**Key Points for Transition Year Programme 2013/2014**

## 1. What’s the purpose of the Transition Year Programme?

To promote maturity:

* Maturity in studies by making students more **self-directed learner**s through the development of general, technical and academic skills
* Maturity in relation to **work and career**s 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
* Maturity that will help the student make a more **informed choice of subject for their Leaving Certificate** studies

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## 2.. 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.

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## 3. 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-company, 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 are features of many programmes. Project work, where students undertake independent research, usually more extensive than traditional ‘homework’, is also common to many programmes.

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## 4. 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 won arrangements for reporting to parents and for the certifications of students who complete a TY programme.

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## 5. 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. Research has shown that students who take TY achieve, on average, higher points in the Leaving Certificate exam; this is perhaps due to the development of their general study skills as well as the skills required for each individual subject.

**6. Assessment**

The Transition Year Guidelines for Schools (Dept. of Education 1994/95) state:

 Appropriate modes of assessment should be chosen to complement the variety of approaches used in implementing the programme and may include the following :

* Summative assessment
* Written , practical, oral and aural assessment
* Report of Work experience
* Projects , Portfolios and exhibitions of Work
* Pupil diary /Log Book recording personal progress
* Records of skills and competencies attained.

   The Evaluation of Transition Year by the Inspectorate (1994/1995) states:

* Inspectors found approaches to assessment varied widely from school to school.In some schools there appeared to be very little extra by way of assessment. This was particularly true of schools where there was not an effective core team in operation.
* The involvement of teachers, parents, work providers and pupils themselves in pupil assessment procedures could be greatly improved upon in many of the schools offering the programme (Recommendation No. 8).

