

Transition Year

AN OUTLINE OF THE ANNUAL PLAN FOR TRANSITION YEAR ROCKBROOK PARK SCHOOL 2009/10

What we wish to achieve



“The effectiveness of Transition Year for any student strongly depends on the goodwill, interest and enthusiasm which the student brings to it.”

Outline timetable for longer events

10/11 September:
overnight hike trip

16 October: Belfast cross community trip

16-20 November:
Work experience week

11-19 February:
Mid-term trip tbd

8-12 March: Work experience or Community Service week

26 April – 28 May
Opportunity to study abroad

27 May—Awards Day

Transition Year is a one-year bridging programme which enables students completing the Junior Cycle to approach the Senior Cycle with a greater degree of confidence and maturity. The school puts considerable time and effort into delivering an interesting programme, which will vary from year to year. However, its effectiveness depends on the goodwill, interest and enthusiasm which the students bring to it. For students who recognise the challenge, the impact of the year is soon noticeable. For others, the maturing process does take place but may not always be immediately recognisable. For the few, the opportunity can be devalued by their lack of motivation. In Rockbrook all third year students may apply and they are accepted partly on the basis of an interview and consultation

with parents. Rockbrook wishes that those doing Transition Year enter into the year with a proper spirit, and with a keenness to make it work for them. It is not a whiling away of time, nor an opportunity to take a year out. It is not a homework-free year. It is not a year where students opt to attend or not attend at school. We need parents to fully support us in this approach, including when sanctions may be imposed on students if appropriate work is not presented.

The Transition Year programme content for 2009/10 is outlined in this booklet. The programme is subject to change. Most outings or project oriented work will take place on Fridays, with all class work taking place from Monday to Thursday each week. Community service opportu-

nities will be available on Monday and Thursday towards the end of the school day, and students are expected to make sacrifices to fulfil such obligations. Having a project oriented day each week can cause logistical problems. However, Friday is not a day off for students, and parents should not allow themselves to be misled in this regard. If it turns out on any occasion to be a day off, then advance warning will be given. In Transition Year all students generally undertake to do everything, and it is expected that they do not opt out of any classes or events.

Basic expectations

Students are expected to fully respect school rules regarding dress, haircuts, deportment etc. Non-uniform days will be signalled in advance by the Year Coordinator. Students are expected to attend and help with activities outside of normal school hours. A plan for these activities will be provided to each student in advance. Students are expected to hand in homework and projects on time. Students are required to present

to the Year Coordinator one major project each month for inclusion in their end-of-year portfolio.

Students are expected to participate in all aspects of the year, and not miss school unnecessarily.

Students are required to undertake one special group project which may last for one term. Failure to reach these expectations or a poor approach to the subject/class element of the programme may lead to students

being barred from important outings and trips. Places on full-day or overnight trips will be reserved for those students who are reaching their targets.

Students must sign a contract accepting these terms.

The school reserves the right during September and October to ask any student with ongoing difficulties or who is not approaching the year with the right spirit to move on to 5th Year.

Summary of TY programme content

Subjects: The purpose is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to widen interests. There is a necessary emphasis on project work and on group work, leading to more self-directed learning. Everyone will have 4 classes weekly in Irish, English Maths. Some other subjects are in modular basis (e.g. for a half-year). Where books are prescribed students are asked to have these by the beginning of term. Teachers will seek to prescribe books which will have a use beyond the year, or which can be sold on to the following transition year, if not needed in 5th year. Technical graphics & Chemistry books may be rented from the school.

Students will also have a Careers class and get ongoing advice regarding subject choices for the Leaving certificate. Apti-

tude tests are also conducted early in Transition Year with both students and parents receiving feedback on the outcome.

Additional courses: A wide range of these courses extend the learning experience beyond the classroom, help students discover their personal strengths, promote inter-disciplinary learning and lead to increased motivation.

These include: *European Computer Driving Licence* programme, leading to certificate; *Television & radio course*, leading to the production of video; *First Aid Course* leading to certificate; *Driving Instruction course* and a *Basic cooking skills course*.

Calendar 'out-of-school' events include:

Two weeks of work experience during November and March; Nine days abroad in February mid-term; Regular hikes, field-trips; Cross-border community trip; Class retreat (during Lent); Cultural visits (historical, sporting); Regular guest speakers (mental health, drugs & nutrition advice, road safety, careers advice in law, business, engineering; speakers on topical issues).

With a good emphasis being placed on hill-walking and outdoor pursuits, we recommend that students get themselves useful gear for walking (particularly rain wear & boots): advice will be given as the year begins.

On page 3 & 4 this programme is outlined in more detail.

Transition Year costs

" APTITUDE TESTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR TOGETHER WITH CAREER CLASSES HELP STUDENTS TO THINK ABOUT THEIR FUTURE POSSIBILITIES"

There is an additional charge to cover direct costs associated with the delivery of externally provided modular courses, which will be levied at the time of the annual school fees. This additional fee is €540 for 2009/10. This fee includes some costs for the overnight adventure trip at the beginning of the first term. It also covers the

external delivery costs for ECDL exam fees, TV/Video course, Radio Course, Karate, First Aid course, Driving Instruction, Cookery, as well as miscellaneous transport costs.

Some costs associated with other calendar 'out-of-school' events (e.g. theatre visits, Belfast trip, class retreat) will be levied as these events arise. We seek to organise a wide range of relatively low-cost activities rather than a more limited high-cost programme. This can help students be more conscious of the value of money. Events are spaced over the year, allowing students to put aside pocket money to pay for these as required.

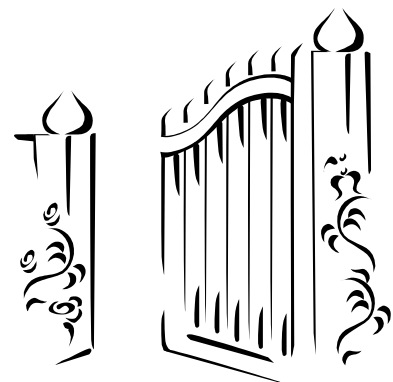
The mid-term trip abroad in February 2010 is not compulsory, but it is expected that students will wish to participate. Participation is conditional on a student's positive contribution to the year. The early estimated cost is €800, but a lot will depend on flight fare costs. Students should seek to pay for the trip in stages. Full details on this trip will be provided in the autumn.



Is there something else you would really like to do this year?

Have you thought about spending a few weeks abroad in France or Spain? Is there an area of study where you would like to dedicate some time? Is there a local history project or a business opportunity or a Young Scientist project you would like to get stuck into? Is there a workplace opportunity which might help shape your future career choice? Have you a placement in a third-level college for a week or

two? Have you a project in mind which could really be of help to your school? During the second half of Transition Year, students with worthwhile individual or group projects that they wish to pursue are encouraged to do so—provided that they are generally up to date with their work. Once approval is received and a plan agreed, students just report back to the school on a regular basis.



There is a broad academic programme in place...

Core subjects throughout the year

Irish *Four classes weekly*

The aim is to develop oral and aural skills and to achieve a higher fluency of the language. The programme includes History of the Irish language/ Irish Music/ Irish dancing/ Irish storytelling.

English *Four classes per week*

The aims of the course are to broaden the scope of reading, to expand and develop vocabulary, to keep up personal writing and to ensure exposure to wide variety of texts. Apart from general preparation for the Leaving Certificate, students will be required to write essays and to read one book per term outside of class.

Maths *Four classes per week*

The aim of this course is to guide pupils towards increased confidence and attainment of a more balanced view of their potential for the subject. At the end of the year students will have a better understanding of the wide use of maths in everyday life, and the ability to create maths. They will be better able to cope with the Leaving Certificate course based on introductory lessons on new topics.

Spanish *Three classes throughout the year*

The aims are to consolidate and build on the language competencies achieved, to give an appreciation of the richness, uniqueness and diversity of Spain and Spanish culture and lack strong foundations for the Leaving Cert course.

Religious Knowledge *2 classes weekly*

The purpose of RK in the school is to educate students so that they can understand their Catholic faith and may live it throughout their lives. The focus this year is on science and religion, the development of religion and on love as the basic tenet of Christian practice. The Community Service project will be tied in with RK. Students will also be asked to undertake a major project. Students will also have the

opportunity of attending Mass weekly.

Social & Personal Ed. *1 class weekly*

A range of subjects covering topical concerns of young people will be covered with a view to encouraging a life well lived. These include: social responsibility; value of life at all stages; importance of marriage and sexual responsibility; nutrition; social aspects of substance abuse; responding to bullying; mental health issues. A fully Christian view of the person will form the intellectual basis of this programme.

Biology *2 periods weekly*

The aim is to promote an interest in Biology and furnish solid background information for the Leaving Cert.

E.C.D.L. *Two classes weekly during year*

Each student will study seven computer modules at six hours per module, with a view to achieving the European Computer Driving Licence certificate in computer proficiency. An examination will be set after the completion of each module.

Modular courses

1st semester to mid-January;

2nd semester to June

History *Two periods weekly, 1st semester*

The course will deal with aspects of American History. The aim is to help develop a social and cultural understanding of the social history of the Wild West and post-war development in America.

Speech & Drama *twice weekly*

The aim is to help and encourage all students to learn the basic skills of Public Speaking. The objective is to have a theatre outing for all each term and for some to take part in school debates with other schools and in inter-school competitions.

Geography *Two classes weekly, first term*

An introduction to geography at senior level, giving a firm understanding of what is required for the future.

Business *2 periods per week, 1st semester*

The aim of this module is to help students appreciate all aspects of the setting up of a new business venture, including all department operations. Each student will be required to complete a business plan for a new business, including a marketing plan, promotional plan, and project cash flow.

Physics *2 periods per week, 1st semester*

An introduction to the challenging concepts on the senior syllabus, giving a taster of different ideas and laws of the universe.

Accounting *2 periods weekly 2nd semester*

The aim of this modular course is to build on basic accounting skills acquired already and to give a taster of the Leaving Cert course.

Technical Graphics *2 periods weekly, 2nd semester*

The aim of this modular course is to encourage an interest in sketching, drawing and 3D thinking. It will help students to realise the importance of diagrams for conveying ideas and to see Tech. Graphics as the language of engineers, designers and architects.

Art *Up to two classes weekly, 2nd semester*

The aim is to study a number of artists and to complete competency in figurative and still life drawing. All students will make and complete presentations on artists as well as achieving greater competency in drawing.

Photography *Twice weekly, 2nd semester*

The aim is to introduce students to the art of photography through practical and theoretical engagements.

Development Education *up to two classes weekly, 2nd semester*

This module seeks to provide students with a better understanding of global citizenship and development using media images and associated text. Students will have the opportunity to apply research, presentation, media literacy and ICT skills.

contd on page 4.

Sporting, outdoor and many practical skills also developed...

Chemistry *2 classes weekly second semester*

The aim is to promote an interest in Chemistry and furnish background information for the Leaving Certificate. The emphasis will be primarily on practical work.

Politics *One class occasional*

The aim of this module is to give students a good understanding of how politics operates through visits and practical experience. Visits to places of political interest will be included as well as discussions on US and EU matters.

Career Guidance *One class weekly during the year*

As a preparation for Senior Cycle, students will undergo a series of tests (both interest and aptitude). They will then receive feedback both general and individual. It is hoped this will help students in their choice of subjects for senior level and beyond.

Sporting & Outdoor activity

Sports : one day outings

The aim of these local outings is to familiarise young people with the joys of the outdoor; to improve physical fitness; to instruct them in map reading skills and to afford students an opportunity to involve themselves in the safe planning of hikes (correct equipment / first aid / safe routes).



Sports / Physical Education

Two periods weekly throughout the year

In the first term the emphasis will be

on developing general fitness through regular exercises, cross-country running and soccer training / games.

In the second term there will be an emphasis on indoor work and drills and on life saving techniques. The final term will include some orienteering, sports preparation as well as involving students in the organisation of the Schools Sports Day. All students are expected to participate in sporting activities.

Sports: Self Defence – Karate

Five one-hour sessions (as a module) off site

To develop the basic skill of this ancient art through an understanding of its history and tradition, and to increase levels of fitness.

World of work

Work Experience & Community Service

Each student is required to do *two single weeks* of placement in a work environment. First term 16th—20th November; Second term 8th—12th March.

The objectives are to develop the skills needed to find a placement, improve self-confidence, develop personal organisation and interpersonal skills as well as personal initiative.

Alternatively for the second week, instead of work experience, a student may do voluntary work in the local community – this may be helping out in the local primary school, hospital, youth centre, retirement home etc. Ideally they should seek and find the placement for themselves.

Additional modular courses

First Aid Course (2 days)

Provided by St John's Ambulance leading to a basic certificate in First Aid.

TV & Radio Course (2 days)

Provided by Kairos: experiencing the skills needed in radio and television production.

Driving Instruction Course (on site)

A one day course with practical experience on basic driving instruction helping to identify and correct typical errors made by young drivers.

Cookery skills & Gardening skills

Two half-day sessions on basic skills for the modern man.

Cross-border / Belfast community trip (1 day)

Visit to Belfast and meeting with community people on both sides. Cultural visits.

Class retreat (1 day)

A day spiritual retreat in Lismullin Conference Centre, Tara during Lent.

Learning a language abroad

For the last month of Transition year some students may go to study in a Spanish school. This total immersion experience can be done on an exchange basis, thus reducing the cost for the student. It is envisaged that students would return from abroad for the last week of the school year.

Decisions on suitability of students for such exchanges will be made around December.

Other occasional and once-off activities during the year

Night hike, Dundalk/ Carlingford day trip, ice skating, paintballing
Cultural visits: Dublin Castle, Kilmainham Gaol, Book of Kells, Newgrange, Wicklow Gaol.

Fundraising Activity Days for African Solidarity Project, St Vincent de Paul & Happy Heart Foundation.

Do something for 1st Year day; Garda Road Safety day; Sports Day preparation; Clann Days, School Introduction day assistance. Secretaries to all school clubs will come from the TY class. Also aside from individual project and portfolio work, everyone undertakes to contribute to the Transition Year diary.

It is also hoped that some students will take responsibility for the Rockbrook Year Book.