



Errigal College Letterkenny

Transition Year Policy *November 2024*

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Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement:

To enable each student to achieve his/her educational potential, in partnership with parents, based on the principles of caring, dignity, mutual respect and equality.

We are an ETB school, state, co-educational and multi-denominational, underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect



1. What is the Transition Year programme?

Transition Year (also called TY) is an optional one-year programme between Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle. Transition Year is part of a three year Senior Cycle, but it is separate to the Leaving Certificate programme which lasts two years.

The TY programme at Errigal College aligns with the Department of Education's updated statement on Transition Year and seeks to offer a unique, student-centred educational experience.

The TY programme aims to foster personal, social, and academic growth while encouraging independence, self-directed learning, and creativity in a non-exam-driven environment. This policy reflects the department's renewed focus on holistic education and the development of life skills as a central pillar of the Transition Year experience.

2. Vision of TY

The vision for the TY programme at Errigal College is to support students in their personal and academic development through experiential learning, while also nurturing their wellbeing, resilience, and sense of responsibility. The programme aims to bridge the gap between the junior and senior cycles, helping students make informed subject choices and career decisions while exploring new areas of interest.

Transition Year offers students an opportunity to:

- Engage in independent, self-directed learning
- Develop general, technical and academic skills
- Develop work-related skills
- Develop social skills such as communication and building self-confidence

3. Aims of TY

Aims of the TY programme:

- nurture the development of the student as a whole person by building on their previous experiences, through a curriculum designed by the school that is aligned to the TY Programme Statement.
- 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.

4. Structure of the Programme

The TY programme at Errigal College is a comprehensive, year long curriculum designed to balance core academics with modular courses and a range of extracurricular activities, giving students a broad educational experience.

TY Programme Structure at Errigal College

1. Core Subjects

The following subjects are taught consistently throughout the year, ensuring continuity and depth in key areas. Students remain in the same class groups for these subjects:

- English
- Irish Cultural Studies
- Mathematics
- Science

- Physical Education (PE)
- Work Experience
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Enterprise
- Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE)
- Coding

2. Rotating (Modular) Subjects

To provide variety and broaden students' exposure to different disciplines, each form class rotates through these subject blocks, spending 10-11 weeks on each. This structure ensures that all students experience each subject area throughout the year.

Modular Subject Blocks:

- **Creative Arts:** Music, Art, Drama
- **Social Studies:** European Studies, Geography, History
- **Practical Skills:** Construction, Engineering, Spanish
- **Life Skills:** Cookery, Life Skills, Community Involvement

This structure allows students to engage with a wide range of subjects, promoting personal growth, practical skill development, and academic exploration in a flexible and engaging environment.

TY Activities*

- Drivers Education
- Street Law
- Drama Workshops
- First Aid
- Subject Related Projects/Competitions
- Educational visits/trips
- Green Schools
- Charity Fundraising
- Driving Campus
- Drumming Workshop
- Musical/Alternative/Variety Show
- Gaisce
- Film Making/Song School/Rap Workshop

TY Competitions*

TY students participate in a wide range of competitions, offering them unique opportunities to develop skills, showcase talents, and engage in healthy competition

Competitions include:

- Scifest, Mini Company, Build a Bank, Donegal Schools Drama Festival, TY All Ireland Drama Competition, Junk Kouture

*These lists are not exhaustive and may change from year to year.

5. Assessment

Assessment in TY is non-exam focused, encouraging self-reflection and personal progress. Students are required to sit Christmas and Summer exams in core subjects - English, Maths and Irish.

Students will be assessed in all other subjects through a combination of the following:

- **Project work:** Group and individual projects, reflecting research, teamwork, and creativity.
- **Portfolio:** A digital portfolio of work documenting students' experiences, including work experience, community involvement, and personal development.
- **Teacher Feedback:** Ongoing formative assessments by teachers will provide students with constructive feedback on their work.

6. Work Experience

Work experience is a core part of TY. It aims to bring new kinds of learning opportunities to students by experiencing working life. It also helps students get some work experience for their CV, which is useful when looking for jobs in the future.

At Errigal College, TY students participate in work experience placements on the designated work placement day throughout the academic year, gaining valuable hands-on experience and practical insights into various careers.

Students must be in school with good attendance to avail of the work experience insurance that Errigal College provides.

7. Student Participation and Expectations

Participation in TY at Errigal College is an optional year for students. Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to review the programme and consider its benefits.

Students are expected to:

- Actively participate in all elements of the TY programme.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude, initiative, and a willingness to take responsibility for their learning.
- Engage with the school, community, and work experience placements responsibly and respectfully.
- Reflect on their personal development through regular self-assessment and feedback sessions.

8. Wellbeing and Inclusion

In keeping with the Department of Education's emphasis on student wellbeing, Errigal College prioritises mental, emotional, and physical health throughout the TY programme. Support systems, including pastoral care and guidance counselling, are in place to assist students during their TY journey. All students, regardless of ability or background, are encouraged to participate in a programme that is inclusive, adaptable, and designed to meet the diverse needs of our student population.

9. Partnerships and Community Involvement

Errigal College is committed to fostering partnerships with local businesses, organisations, and the wider community. Through these partnerships, the TY programme offers work experience, community service opportunities, and external expertise, which enriches the learning environment. We also collaborate with parents and guardians to support students' holistic development and future planning.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programme

The TY programme at Errigal College will be continuously monitored and evaluated to ensure it meets the goals set by the Department of Education and the school community. Feedback will be gathered from students, parents, staff, and external partners to inform ongoing improvements.

11. Policy Review

A formal review of the TY programme will take place annually, and this policy will be updated accordingly to reflect any changes in the Department of Education's guidelines or school-specific developments.

Signed: _____

Donal Coyle

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: _____

Danny McFadden

(Principal)

