

Idirbhliain Programme Statement

27th May 2025

Coláiste na hInse



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Introduction to Idirbhliain

Senior cycle in Coláiste na hInse consists of an optional Idirbhliain (Transition Year), followed by a two-year Leaving Certificate course. Idirbhliain is aligned with the Senior Cycle guiding principles of:

- Wellbeing and relationships
- Inclusive education and diversity
- Challenge, engagement and creativity
- Learning to learn, learning for life
- Choice and flexibility
- Continuity and transitions
- Participation and Citizenship
- Learning environments and partnerships

Idirbhliain supports students to make informed choices as they choose different pathways and every student has the opportunity to experience the joy and satisfaction of reaching significant milestones in their education.

Idirbhliain aims to establish firm foundations for students to progress to experience the working world, participate meaningfully in school and society.

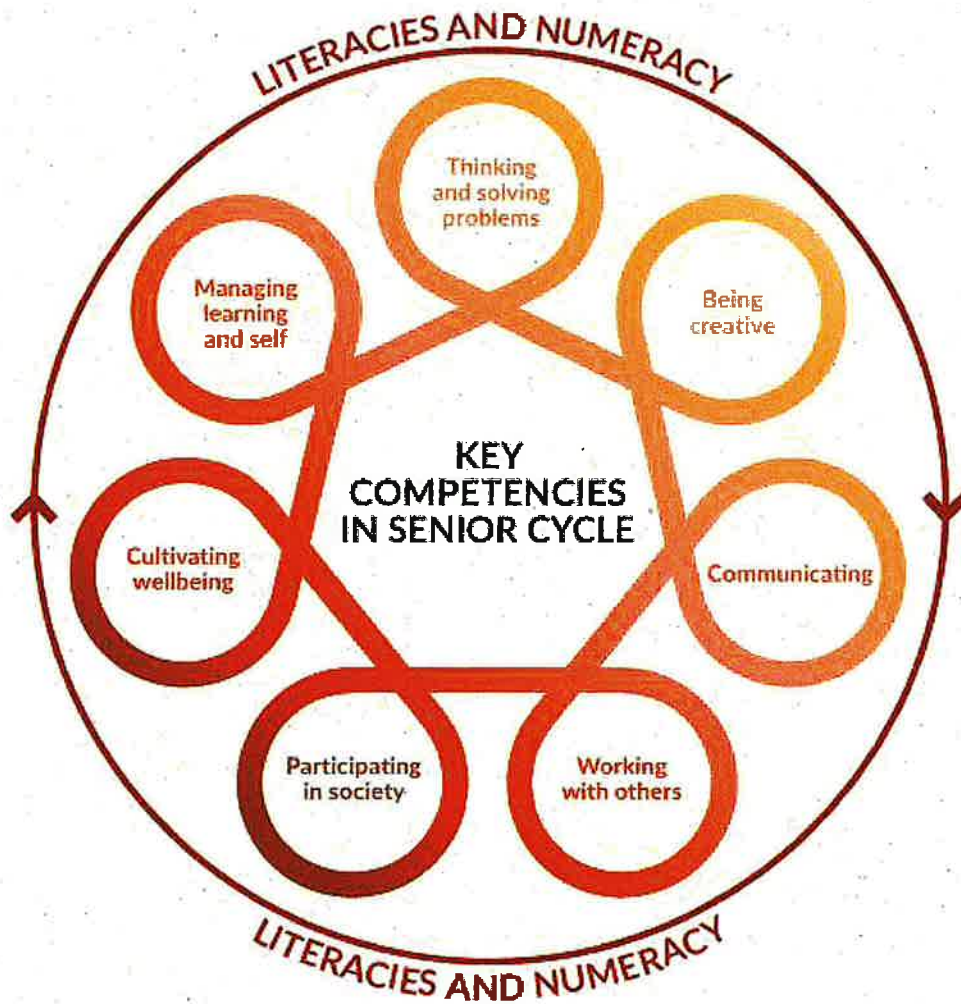
The educational experience in senior cycle should be inclusive of every student, respond to their learning strengths and needs, and celebrate, value, and respect diversity.

Every student's identity should be celebrated, respected and responded to throughout their time in senior cycle.

Idirbhliain is brought to life in schools and other educational settings through:

- effective curriculum planning, development, organisation, reflection and evaluation
- teaching and learning approaches that motivate students and enable them to improve
- a school culture that respects students and promotes a love of learning.

Key Competencies in Senior Cycle



Idirbhliain seeks to build on the Key Competencies in Senior Cycle.

The development of students' literacies and numeracy contributes to the development of competencies and vice versa. Key competencies are supported when students' literacies and numeracies are well developed and they can make good use of various tools, including technologies, to support their learning.

Continuity, Pathways, and Progression

Idirbhliain aims to build on student achievements in the Junior Cycle programme.

As an optional programme, Idirbhliain builds a broad and solid foundation for students to progress from their previous experiences into the remainder of senior cycle. It develops aspects of the key competencies of senior cycle and gives opportunities to students to explore and expand their strategies for learning. While students continue their learning in some subject areas, Idirbhliain helps students make informed decisions around future choices of subjects and modules.

During Idirbhliain, students have opportunities to explore different career options and develop some of the competencies needed to access more diverse futures. Idirbhliain can also enable students to make more informed choices of possible career options by, for example, raising awareness of further adult and higher education, traineeships, apprenticeships and through direct experience of work and participating in society.

Idirbhliain contributes to the development of students' sense and experience of civic and community responsibilities, empowering them to become more compassionate, active citizens. They learn to appreciate cultural diversity and actively participate in creating a more sustainable world. With a focus on continuity and progression in Idirbhliain, students can use their experience of the year to further develop the key competencies they need to move through life as local, national and global citizens.

Rationale

Idirbhliain is a one-year, optional programme offered in Senior Cycle in Coláiste na hInse. It offers time, space and autonomy to create enjoyable and meaningful educational experiences that support students in senior cycle.

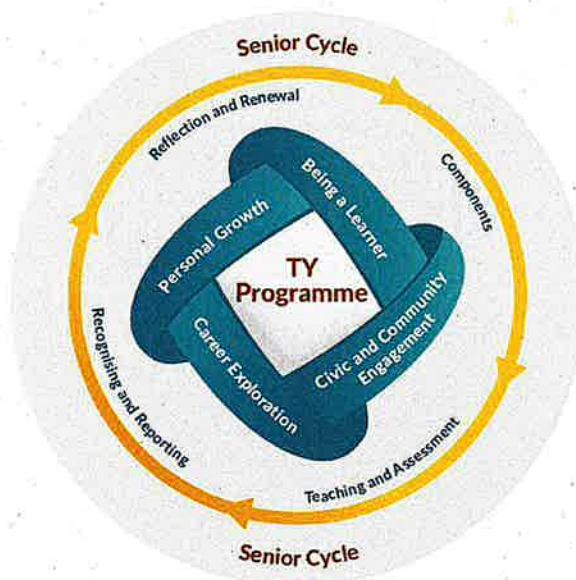
Participation in Idirbhliain contributes to the continuing learning and development and personal growth of students. All students are supported throughout the year to become more adaptable, empathetic, competent and resilient human beings; qualities which are modelled by the school community, evident in the nature of the Idirbhliain programme itself and valued within the local community. All students can avail of opportunities to grow and develop, learning to make more informed choices in senior cycle and beyond.

Aims of the Idirbhliain Programme

The aims of the Idirbhliain Programme are to:

- nurture the development of the student as a whole person by building on their previous experiences, through a curriculum that creates 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.

Student Dimensions



The Idirbhliain Programme is designed upon the four Student Dimensions of:

- Personal Growth
- Being a Learner
- Civic and Community Engagement
- Career Exploration

Student Dimension	Description
Personal Growth	Students mature socially and emotionally over the course of the year, developing in areas that include health and wellbeing, autonomy, identity, empathy and leadership.
Being a Learner	Building on their previous experiences, students begin to develop as senior cycle students, embracing opportunities and strategies for learning that work best for the student now and into the future.
Civic and Community Engagement	Students make a positive difference in their schools, communities and society. They learn to act on their responsibilities and exercise their rights as local, national and global citizens in ethical and sustainable ways.
Career Exploration	Students explore diverse future pathways in a guided and coordinated manner, gaining first-hand workplace experience, and developing career-related competencies.

Curriculum Dimensions

The IdirBhliain programme in Coláiste na hInse is designed around Four Curriculum dimensions.

Curriculum Dimension	Description
Components	A combination of core learning, subject sampling, TY specific modules and other components provides a balanced and broad set of experiences which encompasses the Student Dimensions.
Teaching and Assessment	Appropriate and effective pedagogies, alongside ongoing assessment, support students to progress in their learning while also enabling the renewal of classroom practice.
Recognising and Reporting	The means by which student learning and achievement in all areas of the TY programme are affirmed and celebrated. Reporting in TY provides a broad picture across all the Student Dimensions.
Reflection and Renewal	Reviewing, evaluating and updating the TY programme, in a continuous and inclusive manner, enables schools to evolve the TY programme most suited to the developmental and learning needs of their students.

Components

Idirbhliain offers students continued learning in core subjects, sampling in Leaving Certificate subjects, Idirbhliain-specific subjects, alongside other components that provide a balanced and broad set of experiences which encompass the Student Dimensions.

There are additional growth experiences through guest speakers, workshops, trips a school musical, the Gaisce programme, and various competitions.

Idirbhliain is divided into two semesters (August-January, and January-May/June).

Students who wish to participate in externally provided learning experiences may also be accommodated, once it is within the context of the school's Idirbhliain programme.

Students will be guided and supported in creating their Idirbhliain Portfolio, which offers students the opportunity to set goals during the year and reflect on their experiences.

Students will complete work experience every Tuesday throughout the school year. Students may avail of further work placements that are only offered Monday-Friday (for example, an Garda Síochána, the Defence Forces etc) once they have provided proof of their acceptance on to the programme to the Programme Coordinator. Students will be assisted in their work experience and career guidance through the Life Skills class once a week.

Teaching and Assessment

Teaching and Assessment across the entire Idirbhliain programme are characterised by:

- identifying and setting high expectations for all students
- whole-school practices that respond to the strengths and needs of all students and encourage student inputs and contributions to the programme
- opportunities for planning, preparation and implementation of teaching and assessment approaches
- increased opportunities for student involvement, enjoyment and agency in their own learning
- the provision of experiences that are challenging and engaging, which can stimulate creative critical thinking inside and outside the classroom, and across the TY curriculum
- sharing of expertise and experience with colleagues in a professional environment, within the school and, where feasible, with other schools

- gathering and sharing evidence of learning to inform the other Curriculum Dimensions, particularly Recognising and Reporting
- consistent evaluation of collective practice across the year of the programme, informed by feedback and reflection.

School reports on Idirbhliain are issued in January and May. Comment only reports are issued in November, with a parent-teacher meeting in March.

Students and parents complete an evaluation of the year in May each year.

Individual Classroom Practices Teaching and Assessment in the classroom are characterised by:

- appropriate student-centred approaches which are aligned with learning outcomes and develop all four Student Dimensions
- planning of learning opportunities to support each student and address their educational needs
- preparation of appropriate resources and use of digital technologies
- opportunities for students to work on extended tasks, such as projects, investigations and competitions to promote ownership of learning and develop rigour in their approaches
- genuine and meaningful collaboration between students, both within and across Idirbhliain components. This collaboration, where feasible, can be achieved through team tasks and team projects enhancing group cohesion
- creating and sharing of success criteria with students to enable peer and self-assessment
- opportunities for students to experience success within and across curriculum components
- the use of a variety of modes of assessment, for both summative and formative purposes
- constructive and timely feedback from the teacher designed to improve learning and development
- effective questioning and opportunities for the student to give and use feedback.

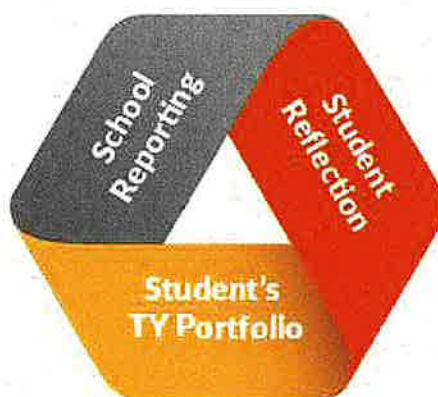
Recognition of Student Achievement

The development of students across the four Student Dimensions is one of the key aims of the Idirbhliain programme. Student achievement and progress should be recognised day-to-day in class and in broader interactions with the school community.

An Idirbhliain Graduation ceremony takes place at the end of the school year to allow teachers, parents and the school community to acknowledge and celebrate the successes and achievements of the entire year group.

Reporting

There are three elements to reporting in Idirbhliain.



The Idirbhliain Portfolio affords students the opportunity to capture their own unique experience of the year. Through their portfolio, students will develop

- goal setting and ongoing review of goals
- a chronological review of student experiences and learning over the year
- overall progress across each of the four Student Dimensions: Personal Growth, Being a Learner, Civic and Community Engagement, and Career Exploration
- critical reflections on key learning and achievement.

Students can showcase learning and achievements, and review their developmental goals from the start, middle and end of the year. The focus will be on setting goals, reviewing their progress and reflecting on their experiences, in this way developing their critical thinking skills. These skills are further developed by an end-of-year portfolio interview, which also offers feedback on the Idirbhliain programme.

School reporting

A broad form of reporting that is aligned to the developmental indicators across all four Student Dimensions is necessary in order to recognise the development of the student. Some form of coordinated approach is required to assess curriculum components taken by the student.

The school's report should take account of:

- student development across the developmental indicators for each of the four Student Dimensions
- assessment of learning in the curriculum components taken by the student
- accredited and non-accredited micro credentials from recognised bodies.

The Idirbhliain reporting mechanism is supported and affirmed throughout the year by ongoing communication with the home through parent-teachers meetings in March, comment-only reports in October, end of semester reports in January and May, and informal communication between home and school.

Reflection and Renewal

Reviewing, evaluating and updating the TY programme, in a continuous and inclusive manner, enables the evolution of a TY curriculum most suited to the learning and development of students.

The Idirbhliain Coordinator, Core Team and Management audit the Idirbhliain Programme to evaluate all four Curriculum Dimensions in order to affirm and develop all areas of the programme.

Student feedback on the programme is drawn from Student Portfolios, an end-of-year online survey, and informally through verbal feedback.

Parents' feedback on the programme is received through an end-of-year survey, verbal feedback on occasions such as parent-teacher meetings and other events throughout the year.

Schools need to consider the following broad questions when evaluating their TY programme:

- how is the school's TY programme fulfilling the aspirations of the rationale of the TY Programme Statement?
- how can the aims of the TY Programme Statement be better achieved?
- how is the TY programme supporting development across all four Student Dimensions and how could it be improved?

Each of the four Curriculum Dimensions need to be individually evaluated, considering for example:

- reflecting back - the evaluation needs to consider what worked well and what did not work well in each Curriculum Dimension
- reflecting forward - the evaluation needs to plan how to build on successes and learn from shortcomings in each Curriculum Dimension.

Encouraging Participation and Engagement in Idirbhliain

Participation in Idirbhliain is encouraged and promoted by sharing a clear and accessible overview of the school's Idirbhliain Programme with students, parents/guardians and the wider school community during a Senior Cycle Options Night in January and at an Idirbhliain Information Night in September.

The opportunity for students to participate brings with it the responsibility for students to engage as fully as possible across the entire year of the programme. This can create a reinforcing cycle where students develop through an evolving curriculum that is aligned to the aims of the TY Programme Statement, and where the curriculum in turn creates further opportunities to encourage student growth and development.

Sustaining engagement across the full year of the TY programme is complex and highly contextual. However, some of the other factors that can encourage and sustain student engagement include:

- greater school community understanding of the purpose and benefits of the TY programme and community support to fulfil that purpose
- consistent communication between student, home and school, including updates on what is happening in the programme
- implementation of a coherent approach to assessment across TY.

Review and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Principal in consultation with all school stakeholders. This policy will be reviewed every two years or as needs dictate during the academic year.

Ratification of Policy:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

27/5/25

Signed: Wayne Hody
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 27/5/2025

Signed: [Signature]
(Principal – Secretary to the Board)

Date: 27/5/25

Appendix 1 - Sample Curriculum Plan

Core Components (12 hours)

- English (2)
- Gaeilge (2)
- Mathematics (2)
- Modern Foreign Languages (French/Spanish) – (1)
- Community Activism and Engagement (1)
- Physical Education (1)
- Careers and ICT (1)
- Portfolio (1)
- SPHE (1)

Option Components (10 hours)

Cluster 1 (Students study two from this cluster throughout the year – 2 periods per week)

- Home Economics
- Engineering
- Agricultural Science
- Biology
- Business
- Accounting
- History

Cluster 2 (Students study two from this cluster throughout the year - 2 periods per week)

- Geography
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Design and Computer Graphics
- Economics
- Technology
- Politics and Society

Cluster 3 (Students study one from this cluster and study it for the full year - 2 periods per week)

- GAA Future Leaders
- Strength and Conditioning

- Mini-company
- Childcare
- Green Schools
- Public Speaking
- Horticulture
- Textile studies
- Public Relations (general)

Cluster 4 (Students study one from this cluster and study it for the full year - 2 periods per week)

- Art
- Construction
- Music (x 3 classes)
- Cookery
- DIY and AMTCE

Cluster 5 (Students study one from this cluster and study it for the full year - 2 periods per week)

- Construction
- Music X3
- Cookery
- DIY and AMTCE
- Public Relations (musical related)

Note:

- Sustainability and environmental awareness are studied as part of all modules – thus forming part of the core curriculum
- Across all modules emphasis is placed on all four curriculum dimensions
 - Being a Learner
 - Personal Growth
 - Civic and Community
 - Career Readiness