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St Colman's College,
Castlegar,
Claremorris,
Co. Mayo.

Principal
Mr James Finn

Deputy Principal
Mr. Roy Hession

Transition Year Policy of St. Colman's College

Transition Year is a DES recognised programme which began in St. Colman's in September 1994. The course is designed by the school to lead students to maturity in order to benefit more from Senior Cycle education, to develop independent learning skills and introduce them to the world of work. The programme is skills based and the emphasis is on variety. Every effort is made to introduce the students to areas of ability and expression which develop the individual to reach his potential as an autonomous participative and responsible member of society.

The overall unifying theme of the programme is that of Peace and is addressed with regard to the individual, the family, the peer group, and the community nationally and internationally. The programme has a mixed-ability ethos, which is expressed, in a wide variety of methodologies: (Guest speakers, media presentations, study visits, individual and team research, experimentations, questionnaires, fieldwork, travel, observation etc.)

At the core of the programme are eighteen subject areas including traditional academic and practical subjects with Senior Cycle significance. To this level a variety of modular programmes is added. The outer level of the programme is a further ring of excursions from and incursions into the classroom for educationally sound purposes.

Staff, students and parents evaluate the programme on two occasions during the year. The report of this evaluation is then shared and appropriate action taken. The engine of the programme is the Transition Year team which meets regularly and ensures continued momentum. A personal assessment of students with regard to their work rate, participation and behaviour is sent home at the close of the first term.

At the end of the year the same method decides the grading of the student's in-house certification.

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

St. Colman's College offers Transition Year as an optional one-year programme post Junior Certificate. The aims of the Transition Year Programme reflect those specific to the guidelines published by the Department of Education and Skills, namely:

- Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.
- The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with the emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.
- Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.

2. PROCEDURES

- The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the number of Transition Year classes and the maximum number of pupils accepted into the TY Programme each year bearing in mind:
 - Health & Safety
 - Availability of teacher resources from Department of Education & Skills
 - Department of Education & Skills directives
 - Ability of St. Colman's College to cater for the educational needs of pupils.
- The Board of Management delegates these powers to the Principal who will consult with the TY team and the relevant teaching staff.
- An information evening for Parents and information seminars for students are held in the spring time of the year of entry. The Transition Year Programme is not necessarily suitable for all students.
- Transition Year application forms are supplied by and returned to the Transition Year Coordinator by a stipulated date. Following submission of the 5th Year options the process begins.
- Application forms submitted after the stipulated date will only be considered after all others have been processed and decided upon.
- On acceptance into the programme the choice is final. Application does not, however, guarantee acceptance.
- External applicants fill in the enrolment application form for St. Colman's College as new entrants and such students who meet the criteria can fill out an application form for TY. Priority is however given to students of St. Colman's College who are in their third year in the school at the date of application. Suitability for the programme will be decided based on the admissions criteria.
- The TY Coordinator will consult with members of the Teaching Staff with respect to the TY Applications list and the suitability of candidates for the programme.

- Suitability for the programme will be decided upon at first instance. Where less than three members of staff or management express concerns about a particular student then the student will be deemed suitable for the programme.
- Where the Principal and/or three or more staff/management members express concerns regarding the suitability of an applicant then a committee of no less than three of the staff/management decide upon suitability based on the criteria set out below. The committee may interview the student as part of the assessment of suitability.
- The suitable candidate students will be offered a place on the TY programme in multiples of 24.
- The maximum number of places available in each Transition Year Class in the programme is 24. This number may only be exceeded, in exceptional circumstances, after consultation with and agreement of the teaching staff.
- If the number of suitable applicants exceeds 24 then the Board of Management may decide to limit the provision to one class. Where the number of applicants exceeds 48 then the Board may decide to limit the provision to two classes.
- If after completion of the selection process for suitability there are still excess suitable candidates for the number of classes deemed necessary by the Principal on behalf of the Board of Management then the Principal shall activate a selection process based on the disciplinary record of all candidates. Students shall be allocated points based on the number of detentions and suspensions incurred by all candidates during their first, second and third years. Points shall be allocated as follows:

A first year detention	= 1 point
A second year detention	= 2 points
A third year detention	= 3 points
A Saturday Detention	= 5 points (In first, second or third year)
A suspension	= 15 points (In first, second or third year)

Points for Saturday Detentions and Suspensions will be allocated in addition to the cumulative points for the detentions which led to the Saturday Detention and the Suspension. Where a Suspension or a Saturday Detention was administered as a stand- alone sanction then cumulative points will not be added.

Applicants with the lower number of points will be allocated places first. Where after the completion of this selection process there are a greater number of candidates with the same number of points than places to be filled in the programme then the final places will be filled by the drawing of lots.

- Where a student's application is rejected, either on suitability or because of an excess of applicants for limited places, then the parents/guardians of the student may appeal to the Board of Management within 5 school days of the student and/or his parents/guardians being informed of the decision, by writing to the Secretary of the Board of Management.

- This policy will apply retrospectively for the year 2016-17 and detentions in this year and in earlier years may be counted as part of the selection process.

3. CRITERIA TO BE USED FOR DETERMINATION OF SUITABILITY

The following criteria will help ascertain suitability:

- Level of serious commitment indicated by the student at interview where necessary.
- Reports from Teachers as to the suitability of an applicant.
- The student's compliance with the application requirements and process, including completion of application form, abiding by closing dates etc.
- The student's application to work over Junior Cycle and compliance with teachers instructions both inside and outside class.
- The students' willingness and ability to participate in all elements of the TY Programme both school based and external, inside and outside school hours.
- The student's satisfactory attendance record in school.
- The student's adherence, as a Junior student, to the Code of Conduct of St. Colman's College. (Journal, Report Cards, Detention, Year Heads' reports etc may be considered)
- The assessment of the student's competence and value to be derived from participation in key elements of the TY Programme.
- The positive or negative impact of the applicant student's presence in either programme on other students and on the programmes as a whole.
- In the objective opinion of the Selection Committee what contribution the applicant can make to the TY programme.
- In the objective opinion of the Selection Committee the proven ability of the applicant to work independently, as part of a team and without the necessity for supervision.
- The student's age and/or pastoral needs as communicated by the Year Head, Guidance Counsellor and/or other professionals in the school.
- The student's engagement with the Junior Certificate Curriculum and in particular his engagement with such elements as practicals and project work which require a great deal of personal initiative and involvement.

FAILURE OF A STUDENT TO ADEQUATELY ENGAGE OR PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAMME

A Transition Year student who does not actively participate in or jeopardises the programme may be placed back in the Traditional 5th Year Programme for the current year. As the Department of Education only allows 5th Year students to repeat the year in very exceptional circumstances of medical necessity then that option may not be open to a student ejected from the programme and returned to 5th year. A similar sanction may be given to any student who misses in excess of 10 days during the course of the programme without an official medical certificate. Full attendance during the course of the programme is vital. Students who do not comply in this regard will, at the very least, not receive certification at the end of the year.

Where a student is ejected from Transition Year because of non-participation, non-engagement, disruption, interference with learning and participation of other students, and where that student is placed in a 5th Year Class he may not have access to the full curriculum choices as there may not be available places in all subjects.

Work Experience and Attendance

- Work Experience is a fundamental part of Transition Year and must be engaged with fully. Where a student fails to so engage he may be ejected from the programme and returned to mainstream 5th Year, where he may not have access to his own choice of subjects.
- Attendance is also a fundamental element of Transition Year. Where a student misses in excess of five days then a doctor's note will be required for all absences thereafter. Failure to adequately explain absences thereafter, by for example the provision of a doctor's note, will result in the student being returned to fifth year.

Agreement to School Rules, Code of Behaviour and TY Contract of Learning

It is a condition of enrolment in the TY programme that both pupil and parent(s)/guardian(s) give their consent in writing to the School Rules & Code of Behaviour in addition to the TY Contract of Learning (see attached) by 31st May preceding entry. Please note that failure to sign this Contract does not exonerate a student and his parents/guardians from the rules and obligations set by this policy as participation in the programme denotes acceptance of these rules and obligations.

Transition Year Contract of Learning

Transition Year will help you make the transfer from Junior Cycle to Leaving Certificate. It offers you a unique opportunity to develop in a number of important areas:

<i>Personal</i>	To help you develop your personality and character towards a more positive and confident self-image.
<i>Study/Work</i>	To develop independent work and study habits appropriate to the Senior Cycle.
<i>Career</i>	To become familiar with workplaces outside school and possible career paths.

<i>Social</i>	To become more informed about society and more skilled at dealing with people.
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This school has high expectations of you during Transition Year. Here we outline our requirements with regard to work and behaviour. Transition Year students are expected to contract to do the following:

- Actively participate in the opportunities offered throughout Transition Year.
- Develop work and study habits appropriate to the Senior Cycle.
- Fully participate in the Work Experience Programme.
- Establish positive and respectful relationships with fellow-students and teachers.
- Participate in class-work and complete homework and other assignments on time, to the required standard.
- Observe the rules and regulations of the School with regard to conduct, attendance, punctuality and uniform.

I agree to abide by the School Rules, the Code of Behaviour, the Transition Year Policy and other School Policies and understand that they apply equally to Transition Year as they do to all other programmes.

I undertake to comply with the above Contract of Learning for the duration of Transition Year at St. Colman’s College.

I understand that failure to adequately participate in or engage with the programme (including Work Experience) may lead to penalties under the School Rules, Code of Behaviour and/or other Policies and may lead to my ejection from the programme, to my placement back in the 5th Year programme and the possible failure to achieve certification.

I understand that if I am ejected from Transition Year because of non-participation, non-engagement, disruption, interference with the learning and participation of other students, and where I am placed in a 5th Year Class I may not have access to the full curriculum choices as there may not be available places in all subjects.

Student’s Name: _____

Signed: _____
Student

Signed: _____
Parent

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on Wednesday 25th March, 2015 after a consultation process involving the Students' Council, the Parents' Association and the teaching staff.

Signed:

**Fr. John O' Boyle
Chairperson of the Board of Management**

This policy was amended by the Board of Management on Thursday 13th October, 2016 after a consultation process involving the Prefects, the Parents' Association and the teaching staff.

Signed:

**Fr. John O' Boyle
Chairperson of the Board of Management**

