday, 1 February 2022.

## **Fee for Transition Year**

The fee is €600 (this includes the annual charges fee).

This can be paid in instalments:

- (i) Two instalments of €300 each
- (ii) Four instalments of €150 each.

This fee is non-refundable for offers made, and payment or part payment made. If an application is made, and the decision is then not to offer a place, the fee will be refunded.

All Transition Year fees must be paid to St. David's in full by the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 with a recommendation that it be reviewed every three years or earlier if legislative or other factors suggest the need for a review.