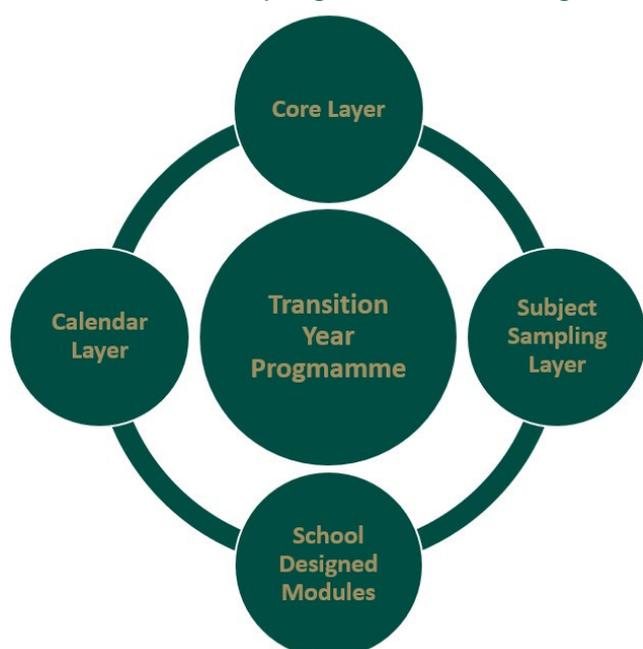




This summary advice note (August 2021) sets out practical advice for school leaders and teachers of TY 2021/22. This advice note should be read in conjunction with [Returning to School, Transition Year 2020/21, July 2020](#); [Return to School Guidance for Practical Subjects in Post-Primary Schools and Centres for Education, March 2021](#); [Supporting post-primary students who are at very high risk to COVID-19 Learners, September 2020](#); and current Public Health Advice. The experience of this year's TY students in Junior Cycle has been different from that of students who have participated in the programme in previous years. This year's TY students will have used digital technology to support their learning and in assessing their progress. For some students TY will provide an opportunity to address gaps in learning due to the impact of COVID-19.

Key considerations for TY 2021/22

Transition Year programmes are designed at school level and based on a multi-layered approach



It is important that schools consider the balance of each layer of the TY programme to ensure a well-rounded experience for all students.

As the remote learning period in 2020/2021 will have impacted on students' learning in variable ways, schools may choose to allocate additional time to teaching the core layer of the programme, with an emphasis on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills.

In planning for TY in the coming academic year, it will be important to:

- Identify priority areas for knowledge and skills development for students entering TY in September 2021 that bridge the learning between junior and senior cycle.
- Plan for a programme that is a minimum of 28 hours instruction time per week, inclusive of work experience.
- Use an interdisciplinary, cross-curricular approach to design activities that draw on students' interests and experiences of learning, wellbeing and social interaction.
- Recognises that many families may find it difficult to pay for activities associated with TY. Schools should prioritise low cost or no cost alternatives that all students can participate in.
- Ensure that students and their families should not be expected to pay upfront at the start of the school year for activities that may not be possible to complete owing to public health requirements.
- Continue the existing good practice of planning TY programmes that are creative and innovative and not three-year Leaving Certificate programmes.
- Organise TY parent information sessions and parent-teacher meeting earlier in the school year if they did not take place last year.
- Be cognisant of the need to provide an RSE programme.

Teaching, learning and assessment

In considering teaching, learning and assessment teachers can promote learning and assessment that is:



active, inquiry based and includes practical activities that enable students to demonstrate skills and knowledge;



collaborative and includes pair work and group work in order to further develop student interaction, peer relationships and engagement so students can learn from the ideas, perceptions and opinions of others;



supported by the use of digital technologies adapted to include for example, virtual tours, on-line , outside speakers;



is balanced in providing cross-curricular links and learning experiences that support the four layers of the programme, including provision for more outdoor learning experiences, in line with Public Health Advice;



maximising opportunities to develop students' digital and communication skills to enable them to utilise the features of online platforms to their full potential and develops the use of online, learning platforms to engage TY students in peer and self-assessment.

Co-Curricular and Extra-curricular activities:



Co-curricular and Extra-curricular activities that support the four interdependent layers often involve students travelling to locations outside schools; in planning for such travel relevant Public Health Advice and travel restrictions should be adhered to.



Bonding activities are an important part of the TY programme, provided they adhere to health and social distancing guidelines. In this context, school-based or locally based outdoor learning activities are advised as alternatives to residential or overseas trips that typically involve overnight stays.



External coaches or tutors may attend the school at the discretion of the board of management, which 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.

Guidance

Guidance should be both integrated into the programme as a whole-school activity and treated as a specific component. Guidance should assist students to:

- assess and interpret information related to their abilities, interests, skills, values and achievements;
- acquire competences in educational and career exploration and planning, and apply their learning to their choice of work experience, subjects and career pathways;
- develop knowledge of self and others and of the society in which they live;
- develop realistic personal, social, educational and vocational goals;
- prepare themselves to make informed choices regarding their options, e.g. in further and higher education, apprenticeships or the world of work.

Planning for Work Experience and Social Placement

Work experience

It is expected that students will complete work experience in a workplace environment. If access to work experience is delayed or a student encounters difficulties in sourcing a work experience placement due to COVID-19 it may be necessary to put alternative learning experiences in place for those students.

Generally, the onus should be on the students themselves to explore, research and access work experience. Where students encounter difficulties in sourcing work experience some alternative approaches to work placement may be considered, including Education partnerships, Mentoring and Online training.

In certain cases, it may be helpful for the work experience coordinator to liaise with the SEN department and parents to identify suitable placements for vulnerable students.

 There should be clear links between work experience, student self-reflection and the learning outcomes associated with the TY programme.

 Where students are working with children or vulnerable adults then the Garda vetting procedures as outlined in [Circular 0031/2016](#) must be strictly adhered to.

 Good record keeping and effective oversight of student attendance and engagement in work placements, that include meaningful feedback from employers as well as students, are intrinsic to the success of the programme.

Social Placement in voluntary or community settings for TY

 Schools should be mindful to incorporate adequate opportunity for social placement/engagement with voluntary and charitable organisations within the community across the TY programme.

Additional Supports, including CPD

- The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) will have a range of TY supports available for new coordinators and teachers.
- A full suite of supports provided by PDST will commence in early Autumn 2021. Further information can be found on www.pdst.ie