



# Returning to School Guidance for Teaching, Learning and Assessment Transition Year

## Introduction

This guidance document provides practical advice for school leaders and teachers as schools recommence face-to-face learning for students in Transition Year (TY) from **Monday 12th April 2021**. This guidance for the TY programme should be read in conjunction with *Returning to school: Transition Year 2020/21*, available [here](#) and the *Return to School Guidance for Practical Subjects in Post-Primary Schools and Centres for Education, March 2021*, available [here](#).

The TY programme is designed to provide students with an opportunity to think independently, be open-minded, interrogate / critically evaluate information and use social skills for teamwork.

On conclusion of the programme, it is important to provide students with opportunities to reflect on the general aims and learner outcomes of the TY programme.

**On reflection has the school provided students with opportunities for:**



Personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.



Development of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.



Gaining experience of working life or developing adult life skills as a basis for personal development and maturity.

## Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Schools are best placed to make decisions and to exercise their professional judgement and autonomy in relation to teaching, learning and assessment approaches as students return to school. Assessment is integral to the TY programme and teachers may need to be creative and flexible in how they assess student learning in the current school year.

**In planning their work, teachers may like to consider:**



Prioritising active, inquiry-based, practical activities during lessons to enable students to demonstrate skills and knowledge developed during the period of remote teaching, learning and assessment.



Providing safe collaborative learning experiences based on pair work and group work in order to further develop student interaction, peer relationships and engagement so they can learn from the ideas, perceptions and opinions of others.



How they can continue to integrate the use of digital technologies to support teaching, learning and assessment.



How to adapt learning experiences usually associated with the calendar layer of the programme, including, for example, virtual tours, on-line outside speakers.



How to achieve a balance in providing cross-curricular links and learning experiences that support the four layers of the programme while adhering to COVID-19 restrictions.

**Assessing learning and students' experience of TY:**



Assessment of students' learning should reflect the aims and learning outcomes of the programme and be adaptive to how students have experienced learning in the on-line environment.



Assessment tasks in TY should be varied and assess learning in each of the four layers of the programme.



Assessment modes selected should facilitate student self-reflection on their personal development, life skills and overall TY experience.



Assessment should allow students to demonstrate their learning with a particular focus on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.

### Additional information

Curriculum support:  
[inspectorateadvisory@education.gov.ie](mailto:inspectorateadvisory@education.gov.ie)

[www.gov.ie/backtoschool/](http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool/)



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## Digital technologies

Digital skills acquired as a result of remote learning experiences can continue to be developed and enhanced as students return to school. Teachers should consider how best to continue to use online-learning platforms to support and embed the aims of TY.

### In planning their work, teachers may consider:



Maximising opportunities to develop students' digital and communication skills to enable them to utilise the features of online platforms to their full potential.



Using digital portfolios and project work completed to date in order to provide constructive feedback for improving learner outcomes.



Continuing the use of digital technology to support virtual visits, partnership and communication between the school, home, local enterprise and the wider community.



Developing the use of these online-learning platforms to further engage TY students in peer and self-assessment.

## Wellbeing and Peer Relationships

The end of TY is an important opportunity for strengthening peer relationships and connections. Bonding activities are an important part of the TY programme, provided they adhere to health and social distancing guidelines. In this context, outdoor activities merit consideration, within the guidelines.



Considering that TY students experienced disruption this year due to COVID-19, schools should use their autonomy to explore how to structure learning during this term in order to support peer relationships and student wellbeing.



Young people do not respond to challenges in the same way and each young person will have their own unique coping mechanism. Some students may have disengaged and are experiencing additional challenges. The student support team will play a crucial role in identifying these students, connecting with them and making appropriate referrals.



Students should be encouraged to pay attention to and take proactive steps to promote their physical, emotional and mental well-being.



The delivery of any aspect of the RSE programme should be prioritised and completed on the return to school.



Wellbeing resources are available from the NCCA [here](#) and NEPS [here](#).



## Promoting safe working and learning environments

School leaders and teachers should familiarise themselves with the revised COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of schools, available [here](#). Clarification on the use of face-coverings in Post-Primary schools can be accessed [here](#).

Schools can reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 by:



Encouraging subject departments to plan appropriately to enable a safe working environment. Detailed guidance for practical subjects is available [here](#).



Promoting awareness of protocols for all school personnel, students, families and visitors.



Advising teachers and staff not to attend work and to self-isolate if unwell or identified as a close contact.



Ensuring that the layout of classrooms and staffrooms maximises physical distancing.



Creating seating plans for each class group. Where possible, students from the same base class should be seated together.

External coaches or tutors may attend the school at the discretion of the board of management, who must satisfy itself that these visitors are Garda-vetted, adhere to public health advice, are trained by their governing bodies with regard to COVID-19 and fully implement the school's COVID-19 response plan.